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STUDY OF NEW YORK CITY'S POLITICAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE**

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DISCURSIVE EXCLUSION OF CHINESE AMERICANS:
A CASE STUDY OF NEW YORK CITY'S POLITICAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE

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ABSTRACT

DISCURSIVE EXCLUSION OF CHINESE AMERICANS: A CASE STUDY OF NEW YORK CITY'S POLITICAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Andrew G. White IV

The aim of this study was to answer the following question: Between November 2020 and November 2021, were Chinese Americans discursively excluded from New York City's political media landscape?

The Chinese American experience has been punctuated with countless examples of faith and investment in the American ideal. Despite that fact, it has also been marred with periods in which that faith was tested and in which the return on their investment fell short of expectations.

To arrive at this study's findings, a summative content analysis of two-hundred-forty-three news articles was conducted. To reinforce these findings, a subsequent, discursive analysis, of thematically oriented local mainstream news article excerpts was also conducted.

As it pertains to this study's core question, significant change is required to mitigate the problem of Chinese Americans' discursive exclusion from political media. A portion of that change may occur with a concurrent reevaluation of how the term 'mainstream media' is defined in a political context. It may also occur in the adoption of what will be referred to as 'Affirmative Journalism.'

DEDICATION

To my family near, my family far, and to those who look down from among the stars:

With all my heart, I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Committee Members: Dr. Basilio G. Monteiro, Dr. Mark D. Juszczak, and Dr. Yue Zhuo, if the etymology of the word ‘educate’ has its roots in the Latin, educare, ‘to bring out,’ then it is the faculty at St. John’s University and the members of this committee, in whom I have placed my trust and confidence, that have supported me in bringing about a project of this magnitude. I offer my sincerest gratitude for your unwavering support of my scholarship and care for my humanity.

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INTRODUCTION

The American experience is, for some, a paradox that can best be described as an ideological objective existing where the poles of possibility, pain, reward, risk, triumph, and turmoil have intersected since 1776. The held consensus is, however, that in the United States, opportunities still exist for those who yearn to ‘breathe free’ (Lazarus, 2002).

When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of the good life. (Aristotle, 1984, p. 1987)

The key element in the sustainability of that freedom and in the realistic pursuit of ‘the good life’ is that citizens have the right to elect their representatives through the democratic process known as voting.

Critical to this process is not only the expectation that the majority of citizens will agree on one representative but, regardless of the outcome, that they will continue to adhere to the standards of civil society.

One of the primary means by which a candidate will attempt to position themselves as the individual most qualified to represent the citizenry, is in their utilization of political media. Through political media, a candidate will communicate their messages and ideas in ways they expect will resonate with the voting public, to whom they must appeal in order to claim public office. At the most fundamental level, those messages are expected to resemble the language upon which the legacy of the United States was built, E-Pluribus-Unum.

Woven into that messaging must also be a commitment to the United States' most precious of ideals: first, that adhering to the rules of law and democracy will enable the pursuit of happiness, and second, that those entrusted with the responsibility of public representation will remain committed to the promulgation of means by which the American dream may become, for all its citizens, a possible dream.

Since the first wave of immigrants from China arrived in the United States in 1848, interpretations of their citizenship and the capacity of their political rights have been in a consistent state of flux. Early immigrants were not 'political' in the traditional sense of voting and running for elected office because they were never afforded the basic constitutional rights that would have enabled them to do so (Nakanishi & Lai, 2003, p. 20).

In 1982, Diana Fong authored a *New York Times* opinion piece entitled "America's 'Invisible' Chinese." In it, she stated:

We've been called the model minority, the silent minority. Sometimes we're too insignificant in numbers to even count as a minority. We are such a tiny, conspicuous group that we pique the friendly curiosity and once in a while the hostility of people. At times, we don't count as a minority either. When the word "minority" appears in newspapers, only Blacks and Hispanics are usually mentioned. Though we're included in affirmative-action programs, we're not perceived as a "disadvantaged" group. Though we've "made it," discrimination still exists - it's just better-disguised now. Once in a few years, I'll come across a blatant remark such as: "Why don't you go back to your own country?" Today, we're excluded in another sense - we're ignored. In

schools, study is almost exclusively centered on Western civilization. Partly it's our own fault that we're ignored. Chinese do not generally see politics as a means of achieving group goals or to fight discrimination here in the United States. For many Chinese, the road to economic success, to acceptance and power, is scholarship and commerce. We also tend to choose self-employment, partly because of discrimination in the private industry. (Fong, 1982, p. 27)

Forty-two years later, it is unclear whether sufficient progress has been made in addressing Fong's (1982) concerns or those succeeding hers (Nakanishi & Lai, 2003).

In particular, this pertains to the critical role of political media as a pillar of democracy, and it is for this reason that this study seeks to inductively examine whether Chinese Americans were discursively excluded from New York City's (New York's) political media landscape between November 2020 and November 2021.

This study is conducted within the stated temporal context for two reasons. The first reason is because there was a mayoral election happening that called for political solidarity and support in the face of violence that was decidedly aimed at Chinese Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of that violence, the second reason is that there was significantly more media attention directed at this community than at other times.

If it is determined that Chinese Americans were discursively excluded from New York's political media landscape during this time, such a result would demonstrate a more systemic problem requiring greater attention and support to resolve in the future.

To explore its primary research question, this study considers the strategic use of political media in a variety of ways. Most prevalent among these considerations are the ways in which some racial and ethnic groups are presented and positioned in strategic opposition to others, the continued use of ‘umbrella terms’ such as Asian American or Asian American Pacific Islander, and the exclusion of social and ethnic media from the mainstream media lexicon. Each of these considerations directly reflects and is presented to address discursive exclusion as a means by which the status quo of political inequity for Chinese Americans has been maintained. It is in this way that this study will contribute to a body of literature that has yet to address this matter through the disciplinary lens of communication.

Existing literature has unearthed a tendency toward culturally general discussions around Chinese Americans in lieu of addressing them directly. It has instead prioritized assimilation, settlement patterns, social struggles, and the cultural intersections and divergencies among Asian Americans across the country. In addition, there has been an underwhelming display of focus directed at answering this study’s core question: Were Chinese Americans discursively excluded from New York’s political media landscape between November 2020 and November 2021?

Understating whether this community has been discursively excluded from New York’s political media landscape will serve as a springboard from which future, solution-focused research may be launched.

Conducting such research will enable political strategists, thought leaders, and journalists to make appropriately informed decisions intended to rectify reoccurring lapses in the political-media-based attention that is directed at Chinese Americans.

Outside of a strict focus on Chinese Americans however, the methods used to conduct this study should plausibly apply across a wide range of groups whose existence includes a history of being relegated to the political periphery. This is a habit that impedes normative democratic practice.

According to Robert Dahl (1998), the practice of democracy requires effective participation, equality in voting, gaining enlightened understanding, exercising final control over the agenda, and inclusion of adults (p. 38). In addition, there are two primary interpretations of how democracy may be understood and how it should be facilitated.

Whether democracy is negatively interpreted and pertains to the private rights of citizens in a free market or is positively interpreted and prioritizes the rights of political participation and communication, the praxis of self-legislation requires the guarantee of inclusive opinion and will-formation (Berlin, 1998; Habermas, 1994). This necessitates discussion by members of the political society – *societas civilis* – about how minorities and marginalized groups will be treated.

Arriving at an ethical consensus about the establishment of societal norms such as these also requires the informed participation of the minority constituents at whom political communication is directed. Excluding these groups from such discussions or a lack of specificity when issues that pertain to them arise impedes understanding as to whether democratic processes are being equitably conducted.

This study prioritized Chinese Americans, as they have historically been excluded from political discourse in the United States. It was methodologically qualitative in its utilization of a summative approach to content analysis. As the selected research method, content analysis adhered to the fundamentally qualitative nature of discourse while

allowing for the incorporation of quantitative considerations that further substantiated this study's claims. These particular considerations primarily focused on the amount of political-media-based content that included language pertaining to Chinese Americans as compared to other ethnic and racial groups during the same time period.

A significant benefit of this approach is that while the qualitative content that made up its dataset is subject to interpretation insofar as exclusion is concerned, alongside its quantitative findings, its conclusions regarding the discursive exclusion of Chinese Americans from New York's political media landscape become more solidified.

On the concepts of race and ethnicity that undergird this research, according to Blank, Dabady, and Citro:

There is no single concept of race. Rather, it is a complex concept, best viewed for social science purposes as a subjective social construct based on observed or ascribed characteristics that have acquired socially significant meaning. In the United States, ways in which different populations think about their own and others' racial status have changed over time in response to changing patterns of immigration, changing social and economic situations, and changing societal norms and government politics... For certain populations and in some situations, race may be difficult to define consistently... The ambiguity involved in defining race has implications for how data on race are collected. The official federal government standards for race and ethnicity currently identify five major racial groups (black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and white. The government standards are not

always consistent with scholarly concepts of race or with concepts held by individuals and groups; as a result, it may be difficult to obtain data on race and ethnicity that are comparable over time or across different administrative records. The federal racial categories have changed over time, in part reflecting the changing conception of race in the United States. (Blank et al., 2004, p. 2)

The timing of this study is unique as it focuses on a period in which media attention directed at Chinese Americans was higher than in previous years. At such a time, understanding whether Chinese Americans were excluded from political media discourse is highly salient. This is primarily because its temporal parameters, the election, and the group on which it focuses are inseparable from, albeit not limited to, the COVID-19 pandemic for which some illegitimately blamed and attacked people they thought were of Chinese ancestry (Hswen et al., 2021).

This study highlights politicians' questionable use of media to both address and curry favor with some minority groups at the expense of or while omitting others. Its findings are ultimately used to challenge journalists to use their power in search and in service of a balance that is consistent with their charge (Pew Research Center, 1999).

As a publication in field of multi-sector communication, this study interlinks the disciplines of political media analysis and intercultural communication. Its aim is to serve as a methodological means by which others may understand and address the discursive exclusion that is faced by those whose voices remain pacified across political media.

Following this introduction, Chapter I will present the hypothesis and explicate the key concepts underpinning this study; Chapter II will review the literature and provide a rationale for conducting the current study; Chapter III will present the methodological process that was undertaken to establish the dataset. It will also discuss the qualitative method of analysis employed to arrive at the findings that will be presented in Chapter IV. Finally, Chapter V will enter into a discursive analysis and discussion prior to presenting recommendations that will be followed by a conclusion and the implications of this work.

CHAPTER I

Hypothesis & Conceptual Explications

Hypothesis

This study aims to examine whether New York's Chinese American population was discursively excluded from New York's political media landscape between November 2020 and 2021.

The following timeline serves to frame this study within a set of specific temporal parameters while bringing its preliminary considerations to the fore. Not the least of these considerations is the fact that a group of people can be at the center of a discussion while simultaneously being excluded from it.

On January 20th, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the first lab-confirmed case of the Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the United States. On March 16th, 2020, Former President Donald J. Trump referred to it as, 'the Chinese virus.' On March 20th, 2020, Former Governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo, ordered nonessential workplaces to close and banned nonessential gatherings of any size for any reason. On November 17th, 2020, Eric Adams announced his candidacy for mayor and was elected on November 2nd, 2021 (Syam, 2022).

While this study's specific focus is not the COVID-19 pandemic, its contextual relevance is inescapable, as it prompted unexpected violence and increased media attention that were both directed at New York's Asian population. In light of the fact that these were occurring in the context of a mayoral election, the overarching expectation is that there would have been significant commentary by the candidates and a clear display of intent on the part of journalists to include them in the political media discourse.

Conceptual Explications

Throughout this work, several key concepts are presented that require further explication in order that they may be construed as intended. At the outset, it should be understood that some of them are highly fungible.

The core concept of this study is discourse, which can be defined as the various ways in which talk, text, and media constitute and express ways of gaining knowledge (McGregor, 2004; Weedon, 1987).

The relevant features of discourse are: first, that it is constitutive, as it seeks to sustain and reproduce the status quo; second, that it has ideological effects, as it produces and maintains unequal power relations between groups of people; and, third, that the strategies expressed in discourse are persuasively enacted through structural emphasis and word choice, e.g., headlines in a newspaper, that positively represent some groups while positively representing 'others' (van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

According to van Dijk (2013), key considerations when discussing discourse in a media context have to do with understanding who has access to journalists, who will be interviewed, quoted, and described in news reports, and whose opinions will thus be able to influence the public (p. 68). It is also important to note that discourses can be grounded within contextual interactions between identity, production, cultural values, social relations, consciousness, and semiology, and that they are always historically contingent (Fairclough & Wodack, 1997).

Political discourse pertains to the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions at various levels of government (van Dijk, 1997). It also conjoins with the concept of dominance, as the exercise of social power by elites, institutions, or

groups that results in politically, culturally, socially, ethnically, and racially unequal communicative contexts.

This study will define and operationalize discursive exclusion as those instances of communicative discrimination or other forms of marginalization that have the capacity to turn the media into a segregating structure. In such instances, the less powerful are less quoted, less spoken about, and retain less freedom of choice, e.g., the freedom to decide how they are represented and the policies under which they are governed by the central actors in the polity, i.e., politicians and journalists (van Dijk, 1993; 1997).

The consequence of discursive exclusion is a perpetual marginalization of systematically and socio-politically disempowered groups. In a political context, this casting aside of society's 'others,' tends to manifest as governments' ignorance of the unique needs of specific groups or in its failure to address various groups equitably.

Much like the notes in the blank edges of a book, marginalized groups are treated as separate from the main body of society and exist in the peripheral view of leadership, never fully receiving adequate attention or consideration (Pratt & Fowler, 2022).

It is important to make mention of the functional hierarchy and role of peripheral vision because much less of our quality of sight and the visual field of our special resolution happens at the eyes' peripheral edges than at its center. The information gathered and organized by our ocular infrastructure is compressed with data loss before transmission to the brain, while information presented through other parts of the eye is not. This causes our vision to have much greater clarity at its center than elsewhere (Johnson, 2010).

While some objects that exist within the periphery eventually come into the eyes' more attentive center, those that do not are rendered effectively invisible due to inattentional blindness (Chalmers & Cater, 2005). As fundamental features of the human visual system, this is acceptable. As a sociopolitical metaphor, these limitations are antithetical to the principles on which the United States prides itself and upon which democracy is dependent. They are not, however, inconsistent with the historical narratives regarding the experiences that various groups have had in this country. Nor is it a far reach to suggest that still today, some experience either invisibility or less flattering forms of visibility as their unsolicited truth.

This study directs its attention at New York's Chinese American community and will operationally regard them as such if they are either naturalized or American-born and choose to position their national American identity alongside their ethnic Chinese heritage.

With a population that exceeded 1.5 million in 2020, Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial group in New York City. Between 2013 and 2020, the city's Asian citizen voting-age population grew from 581,490 to 694,940. This represents a 19.5% growth over seven years, outpacing all other major racial groups (He, 2022, p. 5). What is most important to note here, is that it is Chinese Americans who represent 43.6% of the voting-age population from this group.

If what's past is prologue, this trend will not soon slow which means that engaging on the topic at hand is both appropriate and timely. That is because it speaks directly to the need to include, in political discourse, a group that will likely have an increased presence and political activity in this city's foreseeable future.

While every attempt has been made to specifically address Chinese Americans, there are some instances in which the data required to proceed synonymously refer to Asian Americans. This is an issue that will be discussed here, and as a matter of cultural sensitivity in Chapter V. At the outset, however, it is necessary to identify the challenges and benefits associated with singularly directing this study at Chinese Americans.

The higher-order concept, ‘Asian American,’ can be used to refer to individuals with ties to at least twenty countries, e.g., China, Japan, or India (Ruiz, Shao, & Shah, 2022).¹ It comprises such other terms as race and ethnicity while maintaining the potential for relevance and application across various other contexts. This means that the methods employed in this study may legitimately be applied to similarly identified, yet decidedly unique, lower-order cultural groups across America.²

There is an inherent challenge with the operationalization of the concept, ‘Asian American,’ because it is grounded both in cultural heritage and in choice (Chang, 2003). Moreover, the term carries no specific rules or degrees of consistency regarding the circumstances under which a person may or may not refer to themselves as such. This type of terminological opacity results in a simultaneously accepted and rejected pan-ethnic umbrella because it tends to mask meaningful cultural, linguistic, ethnic,

¹ *The initial intention behind the coining of the term ‘Asian American,’ was the unification of groups with similar regional origins. The original proposal discussing these matters concluded that there should be increased academic attention directed at ‘this long-neglected area’ (Hardwick & Young, 1969).*

² *The process of analyzing the meaning of a concept may be approached in two ways: by distillation and by list. In either case, it is useful to organize our thinking into lower-order and higher order concepts. Lower-order concepts are closer to the world of observation, either in everyday life or in a contrived laboratory setting. A higher-order concept subsumes several lower-order concepts (Chaffe, 1991, p. 25).*

migration, gender, identity, and socioeconomic differences that render some lower-order cultural groups irrelevant (Ruiz, Shao, & Shah, 2022; Yip et al., 2021).

For a democracy to function normatively, the public must be kept abreast of the nation's affairs, and of the steps that are being taken by political leaders to meet their obligations as societal representatives (Habermas, 1994; Mitchell et al., 2001-2004). That information cannot be skewed, hinted at, or otherwise avoided. Instead, it must clearly reference what is at issue and of concern among specific members of the citizenry, and it must not seek solace in the safety of being indirect.

The media are a prerequisite for shaping the democratic character of society; they are the bearers of democracy's political communication and, in no uncertain terms, play as vital role in making politics visible as they do in providing political information, analysis, forums for debate, and a shared democratic culture (Dahlgren, 2009, pp. 2-3).

Chapter II discusses terms such as ethnic media, social media, and Chinese-language media. These are increasingly important in today's communications lexicon but are not currently viewed as mainstream. Therefore, they fall outside of the methodological framework within which this study proceeds.

At present, it is the newspaper that remains a fundamental institution of democracy and a critical instrument in the development of the public's awareness. For that reason, this study will operationally regard 'political media' as a legacy publication, the likes of *The New York Times* and *The Flushing Times*, which describes an extant form of media with a longer history, e.g., newspapers (Harcup, 2014). Despite their political proclivities, individuals have consistently used these types of publications for the news that partly informs their political decision-making process (Shearer & Mitchell, 2021).

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

The United States has the largest ethnic Chinese population outside of Asia. Since the end of the sixty-year period of legal exclusion, international migration from China to North America has increased exponentially, from 237,292 in 1960 to 1,645,472 in 1990 and to approximately 5.4 million in 2021. This accounts for more than one percent of the country's total population (Rosenbloom & Batalova, 2023).³

The settlement patterns of Chinese immigrants are characterized by concentration as well as dispersion. This behavior is consistent with their historical tendencies, as they continue to concentrate in the American West and in urban areas throughout the nation. For example, over half of America's ethnic Chinese population lives in just three metropolitan regions: New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco (Zhou, 2009, pp. 47-49). Currently, however, only 14% of them live in old Chinatowns. Once settled, they now gravitate toward more affluent urban and suburban areas, creating new, 'second Chinatown' enclaves in places like Flushing, New York (Zhou, 2009, p. 49; Lai, 2022).

Compared to Manhattan's Chinatown, for example, in 2020, New York's borough of Queens had more than double the representation by people of Chinese origin; 41.4% compared to 19.1%, some 254,348 people (Wang, 2022). This indicates a significant shift from the long-held tendency toward urban environments that many Chinese immigrants have had. Instead, it places their recent attention on more suburban locales like Flushing, Queens.

³ *Iris Chang (2003) thoroughly introduces the history of the Chinese Exclusion Act that spanned from 1882-1943 (pp. 130-156).*

Since the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, enclaves like Flushing have grown into bustling, community-driven economic zones and have become examples of the promulgated American experience made manifest. Consequently, they are gaining increasing consideration as regions of interest in conversations pertaining to voter participation and the political power of Chinese Americans in New York.

While not a monolith, Chinese immigrants have tended to be concerned with three urgent issues of settlement: employment, homeownership, and education. For many members of this community, a successful life amounts to running one's own business, living in one's own home, and sending one's child to an Ivy League or equally prestigious college (Zhou, 2009, p. 52). Most importantly, the prioritization of these criteria does not dissipate after the label of immigrant is shed and that of citizen is adopted.

The correlation between these interests and local-level politics lies in the sentiment that Chinese Americans carry regarding whether they and their interests are being adequately addressed. This is because that sentiment tends to directly impact their political expression through the electoral process (Ong & Nakanishi, 2003).

Data presented by Nakanishi and Lai (2003) indicate that the Chinese American community can significantly impact political outcomes if its members are galvanized toward or in opposition to a particular set of issues they view as relevant to their well-being. This is not dissimilar from most groups.

As it pertains to traditional partisan association, however, what is unique about Chinese Americans is that they have not historically tended to identify with either of the two major American political parties (Wong & Ramakrishnan, 2023). Such a

consideration incites inquiry into the factors that may motivate them toward one over the other or why they may opt out entirely.

In any political contest, one of the most critical keys to success is how a candidate communicates with potential voters. It is permissible to assume that in a close second, would be the discussions that voters have about those individuals who hope to represent them.

According to Min Zhou (2009), more than 80% of Chinese Americans speak a language other than English at home (p. 125). This presents somewhat of a conundrum for any politician who does not speak that language. It also instigates further curiosity as to the nature of communicative access to Chinese American voters and their subsequent discourse about potential candidates. Most importantly, it adds a significant level of value to this study, as candidates across the nation can potentially use its findings to gain further insight into what it means to engage with and otherwise address the concerns of this and other burgeoning constituencies.

Major contributions have been made by Zhou (2009) on the nature of the assimilation of Chinese immigrants into America and its culture. She offers profound insights into the challenging relationship that this community has with the United States, both, as their population increases, but also, as they remain ‘forever foreigners’ and members of the ‘model minority’ (Aoki & Takeda, 2008, pp. 143-146; Lai, 2022).

The prior issue is a typically stated reason why Chinese Americans have not definitively associated themselves with a singular political party en masse (Wong & Ramakrishnan, 2023). The latter pertains directly to a myth that emerged during the 1960s, when White journalists sought to contrast the demands and protests of so-called

‘problem minorities,’ such as African Americans, with the quiet and patient economic advancement of Asian Americans (p. 4).⁴

Although any ethnic stereotype decreases the potential for engagement and dialogue that support true learning and cross-cultural understanding, this issue lies beyond the scope of this research but could be relevant in future work.

Stereotypes aside, Zhou (2009) explicitly discusses and leans into the significant level of value that Chinese American families place upon two specific social institutions. In doing so, she first describes how Chinese Americans benefit greatly from community-based social capital directed at the institution of education and the belief in advancement by way of academic merit.⁵

The specific matter of education has not been prioritized in this study but bears mentioning due to its contextual significance within the dataset and during the election under review.

⁴ *The article to which origin of the term ‘model minority’ is associated, was written in an effort to draw contrast between the more admirable outcomes following the negative treatment of Japanese immigrants upon their arrival to the United States as compared to other ethnic groups. In particular, that comparison was to ‘Negros,’ whose suffering from the deeds of slave traders saw no clear path toward any form of respite (Petersen, 1966) . Two years later, the term ‘Asian American’ was coined.*

⁵ *According to Pierre Bourdieu (1986), social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to passion of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance, recognition, and membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital (p. 21). In an ethnic context, according to Zhou and Lin (2005), social capital inheres immediately in the social relations among individuals that are often determined and constrained by ethnicity. They also believe that it is embedded in the formal organizations and institutions within a definable ethnic community that structure and guide these social relations (p. 262).*

The second major social institution that most directly correlates with and supports the culturally focused and priority-driven dissemination of information to Chinese Americans is Chinese-language media.

According to Zhou (2009), since the early days of the immigration of Chinese into the United States, Chinese-language media has supplemented immigrants' exposure to pertinent information both 'at home,' and back in China. Via print, television, radio, and online content, it has served to keep them up to date with information that supports their prioritization of advancing their family's interests in the United States (p. 228).

Zhou's (2009) work opens the door to very exciting points of inquiry that are relevant to this study, as she discusses the fact that through Chinese-language media, Chinese immigrants have a culturally focused space in which they may be connected to each other and practice democracy (p. 143).

A limitation of Zhou's (2009) work is that she does not expand upon the practice of democracy, how ethnic media influences political participation, or the discourse surrounding it. This is because her focus is largely directed at assimilation and the extent to which things, such as Chinese-language media, can be understood as a social institution and as an important factor in immigrants' acclamation to American life (pp. 141-147).

Wong and Ramakrishnan (2023) delve further into the discussion pertaining to the participation of Chinese Americans in the democratic process but center their research around the higher-order concept group of Asian Americans. They claim that the experiences and role of Asian Americans in a political system are a function of their racialization and position in the broader racial landscape. They also refer directly to the

racialized perceptions of Asian Americans as the ‘model minority’ and the ‘forever foreigner,’ where Zhou (2009) glances at these topics but never confronts them directly.

Explicitly focusing on political participation, Wong and Ramakrishnan (2023) explain that the earliest Asians who immigrated to America were not political in the traditional sense of voting and running for election. They attribute this to the early denial of these rights but point out that despite the persistence of institutional and demographic factors causing barriers to Asian American voting, the group’s voting rates have increased dramatically over the years (pp. 5-6).

Nevertheless, they point to the model minority myth, historical barriers limiting political socialization, a need for politicians to work harder to attract them, the fact that political parties have historically neglected Asian Americans, and a lack of guaranteed political loyalty as the primary reasons for minimal engagement with this group by political aspirants (Wong & Ramakrishnan, 2023, pp. 7-9).

After almost two hundred years, immigrants from China and their American-born descendants continue to carry a yoke of political indifference. Unshakable, it seemingly serves to only justify their further exclusion or minimal consideration by political candidates, despite laws to the contrary. There are, however, additional potential explanations for why members of this demographic have yet to be identified as critical participants in the theatre of American politics. Chief among them is offered by Raymond Wolfinger (1965).

Almost immediately following the ratification of the Voting Rights Act and the end of Asian American Suffrage, Wolfinger (1965) discussed the role and persistence of

‘ethnic voting.’⁶ He concluded that members of an ethnic group displayed ‘affinity’ when their political behavior could not be explained by other demographic characteristics (p. 896). He also posited that members of an ethnic group would cross party lines to vote for or against a candidate of a particular background.

An assertion such as this is curious, as, among Asian Americans, it has historically been a challenge to discern any traditional partisan affiliation from which one could cross over. Moreover, in New York’s mayoral races, there has not yet been justification for such a rationale, as a Chinese American has not yet been nominated as the republican or democratic candidate for the role.

What is discussed in this study, however, is less about the subject of ‘ethnic voting’ and more about what will be referred to as ‘acts of affinity,’ whereby the candidate is selected based on their culturally relevant platform or media presence instead of their culture. This suggests that a candidate who is not of Chinese descent could potentially earn the affinity of Chinese American voters because their platform intentionally placed itself within their ethnic media context.

According to Nielsen (2019), over half of Asian Americans consume Asian content. To support the premise that acts of affinity, in the form of media consumption, tend to play a role in voter behavior, alongside Indian Americans, the report also indicates that Chinese Americans are most likely to consume ethnically consistent content.

⁶ *The Voting Rights Act was signed into law on August 6, 1965, by President Lyndon Johnson. It outlawed the discriminatory voting practices adopted in many southern states after the Civil War, including literacy tests as a prerequisite to voting (United States Commission On Civil Rights, 1965).*

By stating that the family members who consume ethnically specific content tend to be either over fifty years old or between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four, these findings substantiate the inference that those who consume culturally specific content are the same people who vote. This further supports the supposition that politicians who genuinely work to engage with Chinese American voters may see significant support from this demographic.

Instead of solely focusing on ethnic media, however, affinity could also be developed through mainstream media by speaking directly to the Chinese American community instead of generically around them. Such an approach might affirm for this constituency that they are, in fact, seen by the candidate and viewed as constituents worthy of equal attention. In effect, this would remove the yoke of civic indifference that was illegitimately placed on the shoulders of Chinese Americans to begin with. As was introduced by Zhou (2009), and like mainstream media, however, the ethnic media landscape continues to evolve.

In a tone and timbre somewhat reminiscent of Marshall McLuhan's (2011) publication on the evolution of communicative technology, Lai (2022) discusses social media, its early 21st-century entry into the American national lexicon, and its ubiquity in the lives of American citizens (Lai, 2022, pp. ix-x).

Using the term 'connective action' to describe this phenomenon, he addresses the increasing amounts of research that are being conducted to examine social media and its connection to various domestic and international political movements throughout the world. He also posits that the rise of social media has concomitantly resulted in the

disappearance of the digital divide that has, in more recent history, tended to bar marginalized groups from political participation (pp. 3-4).

While his title specifies ‘Asian Americans,’ Lai (2022) spends a great deal of time focusing on the Chinese diaspora and, quite pertinently to this discussion, on their connective political action in the United States.

The social media platform, WeChat, is Lai’s (2022) key to this action, as it embodies a powerful and mobilizing tool that is used exclusively in Mainland China and its diasporic communities. He explains that, on this platform, groups can be created with a maximum of 500 members who discuss common interests, political issues, hobbies, alumni connections, and social events.

More important than what they are talking about, however, is the fact that members can do so in their native language, something that Habermas (1987) also indicated as critical to democratic continuity (Lai, 2022, p. 4).

Through social media platforms like WeChat, connective action allows large, foreign-born racial groups to communicate and moderate their voices and concerns at the local, State, and national levels. According to Lai (2022), this is arguably most visible among Asian Americans, a group stereotyped as quiet, docile, and apolitical in U.S. politics (p. 5).

Despite what he calls the ‘compelling arguments’ about the adverse effects of social media, however, Lai (2022) endorses the numerous positive influences that exist in the relationship between social media and democracy. For example, he states that social media has filled a necessary vacuum that has allowed millions of Americans to participate and voice their concerns in ways that they could not have done a decade ago,

before the invention of the smartphone and globally adopted social media platforms. He also points out that social media platforms have become a prominent part of the organizational and action-oriented political structure, itself.

Ultimately, his position is that social media has made political information more accessible. As a result, he believes that it has had a democratizing effect in the political sphere, as it has provided a lower entry point into American politics for historically disenfranchised racial minorities (Lai, 2022, p. 7).

Acknowledging that social media cannot stand alone as a means by which Chinese Americans may be increasingly empowered in the American political stratosphere, however, Lai's (2022) perspective is that political motivation is essential for connective action to allow minorities to close the participation gap in both traditional and nontraditional ways. This is because the combination of the two provides individuals with new opportunities to shape political discourse around public policies and political candidates (p. 8).

Measuring the political motivation of Chinese Americans falls outside the scope of this study, but the research has shown the value of ethnic institutions, e.g., ethnic media, in the promulgation of political interest and voting as part and parcel of being an American.

The fact that there has been very little focus on how connective action shapes Asian American political engagement is especially salient in the context of political media-based discursive exclusion. This is primarily because Asian Americans have one of the lowest voter turnouts among members of their voting age population and because

they are simultaneously one of the most digitally connected racial groups in the United States (Lai, 2022, p. 9).

Ethnic media has become ubiquitous and critical for Asian Americans' political action efforts because it provides political information and connects ethnic candidates to both old and new Asian American voters (Zhou, 2009; Lai, 2022, p. 10).⁷ What is not discussed, however, is how either of the two, are used by non-Asian candidates. Nor is it mentioned whether there have been any attempts, through either outlet, to curry the favor of their increasingly attentive and participatory Asian American constituents. On the contrary, there is a growing concern that they are largely overlooked and ignored by both of the mainstream political parties (Chen, 2018; Kao, 2023).

Lai (2022) also marks linguistic limitations as an area of great concern and as one explanation for the limited political participation of newly minted Asian Americans. This explanation is somewhat supported by Annie Wang's (2020) "Chinese in NYC: A Profile," which describes the English proficiency level of New York's Chinese community as low. The report also cites 58.5% as having a limited level of English proficiency (LEP).

In using a language barrier to rationalize the disconnect between politicians and Chinese Americans, however, Lai (2022) ignores the prevalent and viable solutions woven into platforms like WeChat and the Internet in general; a ready slew of translators that, while imperfect, enable some degree of communicative exchange.

⁷ According to Zhou (2009), as a social institution, a risk associated with ethnic media is that they reinforce immigrants' sense of "we-ness" to the exclusion of "other-ness" and lower the incentive to expand social and personal networks to include members of other racial and ethnic groups (p. 144).

This is a critical oversight but also begs the question regarding media consumption by Chinese American citizens and the degree to which they are expected to trust and act upon content that is not presented to them in their preferred linguistic format.

Although they discuss the role that various types of ethnic media play in the lives of Asian Americans, neither Lai (2022) nor Zhou (2002, 2009) address the issue of trust and its impact on political behavior.

Gainous, Abbott, and Wagner (2018) venture into this area in the context of media consumption and the impact that trust in the medium has on the subsequent political actions taken by Malaysian citizens.

They conclude that higher levels of trust are associated with the consumption of traditional media and that, said trust, positively impacts attitudes surrounding the country's democratic conditions.

They also found that, not only is trust in Internet media decidedly lower than it is in traditional media, but that trust invested in Internet-presented media enhances dissident attitudes about democratic conditions and that it spurs a greater inclination to protest (Gainous et al., 2018, pp. 1-2). In addition, they display great faith in the function of the Internet as a private sphere that enables discussion of sensitive issues outside the view of government.

Like Lai (2022), they see the low cost of entry as supportive of overall increased democratization. They also see the lack of external government control as a highly valuable catalyst for increased political participation, mobilization, and dissemination of dissenting information where there were previously no opportunities to do so.

Like Zhou (2009), they are aware of the various places in which democratic activity has been enabled because of the Internet. However, they seem overly confident in the level of safety that an individual in a ‘semi-authoritarian’ country can have in expressing themselves in ways that run counter to the State.

It is likely because of this confidence that they make no mention of whether leadership has adhered to its pledge of non-censorship or whether the Internet is monitored. Furthermore, they take no issue with users' ability to become entrenched in established worldviews and preferred sources that only reinforce themselves.

Gainous et al. (2018) do not, however, share this level of confidence in ‘traditional’ media. That is because, in Malaysia, ‘traditional’ media is state-controlled. Nevertheless, their advocacy for the use of the Internet for political dissent, while plausible, would be well served to include a warning label and set of examples where such behavior had some sort of consequence. Without such examples, acting on their findings alone could carry significant risk and be considered somewhat naïve.

What is essential to draw from their research is the extent to which the role of media and the medium are context-dependent and how various forms of media can mobilize different types of political behavior. In this way, they serve as an indicator of governments’ need to be nimble insofar as how they communicate with their people and, in fact, show them that they are worthy of their allegiance.

In summary, still today, and despite increasing evidence to the contrary, the Chinese American community carries a stigma of being apolitical (Wong & Ramakrishnan, 2023). Whereas Chinese immigrants might have once settled in more urban environments, data show that the modern ethnic enclaves they create are now

removed from the metropolis and tend to be in more suburban environments such as Flushing, Queens (Zhou, 2009, p. 49; Lai, 2022). If they do ultimately naturalize, and while the opportunity to participate in democracy is then made manifest, partisanship is not prioritized.

What remains at issue for them, however, are their primary cultural concerns about home ownership, business ownership, and the highest level of education for their children. This is where the roles of ethnic media, and now, social media, become quite relevant among the primary means by which individuals are informed of the goings-on around them and of the opportunities that are available to them through the democratic process.

The two points that must be joined here are that this group tends not to speak English at home and that at least half of America's naturalized population of Asian origin tends to consume ethnic media (Zhou, 2009; Nielsen, 2019). This means that ethnic media, presumably in all its forms, can potentially act as a culturally structured space in which values may be promulgated, knowledge may be shared, debate may ensue, decisions may be made, and the practice of democracy may ultimately be encouraged. The nature of democracy, however, is only as good as the information shared with and among its practitioners. In this instance, the source of that information is 'political media,' as it was operationalized above.

The strength and legitimacy of the democratic process depend on the words journalists use to present the media-based content consumed in society. If that content is loaded with language that turns a structured space into a segregating structure or if it does not clearly display efforts of inclusion, e.g., invitations to important events by politicians,

interviews by journalists allowing underrepresented groups the opportunity to vocalize a perspective on matters relevant to them, or vetted data to substantiate unflattering claims, then discursive exclusion has occurred.

Preceding the 2021 mayoral election in New York, for example, David Chen (2018) discussed the absence of Asian American representation in an education-related political discussion that stood to significantly impact the Asian American community's access to the city's specialized high schools; they were not invited. This speaks to a more significant issue pertaining to the persistent lack of attention directed toward Asian Americans in U.S. politics and by some U.S. politicians.

According to Chen:

Noticeably absent were representatives from one group that would be heavily affected by the change: Asian Americans, whose children dominate those schools. Asian-American community leaders say that in New York, far from being the "model minority" — a term many view as disparaging and inaccurate — they are the overlooked minority, taken for granted in the city's calculus of political power. (Chen, 2018, paras. 2-4)

Chen's (2018) article foreshadowed the concerns expressed by Chi'en (2021) regarding the perspective that Asian Americans 'do fine when left alone' (para. 6), and Leonhardt's (2023) later assertion that Democrats had grown complacent in their outreach to Asian Americans (para. 6).

Statements such as these give further credence to this study's title and support its ambition to understand whether Chinese Americans were, in fact, excluded from New York's political media landscape between November 2020 and 2021.

As initially expressed, the review of literature has revealed a tendency toward culturally general discussions around Chinese Americans in lieu of addressing them directly. It should also now be evident that the common themes to be found in literature regarding Chinese and Asian Americans are assimilation, settlement patterns, social struggles, and the cultural intersections and divergencies among Asian Americans across the country.

While these are valid areas of focus for continued research, and there has been a more recent inclusion of the ubiquitous use of ‘ethnic social media’ among the Chinese community, in particular, there is no evidence of material pertaining to the discursive exclusion of Chinese Americans in political media. Thus, this study's contribution is that it fills a gap in both political media-related literature and that which pertains specifically to the exclusion of Chinese Americans from the theater of American politics in that regard.

CHAPTER III

Data & Methods

Data

In conducting qualitative research, Creswell and Creswell (2018) allow for a wide range of data collection methods, including the review of public documents such as newspapers. This study utilized print media as defined in Chapter II. To maximize the possible areas of consideration aimed at answering its question, the dataset met the following requirements:

- First (Periodicals Under Review):
 - *The New York Times* and *The Flushing Times*
 - Highest in circulation during the year under review
 - *The New York Times* (Print)-2020-2021: 260,988,000
 - A local newspaper directed at the enclave of Flushing, New York.
 - *The Flushing Times* (Print)-2020-2021: 2,080,000
- Second: (Viewed as Mainstream)
- Third: (Local Audience-Specific Publication)
- Fourth: (Publication Dates): Between November 2020 and November 2021
 - Eric Adams (Democrat) announced campaign: November 17th, 2020
 - Curtis Sliwa (Republican) announced campaign: March 14th, 2021
 - New York Election Day: November 2nd, 2021

Establishing this study's dataset required considerations regarding how it would simultaneously be expanded and contracted in order to meet its stated objectives. Expanding the dataset necessitated the use of two media sources, which tend to be trusted by individuals with different sociopolitical value systems. This decision was made to ensure that perspectives on matters of importance to the Chinese community, e.g., educational opportunities, business ownership, policies related to home ownership, and, more recently, matters of safety, if reported on, were able to be seen by its members (Kao, 2023; Zhou, 2009).

As the first media source, *The New York Times* is a publication with a history spanning one hundred and seventy-two years. With an annual readership of over two hundred sixty million readers, it is the nation's most highly circulated periodical (Watson, 2023). In addition, it is considered mainstream at both political poles (Shearer & Mitchell, 2021), which is crucial to note in order to dispel any doubts about its validity as a data source or its accessibility to Chinese Americans during New York's 2021 mayoral election.

As the second media source, *The Flushing Times* is a grassroots publication of similar age that avoids political typecasting and serves approximately two million readers a year (adfontesmedia.com, 2023; V. Schneps, personal communication, December 14th, 2023; Jurkowitz et al., 2020). As a data source in the context of discursive exclusion in political media, using *The Flushing Times* fulfilled a specific requirement that local political content would have been accessible to residents of Flushing Queens, the New York enclave housing the most Chinese Americans.

Contracting the dataset confined the reviewable material to a publication period between November 1st, 2020, and November 2nd, 2021. These two dates encompassed the start of Eric Adams’s campaign and extended to the day of the New York mayoral election, a time in which media-based discussions on matters of importance to the Chinese American community would have had the attention of its voting members.

Methods

The ultimate objective of this study was to determine whether Chinese Americans were discursively excluded from New York’s political media landscape between November 2020 and November 2021. To arrive at such a determination, a dataset comprised of nationally and locally circulated print media was analyzed.

The dataset was derived from two printed periodicals that were published daily (*The New York Times*) and weekly (*The Flushing Times*). The data were collected from archives of the respective publications and met a temporal requirement in which campaign or policy-related content would have been visible to Chinese Americans and to New Yorkers at large.

Among the primary theorists who have contributed to content analysis as a research method, Holsti (1968) defines it as any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages. Bernard Berelson’s (1952) work supplements this definition by stating that the objective of content analysis is to describe the manifest content of communication.

Finally, Maxfield and Babbie (2018) specify that content analysis is an operation in which various forms of communication are coded and ultimately measured according to a conceptual framework. They also supplement Holsti’s (1968) definition and discuss

the researcher's requirement in determining whether to code the manifest or latent content (Maxfield & Babbie, 2018, p. 345).

A significant factor in their contribution to the content analysis method is that they call upon the language of Harold Lasswell (1948), who conceptualized one of the earliest communication models and asked the classic series of communication research questions, 'Who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect?' (p. 117). This particular series of questions was applied to the latent phase of the analysis that will follow.

Studies using the content analysis method may be qualitatively or quantitatively driven and either directed, conventional, or summative in their approach. Alongside its allowance for a manifest level of understanding that may be derived from the analysis of a dataset, summative content analysis also requires an analysis of its latent meaning (Holsti, 1969; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

It was most suitable for this study to utilize the summative approach because it supported the refinement and overall organization of the material that would fit within the parameters of the dataset. This aspect of the summative approach speaks to its more quantitative considerations.

Because this was a qualitative study, the number of times terms like 'Chinese American' versus 'Asian American' were found within the dataset was noted but not prioritized. Nor were those findings deemed overly conclusive. However, a significant benefit of initially viewing and organizing the dataset for the manifest 'quantitative' analysis phase was that it yielded the central themes that would be used to code and organize it for the study's latent 'qualitative' analysis phase.

Aside from determining whether to prioritize the analysis of the manifest content or the latent, pre-testing a coding scheme prior to its implementation was critically important (Maxfield & Babbie, 2018). This is because the proper use of a coding system necessitates the operationalization of terms that illuminate the inferred meanings of the content under review.

According to Maxfield and Babbie (2018), there are two ways to assess coding reliability. The first way is the interrater reliability method, which requires multiple participants. The second way is the test-retest method, in which one person codes the same message twice (Maxfield & Babbie, 2018, p. 346).

In the manifest phase of this study, the test-retest method was performed several times to both organize the dataset and to establish a preliminary expectation that, while Chinese Americans were not entirely invisible, they would be found to have been less visible across political media than other groups during this time period.

However, the summative approach to content analysis calls for further investigation into the ways in which audiences of interest are presented, and so requires a latent phase of analysis. This phase began with the re-organization of the articles in accordance with the themes of education, violence, cultural sensitivity, and racial (or) ethnic pursuit, that were developed in the manifest stage.

Chapter II permitted the interchangeable use of terms like ‘Chinese American’ and ‘Asian American’ for the purposes of continuity and pointed out that some authors do not differentiate between the two. However, the data organization and analysis phases of the process were held to a much stricter standard to consistently determine the use of key terms and accurately report the findings of its manifest phase.

Manifest Analysis

The manifest phase of the data analysis took place in five stages intended to support a determination of the extent to which Chinese Americans were considered and otherwise addressed in New York's political media landscape between 2020 and 2021.

To be included in the initial article count, an article had to include at least one of the following terms and had to be found in the print editions of the newspapers: Eric Adams, Curtis Sliwa, Chinese, Chinese American(s), Asian, or Asian American(s).

According to Kao (2023), Leonhardt (2023), and Zhou (2009), four primary areas of concern for Chinese Americans since they began to settle in the United States are education, business ownership, home ownership, and safety.

Though no race or ethnicity can be labeled as having any specific concerns in common, and these are certainly not native to the Chinese American community, these four did serve to categorize the articles under review for this study. For that reason, following the initial review process, the articles were again assessed to determine their relevance across the areas of concern listed above or whether they mentioned the mayoral election. Ultimately, from the original eight hundred six, applying these parameters yielded a total of two hundred forty-three articles for further analysis.

The next stage in the analysis focused on the extent to which Chinese and Asian Americans were discussed across the mayoral election cycle. Each of the articles that passed the first stage was again reviewed to discern whether Chinese American, Chinese, Asian American, Asian, or, both were used in a context that was relevant to the study. It was also recorded if neither were mentioned.

The fourth stage prioritized ethnic enclaves that are associated with New York's Chinese community. It also considered the use of some of the most common Chinese names. This was yet another way to understand the level of media attention that was directed at this audience.

According to the Asian American Foundation's (2018) Census Information Center, at least 58% of the population in Flushing, Elmhurst, Chinatown, Bayside, and Richmond Hill, identifies as Asian. For that reason and from the articles that mentioned neither Asian nor Chinese, the dataset was again reviewed for contextually appropriate mentioning of these locations.

The dataset was also reviewed for use of what the New Zealand Asia Media Center of the Asia New Zealand Foundation (2023) calls 'the most common three family names in mainland China,' Li, Wang, and Zhang (para. 2). The publication also discussed variations of commonly used names like Wang versus Wong, Chen versus Cheng, or Liu versus Liew, due to the diaspora from mainland China to places like Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The consistency of the use of these names was supported by Jessie Yeung (2021), who discussed the impact that both diversity and the Chinese writing style have on range of names used by people of Chinese heritage, but it was the New Zealand (2023) Foundation that made mention of how Chinese people are to be addressed; family name followed by surname (para. 15).

Finally, the dataset was reviewed to determine the extent to which other racial and ethnic groups, e.g., Hispanics, Latin (o, a, x) Americans, African Americans, Blacks, or Whites, were contextually mentioned within the same time span.

While the data were quantified and percentage-based tables were created to display the results, the underlying consideration regarded the extent to which certain groups could have seen themselves as part of the political media discourse during that time.

This process served two purposes: first, it supported the development of central themes that were used to categorize and latently analyze the content; second, it appropriately segued the study from the manifest question of whether Chinese Americans were addressed during the 2020-2021 mayoral campaign season, to the latent questions of how and why they were addressed in specific ways during that period.

If there is one manifest analysis-based conclusion to be presented in response to this study's overarching question, it would be that Chinese Americans were not altogether invisible in New York's 2020-2021 political media landscape.

From that conclusion, however, subsequent questions regarding the visibility of Chinese Americans in the electoral media space presented themselves, e.g., 'In what ways were they visible?' 'In what contexts were they visible?' and 'Was that visibility to their sociopolitical benefit?' These were the primary considerations during the latent analysis phase of this study. They bring about the critical point that invisibility and exclusion are not synonymous, nor are visibility and inclusion.

Latent Analysis

Throughout this stage of the analysis, excluding the theme of ethnic (or racial) pursuit, each central theme was found to have sub-themes that served to further structure the process and to guide the narrative regarding the discursive inclusion or exclusion of

Asian and Chinese Americans during this period. Table 1 presents the central themes and sub-themes that will be discussed in this section.

Table 1.

Latent Analysis Central Themes & Sub-Themes

Central Theme	Education	Violence	Racial (or) Ethnic Pursuit	Cultural Sensitivity
Sub-Theme: 1	Challenges related to COVID-19- Return to School	Everyday Violence		Cultural Sensitivity
Sub-Theme: 2	Lack of Equity in New York’s Gifted & Talented Programs	Violence Aimed at Asian Americans		Cultural Insensitivity
Sub-Theme: 3	Challenging Curricula to Include the Asian American Experience	Community Building as a Response		
Sub-Theme: 4		Violence as a Campaign Issue		

Education

Under the theme of education, three sub-themes arose: the challenges regarding the COVID-19 virus-related return to school, the lack of equity regarding access to New York’s Gifted and Talented programs, and changing school curricula to include ‘Asian American history’ and ‘Asian Pacific American history’ (Bagcal, 2021; Fitzsimmons, 2020; Gewelb, 2021; Rosa, 2020; Shapiro, 2020a; Shapiro, 2021d; Taylor & Shapiro, 2021; Mohamed, 2021h). All of the articles mentioned at least one race, and all but two

of them mentioned Asians, which warranted further inquiry into how they were mentioned. None of them mentioned Chinese Americans.

Each of these stories had two things in common: First, if they discussed the COVID-related return to school, they presented it as less supportive of minority students. Second, if they discussed New York's Gifted and Talented programs, they emphasized the fact that they were made up of majority White and Asian students. The penultimate article displays a commitment on the part of then, Candidate Adams, to keep the programs intact, but made no mention of a particular audience at whom the decision was aimed (Shapiro, 2021d).

In addition to the fact that Adams did not present a plan to make the program more inclusive, a more pressing issue is that of timing, as these articles were being written in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic for which Chinese people were scapegoated, for which many were physically attacked, and for which some were killed.

As previously stated, two of the sub-themes arising from the top-level theme of education were access to gifted and talented programs and the challenges associated with the return to school during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of these articles mentioned the difficulty faced by city leadership in addressing the COVID-related return to school, and all but two of them identified Asian Americans, Blacks, and Hispanics as the groups less likely to send their children back to in-person instruction when compared to Whites.

Although they mentioned safety as a health matter, none of these articles entertained the possibility that, in particular, Asian Americans might not be returning to school for reasons beyond the COVID-19 virus as a mere medical concern. In other words, none of them mentioned Anti-Asian-related violence and the fact that Asian and

Chinese people were blamed for COVID-19 in the first place (Hswen et al., 2020; Rogers, Jakes, & Swanson, 2021).

According to Iris Chang (2003), racial and ethnic tensions simmer just below the surface in virtually all multiethnic societies. She also states that it usually takes an economic crisis to ‘blow the lid of civility and allow deep-seated hatred to degenerate into violence.’ Her final statement on the matter is that ‘when scenarios like this occur, and place our livelihood in jeopardy, a general rule of history seems to be that the more people feel insecure about their own well-being, the more likely it is that they will join with those of close affinity in striking out at some alien group.’ (p. 116).

In the era of the global crisis that was the COVID-19 pandemic, economic challenges were undoubtedly on the list of problems faced by millions of Americans and citizens around the world. It is arguable, however, that when sparked by such a jarring anomalous occurrence, the sentiments of ‘deep-seated hatred’ were more acutely felt because they were infused with the political scapegoating of Chinese Americans as having wrought the virus on America and the rest of the globe (Hswen et al., 2021).

Consequently, and in this context, not only were they and their challenges as ‘fellow Americans’ not considered, but they also had targets on their backs as a group that could be used to curry the political favor of other groups.

During the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese Americans were presented as taking jobs from Americans. In this instance, Asians were almost blanketly presented as taking educational opportunities from Americans, which ultimately leads to jobs.

The articles under the theme of education presented New York's Gifted and Talented programs as benefiting Whites and Asians. They also mentioned the fact that Asians were not planning on returning to post-COVID in-person instruction due to a lack of trust. What they did not do, however, was connect Asian families' 'lack of trust' in the system to concerns over their physical safety (Rosa, 2020; Shapiro, 2020b). Nor did they entertain the notion that during the COVID-19 pandemic, when conjoined with a prevalence of violence against them, shifting education policies that were presented as benefitting Asians might be viewed as punitive.

The third sub-theme under education was the modifying of school curricula to include 'Asian American history' and 'Asian Pacific American history.' Bagcal (2021) and Mohamed (2021h) addressed two instances in which Congresswoman Grace Meng and Senator John Liu separately introduced education-related policies that would be more inclusive of the Asian American experience and their contributions to the history of the United States. Both articles correlated the necessity of these changes to the increases in hate crimes that had been specifically perpetrated against Asian Americans. In addition, between Liu and Meng, both representatives brought up the constant struggle against invisibility as a reason why this topic of instruction was overdue.

The difference between the article published by Jenna Bagcal (2021), which discussed Senator Liu's policy, and that of Carlotta Mohamed (2021h), which discussed Meng's, is that Mohammed's article referred to Meng's plan to include Asian Pacific American history in the curricula, whereas Liu's was aimed at Asian American history.

In the context of political exclusion, Chapter II discussed the overarching complexity associated with the operationalization of the term Asian American because it was grounded in choice (Ruiz, Shao, & Shah, 2022). It also presented the challenges associated with pan-ethnic umbrella terms like Asian American or, in this case, Asian Pacific American. These terms are problematized because they tend to mask meaningful cultural, linguistic, ethnic, migration, gender, identity, and socioeconomic differences that render some lower-order concept groups irrelevant (Yip et al., 2021).

At issue here is not the policies themselves, but four observations from the articles discussing them: first, that these policies were presented by Asian Americans; second, that one proposed policy does not sit well with many citizens of Asian heritage; third, that neither Eric Adams nor Curtis Sliwa, the two mainstream candidates for mayor, were mentioned; and fourth, that they were presented in response to the widespread violence perpetuated against the Asian American population in New York and throughout the United States.

To conclude on the theme of education, quantitatively, the mentioning of Asian Americans throughout the dataset indicates that they were not completely invisible. This is based on the fact that several education-related articles discussed Asian Americans in the context of New York's gifted and talented program, the challenges related to returning to in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and changes aimed at including the Asian American experience in American history curricula.

In conjunction with the theme of education, however, violence against Asian Americans was not presented as a potential reason why they might hesitate to return to in-person learning, and no reports indicate that they were asked about it. Furthermore, the

proposed changes to the gifted and talented program, while presented as a solution to a segregated school system, were never questioned as something that could be construed as a non-physical form of violence directed at Asian Americans. Nevertheless, within the dataset, the theme of violence was inescapable, and so presented a second theme.

Violence

Under the theme of violence arose five sub-themes: everyday violence, violence decidedly aimed at Asians, community building as a response, legislation, and violence as a campaign issue.

What must first and unfortunately be said is that violence exists in the world. Whether it is our nature or a means by which we attempt to secure property and power over others is not at issue in this study. What is necessary to begin with, however, is that violence, in various forms, is no stranger to New York.

As a sub-theme under violence, stories regarding everyday violence told of shootings, stabbings, transit-related incidents, homicide, and illegal weapons crimes (Bromwich, 2021; Bromwich & Newman, 2021; Shanahan, 2021; Southall, 2021; Southall & Singer, 2021; Southall & Rubinstein, 2021; Watkins, Schweber, & Zaveri, 2021).

What these articles have in common is that they do not refer to any of these violent incidents as having been directed at Asian Americans. In fact, of the articles falling into the sub-theme of everyday violence, only one connected ‘spikes in crime’ both to the pandemic and to Asian Americans (Watkins, 2020).

Ali Watkins's (2020) article, "Violent Year in New York and Across U.S. as Pandemic Fuels Crime Spike," discussed the increased criminal occurrences in the city and tied them to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the article, she quoted Police Commissioner Dermot F. Shea's remarks that such a dark period was 'unimaginable' and Executive Director of the Nonprofit Police Executive Research Forum, Chuck Wexler, who said that the combination of the worldwide health epidemic and challenges to community trust were 'a combustible mixture' (Watkins, 2020, paras. 4-8).

Only in the final two paragraphs of the twenty-five-paragraph article, however, did Watkins (2020) attribute the increase in violence to the pandemic and introduce the possibility that the increase was directed at people of Asian descent.

So far, the authorities have tracked 25 virus-related crimes this year, a large number of them involving victims of Asian descent. (The department has also recorded 21 incidents as "anti-other" incidents, some of which they say may involve virus-related anti-Asian crimes.) In August, the Police Department created an anti-Asian hate crime task force to address the increase in attacks. (Watkins, 2020, para. 25)

The use of terms like 'virus-related' and 'anti-other' in relation to these crimes, while potentially done to avoid a mistake, is, at the very least, questionable when the ultimate decision was to create an anti-Asian hate crime task force to respond to them. One possible reason for this move is that the police understood what many were hesitant to vocalize, 'the violence was decidedly aimed at Asians and was 'neither random nor right'' (Wu, 2021).

The second sub-theme, under violence, pertains to those incidents of violence that were decidedly aimed at Asians. What all of the articles falling into this category have in common is that, at the outset, they specify that the crimes being perpetuated were directed at Asian Americans. What several of them problematize, however, are the consistent challenges with labeling the incidents as hate crimes.

Reporting suggests that this is because, in New York State, to charge attacks as hate crimes, prosecutors would need to show that the victims were targeted because of their race, and proving anti-Asian bias can be particularly difficult. Furthermore, it is because there is no widely recognized symbol of anti-Asian hate, like a noose or a swastika, that clearly speaks to the ways in which Asians experience racism. As a result, many incidents do not lead to arrests or hate crime charges, which makes collecting data on the issue quite difficult (Closson, 2021; Hong & Bromwich, 2021).

Although New York State law is not at issue in this study, if the reporting of the stories falling under this sub-theme is accurate, it is evident that there is ample room for improvement on this matter.

A question for future research directed at this issue might be, ‘How could these have been interpreted as anything other than a hate crime?’. Such a question is justified because the majority of the incidents involved a combination of an attack on a Chinese person and the use of a Chinese slur or anti-Chinese language. If the victim was not actually Chinese, the reports indicated that their attacker thought they were (Kaye, 2021).

For example, a story by Hong, Southall, and Watkins (2021) entitled, “He Was Charged in an Anti-Asian Attack. It Was His 33rd Arrest,” tells the story of a Chinese American bus driver who was attacked and called an ‘anti-Chinese slur’ (para. 2).

The same article indicates that another assailant punched a Chinese woman after an Anti-Asian violence protest and that in a separate incident, another man hit an ‘Asian American’ man and called him an ‘anti-Chinese expletive.’

Michael Gold (2021a) presented an article entitled “Suspect Charged With Hate Crime After Brutal Attack on Asian Man in Harlem,” which described an incident in which a Chinese man ‘Yao Pan Ma,’ was pushing a cart full of bottles and attacked from behind (para. 2). Similarly, Petri and Slotnik (2021) discussed a case in which a woman was riding the subway and was spat on and told that ‘Chinese people had caused the virus’ (para. 28).

Each of these articles, and others like them, have two things in common: first, their titles specify that the attacks were anti-Asian in nature; second, they indicate either that the victim was Chinese or that the language used during the attack was explicitly anti-Chinese. The commonality between the articles demands that a question regarding why they were not entitled more accurately be asked, as it is altogether clear that the articles were not about anti-Asian violence but that they were, instead, about anti-Chinese violence.

It is vital to remember that these incidents occurred in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had been referred to as ‘the Chinese virus and Kung Flu’ by someone with a significant media heft (Hong & Bromwich, 2021; Hong, Southall, & Watkins, 2021; Mohamed, 2021g). How could they have been interpreted any other way than what they were, ‘anti-Chinese’? Why were the headlines about them intentionally general? And, why does the law not support the victims in seeking justice?

One reason presented by Stewart Loo, head of the Asian Hate Crimes Task Force, is that victims are often reluctant to report crimes because of language barriers or worries over having their immigration status questioned. Loo also said that many victims also fear retaliation from perpetrators or simply do not want to make trouble (Hong & Bromwich, 2021). In essence, what Loo is saying is that the current state of affairs, despite the prevalence of reported acts of violence perpetrated against them, gives Asian Americans a choice between leveraging the city's services to protect themselves or staying invisible and that they are choosing the latter. If not, they are going on the defensive, as expressed by Chia (2021), as she described how many Asian Americans have affected the practice of incorporating tasers and pepper spray into their list of things, e.g., 'keys, phone, wallet,' without which they should not leave home.

Apart from the obvious problem that no group should fear that they are at risk of such subjection, it is arguably more problematic to consider that although many of the acts of violence were directed at individuals who turned out to be Chinese American, the discourse surrounding the attacks kept them partially invisible by not being specific about it. How did New York respond?

Under the theme of violence, the third sub-theme pertains to the local-level community-building efforts that were a response to the consistent violence perpetuated against the Asian American community. The fourth sub-theme pertains to both national and local-level legislation that was also presented in response to it. Like those before them, the articles falling into these two sub-themes also shared at least three commonalities that are highly relevant to this study.

First, of those articles specifying that the community activities were being organized in response to violence against a particular societal segment, while the headlines indicated that the gatherings were in response to Asian American-related hate crimes, or attacks, the body of each article indicated the use of a Chinese slur or emphasized the importance of learning about the Chinese experience in the United States.

Second, with the exception of two articles mentioning that the events were held virtually (Mohamed, 2021d, 2021e), all of the articles discussing the community-based events that were held in response to Asian American hate indicate that they were held in or in close proximity to areas, according to the Asian American Foundation (2018), that constitute an Asian enclave. It should be noted, however, that the enclave hosting the most events was Flushing, Queens, which, according to the review of literature, is made up of a majority of individuals with Chinese ancestry (Zhou, 2009, p. 49; Lai, 2022). It is essential to take note of where these events were happening because it illuminates the specific nature of the violence that inspired them. It also indicates a level of locational awareness regarding where support was needed in order to confront it.

Third and finally, it must be noted that none of these articles indicate that either mainstream mayoral candidate was present at any of the events.

If this study ultimately concludes that some politicians excluded this constituency, it was certainly not those at the macro-political level, nor was it those at the micro-political level. Under the sub-theme of legislation directed at curbing Anti-Asian violence, for example, New York Congresswoman Grace Meng worked to have the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act signed into law by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (Mohamed, 2021f, 2021j). In his speech at the signing, praising the bi-partisan support of

the Act, President Biden said, ‘We see you and the Congress has said we see you.’ (Mohamed, 2021j, para. 3). While this was taking place at the national level, at the state level, Senator Toby Ann Stavisky was introducing Legislation (A1201) to mandate ‘anti-hate’ training, education, and counseling for every person convicted of a hate crime (Mohamed, 2021i). At the city level, Councilman Peter Koo introduced a resolution at the City Council to address the surge of anti-Asian hate crimes during the pandemic by supporting the passing of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act (Mohamed, 2021g).

From the analyses of the sub-themes thus far, it is evident that Asian Americans, and to a lesser extent, Chinese Americans, were not invisible to some politicians but that these politicians were not the mayoral candidates. The clear questions that remain under the theme of violence must, therefore, be, ‘Where were the mayoral candidates, and what were they talking about?’.

Under the fifth and final violence-related sub-theme, violence as a campaign issue, two initial points bear mentioning. First, that violence was, in fact, a critical campaign issue on which Eric Adams ran and won the election. Second, as a reiteration from this study’s review of literature, that the issue of safety was a fundamental topic of concern and consideration for Asians across America (Ax, 2021; Bergin, 2021; Kao, 2023).

Reiterating these points should clarify that if Asian and Chinese American New Yorkers were considering the person whom they would vote for mayor, the 2021 candidates had their attention. On the matter of violence as a campaign issue, however, what the stories under this theme have in common is that the candidates’ discussion of Asian and Chinese Americans in that context was almost nonexistent. In fact, the most

focused instance within the dataset, in which Eric Adams mentioned violence against Asian Americans, was a story from his time as a police officer.

Not only did the story exclude information about when the interaction took place, however, it was accompanied neither by commentary, nor by any mention of its connection to the racial climate at the time (Glueck, 2021c). In the single article mentioning Adams's rival, Curtis Sliwa that fell into this category, neither Asian nor Chinese Americans were mentioned (Glueck, 2021a).

To conclude the discussion on the theme of violence by saying that Asian Americans were visible across political media between November 2020 and 2021 would be an understatement, as there should be no doubt that they were. What is clear, however, is that even though the subject of violence was not lost on the mayoral candidates, they did not directly correlate it with that which was being directed at Asian Americans (Ax, 2021; Bergin, 2021). Future projects should certainly address how Asian and Chinese Americans felt and responded to this omission at the polls. This is especially salient because of their broad concerns over safety and, more specifically, because of the fact that outside of the mayoral campaign, the calls to address the violence being perpetrated against them were heard all the way in the Whitehouse and resulted in national-level legislation.

Because this study was concerned with local political media, no further national-level considerations on this matter were addressed. What did become pressing, however, was the extent to which any level of racial (or) ethnic pursuit, on the part of New York's political leadership, was directed at Asian and Chinese Americans.

Racial (or) Ethnic Pursuit

In any political contest, one of the most critical keys to success is how a candidate communicates with potential voters. Expressed otherwise, ‘What do voters see when they open the newspaper to learn about their potential leaders, and what does that tell them about the extent to which they are or are not seen by that individual?’.

In the manifest phase of this study, it was quantitatively determined that within the temporal parameters of the dataset and regarding race and ethnicity, on average, Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites were mentioned .5% less than Asians. Taken out of the average compared to the relevant use of the term ‘Chinese’ rather than Asians, Blacks were mentioned at 44.85%, Hispanics were mentioned at 27.57%, and Whites were mentioned at 17.28% more than Chinese people. In applying the summative approach to content analysis, however, arriving at a determination of discursive exclusion would have been premature.

Following the themes of education and violence, and in furtherance of this study’s objective, the articles that were coded as relevant to the theme of racial (or) ethnic pursuit were then reviewed. What each of these articles’ headlines had in common was that they made no mention of Asian Americans as a group that was under pursuit by the final-two mayoral candidates, Eric Adams, and Curtis Sliwa.

Under this theme and apart from a single headline, there were no articles that indicated or even hinted at a directed pursuit of Chinese or Asian Americans on the part of a mayoral candidate. The single example referred to candidate Andrew Yang, who did not ultimately win the nomination for the party and was therefore not considered a mainstream party candidate.

In the article entitled “Yang’s Latest Endorsement Shows Momentum with a Key Voting Bloc,” the subheading stated that Congresswoman Grace Meng, a top Asian-American politician, had endorsed him (Fitzsimmons, 2021d). That same article quotes candidate Adams, who said, ‘Before Yang, I was the Chinese Candidate’ (Fitzsimmons, 2021d, para. 14). The overall tone of his statement did not indicate that he was pursuing the Chinese or Asian American constituency, but that was calling himself the ‘minority’ candidate.

In the context of discursive exclusion, the critical relevance of this example is that inauthentic inclusion is perhaps worse than blatantly discursive exclusion. That is because it implies an intention to deceive and otherwise portray a level of concern for those about whom little actually exists.

The closest other example of racial (or) ethnic pursuit of New York’s Asian population, occurred in Mohammed’s (2021a) article that discussed Flushing Assemblyman Ron Kim’s endorsement of Andrew Yang.

As previously indicated, however, the fact that it was an endorsement by a member of New York’s Asian community was not made explicitly clear. Furthermore, it was not until the third paragraph that Ron Kim’s Korean heritage was mentioned.

Another article mentioning Kim and Yang in the same context discussed the fact that Andrew Yang had won an endorsement from former rival Carlos Menchaca (Fitzsimmons, 2021b).

The reason this article is important to mention here is because, whereas Kim’s Korean heritage was mentioned in the third paragraph of the prior example, it was not mentioned at all in this one. Similarly, whereas the fact that Kim’s support was

representative of part of New York's Asian community was discussed in Mohammed's (2021a), article, that fact was not discussed in Fitzsimmons's (2021b).

Instead, the focus was on the fact that Menchaca was from the LGBTQ community, that he was Latino, and, according to Yang, that he "has been fighting for marginalized communities for years." (Fitzsimmons, 2021b, para. 10).

To conclude on the theme of racial (or) ethnic pursuit, the following should be said: first and foremost, there were no articles regarding Republican candidate Curtis Sliwa presented in this fashion; second, After Andrew Yang dropped out of the race, no subsequent article indicated that this 'key voting bloc' was being pursued by either candidate Adams or his opponent; third, these are only two articles that speak to the seemingly apparent level of myopia that can be diagnosed as it pertains to the mayoral candidates and their ability to see the Asian and Chinese American citizens of New York as worthy of their pursuits when compared to other racial and ethnic groups; and, finally, it seems beyond the realm of possibility that neither being mentioned as part of a 'diverse collation,' nor listed as 'what it means to be a New York Democrat,' nor being presented as part of the candidate's 'inner circle,' went unnoticed by this community.

Not only is this a matter of racial (or) ethnic pursuit, but it also serves as an indicator of cultural sensitivity, as one is not likely to take place or be possible without the other.

Cultural Sensitivity

In the manifest analysis phase of this study, several steps were taken to determine the extent to which Asian and Chinese Americans were visible within the dataset. The fourth stage in that process involved a review of the periodical content not mentioning

Asian or Chinese Americans but which still made use of some of the common names from that culture. In this way, even if those two words were not used, the utilization of others could serve as proof of inclusion.

From that analysis, it was determined that of the articles that did not mention Asian or Chinese Americans, only 5.79% mentioned names that the New Zealand Asia Media Center of the Asia New Zealand Foundation (2023) indicated were the most common three family names in mainland China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan.

On the matter of cultural sensitivity, the Foundation also specified that people of Chinese heritage are addressed by their family name followed by their surname. What was quickly realized was that the nuance of Chinese culture was not being reflected within the stories that were addressing or rereferring to the experiences of Chinese Americans during this time period.

Due to the limited number of examples within the dataset, some of the articles under the theme of cultural sensitivity were also reviewed under the theme of violence, but with different considerations. Under the theme of cultural sensitivity were two sub-themes: cultural insensitivity and cultural sensitivity.

The first example of cultural insensitivity was found in Fitzsimmons's (2021g) article that referred to Mr. 'Yu Liu,' who planned to vote for Andrew Yang because "he is Chinese and can speak for us" and "because he was concerned about the anti-Asian violence brought about by the COVID-19 virus." As stated in the manifest phase, according to Chinese tradition, Mr. Liu should have been initially introduced as 'Liu Yu,' as his family name would come first.

Another example of such a slip was found in the case of the so-called ‘Mr. Yao Pan Ma,’ who was accosted while collecting bottles. In this instance, the story was presented by both *The Flushing Times* and *The New York Times*, who referred to the man as Chinese but did not refer to him in accordance with the rules of his culture (Gold, 2021a; Holtermann, 2021e). Unlike *The Flushing Times* article, Gold’s (2021a) article also referred to Ma’s wife, ‘Baozhen Chen’ (para. 3). His name is ‘Ma Yao Pan.’ Her name is ‘Chen Baozhen.’

A final example of an article falling under the sub-theme of cultural insensitivity has to do with the case of either ‘Ms. Cheng’ or ‘Ms. Chen.’ This story, also covered by *The New York Times* and *The Flushing Times*, described an attack on an Asian woman in which she was shoved and beaten on a crowded street in Flushing, Queens (Mohamed, 2021b; Petri & Slotnik, 2021). In addition to being investigated as a hate crime, the story was posted on social media by the victim’s daughter and re-posted by celebrities.

In this instance, at issue is not that the incident happened or even that it was one of four attacks against Asian American women that day (Petri & Slotnick, 2021). As a matter of cultural insensitivity, what is at issue, however, is that there was no consistency regarding what the victim’s name actually was.

In Mohamed’s (2021b) article, the use of her name fluctuated between ‘Chen’ and ‘Cheng,’ whereas, in Petri & Slotnick’s (2021), it remained consistent. The latter article went on to quote Chris Kwok of the Asian American Bar Association of New York, who said, “The political and social invisibility of Asian-Americans have real-life consequences,” “The invisibility comes from Asian-Americans being seen as permanent

foreigners — they can't cross that invisible line into becoming real Americans.” (Petri & Slotnick, 2021, para. 19).

At a minimum, cultural sensitivity means paying attention to the nuance of how names ought to be presented according to their cultural tradition. It also means getting someone's name right, especially when they are the victim of a crime that is solely based on the inconsistency of their heritage with that of their attacker. One can likely not help feeling invisible if they cannot expect that their name will be correctly presented in the media when they are a victim of such a violation.

However, cultural sensitivity is not only about one's name. It also pertains to the ways in which local or national-level leadership shows various groups that they understand their unique challenges and that they are working to address them. Two such examples that fell under the theme of cultural sensitivity were found in the dataset.

The first example refers to an article by Valdes (2021), which discusses Congresswoman Grace Meng's calls for COVID-19 materials to be presented in multiple languages. This effort was in tandem with her push for increased expedience in dealing with anti-Asian hate crimes and her insistence on adding language on the Asian American experience to the country's public-school curricula.

In the 'COVID-19 Language Access Act,' Meng introduced legislation that would mandate federal government agencies to translate all written COVID-19-related resources into the languages that represented the broad array of communities and the diverse cultural and linguistic needs among them (Valdez, 2021, para. 1). It is evident that, to Meng, COVID-19 was not simply a 'Chinese virus.' Rather, from her vantage point, it impacted all communities, as, beyond Chinese, she insisted that the Act require the

material to be offered in Arabic, Cambodian, Creole, French, Greek, Haitian, Hindi, Hmong, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

The second example under this sub-theme refers to a New York group that was created to ‘dismantle structural racism’ (Fitzsimmons, 2021a). This group was organized by Former Mayor Bill de Blasio in an effort to ‘examine and remake the City Charter to correct imbalances and ‘dismantle structural racism for all New Yorkers’ (para. 1). As an example of cultural sensitivity, this article is sound. However, it also lends itself to the following question: ‘How does one holistically address a structural issue?’.

If one area of concern can be found in the plan as presented by Fitzsimmons (2021a), it is that, from the subheading and the body of the article, the group, at least at the outset, only defined structural racism from the perspective of African Americans.

This is problematic primarily because it should have been clear that in the history of the United States, this has never been the only group impacted by structural racism. Because there were two representatives from New York’s Asian community on the committee, however, it is possible that the group’s interest parameters have expanded. Nevertheless, this can best be cited as an example of limited cultural sensitivity for which there is room for improvement.

To conclude on this theme is to first point out that none of the articles under the theme of cultural sensitivity mentioned the mayoral candidates, Eric Adams and Curtis Sliwa, in any significant way, and it is increasingly clear that Chinese and Asian Americans were not their priority. Even when the topic of discussion was putting an end

to structural racism, they were not present, and within the dataset, no language suggests that they commented on it.

There is an additional and altogether different matter at issue, however, when the victims of hate are not properly presented in the media. That is, considering the racial strain and claims of political and social invisibility that were obvious at the time, greater care needs to have been taken in attending to the nuance of culture and tradition. In the absence of such considerations, a future study addressing the resultant political behavior on the part of Chinese and Asian Americans becomes increasingly pressing. At present, however, it is the results of this study's summative analysis that will now be given.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Manifest Results

The objective of this study was to understand whether Chinese Americans were discursively excluded from New York's political media landscape between November 2020 and November 2021. To meet this objective, a dataset was defined and analyzed using the summative approach to content analysis.

In keeping with the inductive nature of this study, it began with the gathering of literature that referred specifically to the Chinese political experience in the United States. It was quickly recognized that the language therein, while relevant, did not often refer solely to Chinese people or Chinese Americans. Instead, it shifted interchangeably between Asian, Chinese, or other iterations of the two. Nevertheless, a solid base of literature was developed and was consistently used to guide the rest of the data gathering and its analysis.

Because this study was directed at a specific election and its correlating political media landscape, the temporal parameters used to define its dataset were somewhat self-explanatory. The primary questions guiding its establishment were, 'Who was the first mainstream candidate to announce that they were running for mayor, and when was the election?'. Answering those questions led to the creation of a dataset that ranged from November 1st, 2020, 'when Eric Adams, the Democratic nominee, announced his candidacy' and November 2nd, 2021, 'the day of the election.'

The articles that qualified for inclusion in the dataset came from the print archives of *The New York Times* and *The Flushing Times* and had to be relevant in the context of the 2021 New York mayoral election. In addition, in that context, and based on the literature review, they had to discuss matters that were determined to be of primary political importance to Chinese Americans: Education, Home Ownership, Business Ownership, and Safety (Kao, 2023; Zhou, 2009). Following that, the dataset was established and comprised of two-hundred-forty-three articles for further analysis.

According to the summative rules of content analysis, after the establishment of the dataset, its manifest analysis must be conducted (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This process amounts to a quantitatively-minded review that involves a determination of how frequently or infrequently specified keywords are used within the dataset. In this process, each article was searched for the following words: Chinese, Chinese American, Asian, Asian American. It was also recorded if an article mentioned both words or neither of them.

After the initial determination of frequency pertaining to the use of the aforementioned terms was established, additional questions arose. One crucial question was how this qualitative study could stay qualitative. As such, the literature was revisited, and the matters of name use and location presented themselves.

Because it was already understood that 57.20% of the articles within the dataset mentioned neither Asian nor Chinese Americans, what needed to be known was whether these articles mentioned commonly used Chinese names or ethnic enclaves, according to Chapter II, in which they tend to live.

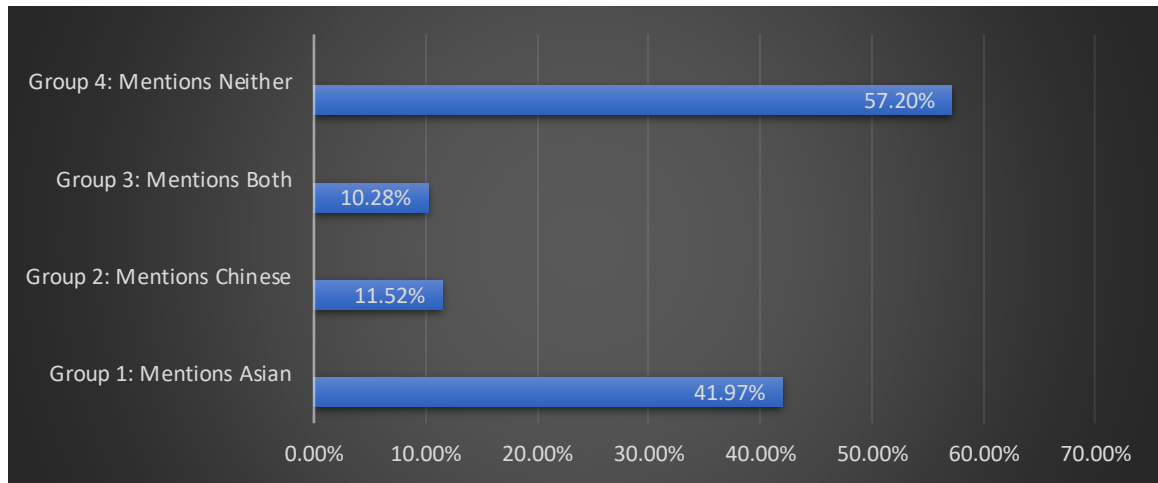
The final pressing question brought about by the manifest phase of the analysis was, ‘Compared to whom?’. In other words, if there is to be a determination that is based on the quantified use of terminology, then there must be a term against which the use, or lack of use, of another term is compared. For that reason, because this study is about a minority population, and because the dataset had been reviewed several times by this point, it was decided that Hispanics, Latin (os-as-x), Blacks, African Americans, and Whites would be the counter terms. In addition, the words ‘racial’ and ‘minority’ were added to the list because of their contextual relevance.

The manifest phase of the data analysis yielded a conclusion that, while compared to other racial and ethnic groups, Chinese Americans were ‘less visible’ in the 2020-2021 political media landscape, they were not quantifiably excluded from it. It also supported the transition from a manifest analysis to the additional latent analysis that the summative approach to content analysis requires.

Figure 1 illustrates that the majority of the dataset’s two hundred forty-three articles discussed neither Asian nor Chinese Americans in a context that was relevant to the election. This revelation was extraordinarily telling when considering the fact that at least two of the articles discussed the strategic and diversity-centered approach candidate Eric Adams took as he developed his campaign team.

Figure 1.

Asian & Chinese Visibility



For example, Fitzsimmons (2021h) reported that he built a ‘diverse and traditional democratic coalition’ of Black and Latino voters as he worked to win the New York primary that qualified him to represent the Democratic party against Republican candidate Curtis Sliwa.

Similarly, when introducing Adam’s ‘inner circle,’ the article by Fitzsimmons and Glueck (2021) showed a picture of his team that displayed neither faces nor names that were immediately indicative of an individual of East Asian heritage.

Furthermore, neither of these articles mentioned the word Chinese or Asian, which supports a level of conclusion that this was not his primary target audience.

Those articles that did mention Chinese and Asian Americans primarily focused on the scourge of violence directed at this population during the COVID-19 pandemic. If they did not discuss violence, the articles that most consistently mentioned this group tended to focus on the potential changes to the city’s gifted and talented programs as well as its specialized high school admissions policies.

A primary benefit of this stage in the analysis was that it supported the development of central themes across the dataset, one of which would be the theme of violence, and another, the theme of education. Both themes tied well into the areas of concern that are consistent among members of New York's Chinese American community.

Considering the extent to which instances of anti-Asian violence and the use of anti-Chinese slurs were referenced between November 2020 and November 2021, the third stage of the manifest content review process revealed yet another telling truth. Not only were Chinese and Asian Americans not widely discussed, but neither were their communities and nor were their names.

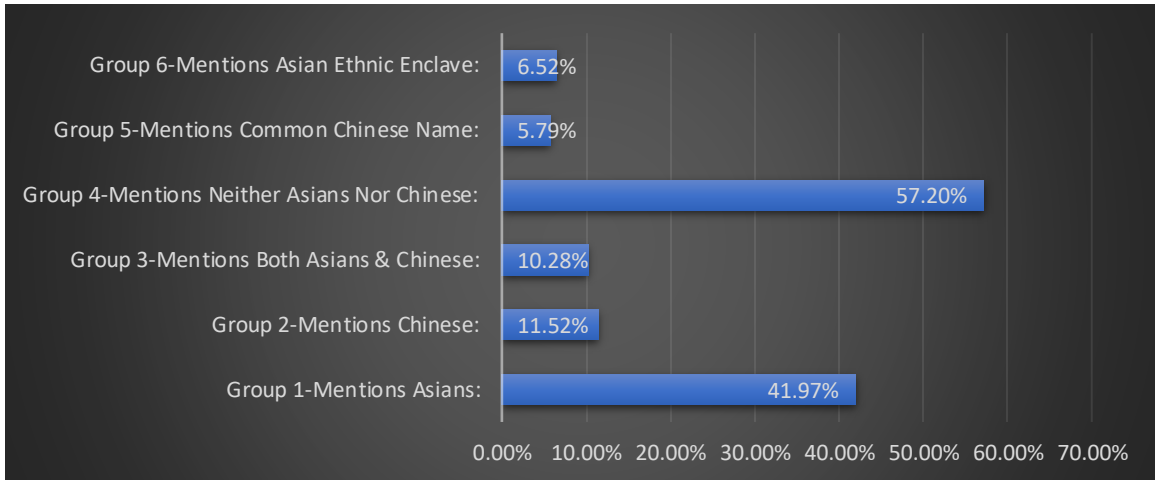
Figure 2 shows the locational visibility and name use of Chinese Americans among articles within the dataset that did not mention either. Of the articles that mentioned neither Chinese nor Asians in any relevant way, it indicates the ethnic enclaves in which they tend to live were also absent from the content.

The New York enclaves that have historically tended to host the most people of Chinese ancestry are Chinatown in Manhattan, Flushing in Queens, and Elmhurst in Queens (Asian American Federation, 2019; Zhou, 2009). To be thorough, outside of the literature review, "A profile on New York City's Chinese Americans" was used to fill in any blanks. On that basis, in addition to those already mentioned, Long Island City, Bayside, Sunnyside, Jackson Heights, Bensonhurst, Richmond Hill, and Jamaica were also listed as having the largest populations of Asians in New York City.

Of the articles that mentioned neither Asian nor Chinese Americans in a relevant context, 5.79% mentioned a commonly used Chinese name, and 6.52% mentioned an ethnic enclave toward which Chinese Americans have historically gravitated.

Figure 2.

Locational Visibility & Name Use



Because this phase of the analysis was concerned with the use of names and locational awareness during the campaign, a third theme arose, ‘cultural sensitivity.’ This theme brought another question to bear: ‘As it pertains to Asian and Chinese Americans, when their names were used, ‘Were they used in accordance with their cultural traditions whereby the surname precedes the given name?’.

As representatives of and for the people, it is critical for politicians and their press managers to attend to this type of detail as a display of legitimate concern for their constituents’ culture. An example of a lapse in cultural sensitivity can be found in Fitzsimmons’s (2021g) article, “Early Voting Begins in Wide-Open Race for New York Mayor.”

When discussing some of the challenges and considerations that were guiding New Yorkers' votes, Fitzsimmons (2021g) referred to Mr. 'Yu Liu,' who planned to vote for Andrew Yang because he was concerned about the anti-Asian violence brought about by COVID-19, and because, as a Chinese mayor, he could "speak for us" (paras. 27-28).

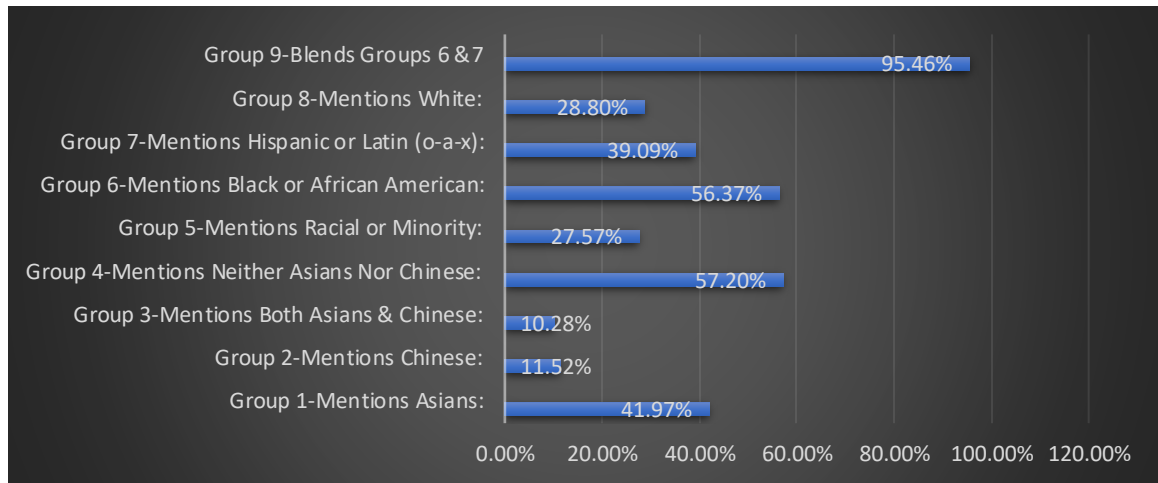
According to Chinese tradition, Mr. Liu should have been introduced as 'Liu Yu,' as his family name would come first (Asia New Zealand Foundation, 2023). This is not an idiosyncratic preference; it is a cultural rule, and its omission speaks to what is largely at issue for this study.

In addition to displaying concern for the unique cultural heritage of various constituents, a broader concern is the general need to express a measure of consideration for voters who fall outside of the political trinary of Black, White, and Hispanic. Figure 3 displays the comparative level of visibility between racial and ethnic groups that were mentioned within the dataset.

Compared to Asians, who were mentioned across 41.97% of the articles within the dataset, and Chinese people, who were mentioned across 11.52% of them, counter terms pertaining to Blacks & African Americans were mentioned across 56.37% of the articles; to Hispanics & Latin(a-o-x,) were mentioned across 39.09% of the articles; and, to Whites, were mentioned across 28.80% of the articles. Unlike Figure 2 that only reviewed those articles not mentioning Asian or Chinese Americans, the data in Figure 3 are from the entire dataset.

Figure 3.

Comparative Racial Visibility



As with the themes of education and violence derived from the manifest-level analysis of the dataset, the theme of ethnic (or racial) pursuit is both manifestly and latently relevant.

In the manifest sense, Blacks and Hispanics were mentioned significantly more frequently than Asian and Chinese Americans. Furthermore, there was no single article with a headline that displayed a specified a mainstream candidate’s interest in the Asian or Chinese American community. There were, however, several that discussed apparent efforts in the pursuit of Blacks and Latinos (Fitzsimmons, 2021c, 2021b; Glueck, 2021b; Mays, 2021; Rubinstein, Fitzsimmons, & Mays, 2021). For example, Fitzsimmons (2021c) wrote about the success of Eric Adams in securing an endorsement that would direct more Latino votes his way. Two other articles referenced the ‘Battle for Black Voters’ (Glueck, 2021b; Mays, 2021).

Conversely, the only sub-headline referring to a candidate’s pursuit of the Asian American vote was about Andrew Yang and his endorsement by Congresswoman Grace Meng, who said that her Queens constituents were ‘genuinely excited by him’

(Fitzsimons, 2021d, para. 5). Following his departure from the race, however, no other article had a headline indicating that either nominee sought Meng's endorsement.

Latent Results

The latent phase of summative content analysis required the organization of large quantities of text into much fewer content categories (Weber, 1990). According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), these categories, also referred to as themes, can either be directly expressed in the text or derived through analysis based on the interest of the researcher during the literature review. Relationships among categories are then identified, and a coding scheme is devised to support the researcher through their analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1285).

During the review of the literature, it was found that Chinese Americans have consistently kept education, business ownership, and home ownership in mind as primary matters of importance (Zhou, 2009). More recently, safety has been added to that list (Kao, 2023). Therefore, an early step in the latent analysis phase was to find articles that were relevant in the context of New York City politics at that time, and that simultaneously discussed those matters. During this process, it became clear that the dataset's core themes were education, violence, ethnic (or) racial pursuit, and cultural sensitivity.

Part of the development of these themes involved reorganizing the articles according to those themes and separately reviewing each thematic set. This was done to avoid instances of thematic overlap, as Maxfield and Babbie's (2018) coding requirements specify that the categorizations be mutually exclusive and exhaustive.

Due to the limited number of examples within the dataset, however, in the singular case of the theme of cultural sensitivity, but with different considerations, some of the articles were also reviewed under the theme of violence.

As the latent analysis phase ensued, an unexpected realization was that there were micro thematic consistencies within the macro themes. For example, under the theme of violence came the sub-themes: Everyday Violence, Violence Against Asian Americans, Violence-related legislation, and Violence as a campaign issue.

Apart from the theme of racial (or) ethnic pursuit, each theme had at least two sub-themes that served to further refine the organizational process and to systematically tell the story of the experience as it pertained to Chinese and Asian Americans in that context. They are presented in Table 1.

The manifest analysis phase yielded the conclusion that Chinese and Asian Americans were not altogether invisible across New York's 2020-2021 political media landscape. Albeit with qualitative considerations, this phase was largely approached through a quantitative lens.

The latent analysis phase was strictly qualitative and was approached in a manner consistent with Harold Lasswell's (1948) early communication model, which asked, 'Who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect?' (p. 117).

Regarding education, for example, a pressing question guiding this phase was, 'How were Chinese and Asian American families presented as compared to other races regarding the inequities of the city's Gifted and Talented programs?'. An additional question was, 'Who was presenting education-related policy changes to be more inclusive of the Asian American experience in the United States?'.

Regarding violence, one example of a guiding question was, ‘In the stories discussing ‘Asian American violence’ or ‘anti-Asian hate,’ what was reported to have been said during those encounters?’. Another point of inquiry was, ‘When the topic of violence came up during the mayoral debates between Eric Adams and Curtis Sliwa, were Asians mentioned?’.

On the theme of racial (or) ethnic pursuit of specific groups through media, the guiding question was, ‘In pursuit of whom were the articles written?’.

On the theme of cultural sensitivity, the guiding questions were, ‘How are people presented when there is no doubt about their ethnic heritage, and they are not using a Western name?’ and, ‘Is it clear that discussions surrounding racism in America do not only pertain to the experiences of a singular group?’

To directly re-present the answers to these questions outside of Chapter III would be somewhat redundant, but to do so in accordance with Lasswell’s (1948) model supports the objectives of this work.

Asking, ‘Who says what to whom?’ is quite appropriate in this context because, from the various analyses of the dataset, it is clear that neither the Mayor nor the mainstream party candidates viewed Chinese Americans as a group of people with whom they were trying to curry political favor.

On the theme of education, for example, Former Mayor Bill de Blasio problematized Asian Americans as he attempted to modify the City’s Gifted and Talented programs to be more inclusive. In these instances, he equated Asian Americans with Whites and expressed discontentment with the resulting inequity that places Blacks and Hispanics at an educational disadvantage (Gewelb, 2021; Shapiro, 2021c).

Unlike Mayor de Blasio, Eric Adams expressed an intention not to change the programs but did not explicitly do so in defense of Asian Americans. Instead, he aimed to expand them into areas inhabited by people who ‘genuinely need them’ (Shapiro, 2021d). In Shapiro’s (2021d) article, it became clear that from Adams’s perspective, it is Black and Latino students who need the programs, as he was ‘infuriated’ at their low enrollment rates in these programs.

While they address the debate surrounding the matter of equitable access to New York’s top public schools, on the theme of education, Congresswoman Grace Meng, and State Senator John Liu, also discussed the need to include instruction on the Asian American experience in the curricula of public schools across the United States (Bagcal, 2021; Mohamed, 2021h).

Quite separately, on the theme of violence, Congresswoman Grace Meng and Councilman Peter Koo presented legislation to curb the acts of hate that were being directed toward the Asian American community. President Biden signed Meng’s into law (Mohamed, 2021g; 2021j).

Also, on the theme of violence, when it was generically reported as being directed at ‘Asian Americans,’ it was the perpetrators of that violence who used slurs and language directed at Chinese people.

Excluding the Mayor and the mayoral candidates, it was a wide range of New York’s local leaders, primarily in Queens, a borough populated mainly by Chinese people, who brought the community together to stand in solidarity against it (Gold, 2021a; Holterman, 2021g; Hong & Bromwich, 2021; Hong et al., 2021; Petri & Slotnik, 2021).

On the theme of racial (or) ethnic pursuit, when articles were written that contained headlines clearly indicating the intent of a mayoral candidate to curry political favor with a minority demographic, barring two exceptions, Asian and Chinese Americans were not among them.

In the two articles that did indicate a level of racial (or) ethnic pursuit on the part of a mayoral candidate, it was the Asian American candidate, Andrew Yang, who ultimately did not win the party nomination, that was discussed as having secured the endorsement of Congresswoman Grace Meng and Flushing Assemblyman Ron Kim (Fitzsimmons, 2021d; Mohammed, 2021a). Neither party's nominee was reported to have pursued their endorsement after Andrew Yang dropped out of the race.

On the final theme of cultural sensitivity, when the names of Chinese people with non-Western names were used, they were presented in a fashion that was inconsistent with their tradition or simply misspelled (Fitzsimmons, 2021g; Mohamed, 2021b).

The subsequent questions of 'Why' and 'With what effect' in Lasswell's (1948) model will be reserved for the discussion section of this study, as it is more appropriate to respond to them there. The answers to those questions pertain to the level of perceived value that politicians placed on Chinese and Asian American constituencies as compared to other ethnic groups.

In response to Lasswell's (1948) third question, 'How?', the latent phase revealed a tendency toward presenting matters as 'Asian American' in nature or as 'pertaining to Asians' or Asian Americans, despite what or about whom the story was written.

Among the articles within the dataset, whether in the context of education, violence, cultural sensitivity, or racial (or) ethnic pursuit, with few exceptions, ‘Asian Americans’ were consistently discussed, not ‘Chinese Americans.’ From those articles, however, three specific ‘how-related’ examples should be presented. The matter that binds them will become relevant in the discussion section regarding Lasswell’s (1948) question, ‘Why?’.

Across three articles presented by Carlotta Mohamed (2021) that discussed the passing of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, the matter of ‘How’ these articles were presented carries significant relevance in the context of discursive exclusion from political media. In each of them, it was not Chinese Americans who were addressed, nor was it simply Asian Americans:

Example 1: ‘This critical legislation will bring our nation one step closer to achieving justice and equality for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Communities’ (Mohammed, 2021f).

Example 2: ‘The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act seeks to address the ongoing hate and violence toward Asian American Pacific Islanders’ (AAPIs) (Mohammed, 2021b).

Example 3: ‘The President said he hopes the signing ceremony, which comes during Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, sends a message to the Asian American community, “We see you.” (Mohammed, 2021j).

What these articles have in common regarding ‘how’ is that they all referred to the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act as primarily directed at the AAPI community. This is important to consider because it is an example of the initially stated challenges associated with operationalizing the terms ‘Chinese’ and ‘Asian’ American.

It is critical that these challenges not be minimized because they speak directly to Chapter II's reference to Yip et al. (2021), who indicate that pan-ethnic umbrella terms can essentially cut both ways and mask the various and highly nuanced differences between groups they aspire to include.

This consideration gets to the heart of this study's fundamental question: Were Chinese Americans discursively excluded from New York's political media landscape between November 2020 and November 2021? The answer is not so simple.

Although the manifest analysis yielded a conclusion that 'No, this group was not excluded,' that conclusion could just as easily have been phrased as, 'No, they were not all together included, as the use of terms related to them was minimal at best.' However, this was not a quantitative study.

After presenting the findings from the latent phase of its analysis, however, it must be concluded that the mayoral candidates were altogether absent from the multitude of conversations pertaining to Chinese Americans and Asian Americans and that they were absent from media about the candidates aspiring to represent them. Furthermore, there were instances, specifically in the context of the election, in which other races and ethnicities were mentioned while Chinese and Asian Americans were not.

Beyond matters specifically pertaining to the mayoral campaign that were still applicable across the political media landscape and where the public good equates to an integrated public education system in New York, non-elite Asian Americans were repeatedly presented in opposition to the public good. This happened because they opposed attempted policy modifications that would limit their 'overwhelming' presence in New York's top public schools. Otherwise, they were indiscriminately portrayed as a

monolith. That they were largely unengaged on these and other matters, which will be discussed below, amounts to their discursive exclusion from New York's political media landscape between November 2020 and 2021.

The objective of Chapter V will be to present some of the potential reasons 'why' Chinese Americans were discursively excluded from political media during this time. It will also incorporate an additional analysis of select thematic excerpts from the dataset. This will be done in order to reinforce the summative results of the content analysis and to directly address the role of journalists in their capacity as the arbiters of political media discourse.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Chapter V will begin by introducing issue publics as discussed by Henderson (2014) and Juszcak (2023). It will then identify some of the issue publics that were highly relevant in New York's 2020-2021 political media context and explain why they can be characterized as such. For contrast, it will also address two significant issues that did not fulfill the requirements to be called issue publics. Finally, it will compare and contrast excerpt examples of discursive inclusion and exclusion from the dataset.

In the active proselytizing minorities in whom selfish interest and public interest coincide, i.e., politicians, lie the progress and development of America. Only through the active energy of these intelligent few can the public at large become aware of and act upon new ideas (Bernays, 1928, p. 31).

Without this energy, in the form of an intentional placement of oneself and one's messaging into various constituency contexts, curiosity abounds, regarding the extent to which a politician can expect to convey their ideas, let alone, have they and themselves supported by those they aim to represent.

As it pertains to Chinese and Asian Americans in New York's political media landscape between November 2020 and 2021, politicians either used general language to discuss problems that warranted specificity, misrepresented the Asian American community as monolithic, or can be described as simply absent from occasions that called for their presence as potential political representatives.

The introduction to this study presented Robert Dahl's (1998) key requirements for the practice of democracy: effective participation, equality in voting, gaining enlightened understanding, exercising final control over the agenda, and inclusion of adults (p. 38).

In this context, most pressing among them must be effective participation, gaining enlightened understanding, and, the ability to exercise final control over the agenda. This is because they speak to the extent to which politicians communicate with voters through media, such that they can make informed and effective decisions on matters that are important to them.

Issue Publics

Chapter II discussed the political issues that have consistently been prioritized by Chinese Americans throughout their history in the United States. Alongside education, business ownership, and home ownership, it also included a more recent issue, 'safety,' that became highly relevant during temporal period on which this study focused.

As core areas of concern impacting political behavior, some of these may also be referred to as 'issue publics,' political issues within a society that have received enough resources and attention to rise to the level of national awareness and competition among political parties within that issue (Juszczak, 2023, p. 1).

Upon reaching the mass electorate, it is issue publics that either do or do not become the major political issues of their time and place. In addition, they retain a type of salient self-evidence, as they directly affect and are understood by a mass electorate without a need to complicate the language or political process in which they are acted upon (Juszczak, 2023, pp. 1-5).

In the context of the 2021 mayoral election in New York, the most obvious issue publics would have been safety and education. More than any others, these displayed high levels of visibility within the dataset and were, specifically safety, listed as the issues on which Eric Adams ran and won his campaign (Ax, 2021; Bergin, 2021).

According to Henderson (2014), voters may not have a broad base of information about politics, but they are well informed about the issues that are important to them. Positioning his discussion on issue publics adjacent to the knowledge gap hypothesis, Henderson states that those with higher levels of education or who follow the news more closely will tend to pick up new information more readily than the less educated or interested. His hypothesis is that when it comes to acquiring information, individuals on the preferred side of the knowledge gap have stronger comprehension skills, larger stores of prior knowledge that help them integrate new information, relevant and mutually beneficial networks of informational exchange, and greater exposure to mass communication (Henderson, 2014, pp. 633-634).

In essence, what Henderson (2014) and Juszczak (2023) are saying is that even if individuals or specific groups do not have a great deal of political knowledge or the highest level of education, there are specific issues, 'issue publics,' that carry such significance, that they make it their business, through the instruments of mass communication, to become aware of them. Only then may they become enlightened and cast such a vote.

A problem arises, however, when the issues that are relevant to some groups, e.g., Chinese Americans, are either not presented to the mass electorate, or, are presented in such a way that their intentions and target audience are unclear.

An issue such as this, one of significant relevance to some, that has not been put on a ballot as reflective of a candidate's agenda item or that does not specify a target audience, will be referred to as a 'non-issue public.' In this study, the best example of a non-issue public must be the use of the terms Asian American or Asian American Pacific Islander, in lieu of specifying a region or country as part of an individual or group's cultural identity, e.g., Chinese American.

According to Joane Nagel (1994), identity formation is a dialectical process that involves both internal and external opinions and processes regarding what an individual thinks they are versus what others think they are. As it pertains to individuals of Chinese descent, what this means is that some may refer to themselves as Asian American or as Chinese American. Beyond that, some may refer to themselves as Chinese while others may choose to refer to themselves as simply, American.

As discussed in Chapter II, the use of umbrella terms such as Asian American and model minority, is a matter that has been under debate since their inception.⁸ However, their use does not constitute an issue public because the subject has never been put to a vote by the mass electorate. Moreover, their continued use is seen by many as antithetical to its aims of inclusion. This makes the matter highly complicated.

According to He (2022), as of 2020, Asian Americans were the most ethnically diverse group in New York and made up approximately 13% of the city's eligible voting population. Of the 13% of the population that were of Asian heritage, separating 43.6 % of those that were of Chinese descent, would significantly decrease the polling power of

⁸ *Yip et al. (2021) argue that umbrella terms tend to mask meaningful cultural, linguistic, ethnic, migration, gender, identity, and socioeconomic differences that render some groups irrelevant.*

the entire Asian American population. The result would be a diminished voting bloc for politicians to rally behind their various causes.

The problem is that grouping Americans of Asian descent together negates the various inequities between them. When presented in the media, it is arguably worse because people view the various groups indiscriminately and risk basing their opinions and political decisions on inaccurate information.

For example, the fact that Asians and Whites make up the largest population of students in New York's Gifted and Talented programs may be statistically true, but the reason why that is the case was never discussed within the dataset. As a result, when voters cast their ballots about policies pertaining to education, had they based those decisions on the understanding that those groups were overly represented in certain schools, those decisions would have been insufficiently informed.

Regarding Chinese Americans, the use of umbrella terms effectively and further marginalizes the already marginalized. One reason for this is because, if politicians use the umbrella terms when voters attempt to make 'enlightened' decisions on matters that are important to 'them,' they may feel like they are not speaking to 'them.' Another reason is that what is true for one contingent within the group may not be consistent among others who are similarly categorized.

For example, according to an Asian American Federation (2019) profile, relative to all residents and as New York's largest Asian ethnic group, individuals of Chinese heritage were more likely to be working-age adults, less educated, have limited English proficiency, and live in poverty (p. 1). With no breakdown to display the twenty-plus sub-nationalities, however, political media problematized Asian Americans as

overrepresented in New York's most prestigious public schools that require a specialized test for entry.

According to Li Zhou:

It is increasingly apparent that sweeping labels have serious problems. When it comes to the term "Asian American," there's a continual risk that it's masking the differences within communities and fulling the myth that Asian Americans are a monolithic group. For some there's also the sense that East Asians, including groups that were part of come earlier waves of Asian immigrants such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans, are viewed as more synonymous with the term Asian than others. (2021, p. 13).

An additional challenge with the use of these terms is that politicians are pushing the envelope further. As evidenced in the media coverage of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, the language of the moment was expanded to include 'Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities (Mohamed, 2021f, para. 4).

At issue here is not the immense value of the Act or its intentions, but the language that was presented in the media to introduce and celebrate it. The perpetrators of the violence directed at New Yorkers did not say, 'You Hawaiian virus.' Nor did they say, 'Go back to your Pacific Hawaiian Islander.'. They said, 'You Chinese virus.' and 'Go back to your home, Chinese.'. That fact appears to have gotten lost in both the use of increasingly expansive umbrella terms in the legislation that was used to address this

heinous behavior, as well as in the media language that was used to report it.⁹ Moreover, it represents a disconnect between policy and practice.

Zhou also states:

In addition to grouping people of Asian descent under one racial category, the label expanded in the 1980's to include populations across the Pacific Ocean. The term AAPI, which includes Pacific Islanders took off prominently among academics and was used in the 1990 census as government officials weighed how to count the group, who had previously been categorized in individual boxes... But many Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders argued this grouping erased their specific and current struggles...many identify as indigenous. The AAPI category also painted over inequities that existed making it seems as though they were overrepresented in higher education like other Asian Americans when the opposite was the case. In 1997, the Office of Management and budget officially disaggregated the group in its data collection practices, though the label is still used by the media, academics, advocacy organizations, and some government institutions. (Zhou, 2021, pp. 11-13)

⁹ *Congress finds the following:(1) Following the spread of COVID-19 in 2020, there has been a dramatic increase in hate crimes and violence against Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders.(2) According to a recent report, there were nearly 3,800 reported cases of anti-Asian discrimination and incidents related to COVID-19 between March 19, 2020, and February 28, 2021, in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. (Cosponsors S.937 – 117th Congress, 2021-2022)*

In the broader scope of political strategy, the fact that the history of this term is not unclear brings about a question regarding its continued inclusion in new legislation. Addressing this question will require a return to the matter of issue publics. It must be emphasized, however, that the use of umbrella terms constitutes a ‘non-issue public,’ because the matter has never been put on a ballot. Had it been, there is little certainty about whether their use would have been supported.

Bernays’s (1928) politicians may genuinely be those ‘in whom self-interest and public interest coincide’ (p. 31). However, they must also exist in a world that is highly quantified, increasingly diversified, and unapologetically vocal about how people are identified.

In the context of targeting specific ethnic groups, what this means practically is that it is not the ‘issue public’ about which the politician ought to be most concerned. Instead, and at the same time, it is the ‘entire public’ as well as the publics within it, that should be the priority of their focus, the pluribus within the Pluribus.

According to Caldwell (2021), of the almost fourteen-million New Yorkers that were eligible to vote that year, 68% were White, 15.6% were Black or African American, 15.2% were Hispanic, and 6.7% were Asian.

If a politician is developing a campaign strategy, then it is sound to assume that they will invest more of their time and energy into those groups that have the highest probability of helping them secure a win, and less of it into those that do not.

As discussed in both its latent and manifest findings, this study and its process support that conclusion, but it was the latent findings that addressed the matter of ethnic and racial pursuit. In doing so, they emphasized the fact that no singular headline, other

than one regarding a candidate who did not win his party's nomination, referenced a clear intention by a mayoral candidate, toward New York's Asian or Chinese electorate.

Combined with other articles that fell under the defined themes, this study found that Chinese Americans had been excluded from New York's political media landscape between 2020 and 2021. The response to Lasswell's (1948) 'why' is, 'because the candidates did not see them as quantifiably worth the effort.' In essence, it found that on the part of the candidates, the perceived value of some New York citizens, was greater than that of others.

Despite how salient an issue might be, whether it is education, safety, business ownership, or home ownership, the politician is not trying to appeal to the issue. Their true objective is to appeal to the population that cares enough about those issues to use their vote to express that care in their, 'the politician's,' favor.

Because there is no historical precedent on which Chinese Americans could be viewed as having sufficient sway to help them secure political wins, it seems clear that the current and future strategy will be to address a broader group of potential voters. This is why something like a hate crimes bill would be celebrated as something referring to the Asian American Pacific Islander community versus the Asian community or the Chinese American community.

While violence may have been the 'issue public' of the moment, it was absolutely the pool of concerned 'voting public' that politicians were seeking to expand for their own political purposes. The problem is that if the voting public does not see themselves as part of that expanded membership, the strategy risks yielding an adverse result: non-

participation. This would only serve to reinforce the stigma of Asian Americans as apolitical.

A Pew Research Center (2012) report found that on the matter of identity, the Asian American label does not hold much sway among the people with whom it is associated. The report also indicated that approximately 19% of its survey participants described themselves as Asian American or Asian, whereas 62% said that they most often described themselves by their country of origin, e.g., Chinese or Chinese American.

With the increasing normalization of the broader AAPI term and despite the intentions of those who use it, there is justifiable concern that its popularity may have the opposite effect, thereby marginalizing groups that need to be included in political discourse. This is one potential response to the last of Lasswell's (1948) questions, 'With what effect?'

Dhal (1998) said that the practice of democracy required the inclusion of adults, but he did not say which adults. At a point in our civilization where identity is everything, the need for politicians to specify the audience to whom they are speaking must be considered constantly, and that consideration must be emphasized in political media. Furthermore, it seems less likely that politicians will be able to generically refer to the entire public and run for office without displaying a clear desire to engage with its specific subsets on matters that are especially salient to them.

On the matter of safety as an issue public, for example, not only did the candidates not plainly specify that they were speaking to the Chinese or even the Asian American community, they were also absent from the events that were organized to address their safety as a people. Regarding education, when Asian Americans were

discussed in the media, they were positioned in a way that would antagonize other ethnic groups against them due to their comparatively greater presence in New York's better academic institutions.

Apart from delving into a discussion on the actual election and the rates of participation within this community, the answer to the last of Lasswell's questions, 'With what effect,' will remain a mystery. However, three potential consequences of this exclusion remain: The first was mentioned in Fitzsimons's (2021g) article and is certainly in keeping with the concept of an issue public, as safety was a major campaign topic. The second is more consistent in the context of Wolfinger's (1965) discussion on the persistence of 'ethnic voting' and affinity. The third has to do with the risks politicians face by not adapting to shifting communications paradigms.

Prior to discussing these consequences, however, a set of excerpts from the dataset will be introduced and analyzed in order to reinforce the conclusion that, between November 2020 and 2021, Chinese Americans were discursively excluded from New York's political media landscape. They will be arranged and analyzed according to the thematic coding scheme as presented in Table 1. The excerpts may be found in their respective thematic appendices.

Excerpt Analysis

As discussed in Chapter I, the act of excluding a group from political discourse shares synonymity with marginalizing, ignoring, omitting, segregating, and otherwise shifting them to the periphery. If newspapers are a means by which democracy and political discourse occur, then the misrepresentation or absence of their voice is akin to exclusion from that discourse. Similarly, if politicians are not presented as standing in

solidarity with groups who are struggling or are not clear in their pursuit of their vote, it can also be said that they were excluded or simply invisible to them.

The dataset's clearest examples of exclusion have the following in common: first, they tend to represent all Asians or Asian American Pacific Islanders as a monolith; second, outside of the Asian candidate, they do not display an abundance of effort by the candidates to pursue Chinese or Asian Americans as compared to other racial and ethnic groups; and third, they do not often include voices of Chinese or Asian Americans who are not politicians.

Education

The first set of excerpts refers to the issue public of education and pertains, more specifically, to New York's 'gifted and talented' and 'specialized' education programs that have been a matter of significant debate since 1973. The consistent language surrounding these programs is that they are inequitable and that they provide more privileged and resourced individuals with greater opportunities for success and advancement through education.

This inequity is also referred to as a form of racial segregation, as the tendency has been for the populations within these programs to be understood through and correlated to the distinct differences in the percentages of racial and ethnic groups that populate them (Frutcher, 2019).

At issue in this instance is not the equitable or ethical nature of the programs themselves, but instead, the consistency with which they were presented in relation to Asian Americans during the 2021 mayoral election.

Excerpt 1 discusses the high level of discontentment expressed by ‘Queens lawmakers’ in response to Mayor de Blasio’s announcement that he would end the city’s Gifted and Talented programs.

While article’s headline did not specify that the lawmakers were of Asian descent, the article quoted Congresswoman Grace Meng and Senator John Liu, as staunchly against the decision, a concern was presented on the basis that members of their community would be negatively impacted by the move.

Alongside their general discontentment with the plan, a primary complaint was that the timing of the announcement gave no opportunity for there to be any legitimate discussion on how best to modify the program so that the impact on the Asian students would be minimal.

Like the majority of the articles pertaining to de Blasio’s plan, this example indicates that opponents of the program were concerned that it was White and Asian students who filled seats in the city’s most advanced academic programs and that Black and Hispanic children were being discriminated against under the current system, as they were not being admitted into them. The article provided no form of conditional language to indicate that any Black or Hispanic child had ever been admitted to these programs but gave no data to substantiate its claims to the contrary (Mohamed, 2021k).

Excerpt 2 fuels assertions of educational inequity that is advantageous to Asians, as it presents them as ‘more affluent’ than their peers but still benefiting from free education at some of New York’s best schools (Gewelb, 2021).

What the article does not mention is that relative to all residents and as New York's largest Asian ethnic group, individuals of Chinese heritage were more likely to be working-age adults, less educated, have limited English proficiency, and live in poverty (Asian American Federation, 2019, p. 1).

By omitting this information and by simply referencing 'Asians,' the article either intentionally or accidentally implies that this group is somehow benefiting from free education when they are affluent and can afford alternative options.

This is one of the most glaring problems with the use of umbrella terms, as they do not tell the whole story about a population and lead to misrepresentation of both facts and individuals that might not fully fit the categories into which they are placed.

Excerpt 3 supplements the hostility towards Asians, as it refers to mayoral attempts to integrate schools and failing to do so (Shapiro, 2020c). In this instance, integration would mean decreasing the 'overwhelming' number of Asian and White students and increasing the 'tiny' percentages of Black and Latino students in these institutions. The use of the term 'overwhelmingly,' in this example, clearly problematizes the fact that Asians and Whites out-seat Blacks and Latinos in New York's preeminent public schools.

In particular, the use of the term 'integration,' is a direct reference to the post-slavery days of the United States in which 'separate but equal policies,' and at the risk of death or imprisonment, prohibited Black students from realizing the same benefits made available to their White counterparts, e.g., education.

Otherwise known as ‘Jim Crow Laws,’ these policies were put down and deemed unconstitutional following the verdict in *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)* that overturned the ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)* on the grounds that separate was inherently unequal, and that segregation was unconstitutional.¹⁰

While the constitutionality of segregation is not under dispute, the outcome of a test that yields more Asian and White students into certain schools than Blacks and Latinos cannot so simply be chalked up to segregation on account of race. Moreover, using a term like segregation while also stating that Asians are overwhelmingly present and affluent as compared to their minority counterparts does nothing more than to indirectly assert that they are somehow cheating the system, that they should not really be in the schools into which they too must be tested for admission, and that policy changes will stop them from utilizing a service they do not need. This type of behavior is as irresponsible as it is dangerous.

The next three excerpts incorporate similarly divisive language that positions Asian and White students as benefitting from inequitable access to specialized programs as compared to their Black and Hispanic counterparts.

Excerpt 4 discusses the fact that in 2021, Stuyvesant High School only admitted 8 Black students (Shapiro, 2021b). It also points out that across the board, New York’s elite high schools place too much weight onto one exam as opposed to the alternative, a

¹⁰ *The Constitution’s Fourteenth Amendment states that: All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws (U.S. const. amend. XIV. sect. 1).*

holistic review. The article speaks to absence of Black and brown students from these institutions while referring to the significant numbers of Asians and Whites. It also mentions that a perspective held among many non-White and non-Asian families is that the exam should not have been administered in 2021 due to COVID-19.

While this article does not provide an opportunity for an Asian student or parent to comment on the matter, it does quote one individual as saying that the test should not be ‘scapegoated’ for a larger problem of educational inequity (Shapiro, 2021b). Nor should Asian students.

Fascinating about this particular article, however, is that it serves as somewhat of a counterpoint to Kaye’s (2020), excerpt 5, that discusses the deep sense of disappointment held among members of New York’s Asian community about the lack of transparency surrounding the registration process for the entrance test that year.

Not only does this article indicate that the Department of Education was unclear about its plan to administer the exam, while the first excerpt in this section refers to a poor choice in timing and an insincere feign at communication on the part of the Mayor’s office, this selection alludes to a seemingly intentional avoidance on the part of city leadership, to discuss an issue about which the Asian community was highly concerned (para. 2).

Finally, it should be pointed out that the article from which excerpt 5 was sourced never actually mentions the word ‘Asian’ and that the only time the word ‘Chinese’ is used is in reference to the Chinese American Citizens Alliance of New York, to which one of the article’s interviewees, Phill Wong, belongs. It does, however, mention that opponents of the exam feel that it disadvantages ‘black and brown’ students (para 10).

Excerpt 6 includes language from Eric Adams, who did not want to eliminate the programs but, instead, aimed to expand them into low-income neighborhoods. This article references ‘experts’ who state that the admissions policies themselves need to be changed if any improvements are to be expected (Shapiro, 2021c, paras. 6-10).

It would have been appropriate to indicate income levels or some sort of other data in order to display where these programs are housed in relation to the incomes of the people in the neighborhoods they serve. As it stands, however, the use of highly generic language casts far too wide a net and increases the risk of misinformed political behavior.

Excerpt 7 directly quotes Adams after specifying that the separation of students in these programs takes place very early in their academic lives, which has exacerbated segregation in the city’s schools. Adams states, “The gifted and talented program was isolated only to certain communities.” “That created segregation in our classrooms.” (Shapiro, 2021d, paras. 13-14).

Similar to the use of the term ‘overwhelmingly’ above, using the term ‘segregation’ in any political context, while not necessarily untrue, is highly problematic, regardless of the side on which a person stands. This is because it represents not only an outcome, but a choice on the part of the both the politician, and the journalist, who are using it to describe that outcome.

The same article also states that the National Association for Gifted Children appreciated the plan to remove the test because it ‘often fails to recognize a significant number of Black, brown, and impoverished gifted students’ (para. 21).

In this excerpt, Asians and Whites are presented as being on the winning side of segregation while ‘black, brown, and undefined, “impoverished gifted students” are on the losing side, as they are allegedly less affluent.

Despite the fact that these statements are not substantiated with any data, the term is comfortably and repeatedly used as it pertains to Asians. The articles discussing this matter consistently portray them as illegitimately benefiting from the best and least costly educational options offered by the city because they are already better off than their Black and Latino counterparts.

To protect these allegedly undeserved gains, excerpt 8 states that the members of New York’s Asian community fought so ardently against former education chief Carranza’s proposed, integration-focused changes to the system that they caused his resignation (Shapiro, 2021a).

Throughout these excerpts, no effort is made to differentiate between subjects within the Asian population. Furthermore, there is no indication that any effort has been made to track down an Asian representative that might offer a perspective on ‘how’ or ‘why’ the population of these schools is so much greater than that of other non-majority ethnic groups.

One such perspective is that of Min Zhou (2009), who explicitly discusses and leans into the significant level of value that Chinese American families place upon education. In doing so, she positively describes how they benefit greatly from the community-based social capital that keeps them informed about standardized test schedules, high school and college rankings, and application deadlines for major schools, programs, and tests (p. 160).

According to Zhou (2009), the prioritization of education is so pervasive among the Chinese American community that it is not surprising to hear non-English speaking Chinese people having sophisticated discussions on SAT scores and how to gain admission to prestigious high schools, e.g., Stuyvesant High School, one of the eight secondary schools, in New York, for which an examination is required (p. 228).

The two major social institutions that most directly correlate with and support the culturally-focused and priority-driven interaction pertaining to the dissemination of education-related information for Chinese Americans, are supplementary Chinese language schools and Chinese language media.

Since the early days of Chinese immigration to the United States, the prior, according to Zhou (2009), have acted as a centralizing social venue for the continued instruction of Chinese language, the inculcation of Chinese culture, and the maintenance of a social space for Chinese people. Regardless of their citizenship status, she believes that without these schools, Chinese immigrants would have less structured and culturally focused support outside of their home country.

As important as these schools are, however, it is the latter, Chinese language media, that supplement immigrants' exposure to pertinent information both 'at home,' and back in China. Via print, television, radio, and online content, they also keep them abreast of information that pertains directly to their interest in ensuring that their children have access to the best possible public education available (Zhou, 2009, p. 228).

Table 2 contains recent data from US News & World Report (2023-2024) that show the demographic representation of New York's top public schools requiring the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) for admission.

Although the data show that individuals identifying as Asian represent a significant percentage of the student population in some of these institutions, that does not amount to the very intentional nature of segregation as it is understood in American history and as it is taught in American classrooms.

Table 2.

List of New York High Schools Requiring Specialized High School Admissions Test (2023-2024)

School	Asian Students	White Students	Hispanic Students	Black Students	New York City Public School Ranking
High School for Math, Science & Engineering at City College of New York	29.2%	28.4%	17.0%	10.1%	1
Queens High School for Sciences at York College	84.0%	5.0%	5.0%	3.3%	3
Stuyvesant High School	71.5%	18.0%	3.8%	1.6%	4
Staten Island Technical High School	60.7%	32.5%	4.1%	0.7%	5
Bronx High School of Science	61.4%	21.5%	8.2%	3.7%	6
High School of American Studies at Lehman College	22.8%	42.2%	17.2%	9.1%	7
Brooklyn Technical High School	59.2%	23.0%	6.4%	5.6%	8
Brooklyn Latin School	51.8%	14.5%	11.0%	12.4%	9

If one incorporates Zhou's (2009) perspectives on the matter, what may, instead, be realized is that, at least for some, there is a culturally grounded structure in place that is designed to guide members of the Asian American community toward these schools. It should also be realized that if the requirements for admission into these schools are modified, members of this community will not lose interest in accessing top academic institutions. Instead, the likely expectation should be that they, and the structure they have created, will simply adapt.

A final consideration should, therefore, be, that if the policies are written in such a way that Asian Americans cannot access these institutions while the road for others is made easier, such an action would legitimize future assertions of segregation as compared to the unfounded ones that are being made at present.

The excerpts discussed above are examples of discursive exclusion under the theme of education for several reasons. They utilize words that create division, they negatively represent Asians as a monolith, they incite false impressions of power imbalances between them and other ethnic groups, and they do not display an awareness or consideration of the cultural values that might lead to Asian American family's increased interest and success in gaining admission into certain academic institutions. Moreover, they do not quote non-political actors of Asian descent or display evidence of seeking them out for increased understanding of their behavior in this regard.

If education is considered to be a great equalizer, then the only clear consequence of these articles is the development, toward Asian Americans, of an enhanced resentment and animosity among members of the New York community, who see themselves as being on the losing side of an inequitable scenario. This also has a consequence: violence.

Violence

Throughout American history, there have been multiple instances and variations of violence directed at Asian Americans. The most notable among them began to occur in the 1850s, as Chinese immigrants arrived in the United States to work in low-wage and dangerous jobs like mining and railroad construction (Brockell, 2021). This influx of immigrants resulted in a belief, among many, that their jobs were being lost to Asians who were coming to ‘steal white jobs.’ The problem was that when related violence ensued, the courts did not side with the immigrants. For example, in 1854, the California Supreme Court verdict in *People v. Hall (1854)* denied people of Asian heritage the right to testify against a White person.

In 1871, during the Chinese massacre, more than 500 White and Hispanic rioters surrounded a small Chinese community in Los Angeles that saw at least 17 Chinese men and boys lynched. All of the convicted rioters’ cases were released.

In 1882, in response to nationwide economic challenges, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese people from immigrating for 20 years. This ban was not ultimately repealed until 1943, some 61 years later.

In 1885, the Rock Springs territory in Wyoming was the site of a riotous event that saw 28 Chinese people killed and 79 of their homes burned. Many who attempted to flee the territory sought solace in boarding a train that they were told would take them to California, but it returned them to Rock Springs, where they were forced to return to work in the mines.

In 1900, the bubonic plague hit San Francisco. In this instance, the city's Chinatown was surrounded by the police who only allowed White people the ability to enter or exit the vicinity.

According to Iris Chang (2003), racial and ethnic tensions simmer just below the surface in virtually all multiethnic societies. She also states that it usually takes an economic crisis, i.e., an anomaly, to 'blow the lid of civility and allow deep-seated hatred to degenerate into violence.' Her final statement on the matter is that 'when scenarios like this occur, a general rule of history seems to be that people will join with those of close affinity in striking out at some alien group' (Chang, 2003, p. 116).

The anomaly that is most relevant to this study is the COVID-19 pandemic. In this case, the Former President falsely, repeatedly, and unapologetically asserted that Chinese people and China were responsible for it (Hong & Bromwich, 2021; Hong, Southall, & Watkins, 2021).

The consequence of this assertion serves as another installment in the history of violence that has marred the Chinese and Asian experience in the United States. The dataset's related excerpts serve as examples of how some of these occurrences were presented and responded to in the media.

As the first excerpt under the theme of violence, Holtermann's (2021d) article discusses a visit that was made to the 'Asian' enclave of Flushing, Queens, by the NYPD Chief of Police, a Councilman, and the Queens Borough President, to address the increased violence that was being directed at Asians during the pandemic.

Among the examples of discursive exclusion that can be found in this article are first, that the owner of a noodle shop ‘Maxine Noodles’ who was encountered during the visit, was not associated with any race or ethnicity. The only indicator that she might be of Asian descent was grounded in the probability that because she was running a noodle shop in Flushing Queens, she was Asian. That is hardly enough to deduce her ancestry, as the article did not mention her family name. In addition, while the article referred to ‘Asian hate crimes,’ the example of a hate crime that was presented referred to an act of vandalism in which having ‘kill Chinese’ was written on a local business. Rather than being listed as an Asian hate crime, it could have been specified as a Chinese hate crime to present a greater level of transparency about the target of the action.

Also taking place in Queens, excerpt 2 discusses a virtual event organized by Congresswoman Grace Meng and California Assemblymember Evan Low that aimed to address the violence being perpetuated against Asian Americans (Holtermann, 2021c).

While a local Rabbi was on-site and a California-based politician helped organize it, these can be viewed as cross-cultural and intra-national shows of support at which no mayoral candidate made an appearance. It is also an example of the expanded use from the term Asian American, to that of Asian American Pacific Islander, as a broader political umbrella.

In excerpt 3, Holtermann (2021a) references another rally that took place in Sunnyside Queens, an Asian ethnic enclave in New York. Attending this rally were several candidates who, at the time, were in the running for City Council positions, but who made the time to show up and stand in solidarity with members of the Asian community.

While this article did not specify Chinese Americans as an audience at which many of the attacks were directed, what stands out about it is that it presents the attacks against Asian Americans as ‘COVID-related attacks’ while also and elsewhere calling them ‘hate crimes against Asian Americans’ and hate crimes against ‘Asian American Pacific Islanders.’ Somehow, these are presented as synonymous, though they are not.

What is missing from Holtermann’s (2021a) article is that when it did refer to a specific case of an attack against an ‘Asian man,’ it did not give his name, so there was no way to know who he was or why he was attacked. If this information was not included because he did not want to be identified, that type of language would indicate an attempt at transparency when reporting on such events.

Presented by Mohammed (2021c), excerpt 4 discusses Congresswoman Grace Meng’s COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which was designed to curb the delays in qualifying crimes directed at Asian Americans as hate crimes. Aside from being dubbed the Anti-Asian Hate Crimes Act, which it was not officially called, the constant refrain regarding this legislation referred to it as an Act to protect Asian American Pacific Islanders from these crimes.

While it was drafted during the COVID-19 pandemic and was presented by a representative of the Asian community in response to a significant increase in violence directed at Asian Americans, the fact that it was called the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act and that its common name was the Asian American Hate Crimes Act, are problematic.¹¹ This is because labels such as these only serve to create barriers between groups who are

¹¹ *Holtermann (2021b) reported that the city of New York saw an increase of reported attacks on the Asian American community which went from three in 2019 to 28 in 2020, an increase of 833% (para. 5).*

not of Asian descent or who suffer non-COVID-related violence but who still deserve protection from race-related aggressions.

A potential consequence of this type of labeling is that certain groups might feel that they are taking a back seat, e.g., Blacks and Latinos, who, regarding education, were positioned as suffering from segregation while their Asian and White counterparts were presented as benefitting from it.

The following two excerpts represent a different kind of discursive problem. In excerpt 5, Glueck (2021c) quotes Eric Adams, who claimed to have stopped an ‘anti-Asian hate crime on a subway.’ While the truth of the story is not in question, Adams was not reported as having said anything else about the event, the person, what might have caused the issue, or when it happened. Instead, his use of the term, ‘Asian American,’ seems to be an example of politically motivated use of terminology in light of an evident lack of consideration over the course of an election cycle.

With four months to go in the campaign, this example is one of two instances within the dataset in which Adams is reported as having used the term ‘Anti-Asian hate crime,’ and it did not take place at an event to address those crimes, but instead, during a political debate or in response to a lost endorsement.

This is an example of discursive exclusion because, as a politician, Adams displayed a lack of consciousness and sincerity as it pertained to the challenges being faced by Asian Americans at the time. Had he used the name of the victim or told a story about having a relationship with them after the fact, it would have come across more genuinely. But, he did not.

Occurring in the same time frame, excerpt 6 is similarly relevant, as it appears reactionary to Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's endorsement of Maya Wiley. In this instance, Adams's use of the term 'Asian American' carried with it no additional expression of concern or degree of sincerity on the matter (Glueck, 2021d).

According to Fairclough and Wodack (1997), various unequal communicative contexts can be interpreted as discursive exclusion. In this instance the use of the term 'Asian American,' could be construed as an act of tolerance.

If tolerance is the behavior of an individual who accepts something because they have to instead of because they want to, then Adam's generic story and sudden use of terminology can be similarly interpreted.

Up until that point, he had never been reported as having mentioned Asian Americans, and at that point, was not specific. Nor did he mention a name or any additional information about his perspectives on the city-wide problem. Just as tolerance cannot be seen as acceptance, the insincere utilization of terms for political gain cannot be seen as synonymous with any level of social consideration.

From Gold (2021a), excerpt 7 fell into two thematic categories during the initial data analysis in Chapter III. First, it qualified under the theme of violence. It also qualified under the subsequent theme of cultural sensitivity.

As an example of violence, this article is not dissimilar from others insofar as it refers to the repeated antagonisms that were being perpetuated against Asian Americans during the pandemic. In the second instance, however, it only reinforces the problem of discursive exclusion in political media.

Whereas the headline specifies Asian Americans, the subheading indicates that the act was against a ‘Chinese man.’ The actual text of the article refers to him as ‘Yao Pan, Ma,’ when cultural requirements call for him to be referred to as ‘Ma, Yao Pan.’

While Mr. Ma may have faced physical violence at the outset, the additional acts of violence he faced were two-fold: First, he was not introduced according to his cultural tradition. Second, the headline regarding his attack did not present him as Chinese. He was instead forced under a terminological umbrella that only served to shift both the truth of the incident and Mr. Ma to the periphery.

Like most of those that have fallen under the theme of violence, the 8th and final excerpt also references an attack on an Asian American. In this instance, while Kaye (2021) did not refer to the victim’s ethnicity, his attackers did, as they called him specific expletives that correlated with what they assumed his ethnic heritage to be: Chinese.

It is likely because he was a minor that his name was not used, but there is no indication that his parents were interviewed either. The omission of their voice is an example of not quoting, interviewing, or describing the less powerful in a communicative context (van Dijk, 1993; 1997; 2013). As such, it is yet another example of the discursive exclusion of the Chinese American population between 2020 and 2021.

Compared to those under the theme of education, it is less obvious that the excerpts above are examples of discursive exclusion because, in most cases, they refer to Asian American representatives as present and participating in response to the reports of violence.

One problem with this is, however, that the representatives mentioned are professional politicians, i.e., societal elites, who tend to have access to journalists where non-elites do not. According to van Dijk (2013), this varied access represents the ideological nature of discourse in a media context, as it is those with access to journalists who maintain the power to impact the public.

In the majority of these excerpts, it is politicians of Asian heritage who are mentioned and whose voices are heard. This is not overly problematic, as they are genuine in their efforts to support their constituents. What is problematic, however, is the unreported absence of the mayoral candidates from the community events that were arranged to combat the violence that was happening across the city they sought to lead.

Of similar importance are the multiple instances of epistemic violence and therefore, discursive exclusion, that can be gleaned from these excerpts. For example, each of them refers either to anti-Asian hate or anti-Asian violence instead of specifically referring to these acts of hate and violence as anti-Chinese when, in most cases, it was clear that they were.

Furthermore, in the media and events covering the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, the problem is that while the violence that prompted the Act was largely directed at individuals who were assumed to be Chinese, the solution was presented as something to not only benefit Asian Americans but was expanded to include American Pacific Islanders as well.

On the surface, there is no problem with this, as all citizens should be protected by all laws. This is an example of discursive exclusion, however, because neither Asian Americans nor Asian American Pacific Islanders were given the choice to determine how

they were presented in the media. The fact is that these millions of Americans have never had full control over their own public and political-cultural identity. Consequently, when they are discussed, no one really knows who or what group an article, news story, or politician is talking about.

If an article incorporates all twenty-plus groups that fall under the Asian American umbrella or Asian American Pacific Islander umbrella, it is arguable that it might as well be talking about none of them. This is because the generic nature of these terms and their acronyms makes the challenge of targeting efforts and resources toward a solution quite impossible. The potential salvation for the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act is that while, in some instances, it was referred to as the Anti-Asian Hate Crimes Act, its official name was not.

Long after the virus leaves us, history proves that hate and hate crimes, regardless of whether they are identified as such, will not. Nevertheless, it would have been strategically smarter and likely more appropriate not to tether the solution to a specific point in time. Had it been the case that the Act's official name was, in fact, the 'Anti-Asian Hate Crimes Act,' there would have been an additional problem, as people of Asian descent are not the only ones at whom racially motivated crimes have been or will be directed.

It should also be noted that by naming S. 937 the 'COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act,' it is inadvertently implied that if COVID-19 had not happened, some other anomaly would not have spurred a similar outcome. Furthermore, it allows for the expectation that when the pandemic is over and prior to another anomaly of similar proportion, the same

displays of hatred and racism will not occur to a similar or even greater degree.

Unfortunately, this is likely not the case.

An additional, less obvious form of epistemic violence within the overall dataset is the fact that only two of the articles mention the race or ethnicity of the perpetrators of violence against Asian Americans in New York, e.g., Hong, Southall & Watkins (2021); and, Hong & Bromwich (2021). The second is, perhaps, the most interesting because, on this rare occasion, the perpetrator, a man accused of writing ‘anti-Chinese graffiti outside several businesses in Queens,’ was identified as Taiwanese.

It should be made clear that the example is not rare because the perpetrator’s race was disclosed, as it has already been determined that race has consistently been left out unless it was that of the victim. It is rare because the perpetrator was identified as Taiwanese, although it was not specified how that determination was made. With the exception of what he wrote and a reference to a separate attack, everything else in the story was described as Asian in nature.

Whereas the majority of the education-related articles stated that Asians were benefitting from the ‘segregated’ education system in New York and that Blacks and Hispanics were losing, the articles discussing the violence directed at Asian Americans tended only to mention their race and no one else’s. It appeared as though a clear choice about when to mention and when not to mention race was being made.

In this instance, it is curious why Hong & Bromwich (2021) saw fit to delve beyond the higher-order classification of the perpetrator and refer to his lower-order classification as a man of Taiwanese heritage. Moreover, they did not indicate whether he was Taiwanese or Taiwanese American. What their article did do, however, was quietly

introduce a thread of doubt regarding whether the violence directed at Asian Americans was only committed by individuals with sincere malice toward the Asian Community.

While these matters reach beyond the scope of this study, they do speak to the nature of discursive exclusion and how potentially useful it can be in sewing doubt and discord among the already powerless. Regarding the other example, however, the selective mentioning of race facilitates a clear and racially unequal communicative context, as it constantly presents Asian Americans as having fallen victim to some illusory perpetrator.

Racial (or ethnic) Pursuit

Thus far, it has become evident that discursive exclusion can be both a covert and an overt operation. It is covert insofar as its strategic use or lack of use of certain terms to represent various groups as compared to others. Conversely, it is overt in its blatant omission of context clues that could provide crucial information for those who would be of service and support to the city's underrepresented constituencies.

In representative democracies like the United States, citizens select public officials who then make decisions and choose policies on their behalf via direct democracy (Boudreau, 2019).

Many scholars believe that citizens tend to maintain a certain level of ignorance about politics and that, because of this, democratic elections will be decided by political parties, the media, and other elites, instead of by citizens. There are some, however, who believe that citizens can use shortcuts or cues, such as race, ethnicity, or party affiliation, to inform their political decisions.

According to Boudreau, 2019, one of the most ubiquitous cues available to citizens are political endorsements (i.e., recommendations about which candidate or policy to support). Because political endorsements typically come from well-known groups or individuals, e.g., political parties, interest groups, media outlets, politicians, or even celebrities, and because they make a specific recommendation about which candidate to support, they are thought to be particularly persuasive in guiding voters as they select a candidate.

Using these cues, uninformed or indecisive citizens who require supplementary justification for selecting a candidate can identify endorsers who share their interests and can simply follow their recommendations. It is partly for this reason that political candidates actively seek endorsements from well-known individuals and groups and strategically announce them at key moments during their campaigns (Boudreau, 2019, pp. 225-226).

As critical tools for the dissemination of information about the macro and micro political landscape, newspapers serve to keep voters informed of the activities of those they are inclined to trust and of those to whom they have not yet been introduced.

In addition, they inform citizens of what is happening in their communities and how they may be impacted by it. In this way, newspapers, that is to say, journalists, play a profound role in the framing of society's perception and resultant political behavior.

The excerpts that fell under the theme of racial (or) ethnic pursuit not only serve as examples of discursive exclusion of Chinese and Asian Americans in the context of New York's mayoral election but also across its broader political landscape.

In the first example, Fitzsimmons (2021c) indicates that the Latin American vote was highly coveted during the 2021 mayoral election. In securing this endorsement as part of his desire to ‘fight for all New Yorkers,’ Eric Adams viewed the Latin American population as a crucial part of his plan to develop a ‘diverse coalition’ that would secure him a campaign victory.

In this instance, using terms like ‘diverse’ and phrases like ‘all New Yorkers’ to describe a candidate’s political strategy is exclusionary and problematic because the audience on whom the candidate focused did not represent all New Yorkers.

The article also states that Adams was able to secure a major endorsement from Latin American community representative and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, but that it only came after Diaz, himself, dropped out of the race. This indicates that Adams may not have been as well tied into the Bronx’s Latin American community as he needed to be to secure voters’ support on his own.

Excerpt 2 is a direct response to whether Adams had successfully put in the time and effort to rally these voters to his cause on his own insofar as it speaks to his significant effort to secure the endorsement of yet another representative of New York’s Latin American community.

In this instance, the endorsement he sought was that of Adriano Espaillat, ‘the most powerful Dominican-American politician in New York City.’ Similar to the prior endorsement he received from Ruben Dias, Espaillat’s endorsement only came after allegations of misconduct caused one of Adams’s competitors to drop out of the race.

What is to be noted about this example is that Adams ‘went’ to Espaillat to receive his support whereas, under the theme of cultural sensitivity, he only ‘made a phone call,’ when reaching out to John Liu after Andrew Yang dropped out of the race. Furthermore, it is

absolutely evident that Adams placed a high level of value on the access he would receive to the Latin American community, approximately 20% of the Democratic primary vote.

Alongside a clear and directed energy toward Latino voters, excerpt 3 indicates that Adams also had an eye on unions and that he reportedly wanted to build both a ‘diverse coalition’ and a ‘blue collar coalition’ for ‘New Yorkers who need the most help.’

Like the so-called ‘affluent’ Asians that were ‘overwhelmingly’ represented in New York’s selected schools, no language was put forth to explain why Blacks, Whites, Asians, and everyone else, shouldn’t also expect results from the aspiring candidate. In this context, it would appear that only Latinos count as ‘working class,’ or ‘blue collar.’

In excerpt 4, Fitzsimmons (2021d) discusses candidate Andrew Yang’s endorsement by New York Congresswoman Grace Meng. As a matter of racial (or) ethnic pursuit, this article is special because it was written before Yang dropped out of the race. This is an example of discursive exclusion because no subsequent article presents a candidate as pursuing Meng’s endorsement or that of any other Asian community leader.

Compared to the diverse coalition that only included Latinos and one that supported blue-collar workers, in excerpt 5, Fitzsimmons (2021h) discusses Adams’s success in developing a ‘diverse’ and ‘traditionally democratic’ coalition that was expanded to include Black voters. Across excerpts 5, 6,7, and 8, Adam’s interest in cultivating relationships with this demographic is repeatedly emphasized, as each of them speaks to his directed efforts in that regard.

Among them, however, excerpt 6 stands out because it specifies Adams's efforts to ensure that his message resonated not only with Black families but with 'brown and working-class families, as well (Kully & Nir, 2021, paras. 8-10). It should be noted that this specific excerpt refers to Adams's plans to ensure that housing in New York is affordable, a matter that has been explicitly on the list of priorities for Chinese people since they began coming to the United States.

Excerpt 9 frames Adams's success as the winner of New York's 2021 mayoral election as a 'watershed moment for Black Leaders,' as he was not the only one who achieved victory in his campaign that year.

Quite specifically, across the country and at multiple levels of government, Glueck and Mays's (2021) article states that much of the Democratic Party's continued political success can be attributed to the high level of reliability among Black voters.

Two interesting points from this article are put forth by Democratic party strategist, Leah Daughtry. The first, is that not all liberal, as the party identifies, politicians were happy with Adam's victory. The second, is that if 'Black and brown' people are not considered to be politically 'progressive' enough for more left-leaning liberals, then perhaps the meaning of the term needs to be reassessed.

Whether or not these people, or Adams himself, are progressive enough for everyone is not a matter that this discussion will undertake. What is of note, however, is that Daughtry made a clear effort not only to incorporate Black people into the mix when questioning the remaining shelf life of a current political descriptor but that she found a way to weave 'brown' people into it as well.

At the culminating moment of a winning campaign, this intentional inclusion of a specific minority group that had been consistently addressed alongside Blacks throughout the campaign speaks to a broader political strategy that was at play from the start of Adam's run for Mayor. It also reinforces what is already clear: Chinese and Asian Americans were not a part of that strategy.

In the racial (or) ethnic pursuit-related excerpts that have been discussed thus far, 'diverse' has yet to include Asian or Chinese Americans. It also seems that they are not viewed as democratic or, from excerpt 10, as minorities or as 'people of color' either.

If not minorities or people of color, then, by default, that would suggest that Chinese and Asian Americans are viewed by some politicians as part of the White majority. This might explain why their high level of enrollment in some of New York's elite public schools versus the low rate for Blacks and Latinos was framed as a de facto form of segregation across the majority of the articles that discussed proposed modifications to the city's education policy. It also supports the speculation that in the forty-two years since Fong's (1982) article or in the sixty-four years since the term itself was coined, as members of the so-called 'model minority,' Asian Americans are still more likened to White people than to themselves.

Several of the authors introduced in Chapter II problematized the yoke of apoliticism that Chinese and Asian Americans continue to carry (Lai, 2022; Wang & Ramakrishnan, 2023). It would appear that this stigma is also served as justification for their discursive exclusion from New York's political media landscape between 2020 and 2021. On this particular matter, it is important to point out that this exclusion was not only limited to the context of the mayoral race.

As a very clear example of the earlier stated, ‘inherent difficulties’ associated with defining terms like Asian or Chinese Americans, excerpt 11 serves, perhaps, as one of the best examples of racial (or) ethnic pursuit while also supporting the transition to the theme of cultural sensitivity.

In Gold’s (2021b) article entitled “The Next City Council Will Look More Like New York,” Black people are mentioned, members of the LGBTQ+ community are mentioned, Muslims are mentioned, and Hispanics are mentioned. In fact, Asians are also mentioned, but only insofar as they are ‘South Asian’ or, more specifically, ‘Bangladeshi-American’ (para. 17). The problem with this article is not about whom it includes but, instead, about whom it excludes and how it excludes them.

To begin with, the title states that the city council will look ‘more like New York.’ This is problematic because what New York, ‘looks like,’ is wide-open to interpretation. An additional issue arises as this is one of only handful of instances within the dataset, in which a politician, with the exception of Eric Adams, is referred to in a way that is consistent with their lower-order ethnic identity as opposed to that of their higher order classification, i.e., Asian, versus South Asian, versus Bangladeshi-American.

Elsewhere, the other examples refer to Congresswoman Grace Meng, who identifies as Taiwanese American, Candidate Andrew Yang, who is only referred to as ‘the son of Taiwanese immigrants,’ and Ron Kim, the first and only Korean American ever elected to the New York State Legislature.

Further steps toward discursive exclusion arise in statements such as, “Across the board, you were seeing a group of candidates that more clearly reflected the people that needed to be represented.” (para. 3) or in the statement that “every issue is an L.G.B.T.Q.

issue, every issue is a woman's issue, every issue is a Black and brown issue, for those of us who live on the margins..." (para. 23). It is not that what is being said is, on its own merit, wrong; it isn't. It's that what is being said is not entirely right either.

While the interviewees in this article are lauding inclusion, which they absolutely should, they are not taking great care in their references to what a city 'looks like' or what kind of people are to be associated with certain types of issues. The problem is that once these types of statements are made, unless conditional language is very intentionally used, the door is open to either accidental or intentional misinterpretation with regard to who matters and who does not.

Both inside and outside of New York's mayoral election context, these excerpts serve as solid examples of discursive exclusion because they make it clear that Chinese Americans were not on the radar of the candidates or strategists who lauded the city's successful steps toward a more diverse and representative political environment.

A facile rebuttal of this statement would be that Whites were not in the headlines or clearly pursued either. The problem with such an argument is that just as Jim Crow Laws did not state what Whites could not do, discursive exclusion requires neither that the excluded nor that the excluding groups be expressly remarked upon.

As an alternative means by which segregation may arise, the elegance of discursive exclusion is that it does not require those with power to be expressly kept out of the discourse. Even if it did, excerpts 12, 13, and 14, indicate that, in point of fact, White voters were not off of the mayoral candidates' radar either. Each of these excerpts refers to the efforts made by some candidates to secure the support not only of Black and

Latino voters but of White voters as well. What they also have in common is that they do not indicate an effort to secure the support of New York's Asian voters.

Excerpt 12 indicates that Eric Adams expressed an interest in cultivating relationships with: “working-class New Yorkers of color,” “working- and middle-class Black and Latino voters,” and demonstrating enduring power to appeal to “some white voters with moderate views” (Glueck, 2021e, paras. 1-3).

The inclusion of White voters notwithstanding, what is fascinating about this particular article are Adams's calls for justice, safety, and ending inequality, as well as those of his advisors, who specified that the campaign began with a strategy to connect with ‘working-class and middle-class voters of color.

Further clarification on this strategy came from Adams's advisor, Evan Thies, who pointed out that the initial approach to the campaign was to start with “with low-income, middle-income, Black, Latino, immigrant communities, and then to reach into middle-income communities” (Glueck, 2021e, paras. 1-3).

From excerpt 13, and similarly intriguing, are the words of Representative Hakeem Jeffries, in his endorsement of Maya Wiley for Mayor. In addition to his confidence in Wiley's ability to earn the support of African Americans and some ‘White liberals,’ Jeffries stated that he saw a path to victory for Wiley that incorporated every major political constituency in New York.

The reason this example is so significant is because Jeffries later said that Wiley's appeal was in her experience as a ‘Civil Rights’ lawyer who could reimagine New York and counter the city's significant racial and economic inequality.

Needless to say, Blacks and Latinos are not the only immigrants in New York and as indicated by the Asian American Foundation (2019), they are not the only ones in the city who qualify as having a low income or as living in poverty. They are also not the only New Yorkers who seek justice and deserve to feel safe, an expectation that is in keeping with their civil rights.

Each of these excerpts serve as examples of discursive exclusion as a matter of racial and ethnic pursuit insofar as they consistently omit Chinese and Asian Americans, not only from what it means to be a Democrat but also from what it means to be an immigrant, to be a person of color, to be working or middle class, to be a part of a low-income family, to suffer from inequality; to deserve safety; and ultimately, what it means to be politically represented.

One explanation for these omissions might be that ‘the politician’ is only one person, which means that they cannot possibly conceive of every unique need of every individual or group of which they are a part.

Aside from the simple fact that representing each individual is the very obligation to which politicians subscribe when they run for office, they have teams that are designed to consider what the politician has neglected and to offer support as they strategize to be more successful in their campaigns. In addition, they enlist specific individuals with political followings to which they, themselves, have limited or no access for a potentially wide range of reasons, not the least of which is ethnic association.

According to Fairclough and Wodack (1997), one of the key considerations to be kept in mind about political discourse is that its elements are always historically

contingent. Just as cultural values, and societal norms shift over time, so to do the contexts in which they are understood.

The present state of affairs in the United States requires politicians to either attend to the needs of simultaneously specific and intersectional audiences or to secure endorsements from representatives who can do so for them. If this is not done, or if a range of endorsements are not secured, Boudreau (2019) expresses a concern that some citizens will have difficulty knowing enough to be informed about the candidate for whom they should vote.

This concern is similar to the knowledge gap hypothesis presented by Henderson (2014), as it indirectly demands that politicians be more assertive and creative in pursuing the diverse array of constituents they hope or claim to represent. As stated by Bernays (1928), only through the active energy of these intelligent few can the public at large become aware of and act upon new ideas.

Unfortunately, statistics show that Chinese Americans are on the non-preferable side of the knowledge gap, as they are more likely to be working-age adults, less educated, have limited English proficiency, and live in poverty (Asian American Foundation, 2019, p. 1). This fact seems to have been neglected, or worse, avoided, during discussions about how to make New York's education system more equitable.

Quite simply, what this means for politicians is that they should be more sensitive to the needs of society's non-elites than it appears they have been. While this may certainly include members of other ethnic and racial groups, the needs of Chinese Americans must also be on the list of audiences toward which they direct their focus.

As the final two examples under the theme of racial (or) ethnic pursuit, excerpts 14 and 15 strike a different chord as they speak not only to the energy that candidates placed into securing votes from New York's various communities but also of the expectations that needed to be met for them to succeed in their efforts. Both of these examples are unique insofar as they hold relevance in the context of Zhou's (2009) earlier points on the importance of ethnic media.

Excerpt 14 refers to the ongoing political row between candidates Adams and Yang near the midpoint of the campaign. What is most interesting about this article is that Fitzsimmons et al., (2021) quoted *New Amsterdam*'s Editor and Chief, Elinor R. Tatum, who addressed the fact that Andrew Yang had not attended an event to support low-income New Yorkers and how that decision had the potential to cost him votes among her readers. The reason this is so vital is because Tatum's newspaper is a self-proclaimed Black newspaper which would indicate that her readers and the votes to which she was referring were likely those of Black people.

Excerpt 15 discusses Andrew Yang's success in securing the endorsements of representatives from Brooklyn's Orthodox Jewish community. The reason Stack's (2021) example is so impactful is because it speaks to the candidate's use of not only social media but also 'Yiddish' media, to engage and maximize support from this 'disaffected' community.

These two excerpts bridge the themes of racial (or) ethnic pursuit and cultural sensitivity in two very distinct but equally important ways. In Fitzsimmons et al.'s (2021) article, Andrew Yang was presented as jeopardizing his support from Black voters because he did not show up at a community event to discuss affordable housing.

In addition, the language on this matter came from a representative of an expressly 'Black' newspaper.

Conversely, as expressed by Stack (2021), in seeking support from New York's Orthodox Jewish community, Yang very intentionally developed and executed a Yiddish media campaign that won him important endorsements from its leadership.

Across the dataset, these two examples are quite unique because they not only speak to the use of ethnic media and its role in the pursuit of endorsements and votes by candidates but insofar as they also reference the consequences of not showing up. This is not something that was done in response to the absence of the mayoral candidates from the community events that were organized in protest of the Asian and Chinese hate crimes taking place throughout the city.

Like the comparative value placed on certain demographics by the candidates for quantitative political gain, these two examples demonstrate that not being culturally sensitive, present, or clearly in pursuit of some communities can cost a candidate either a significant endorsement or an entire election. In this way, they speak directly to the discursive exclusion of the Chinese community, as the same consideration was never brought up as it pertained to the importance of showing up to secure their vote. This is also a way in which they necessitate consideration of the importance of cultural sensitivity in political media.

Cultural Sensitivity

In Chapter I and for this study, discursive exclusion was defined as those instances of communicative discrimination or other forms of marginalization that have the capacity to turn the media into a segregating structure. In such instances, the less

powerful are less quoted, less spoken about, and retain less autonomy to decide how, by whom, and under what policies they are governed (van Dijk, 1993; 1997).

It is important to emphasize the fact that the power to discursively exclude rests in the hands of a select few in society, e.g., social elites or those groups and institutions capable of dominance, e.g., professional politicians or political institutions.

This emphasis is necessary because it is these select few who have access to what can essentially be described as the supply side of media, i.e., journalists, which empowers them to determine and ultimately shape what the rest of society comes to know as they consume it.

As the final theme under which excerpts from the dataset will be analyzed, ‘cultural sensitivity’ pertains to the level of care that is shown toward a constituency by politicians and aspiring political candidates.

Defining ‘care,’ according to Noddings (1984), is an endeavor that will require further investigation into ethics, philosophy, and morality than this study will conduct. For present purposes, however, care amounts to the direct and indirect observable action by the ‘caring’ on behalf of the ‘cared for,’ e.g., protesting, raising funds, establishing institutions, or creating agencies in order to provide the caretaking that is determined to be necessary (Noddings, 1984, pp. 10-25).

The critical feature of care that makes it so relevant both in the context of discursive exclusion and as a means by which the meaning of cultural sensitivity may be understood is the ‘caring attitude,’ a quality of disposability on the part of the ‘caring’ that is not only directed at the ‘cared for’ but that pervades the situational time and space (Noddings, 1984).

It is the caring attitude and sensitivity that call for politicians to act, not on behalf of themselves, but in the protection and enhancement of the welfare of those they claim to represent. Nor is their action in the pursuit of gratitude from the represented, but only for its own sake. Similar to the tenets of discourse analysis as expressed by van Dijk (1993), what this suggests is that caring and displaying cultural sensitivity are ‘unabashedly normative’ and acceptably subjective.

The excerpts under the theme of cultural sensitivity serve as examples of the absence of care and cultural sensitivity for Chinese and Asian Americans in New York’s political media landscape between 2020 and 2021.

In excerpt 1, two scenarios are presented. Scenario A pertains to the inconsistency found in the name of the victim in this article versus that of a related article presented by Carlotta Mohamed (2021b).

In the prior, that of Petri & Slotnik (2021), the victim is presented as Ms. Cheng, whereas, in Mohamed’s (2021b), her name fluctuates between Cheng and Chen. In all likelihood, this is a typo or a corrective text oversight, but it adds insult to actual injury when one’s name is not accurately presented in such a circumstance.

Scenario B pertains to the continued use of umbrella terms in the media and by politicians when the assailants specify their disdain for Chinese people, and these occurrences are taking place in the temporal context of the COVID-19 pandemic for which they were illegitimately blamed.

Both scenarios in this excerpt are examples of discursive exclusion as a lack of cultural sensitivity for two reasons. The first reason is simply because people deserve to have their names correctly presented in the media. The second reason is that there is a

clear political agenda at play that has kept the political discourse focused on Asians and Asian American Pacific Islanders while avoiding the use of more specific cultural descriptors.

Under the theme of violence, this can be seen in all of the policies that were put forth to curb anti-Asian hate crimes. As a matter of cultural sensitivity, it is most notable in excerpts 3 and 4, as they discuss politicians' efforts to counter the exclusion of the Asian experience from public-school curricula across the United States.¹²

While all of these efforts were well intended, they, too, contain elements of discursive exclusion. As it pertains to the right an individual has in choosing how they are identified, they display no evidence of having given any such choice to the vast and varied ethnic and cultural groups that fall under the AA and AAPI umbrellas. This is only problematic because there is an inherent risk of a well-intended plan backfiring due to limited buy-in from those who disassociate with their ascribed ethnic category.

In excerpt 2, following Andrew Yang's withdrawal from the 2021 mayoral campaign, there was no evidence that any other candidate pursued the endorsement of a representative from the Asian community. In reference to New York's new model of ranked-choice voting, candidates who did not secure a priority spot were given second and third chances to remain competitive.

In an attempt to garner some of the votes that Yang might not have been able to call to his cause, in this instance, after Andrew Yang secured another endorsement from

¹² *Excerpts 3, 4, and 5 are discussed in relation to the consequences of discursive exclusion.*

within the New York Asian community, Adams reached out to John Liu and said that he needed ‘number 2’ voters (Fitzsimmons, 2021f).

This particular example serves as a lack of cultural sensitivity because no group wants to be viewed as ‘number two’ or as a political consolation prize. In addition, had Adams meant ‘Asian Americans,’ he could have said ‘Asian Americans’ but he did not, he said ‘number 2 voters.’

After Yang dropped out of the race, there is no indication that Adams or Sliwa reached out to John Liu, Grace Meng, or Ron Kim, the other Asian politicians from whom Yang had received endorsements (Fitzsimmons, 2021d; Mohamed, 2021a). Furthermore, and finally, there is no single article showing that they attended any of the events that were organized to curb the city’s scourge of Anti-Asian violence.

The sixth and final excerpt encapsulates the theme of cultural sensitivity, as it discusses a plan by Former Mayor de Blasio to work to dismantle structural racism for ‘all New Yorkers.’

On the surface, there is absolutely nothing wrong with such a plan. Below the surface, however, more latently, when the Mayor spent significant time during his tenure trying to dismantle a system of educational inequity and did so with the expressed intention of making things fairer for Black and brown children who were suffering from segregation, there is a problem.

The problem is that none of this was happening in a vacuum, Asian Americans had been specifically targeted in numerous instances of violence that were grounded in racism and prejudice, and, in no uncertain terms, de Blasio had been very clear that the

segregation to which Black and brown children were being subjected, was the same segregation that was benefiting white and Asian children.

The solutions presented in Fitzsimmons's (2021a) article were largely directed at Black Americans and placed in the context of slavery, for which many believe they are owed reparations. They were also developed in response to structural racism, an issue that, by definition, does not benefit minorities.

Throughout the dataset, the inequities to which de Blasio most commonly refers are only ever presented in a way in which Asians and Whites are portrayed as having unfair educational opportunities in New York's public schools when compared to Blacks and Latinos.

In the singular instance within the dataset, in which Eric Adams referred to New York's educational inequities in his own words, he also referred to educational segregation and positioned Asians and Whites as benefitting from it while presenting Blacks and Latinos as losing out (Shapiro, 2021d).

The simple fact is that working to curb inequity by breaking down structural racism is an honorable pursuit, but it cannot be presented in such a way that pits races against each other or that it comes across as political posturing. As a positive, representatives from the Asian American community were present in this meeting. From this particular article, however, it is evident that they were not the primary audience under consideration during the formation of the commission itself.

Ultimately, this and the analyses above bring about an answer to this study's core question. That is, 'Between November 2020 and November 2021, Chinese Americans were discursively excluded from New York's political media landscape.'

To begin with, they were rarely presented according to their national heritage, and if they were, it was often on the assumption that they were Chinese. The problem with that assumption is that it was the perpetrators of violence against them who were making it. When the stories were told, however, and with very few exceptions, that heritage was consistently wiped away, and they were referred to as Asian.

While this is an important matter, it is far less problematic than the misrepresentation of Asians as ‘affluent’ and ‘overwhelmingly’ benefiting from New York’s public institutions as compared to Blacks and Latinos, especially when the topic of discussion was segregation. At a minimum, such language is irresponsible. At a maximum, it is designed to manufacture racial animosity for political gain.

It should be self-evident that no time is appropriate for such behavior, but the fact that the period in which these stories were being written fell under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic for which Chinese people were blamed and for which they were physically and emotionally attacked, makes it all the more egregious.

It is clear that there was a strong representation of political support for Asian Americans among members of New York’s local leadership and from across the country. However, when opportune moments arose to echo that support and to vocalize disagreement with the violence being suffered by members of the Asian American community, the excerpts above indicate that the mayoral candidates were nowhere to be seen. This absence equates to discursive exclusion, not by some specific action, but instead, by consistent displays of silence and inaction. The articles never addressed it.

As van Dijk (1997) stated, in political media the act of exclusion is seen in the limited quoting of those without power, that it is to be recognized in the minimal number of references that are made to the powerless, and that it results in a limitation in the amount of freedom that the excluded have in deciding how and under what policies they are governed. Added to this list must be the absence and silence of political representatives when scenarios arise that demand both their presence and voice.

Two examples of such scenarios are: first, community events. In no scenario within the dataset that called for ending violence directed Asian Americans were Eric Adams or Curtis Sliwa reported as having been present.

As the last two candidates between whom the mayoral election was ultimately decided, their absence speaks louder to their cultural sensitivity and level of care than any words they could have presented, or that could have been presented on their behalf.

Second, curbing structural racism. As it pertains specifically to any attempt to demolish structural racism, discussing segregation and structural racism while only focusing on one race is highly problematic. However, it is no more or less problematic than a political candidate not being present and vocal about the need to change such a system.

Both of these scenarios are examples of discursive exclusion through inaction, as they constitute a lack of care and cultural sensitivity for the marginalized. What are the consequences of this inaction?

Consequences

The first consequence can be explained by referencing the gentleman who planned to vote for Andrew Yang because ‘he was Chinese’ and ‘because he was concerned about the extensive Anti-Asian violence at the time (Fitzsimmons, 2021g).

Not only was Liu Yu a man who was planning to vote for Andrew Yang, the candidate, he was a ‘Chinese man,’ planning to vote for the ‘Chinese candidate’ because the ‘Chinese’ candidate understood the challenges being faced by Asian citizens at that time. As introduced by Wolfinger (1965), this is a clear case of ethnic affinity that could serve as a precursor to the considerations held by voters in future elections if they continue to feel unseen by candidates who are not of Asian descent.

Alternatively, through strategic engagement via the institution of ethnic media, like Yang, candidates could cultivate relationships with disaffected groups by displaying clear cultural sensitivity in their racial (or) ethnic political pursuits. This cultivation would potentially result in increased ‘acts of affinity’ in which individuals, despite dissimilar heritages, still felt seen by political candidates to the point they saw fit to vote for them.

The second potential consequence is an increase in the role that members of excluded groups will attempt to play in the theater of American politics.

While they were not running for mayor, a clear example of that potential is in the significant political power and prowess displayed by Congresswoman Grace Meng and Senator John Liu during the same time period.

In the mayoral context, they supported candidate Andrew Yang and brought the Asian American voting bloc with them. Quite separate from the mayoral race, as expressed in excerpts 3 and 4, they presented policies to include the Asian American experience into the American public-school curricula. Also, in excerpt 5, Meng reportedly proposed a policy stating that material related to COVID-19 should be presented in multiple languages that are spoken within and beyond the broader Asian American Community.

All of the matters taken up by Congresswoman Meng and Senator John Liu, i.e., health, safety, and education, have the potential to be construed as issue publics, as they impact the mass electorate, directly affect, and can be understood without complicating language or the political process that they require to be acted upon. More importantly, however, is that when they spoke about them, they did not hesitate to speak to the excluded public.

Despite their positive intentions, however, and while their proposed legislations may not have directly pit races against each other, the expansive use of umbrella terms in excerpts 3 and 4, especially, is a matter that has not yet been resolved. These terms have the potential to seriously complicate the policies in which they are included.

Alongside the consequences of continued discursive exclusion in New York's political media landscape, this section discusses three thematic examples that display greater but imperfect interest in the inclusion of Asian Americans by political representatives. In all three of these examples, politicians directed their efforts at the excluded Asian American community in and beyond New York. To their credit, however, each example displays positive language that prioritizes inclusion. In other words, what

they did not do was say that other histories needed to be removed or that they were ‘overwhelmingly represented.’

The critical point to consider from the examples above is that the education and hate crime policies that were presented were directed at Asian Americans and Asian American Pacific Islanders. As previously discussed, great care needs to be taken when using expansive terms. If not, there is a significant risk of dissension among various individuals who fall under potentially multiple terminological umbrellas. This dissension may negatively impact political participation, which, in turn, would only serve to reinforce, in this instance, the stigma of Asian and Chinese Americans as apolitical.

To solidify their position in using culturally expansive terminology, Meng and other politicians should go back to the 1997 archives of the Office of Management and Budget, to find out why they chose to disaggregate the Asian American group in their data collection practices.

To ensure that they are on the right path, direct engagement with the various subjects that fall under the Asian American or Asian American Pacific Islander umbrellas is required so that care and cultural sensitivity can be shown. In other words, they need to include them in the discourse. Despite their findings, in terms of census identification, all options should be available for selection alongside the macro identifiers.

Once that happens, the issues that are prioritized by politicians like Meng and Liu need to be presented with specificity regarding their intended target audiences. This would ensure that members of the community, both those under the umbrella and those not under it, would have the opportunity to actually determine how they are identified

when it comes to ethnically directed policies. This amounts to the ‘final control over the agenda,’ which Dahl (1998) referred to as a key element in the practice of democracy.

As this matter pertains to media representatives, regardless of the outcome, their priority must be to identify and refer to the individuals about whom they speak, on their terms and no one else’s. As stewards of democracy, this is absolutely part of their charge.

Finally, under the theme of cultural sensitivity, excerpt 5 discusses Meng’s efforts to incorporate ‘multiple languages’ into the material that was being disseminated in response to COVID-19.

Although it is clear that she stands in solidarity with the AAPI community, what Meng did not do was call for the material to be presented in languages that tend only to be understood by its members or those who are most commonly identified as such. This is an example of non-zero-sum politics that was either lost on the mayoral candidates or simply not considered as they pursued other racial and ethnic groups. That fact requires a return to the potential consequences of the discursive exclusion that took place in the specific context of the mayoral election.

The third potential consequence coincides with the first two but is supplemented by the earlier discussion regarding the gravitation toward ethnic media and the ubiquitous use of social media among members of the Chinese American Community, as introduced by Lai (2022) and Zhou (2009).

Many of the articles reviewed for this study referred to questions surrounding the challenges and overall effectiveness of online learning. What was only glanced at across the dataset, however, represents the tectonic shift that was occurring across all sectors. The political sector is highly relevant here.

If there is one positive that can be gleaned from the anomaly that was the COVID-19 pandemic, it is that it crystalized the need for approaches to political communication to be nimble. When the topic of virtual engagement and debate was discussed, however, on both sides, the mayoral candidates agreed that they did not want to participate if the events were not in person (Fitzsimmons, 2021e). Some of the reasons expressed for this reluctance were, for example, a desire to ‘be in the ring with their opponents,’ a need to ‘put an end to the fear, fright, and hysteria over COVID-19,’ and a sense that New Yorkers ‘deserved to see the candidates debate in person.’

What the candidates neglected to realize, however, was that in their refusal to adjust their approach, they were expressing a disconnect between themselves and some of their constituents who, in large part, use social media to discuss a variety of topics, not the least of which, is politics (Lai, 2022). Furthermore, they failed to understand that these platforms allow users to communicate in their native languages. Not only was this a point made by Habermas (1987) as critical to democratic continuity, it was also a missed opportunity to limit the use of language barriers as an excuse to exclude various groups from political discourse (Lai, 2022, p. 4).

As part of the immense leap in the communications sector that has occurred in the twenty-first century thus far, social media enables large, foreign-born racial groups, to communicate and moderate their voices and concerns locally, nationally, and internationally. This evolution also involves the use of digital ethnic news media in its facilitative role in the articulation, organization, and dissemination of information that impacts policy and political outcomes (Lai, 2022, p. 43).

The potential held by social media is arguably strongest among Asian Americans, a group stereotyped as quiet, docile, and apolitical in U.S. politics (Hong & Bromwich, 2021), as social media provides a lower entry point into politics for historically disenfranchised racial minorities (Lai, 2022).

It is important to note, however, that political motivation is essential for minorities to close the participation gap in both traditional and non-traditional ways. This is because the combination of the two provides individuals with new opportunities to shape political discourse around public policies and political candidates. It also presents an opportunity for a form of political communications-based leapfrogging, as it allows less established candidates to affordably present their campaigns (Lai, 2022, pp.5- 8).

An example of such behavior took place in New Jersey in November 2016, during Shannon Peng's Edison school board campaign. The reason this example should be understood in the context of the consequences pertaining to political exclusion is because Shannon's campaign received 'no support from any political or civic organizations.' Instead, her team exclusively used the China-based social media platform, *WeChat*, to recruit volunteers and fundraise from local, state, and national Chinese American communities (Lai, 2022 pp. 44-45).

Although she came in second, the outcome cannot be discounted as a failure on her part, as she was ultimately elected to the post for which she campaigned. It should instead be viewed as an example of success that was, in large part, due to her consideration of her people and how they utilize non-traditional media.

Similarly, New York Congresswoman Grace Meng displayed a communicative adaptability not shared by her local counterparts as she leaned into the technological paradigm shift that was forced upon the world by COVID-19.

In some of the community events she held to discuss the acts of hate and violence that were being perpetuated against Asian Americans, she employed the very tools that were being rejected by the mayoral candidates at the time. In addition, she leveraged social media to promote a virtual day of action against anti-Asian hate that reached across the nation (Holtermann, 2021c; Mohamed, 2021d).

The final two points to be made on this matter are best preceded by John Stuart Mill's (2016) perspectives on the potential for representative government.

According to Mill:

In the ancient world, though there might be, and often was, great individual or local independence, there could be nothing like a regulated popular government beyond the bounds of a single city-community; because there did not exist the physical conditions for the formation and propagation of a public opinion, except among those who could be brought together to discuss public matters in the same agora. This obstacle is generally thought to have ceased by the adoption of the representative system. But to surmount it completely, required the press, and even the newspaper press, the real equivalent, though not in all respects and adequate one, of the Pnyx and the Forum. (Mill, 2016, p. iv)

Today, the means by which communication and political discourse may occur have changed significantly. Although the press and newspapers retain irrefutable value, access to their content and the democratic process, they enable no longer requires the physical interaction it once did. Furthermore, it need not be presented in one language or by a local institution to have an impact on a local matter.

Democracy now has the potential to be more inclusive than ever before. It is critical to recognize, however, that such potential can only be realized through adaptation by all members of the democratic process, especially those who would aspire to lead.

When anomalies occur in nature, e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic, species that expect to play a role in the changing environment, i.e., Bernays's (1928) politicians, must adapt lest they themselves become excluded from future opportunities to serve.

As the media sector and political communication within that sector evolve, it is critical that the definition of the term 'mainstream media' be reevaluated. At present, the current definition is as complicit in excluding new members as New York's politicians and political journalists were in excluding Chinese Americans between 2020 and 2021.

Included in that definition must be social media, because it is pervasive and represents a future of communication that is ever at risk of obsolescence. Included in that definition must also be ethnic media, as it is preferred by the Asian American community, and its inclusion would display a commitment to the tenets upon which the practice of democracy is based. More importantly, it would serve to include those who continue to be excluded from it. In that spirit, there must be continued persistence.

Conclusion & Implications

The aim of this study was to determine whether Chinese Americans were excluded from New York's political media landscape between November 2020 and November 2021.

The methodology was fundamentally qualitative and began with the designing of a dataset that was derived from *The New York Times* and *The Flushing Times*.

The method employed to conduct the analysis of the dataset was the summative interpretation of content analysis, which occurred in two phases, manifest and latent. The manifest phase required an organization of the dataset into two-hundred-forty-three separate files that were analyzed in three parts:

Part 1 involved searching for the following words: Asian, Asian American, Chinese, and Chinese American. Figure 1 illustrates the findings from this search as a percentage. It also includes the percentage of articles that had a combination of the words, e.g., Asian and Chinese or Asian American and Chinese American, and finally, those articles that mentioned neither of them.

Part 2 involved re-analyzing the articles that did not mention either of the primary keywords. This was done to determine whether they included the most common family names of Chinese Americans or the New York enclaves in which Chinese and Asian Americans are likely to reside. Figure 2 shows the findings.

Part 3 re-examined the entire dataset to determine the use of the initial keywords as compared to other ethnic and racial groups frequently mentioned in the dataset, e.g., Blacks, Hispanics, Latin (o, a, x) Americans, and Whites. Figure 3 displays the findings.

The manifest phase of the analysis yielded a determination that while Chinese Americans were not invisible within the dataset, they were not highly visible within it either. However, the qualitative nature of this study demanded a prioritization of the content within the dataset as opposed to arriving at a conclusion by simply identifying keywords, e.g., Asian, Chinese, etc., or the comparative use between those and other race and ethnicity-related terms.

In addition to providing an introductory answer to this study's question, the manifest phase of the analysis also yielded the two initial themes that were used to re-organize and approach the latent phase of the analysis.

The themes derived from the manifest and latent analyses were used to frame its approach and present its findings. They are presented in Table 1.

From the manifest and latent analyses of the dataset, it was ultimately determined that Chinese and Asian Americans were discursively excluded from New York's political media landscape between November 2020 and November 2021.

When they were presented in the media, it was typically in competition to or at the expense of other groups' ability to access certain public goods. Most frequently, this pertained to education.

A critical element in the context of this study and within the dataset is the matter of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to its use by some as a justification for violence against Chinese and Asian Americans, it altered the traditional approach to political discourse by forcing much of the process, e.g., the debates, onto digital media platforms, e.g., Zoom.

While the mayoral candidates were rejecting this change, outside of the mayoral campaign context, the analysis revealed that other Asian American politicians who were not running for mayor, e.g., Grace Meng, were doing the opposite.

Quite separately, the review of literature revealed that prior to the pandemic, Asian American politicians were utilizing forms of media that fall outside of the mainstream construct to approach the Asian American community, e.g., WeChat. At least part of the reason for this approach was that they were not able to secure the support they needed to run a campaign through the use of ‘traditional’ media.

On the conjoined contexts of the mayoral election and the COVID-19 pandemic that permeated New York’s political media landscape during this study’s temporal span of focus, even when they were being killed in the streets for a health crisis that was not of their making, Chinese Americans were still excluded from the political discourse. This is because the reason for the exclusion of Chinese Americans, in this instance, is not inconsistent with their history of exclusion from United States politics on the whole.

Although their common concerns as a people, e.g., education for their children, the opportunity to own a home, the chance to be economically self-sufficient, and, the need to feel safe, are not dissimilar from any other racial or ethnic group, they continue to be excluded and relegated to the political periphery because many politicians do not see them as a quantifiably valuable or dependable voting bloc.

The potential consequences of this attitude exist in at least three intersecting spheres. The first pertains to the increased potential for ethnic voting by individuals who continue to feel unseen by politicians with whom they do not identify or who have given

no cause for acts of ethnic affinity in their displays of culturally sensitive racial (or) ethnic pursuit.

The second has been discussed, as the risks of not adapting to technological and communications-related paradigm shifts are akin to long-term political suicide.

The third stands as a limitation to this study, as it pertains to the future political behavior of those who were excluded, but a reasonable assumption would be that it would, at least in part, be related to the first consequence.

Beyond this study, a matter worthy of further investigation must begin by acknowledging that politicians only represent half of the equation that leads to discursive exclusion in political media. The equation's other side pertains to journalists and their role as stewards of democracy through media.

Affirmative Journalism

In their role as members of society who shape the world with their words, journalists maintain a significant level of accountability in addressing the problem of discursive exclusion in political media. This is because it is they, as stated by van Dijk (2013), who determine the people to whom the possibility of inclusion in political media discourse is given. In other words, they determine who will be interviewed, quoted, described in news reports and who will be able to influence the public. More importantly, however, they determine who will not.

Regarding discourse, Fairclough and Wodack (1997) said that historical context should always be a point of consideration. The overarching aims of this study and its dataset were directed at a point in American history that was ultimately found to have

fallen victim to multiple instances of discursive exclusion of Chinese Americans in political media.

The offerings presented by van Dijk (2013), the timetable that was presented in this study's introduction, and the analyses of the dataset substantiate another claim: that this point in time simply represents another brick in a house that was built on a foundation of inequity. This is the essence of the problem for which a 'structural racism commission' was created. As previously stated, however, that commission also showed clear signs of structural inequity and ineptitude, as its intentions were largely directed at the African American community and no one else. This is where the role of journalists needed to have come into play but fell short.

A Pew Research Center (1999) report states that journalists and news media executives across mediums and markets are united in their belief that accuracy and balance in reporting represent the essence of journalism (section 1, para. 1).

A question to such a statement must be, 'Does balance include pointing out what or who is missing?'. If so, then in the context of this study, the journalists referenced in the above excerpts fell short, as they did not take an additional step toward that balance. The 'additional step' will hereafter be referred to as 'Affirmative Journalism.'

Affirmative Action is defined as a set of procedures designed to eliminate unlawful discrimination among applicants, remedy the results of such prior discrimination, and prevent such discrimination in the future (Legal Information Institute, 2023, para. 1).

Placing interpretations and perspectives regarding the policy to the side, if Affirmative Action was initially created to support the access of socially disadvantaged citizens to mainstream institutions (Anderson, 2010, p. 135), e.g., educational institutions, then, in this context, the function of Affirmative Journalism would be to support the inclusion of those who are discursively excluded from political media.

In 1982, Diana Fong stated, ‘Though we're included in affirmative-action programs, we're not perceived as a disadvantaged group.’ She went on to say that this is because of the broad sweeping perception of Asian Americans as a ‘model minority’ as compared to Blacks and Hispanics, who are much more frequently associated with the term. At the end of her article, Fong (1982) referred to a discrimination towards Asian Americans that still exists but is ‘simply better disguised.’

The articles that were analyzed in this study serve as potent examples of discursive exclusion. The elegance of their disguise is that they do not deride Asian Americas. Instead, under the theme of education, the articles presented them as affluent and overwhelmingly populating certain institutions at the expense of other groups who need and essentially deserve more help. Under the theme of violence, they consistently avoided specificity when reporting on it.

Applying Affirmative Journalism to Education-Related Excerpts

Regarding education, the solution to the problem was equally elegant because it did not propose that they be subjected to a quota,¹³ or that they be excluded from select

¹³ *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) mandated that all decisions relating to race and access to post-secondary education serve, *a compelling State interest*, to be considered constitutional. It’s main legal takeaway from was that the Constitution prohibits a school from having racial quotas.

public institutions.¹⁴ Either one of these solutions would have been unconstitutional. Instead, one proposal was to make access to the schools more equitable by eliminating the test (Shapiro, 2020c; 2021b; 2021c).

Although the development of this commission was not related to New York's specialized schools, the problem with such a solution, and the very reason why Former Mayor de Blasio would subsequently organize a group, is that one cannot simply change a test to fix a structural problem.

When it was presented, the appeal of Affirmative Action was that it acknowledged and saw fit to account for systemically entrenched factors that regularly disadvantaged African Americans in the United States. The appeal of Affirmative Journalism is that it accounts for the structural factors, e.g., power and dominance, that enable discursive exclusion. It does this by adding a pair of recursive questions to Lasswell's (1948) model, "What, or who, is missing?"

Similar to the search for explicable relationships between variables (Shoemaker, Tankard & Lasorsa, 2004), and in the in the interest of adhering to journalism's core principles, i.e., accuracy and balance in reporting, the act of affirmative journalism involves asking these questions until the need to do so has been exhausted.

For example, under the theme of education, excerpt 5 discussed the percentage of students in gifted classes and broke the data down by ethnicity. What it did not do was ask, 'What is missing?'

¹⁴ *Title VI of the United States Civil Rights Act states that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Civil Rights Act, 1964).*

To begin with, it did not delve further into what constitutes ‘Asian.’ Also, when the article quoted Mayor Adams’s statement that ‘the gifted and talented program was isolated only to certain communities,’ it did not indicate whether the students that were populating those schools lived in the neighborhoods in which the schools were located.

Had that work been done, based on the Asian American Federation’s (2019) profile, when Adams said that he wanted to expand the programs into less affluent neighborhoods, journalists might have found that large Asian populations reside in the very neighborhoods into which he was planning on expanding them.

Regarding ‘Who is missing?’ neither this nor any of the other articles that fell under the theme of education actually quoted a parent of Asian origin, and only two of the articles pertaining to these programs quoted a political representative of Asian heritage. Coincidentally, that representative was Senator John Liu who said, ‘This administration should not make wholesale changes without full ‘public discourse’ about the issues’ (Shapiro, 2020c).

To paraphrase the earlier quote from Chen (2018), there has been discourse about this topic, but Asian Americans were not invited to it. Nor were non-elites, i.e., non-politicians, often quoted when it was presented in the dataset, a clear indication of discursive exclusion in political media. Less problematic than the fact that the exclusion occurred, however, is the way in which it occurred.

For example, in Shapiro’s (2021a) article regarding the fact that the Chief of New York City Schools planned to resign over clashes on desegregation, it was stated that ‘a major backlash to the plan, led by Asian-Americans, quickly ‘killed’ any hopes of replacing the specialized school admissions exam. The article closed by saying that the

parents who fought to keep the exam in place have since become Mr. Carranza's harshest and most consistent critics (para. 26).

The reason that words like these are more problematic than the exclusion itself is because they clearly cast Asian Americans as so vocally anti-desegregation that they and their criticisms 'killed' a plan of equity and caused the resignation of a city representative who was fighting for educational equality in New York. In so doing, they frame them in contention with those who believe in equality, who want nothing more than the best for their children, and who believe that education is the way to achieve it.

In the context of Lasswell's (1948) model, and in the absence of Affirmative Journalism, the response to the final question, 'With what effect?', would be continued discursive exclusion of Asian Americans in political media. Or worse, it would present a new excuse for their continued physical and emotional assault. In the presence of Affirmative Journalism, however, such an article could never remain as it was.

To meet the standards of this approach, it would have to include at least one representative from the Asian American community to explain why some of its members might not want a modification to the testing policies. In this way, there would be more opportunity for the discourse to ensue and increased potential for equity to guide the political process. Furthermore, it would speak directly to the balance on which journalism is said to be based.

Applying Affirmative Journalism to Violence-Related Excerpts

The violence endured by the Chinese and Asian American community between November 2020 and November 2021 was wrong. What was exceedingly incorrect was that when it occurred, out of some fear of retribution or further persecution, many victims

chose to remain in the shadows rather than seek out the justice promised to them under this nation's banner. Affirmative Journalism is also meant to take this on.

Under the theme of violence in this chapter, excerpt 1 discusses a visit made to Flushing, Queens, by NYPD Community Affairs Chief Jeffrey Maddrey, Councilman Peter Koo, and Queens Borough President Donovan Richards. This would be the response to Lasswell's (1948) 'Who?'. Considering his subsequent questions, i.e., 'What, to whom, how, why, and with what effect?', is where the problem arises.

In a likely effort to express a need for solidarity with the police and to assuage fears of recourse for doing so, Holtermann (2021d) reports Peter Koo as saying that 'the police cannot solve all these problems on their own' (para. 5). Later in the article, Richards says, 'If you see anyone under attack, don't hide, we need you to call it in (para. 12). Finally, Maddrey says, 'if you don't call us, we're not aware that there's an issue, we can't send resources unless you let us know what's going on' (para. 14). Maddrey also said that safety should always be first and that 'In today's times, chances are there's a camera watching, so don't stress out trying to record the incident yourself.' (para. 18).

What this amounts to is a general conclusion that the violence is not a secret, that it is difficult to do anything about it if the community is not involved, that the police will not know about the violence, and that cameras are watching, so, 'be safe.'

From what these representatives reportedly said, it is quite difficult to draw out what the solution actually was. In other words, there was no real solution. The reason this article represents an elegant example that warrants an affirmatively journalistic approach, however, is because of the additional two questions that Affirmative Journalism Asks, 'Who and What are missing?'

Outside of China, Flushing, Queens has one of the largest populations of Chinese people in the world, and the article referenced the fact that victims of harassment in Flushing were seeing language that said ‘kill Chinese’ written on their businesses.

As expressed earlier in this chapter, there is no indication that any of the people interviewed in the article were Chinese. Also, while there is mention of a Korean radio host who said that his listeners had asked him how they should react to violence, the article never actually presented what he told them (para.15).

Holtermann’s (2021d) article quotes Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, who said, ‘We need to make sure our community-based organizations are an essential part of this conversation so that people feel they have a voice there as well.’ (para. 12), but the article never gave any of the community members their true voice.

As stated above, Maxine’s last name was never given, and she was not ethnically identified. By asking ‘Who and What are missing?’, Affirmative Journalism would have accounted for this case of discursive exclusion and would have kept asking the questions until there was no longer a need to do so.

If the strength of van Dijk’s (1993) considerations on discourse are grounded in their contribution to change (p. 253), then the strength of Affirmative Journalism is that it is capable of a type of change less likely to be scrutinized than Affirmative Action has been since its inception.

Unlike Affirmative Action, Affirmative Journalism has nothing to do with the law or any specific group. Instead, it pertains to a charge that is already taken up by journalists, to seek balance and to give a fair accounting when they engage in the discourse over which they, as journalists, have significant control.

Affirmative Journalism is normatively change-driven but is not bound to race, gender, religion, or any other classification that might be called into question as ethically or constitutionally problematic. It simply acknowledges that discursive exclusion exists as a consequence of lasting societal imbalances between elites and non-elites.

Because it is non-preferential in nature, Affirmative Journalism has great potential as a viable tool of empowerment in the context of political media, as it simply charges journalists with caring enough to ask two questions.

As it did in the excerpts above, had discursive exclusion occurred from the journalist's perspective, Affirmative Journalism would obligate them to seek out balance and accuracy by actively and objectively including the excluded group(s) in the discourse. The inaction of one journalist would not, however, preclude the action of others who would carry out that charge and champion the democracy of which they are stewards.

It is in that capacity, as stewards of democracy, that both journalists and the politicians about whom they report must never fail to recall another time in which discontentment between citizens wrought pain and suffering across a nation to which Chinese immigrants were still somewhat new.

During the latter half of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln stated that the United States government should be 'of, for, and by the people, such that it would not perish from the earth.'¹⁵

¹⁵ Lincoln, A. (2008). *The Gettysburg Address*. Carlisle, MA: Applewood Books.

Despite the fact that ‘the people’ to whom the President was referring were far less diverse than present-day America, in the context of this study, Lincoln’s words retain their relevance and undeniable power.

It is unfortunate that the tapestry of heritages and histories that make up the United States should ever be at risk of marginalization or exclusion of any kind. That this is a possibility necessitates a collective effort, especially on the part of politicians and the journalists who write about them, to uphold the standard placed before them by one of this nation’s great leaders, to be of, by, and for the people, not to exclude them.

As it pertains to Chinese Americans and their recent exclusion from New York’s political media landscape, in the most normative sense, the stated expectation with which this study will close is that it will be read and understood as an effort to bring that exclusion to a swift and irrevocable end.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: EDUCATION-RELATED EXCERPTS

Excerpt 1: *Queens lawmakers criticize city’s plan to replace Gifted and Talented Program with ‘Brilliant NYC’*

Queens lawmakers are speaking out against Mayor Bill de Blasio’s decision to phase out the controversial Gifted and Talented (G&T) Program in New York City’s public schools and instead make it more accessible to all children, including better outreach into all communities. ...The elimination of the G&T program addresses racial disparities in public schools that opponents say discriminate against Black and Hispanic children, while those accepted into the program were either white or of Asian descent. ...“It’s utterly laughable for de Blasio to announce the changes and then claim that he will now engage stakeholders in the next two months.” According to Liu, the mayor’s sudden fiat that G&T programs will be eliminated is “disingenuous if not outright detestable,” given that there is not nearly enough time left in his term to have any meaningful public engagement and for him to put any changes in place. “He leaves the next administration with yet another mess to clean up, and with public school parents and their children once again suffering the consequences,” Liu said. Congresswoman Grace Meng is urging the city to immediately reconsider its decision. “Gifted and Talented curriculums have provided students with crucial challenges that help them reach their full potential in the classroom,” Meng said. “Phasing out this program is a mistake. Families in my district and across New York City have anxiously

waited for when the promised public engagement process would begin.
(Mohamed, 2021k)

Excerpt 2: *An Un-Brilliant Plan*

Critics of the G&T program have suggested it unfairly rewards students who are white or of Asian descent, and are generally more affluent. (Gewelb, 2021, para 4)

Excerpt 3: *New York City Will Change Many Selective Schools to Address Segregation*

The mayor's only major previous attempt to integrate schools — pushing the State Legislature to get rid of the entrance exam for the city's elite specialized high schools — failed. In 2018, Mr. de Blasio said he would fight to eliminate the exam for eight top high schools, which are overwhelmingly Asian-American and white and have tiny percentages of Black and Latino students. (Shapiro, 2020c, para. 27)

Excerpt 4: *Only 8 Black Students Are Admitted to Stuyvesant High School*

After a year in which the pandemic shined a harsh spotlight on the stark inequities in New York City's school system, the city announced Thursday that, once again, only tiny numbers of Black and Latino students had been admitted into top public high schools. The numbers represent the latest signal that efforts to desegregate those schools while maintaining an admissions exam are failing. ...Over half of the 4,262 offers this year went to Asian students. The schools have enormous significance for thousands of low-income Asian-American students who attend them, many of them immigrants or the children of immigrants. ...Efforts to change the admissions system have

been seen by some as disregarding the accomplishments of those vulnerable students. ...Accusations of bias from Asian-American New Yorkers have made the debate over whether to keep the exam as the sole means of entry into the schools extremely fraught. Though Black and white students made up the same percentage of test takers — about 18 percent each — less than 4 percent of Black students received offers, compared with nearly 28 percent of white students, a clear sign that having large numbers of Black students take the exam is not leading to more equitable outcomes. (Shapiro, 2021b)

Excerpt 5: *Parents, lawmakers call for continuation of Specialized High School Admissions Test during Bayside rally*

Parents, advocates, and elected officials gathered outside of Nathaniel Hawthorne Middle School in Bayside on Thursday, Nov. 12, to demand students be given the opportunity to take the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT), after the timeline for the exam was thrown into flux by Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza earlier this year. “In September, we were repeatedly assured that by October they would tell us that the Department of Education would announce what the rules are, what the admission criteria would be for entry admissions in the fall of 2021. Guess what? It’s November and we still don’t know anything,” State Senator John Liu said. ... The test, which four of the specialized high schools must use to for admissions in accordance with state law, has been the cause of conflict for years now. Opponents of the test, including Carranza and Mayor Bill de Blasio, argue it widens the education gap between low-income Black and

brown students and their peers. Students with access to more resources at a younger age perform better on the test and then gain access to even more resources while attending the specialized high schools, they say. (Kaye, 2020, paras. 2-13)

Excerpt 6: De Blasio to Phase Out N.Y.C. Gifted and Talented Program

Eric Adams, the Democratic nominee for mayor and the prohibitive favorite to win next month's election, has rejected calls to get rid of gifted classes, and has instead said he favors an expansion of the programs into low-income neighborhoods. Experts have said that plan would do little to integrate the programs without more direct changes to admissions...Though about 70 percent of the roughly 1 million public school students in New York are Black and Latino, about 75 percent of the roughly 16,000 students in gifted elementary school classes are white or Asian American. (Shapiro, 2021c, paras. 6-10)

Excerpt 7: Adams Commits, With Few Details, to Keeping Gifted Program in Schools

About 75 percent of the 16,000 students enrolled in gifted classes are white or Asian American while 70 percent of the students in the overall system are Black and Latino, according to Department of Education data. The gifted program, which puts students on a separate academic track even before they enter the public schools, has exacerbated segregation in the city's schools. Mr. Adams acknowledged the problem on Friday. "The gifted and talented program was isolated only to certain communities," he said. "That created segregation in our classrooms." (Shapiro, 2021d, paras. 13-14)

Excerpt 8: *N.Y.C. Schools Chief to Resign After Clashes Over Desegregation*

Black and Latino students are extremely underrepresented in those schools, and low-income Asian-American children are overrepresented. Some Asian American politicians and families were insulted that they were not consulted about the plan, and many took offense to Mr. Carranza's clumsy defense of the proposal. "I just don't buy into the narrative that any one ethnic group owns admission to these schools," he said shortly after it was announced. ...A major backlash to the plan, led by Asian-Americans, quickly killed the mayor and chancellor's hopes of replacing the specialized school admissions exam. The parents who fought to keep the exam in place have since become Mr. Carranza's harshest and most consistent critics. (Shapiro, 2021a, paras. 25-26)

APPENDIX B: VIOLENCE-RELATED EXCERPTS

Excerpt 1: *NYPD chief joins Queens officials to inform Asian community about safety resources in Flushing*

In light of the staggering increase in Asian American hate crimes, NYPD Community Affairs Chief Jeffrey Maddrey joined Councilman Peter Koo and Queens Borough President Donovan Richards on a walkthrough tour of Flushing on Wednesday, April 14, to talk to local business owners and residents addressing the issues facing the Asian American community. During a press conference outside the Sheraton LaGuardia East Hotel, Koo explained that business owners and residents alike needed to know that the NYPD cares about the community's concerns. "They want to stop the Asian hate crimes, and they want to be part of the solution," Koo said. Koo reported that local businesses have been the victims of harassment, bias crimes, and racist messages like "kill Chinese." (Holtermann, 2021d, para. 4)

Excerpt 2: *Community leaders rally against anti-Asian hate on National Day of Action and Healing*

Queens elected officials, community organizers and religious leaders joined Bay Terrace residents for a unity rally at Bay Terrace Shopping Center on March 26, in solidarity with the virtual National Day of Action and Healing. Queens Congresswoman Grace Meng and California Assembly member Evan Low organized the event, which demands an end of violence against Asian Americans and encourages everyone to share their stories on social media, using the hashtag #StopAsianHate. Queens State Senator John Liu, who has

attended many rallies in the last several weeks protesting the rise in hate crimes against the AAPI community, recognized that the past year had been difficult for everyone, but even more so for Asian Americans. (Holtermann, 2021c, paras. 2-12)

Excerpt 3: *Sunnyside community rallies against recent uptick of anti-Asian hate crimes*

About 100 protesters gathered in Bliss Plaza in Sunnyside, on Saturday, March 6, to rally against the increase of violence and hate crimes toward Asian American Pacific Islanders...There have been 28 coronavirus-related attacks against Asians in New York City since the beginning of the pandemic. The latest attack occurred on Mar. 2, when an Asian man was knocked to the ground and punched in an unprovoked attack on the Lower East Side. (Holtermann, 2021a, para. 1)

Excerpt 4: *Meng reintroduces legislation to combat anti-Asian hate crimes*

Congresswoman Grace Meng is reintroducing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act as Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) experience a wave of physical, verbal and online attacks in Queens and beyond. The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act seeks to address the ongoing hate and violence toward AAPIs by providing greater assistance with law enforcement response to COVID-19 hate crimes and creating a position at the Department of Justice to facilitate review of such cases. (Mohamed, 2021c, paras. 1-2)

Excerpt 5: *Crime and Qualifications at Issue in Heated N.Y.C. Mayoral Debate*

Mr. Adams stressed that he saw a distinction between off-duty officers carrying guns and the proliferation of illegal guns, describing an incident that occurred when he was a transit police officer, and he stopped an anti-Asian hate crime on a subway train. “I was off-duty, I was able to stop those armed perpetrators from carrying out the actions while off-duty,” he said. “The state law states that a police officer can carry off-duty because he has to respond 24 hours a day to any crime that is taking place in this city.” (Glueck, 2021c, para-23-24)

Excerpt 6: *Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Endorses Maya Wiley for N.Y.C. Mayor*

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, one of the most prominent left-wing leaders in the country, endorsed Maya D. Wiley in the race for New York City mayor on Saturday, urging voters to “come together as a movement.” ... Minutes after the endorsement was announced, Mr. Adams — who, more than any candidate, is running on the issue of public safety, casting it as the “prerequisite” to prosperity — released a statement blasting Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and Ms. Wiley over the issue of police funding. “Rep. Ocasio-Cortez and Maya Wiley want to slash the Police Department budget and shrink the police force at a time when Black and brown babies are being shot in our streets, hate crimes are terrorizing Asian and Jewish communities, and innocent New Yorkers are being stabbed and shot on their way to work,” said Mr. Adams, a former police officer. “They “They are putting slogans and

politics in front of public safety and would endanger the lives of New Yorkers.”. (Glueck, 2021d, paras. 1-22)

Excerpt 7: *Suspect Charged With Hate Crime After Brutal Attack on Asian Man in Harlem*

Suspect Charged With Hate Crime After Brutal Attack on Asian Man in Harlem. A Chinese man collecting bottles and cans was stomped and kicked in the head, part of a wave of assaults on Asian New Yorkers. Reports of hate crimes targeting Asian-Americans have increased sharply across the country since the coronavirus pandemic began last year, when former President Donald J. Trump repeatedly used anti-Asian slurs to refer to the virus in an effort to link it to China. (Gold, 2021a, para. 2)

Excerpt 8: *Group of teens attack Asian American boy, 13, in suspected hate crime in Flushing*

A 13-year-old Asian American boy is the latest victim of a string of anti-Asian hate crimes in Queens after he was attacked by a group of teens on a Flushing basketball court last week, police said. On Tuesday, March 16, around 6:30 p.m., the 13-year-old was playing at Bowne Playground, located at 142-20 Barclay Ave., when he got into an argument with three other teenage boys, according to the NYPD. After shoving the 13-year-old to the ground and the three boys took turns throwing a basketball at the young man’s head, cops said. One of the attackers said, “Stupid f-g Chinese. Go back to your country, “according to the authorities. The three teens then ran off. (Kaye, 2021, paras. 1-4)

APPENDIX C: RACIAL (or) ETHNIC PURSUIT-RELATED EXCERPTS

Excerpt 1: Eric Adams Endorsed by Top Bronx Leader, Giving Him Lift With Latinos

When Ruben Diaz Jr. dropped out of the New York City mayor's race last year, his decision surprised many. He had the support of the powerful Bronx Democratic Party, an alliance with Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and strong ties to Latino voters. But Mr. Diaz, the Bronx borough president, still can influence the race: His endorsement became one of the most coveted in the contest — potentially carrying weight in the Bronx and among Latino voters, who make up roughly one-fifth of Democratic primary voters. On Monday, Mr. Diaz will announce that he is endorsing Eric Adams, the Brooklyn borough president, boosting Mr. Adams's hopes of trying to assemble a diverse coalition to defeat Andrew Yang, the former presidential hopeful. "There have been so many issues where I witnessed firsthand how much Eric loves New York, but also how critical it is to have someone who has the life experience of a New Yorker to help inform them about how to fight for all New Yorkers," Mr. Diaz said in an interview. (Fitzsimmons, 2021c, para 1-4.)

Excerpt 2: Adams Gets a Major Endorsement: 5 Takeaways From Mayor's Race

...A scramble ensued, with several leading candidates courting Mr. Espaillat for his endorsement — a rush that ended Sunday when Mr. Adams traveled to Washington Heights, in the heart of Mr. Espaillat's district, to receive the congressman's formal embrace. Mr. Espaillat said he got into politics after witnessing someone shot in the head on a city street. Gun violence is again on the rise in New York City, and Mr. Espaillat said he is endorsing Mr. Adams, a former police captain, because "we don't want that happening again..." "For Eric,

the Espaillat endorsement, this is better than mangú,” said Eli Valentin, a political analyst for Univision, referring to the Dominican dish of mashed plantains. “I don’t think there’s anyone else among Latinos that has that influence within the Latino electorate.” The Latino vote is estimated to make up 20 percent of the Democratic primary vote, Mr. Valentin said. The congressman’s backing is expected to matter more than that of many other powerful city politicians, in part because it comes with Mr. Espaillat’s team of loyal supporters who can help get out the vote. (Rubinstein, Fitzsimmons & Mays, 2021, paras. 1-8)

Excerpt 3: *Courting Unions and Latino Voters: 5 Takeaways From the N.Y.C.*

Mayor’s Race

Mr. Adams is making the case that he is the candidate for working-class New Yorkers. “We are building a blue-collar coalition that will deliver results for the New Yorkers who need them the most,” Mr. Adams said last week. (Fitzsimmons et al, 2021, paras.1-3)

Excerpt 4: *Yang’s Latest Endorsement Shows Momentum With a Key Voting Bloc*

The former presidential candidate won a major endorsement in the New York City mayor’s race from Rep. Grace Meng, a top Asian-American leader in Queens. On Monday, Mr. Yang received a major boost with an endorsement from Representative Grace Meng, the highest-ranking Asian-American elected official in New York, as he seeks to solidify support among Asian-American leaders. Ms. Meng, the city’s first Asian-American member of Congress, said she decided to back Mr. Yang after she kept hearing from her constituents in Queens who were genuinely excited by him. “They really feel like he’s

someone who gives them hope,” she said in an interview. Standing outside a school in Flushing, Queens, with Ms. Meng, who is also Taiwanese-American, Mr. Yang said that Asian-Americans were often considered an afterthought in the life of the city. He said that he was glad that people were inspired by his campaign, but he also wants to focus on the nuts and bolts of improving their lives. (Fitzsimmons, 2021d, paras. 1-6)

Excerpt 5: *How Adams Built a Diverse Coalition That Put Him Ahead in the Mayor’s Race*

Eric Adams has a significant lead in the New York City mayor’s race thanks to his support from a traditional Democratic coalition of unions and Black and Latino voters. ... At his primary night party on Tuesday, Mr. Adams smiled broadly as he celebrated his lead. Then he took aim at the city’s news media and elites and said he had focused on voters who reliably showed up at the polls. (Fitzsimmons, 2021h, para. 1)

Excerpt 6: *Adams Pledges Support for Gowanus Redevelopment, Boosting Delayed Project*

Brad Lander, a Democratic city councilman who represents parts of Brooklyn and has long championed the development, said on Friday that Mr. Adams’s announced support of the project — including the public housing funds — was a significant boost for its future and for the neighborhood. Mr. Lander won the Democratic nomination to be the city’s next comptroller in the June primary. “We both support the concept of rezoning whiter, wealthier neighborhoods with a significant commitment to making sure that housing is genuinely affordable, and real opportunities are created for Black and brown and working-class families,”

Mr. Lander said of Mr. Adams. A review of the plan commissioned by the City Council and the Fifth Avenue Committee, a local housing nonprofit, found that the initiative could redistribute the racial balance of the Gowanus neighborhood —currently one of the city’s whitest — to one more in line demographically with the rest of the city. (Kully & Nir, 2021, paras. 8-10)

Excerpt 7: *Why Top Democrats Are Listening to Eric Adams Right Now*

In some ways, it is a difficult playbook to replicate. Mr. Adams, who will be New York’s second Black mayor if he wins in November, as expected, grew up in poverty and says he was beaten by police officers before joining the force himself. He spent years drawing attention for challenging police misconduct, only to emerge as the most public safety-minded candidate in this year’s mayoral primary. His striking trajectory and promises to combat inequality helped him connect with a broad swath of Black and Latino voters and with some white working-class New Yorkers. And the buzz around him now is due in part to interest in the likely next mayor of the nation’s largest city. (Glueck, 2021f, paras. 7-8)

Excerpt 8: *Where’s Eric Adams? Meeting Donors, From the Hamptons to the Vineyard*

On Martha’s Vineyard last weekend, as most residents braced for the possible arrival of Hurricane Henri, a smaller gathering focused on a more certain visitor: Eric Adams, New York City’s likely next mayor. Mr. Adams mingled on Friday with potential donors at a fund-raiser in Oak Bluffs, a historically Black section of the island. A day later, Mr. Adams traveled to the opposite end of the island, for a fund-raiser hosted at the waterfront retreat of Zach Iscol, a

businessman who ran for mayor and then comptroller during the June 22 primary election. (Rubinstein & Fitzsimmons, 2021, paras. 1-2)

Excerpt 9: Eric Adams’s Win Is a ‘Watershed Moment’ for Black Leaders in New York

Black voters were also vital to the Democratic efforts to reclaim the Senate, a goal that came down to two victories in Georgia. And in New York, Black voters played a significant role in electing Mayor Bill de Blasio in 2013 (though his coalition also included far more white progressives than Mr. Adams’s did). There was little exit polling available on the New York City mayor’s race, but surveys from other years showed that Black voters were not the majority of the electorate. Still, Black voters are among the most reliable voters in the Democratic Party, and the sparse polling data that was available during the primary showed that Mr. Adams was the overwhelming favorite of those voters — meaning that they packed a more unified electoral punch than other constituencies whose preferences were spread more evenly among several contenders. “The Democratic Party can’t win anything of significance without Black voters,” said Leah Daughtry, a longtime party strategist. “You have, with every passing cycle, an increasing awareness and acceptance that we make a difference.” She suggested that Mr. Adams’s victory — which disappointed the most left-wing forces in the city — may prompt a reassessment of what it means to be “progressive” in New York. “Is it that Black and brown people are not as progressive as some people want to say they are, or does the definition of ‘progressive’ need to be looked at?” said Ms. Daughtry, whose father, the Rev. Dr. Herbert Daughtry, was an early

mentor of Mr. Adams's. Left-wing leaders and activists, and some centrist party strategists and officials, caution against drawing sweeping political conclusions from an off-year municipal election and, in particular, a mayoral primary that was decided by a few thousand votes. "The next generation of leaders being elected around the country to Congress — many of them are progressive people of color," said Adam Green, who co-founded the Progressive Change Campaign Committee. "That seems more like a harbinger of future national progressive trends than a New York City mayor's race." (Glueck & Mays, 2021, paras. 14-20)

Excerpt 10: *Yang and Garcia Form Late Alliance in Mayor's Race, Drawing Adams's*

Ire

Andrew Yang and Kathryn Garcia, two leading candidates in the New York City mayor's race, joined each other on the campaign trail on Saturday, a late alliance that the contest's front-runner, Eric Adams, immediately sought to portray as an attempt to weaken the voice of minority voters. ... Mr. Adams inserted the notion that Mr. Yang and Ms. Garcia were playing racial politics, a provocative claim that his campaign attempted to back up by distributing statements from several of his more prominent supporters, including the former Gov. David A. Paterson and the Bronx borough president, Rubén Díaz Jr., who echoed the accusation. Mr. Adams said that the alliance between Mr. Yang and Ms. Garcia was aimed at preventing a "person of color" from winning the race. "For them to come together like they are doing in the last three days, they're saying we can't trust a person of color to be the mayor of the City of New York when this city is overwhelmingly people of color," Mr. Adams said. At a separate

news conference, Mr. Yang responded, “I would tell Eric Adams that I’ve been Asian my entire life.” (Mr. Adams clarified that he was accusing Mr. Yang and Ms. Garcia of trying to prevent a Black or Latino person from becoming mayor.). (Fitzsimmons & Mays, 2021)

Excerpt 11: *The Next City Council Will Look More Like New York*

New York City, a global immigration hub, has never had a person of South Asian descent on the City Council. No openly gay Black woman has ever sat among its 51 lawmakers, even as the city has become a beacon for L.G.B.T.Q. people of color. And though women made gains in politics nationwide in the 21st century, their numbers on the City Council actually dropped over the last two decades. But now, with the Council facing significant turnover because of term limits and retirements, New York’s legislative body is poised to be one of the most progressive in the city’s history, with a diversity that mirrors the city it represents. “Across the board, you were seeing a group of candidates that more clearly reflected the people that needed to be represented,” said Tiffany Cabán, a queer Latina and progressive candidate who won her Council primary in Queens. “That’s really huge, and I think that drove a lot of the success.” ...They include more than two dozen women, who will be positioned to take a majority of the Council’s seats, for the first time ever. There are several activists from working-class backgrounds, several L.G.B.T.Q. people of color and at least six foreign-born New Yorkers.... “It’s not just women,” Sandy Nurse, a carpenter and community organizer who beat an incumbent to win her primary in Brooklyn, pointed out. “There are cross-cutting identities. You’ve got a lot of different identities with a lot of diverse experiences, and

that's significant." Shahana Hanif, a former City Council employee who won her primary in Brooklyn, is expected to be the first Muslim woman elected to the Council in its history. Ms. Hanif, who is Bangladeshi-American, will also be one of the first members of South Asian descent, along with Shekar Krishnan, who won his primary in Jackson Heights and Elmhurst, in Queens. ...Mr. Krishnan, a civil rights lawyer, said the lack of diversity on the Council was part of what motivated him to run, especially after seeing the pandemic devastate his neighborhood. "Communities like mine, we've never had representation in our City Council," Mr. Krishnan said. "And what that means is the voices of our South Asian communities aren't being heard." ...Every issue is an L.G.B.T.Q. issue. Every issue is a woman's issue. Every issue is a Black and brown issue," Ms. Hudson said. "For those of us who live on the margins, we can fully understand and appreciate the value of policy changes that actually impact our day-to-day lives." (Gold, 2021b, paras. 1-23)

Excerpt 12: *What Does Eric Adams, Working-Class Champion, Mean for the Democrats?*

He bluntly challenged left-wing leaders in his party over matters of policing and public safety. He campaigned heavily in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx, often ignoring Manhattan neighborhoods besides Harlem and Washington Heights. And he branded himself a blue-collar candidate with a keen personal understanding of the challenges and concerns facing working-class New Yorkers of color. With his substantial early lead in the Democratic mayoral

primary when votes were counted Tuesday night, Eric Adams, the Brooklyn borough president, demonstrated the enduring power of a candidate who can connect to working- and middle-class Black and Latino voters, while also appealing to some white voters with moderate views. Mr. Adams is not yet assured of victory. But if he prevails, it would be a triumph for a campaign that focused more heavily on those constituencies than any other winning New York City mayoral candidate in recent history. As the national Democratic Party navigates debates over identity and ideology, the mayoral primary in the largest city in the United States is highlighting critical questions about which voters make up the party's base in the Biden era, and who best speaks for them. Barely a year has passed since President Biden clinched the Democratic nomination, defeating several more progressive rivals on the strength of support from Black voters and older moderate voters across the board, and running as a blue-collar candidate himself. But Democrats are now straining to hold together a coalition that includes college-educated liberals and centrists, young left-wing activists and working-class voters of color. "America is saying, we want to have justice and safety and end inequalities," Mr. Adams declared at a news conference on Thursday, offering his take on the party's direction. "And we don't want fancy candidates." Mr. Adams's allies and advisers say that from the start, he based his campaign strategy on connecting with working- and middle-class voters of color. "Over the last few cycles, the winners of the mayor's race have started with a whiter, wealthier base generally, and then expanded out," said Evan

Thies, an Adams spokesman and adviser. Mr. Adams's campaign, he said, started "with low-income, middle-income, Black, Latino, immigrant communities, and then reached into middle-income communities." (Glueck, 2021e, paras. 1-9)

Excerpt 13: *Maya Wiley Lands Major Endorsement From Rep. Hakeem Jeffries*

In the interview, Mr. Jeffries sketched out a detailed map of what he saw as Ms. Wiley's path to victory, though certainly, with a crowded field of candidates, there is significant competition for every major political constituency in New York. "I expect that Eric Adams and Maya Wiley will perform the best in the communities of central Brooklyn, as well as in other traditionally African-American neighborhoods throughout the city of New York," Mr. Jeffries said, going on to note Ms. Wiley's potential in "both traditionally African-American communities" and parts of the city that are home to many white liberals, mentioning neighborhoods like Chelsea, in Manhattan, and progressive Brooklyn enclaves. ... "That's a pretty powerful electoral pathway, if the campaign can continue to put it together over the next few weeks," he said. Some rival Democrats have feared the prospect of a late surge from Ms. Wiley, and the coming weeks will test her ability to execute on that possibility. "Every day I will be out to speak, and we will be making sure that our message is getting out both on television and on radio," she said. "People are starting to turn their attention to this race in earnest and we're going to make sure they know who I am and what I stand for and what I'm going to do." Mr. Jeffries said that at a policy level, he was drawn

to Ms. Wiley’s promises to lead an equitable economic recovery coming out of the pandemic. Ms. Wiley, a civil rights lawyer, speaks often of “reimagining” New York, a city marked by significant racial and economic inequality.

(Glueck, 2021b, paras. 16-21)

Excerpt 14: *Yang and Adams Clash, Councilman Exits: 5 Takeaways From N.Y.C.*

Mayor’s Race

*Mr. Yang, citing forum fatigue, pulled out of a candidates’ forum last week focused on economic and housing security for poor and working-class New Yorkers — a move that disappointed the organizers, given that Mr. Yang is probably best known for proposing a universal basic income as a tool to fight poverty. “This was a forum that brought together groups who advocate on behalf of low-income New Yorkers and the working poor,” said Jeff Maclin, vice president for governmental and public relations for the Community Service Society, one of the forum’s sponsors. “We were a little surprised that he was passing up an opportunity to deliver a message to this community.” Several other top mayoral contenders attended the forum. Sasha Ahuja, Mr. Yang’s co-campaign manager, said in a statement that he attended three forums last week and had also participated in a Community Service Society forum on health care in January. Mr. Yang also spent time with *The Amsterdam News*, a co-sponsor of the forum, for a profile recently, “but there are far too many forums and we can’t do each one,” Ms. Ahuja said. Elinor R. Tatum, the editor in chief and publisher of *The Amsterdam News*, a New York-based Black newspaper, moderated the forum. She said Mr. Yang’s decision to not attend might hurt him among her readers. (Fitzsimmons et al., 2021, paras. 41-43)*

Excerpt 15: *How Andrew Yang Won Over Ultra-Orthodox Brooklyn*

With the June 22 Democratic mayoral primary roughly a month away, Mr. Yang, a former 2020 presidential candidate, has been able to push to the top of the contest through a potent mix of celebrity, optimism and tireless outreach, both in person and on social media. ...As he did in his presidential candidacy, which had support from a broad spectrum of disaffected voters, Mr. Yang has been able to widen his appeal in New York, attracting a significant following from influential ultra-Orthodox Jewish leaders. There are at least 500,000 Orthodox Jews in the New York area, by some estimates, and the endorsement of ultra-Orthodox leaders is highly coveted because the community is seen as a formidable voting bloc, especially in a race that has so far not energized the electorate. (Stack, 2021, paras. 1-16)

APPENDIX D. CULTURAL SENSITIVITY-RELATED EXCERPTS

Excerpt 1: *Attacks on Asian-Americans in New York Stoke Fear, Anxiety*

and Anger

Hate crimes involving Asian-American victims soared in New York City last year. Officials are grappling with the problem even as new incidents occur. ... “I’ve never cried like that before,” Ms. Cheng said, describing her reaction to security footage that showed her mother being shoved to the ground last week on a crowded street in Flushing, Queens. ... Crisanna Tang was riding the subway to work one July morning when a maskless man spat on her and yelled that Chinese people had caused the virus. None of the other passengers intervened, Ms. Tang said. (Petri & Slotnik, 2021, para. 28)

Excerpt 2: *In the N.Y.C. Mayor’s Race, Being Second Might Be Good*

Enough to Win

When Eric Adams, the Brooklyn borough president, recently lost an important endorsement from his friend John Liu, a state senator, he was unbowed. He called on Mr. Liu to rank him second, behind a key opponent, Andrew Yang. “I’m going to need No. 2 voters, and I’m hoping that I can get him to endorse me as No. 2,” Mr. Adams said. Even before Shaun Donovan, the former federal housing secretary, entered the race last year, an “electability” presentation to potential backers extolled how his “broad appeal makes him a natural second and third choice for voters.”. New York City approved the switch to a ranked-choice system in a 2019 referendum; it was designed to give voters broader influence by allowing them to back their top choice while

still weighing in on the race's other candidates — lessening the chances of a scenario where two popular candidates split the vote and a candidate without broad support wins. (Fitzsimmons, 2021f, paras. 5-7)

Excerpt 3: Meng introduces legislation to promote teaching of Asian Pacific American history in U.S. schools

In an effort to help combat continued bigotry and hate against Asian Americans, Congresswoman Grace Meng announced on Tuesday, May 4, that she is reintroducing legislation to promote the teaching and learning of Asian Pacific American history in schools across the United States. The Teaching Asian Pacific American History Act (H.R. 2283) seeks to provide an understanding of the history, contributions, and experiences of Asian Pacific Americans to help eliminate the discrimination and prejudice that the Asian American community has been forced to endure not just over the past year, but for decades. (Mohamed, 2021h, paras. 1-2)

Excerpt 4: Liu introduces bill requiring state public schools to teach Asian American history

A Queens lawmaker recently introduced a bill requiring all New York state public schools to teach students the historical and civic impact of Asian Americans. Under legislation S.6359 sponsored by Senators John Liu, Toby Ann Stavisky, Jeremy Cooney, Andrew Gounardes, Brian Kavanaugh and Kevin Thomas, the instruction on Asian American impact would be required at the elementary and high school levels following the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes across the state and the nation. The curriculum would come directly

from the Board of Regents and State Commissioner of Education, which would create a new course of study highlighting Asian American contributions, struggles and accomplishments throughout history. “Asian Americans have long been caught between the pernicious perpetual foreigner syndrome and the seemingly benign but truly destructive model minority myth,” Senator Liu said. “That my preceding sentence requires a long explanation to most people clearly illustrates the omission of Asian American presence in the teaching of American history and related topics in our public schools. Amid the onslaught of anti-Asian hate, assault and killings, this legislation is necessary to remove the cloak of invisibility that Asian Americans have long endured in order to truly achieve equal opportunity, equal treatment and equal protection. Only then can Asian Americans experience safety and security in the long run. (Bagcal, 2021, paras. 1-4)

Excerpt 5: Meng calls for translation of COVID-19 materials to multiple languages

Queens Congresswoman Grace Meng announced the introduction of legislation that would mandate federal government agencies to translate all written COVID-19-related resources and materials into multiple languages. The COVID-19 Language Access Act would apply to any federal agency that receives related funding for the virus. The measure would require agencies to provide written resources in 20 languages including Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, Creole, French, Greek, Haitian, Hindi, Hmong, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese. (Valdes, 2021, paras. 1-2)

Excerpt 6: *After Unrest and Protests, N.Y.C. Creates Group to Dismantle*

Structural Racism

After a year where the pandemic and protests over police brutality underscored New York City's broad racial inequities, Mayor Bill de Blasio has unveiled a sweeping initiative to examine and remake the City Charter to correct imbalances. The mayor announced on Tuesday the formation of a Racial Justice Commission that will be empowered to make policy recommendations that he said would be designed to "dismantle structural racism for all New Yorkers." The 11-member commission could propose bold policies like a job guarantees for all residents, or reparation payments to Black residents. The commission is expected to make its recommendations this year, the last of Mr. de Blasio's eight years in office; some of the proposals could go before New Yorkers next year as ballot measures. (Fitzsimmons, 2021a, paras. 1-3)

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