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The Dynamics of
Education Equity

Military Courts and
Private Danny Chen

AAPIs in the New Digital
and Media Age

Feature Interviews with:
Senator Mazie Hirono
Chef Anita Lo

Asian American Policy Review

Volume XXIII, 2012-2013



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ASIAN AMERICAN
POLICY REVIEW

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The *Asian American Policy Review (AAPR)* at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government is now accepting submissions for its twenty-fourth edition, to be published in the spring of 2014. Founded in 1989, *AAPR* is the first nonpartisan academic journal in the country dedicated to analyzing public policy issues facing the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community.

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ASIAN AMERICAN POLICY REVIEW
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The 2012-2013 *Asian American Policy Review* staff is proud to present the twenty-third edition of our journal. Founded in 1989, AAPR is the first nonpartisan academic journal in the country dedicated to analyzing public policy issues facing the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

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The Office of Senator Mazie Hirono, Cover Image of Senator Hirono sworn into office by Vice President Joe Biden

REMARKS FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

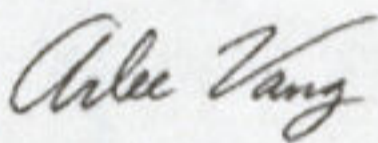
The twenty-third volume of the *Asian American Policy Review (AAPR)* examines a wide array of issues from health care to voter suppression in the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Leading academics, advocates, and policy makers present their vision for the continued prosperity of the AAPI community.

In this volume our authors provide a range of challenges and potential. Congressman Michael M. Honda discusses the importance of education reform for all AAPI students while other authors study the nuanced ways education impacts the socioeconomic status of Filipino Americans. We look toward new forms of media both for representation and advocacy. In a timely and important discussion, Elizabeth R. OuYang questions the effectiveness of military courts in the case of Private Danny Chen.

Our interviews showcase two dynamic women. Anita Lo is a celebrity chef combining the flavors of her Asian heritage with cuisines from all over the world. Senator Mazie Hirono became the first Asian American woman elected to the Senate in 2012. Her experiences and encouragement for a life in public service serve as an inspiration for us all.

Finally, this publication would not be possible without the support of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, members of the AAPI community, and our network of AAPI alumni. Thank you to Fred Wang and organizations that continue to support and believe in the work of this journal. Thank you to our publisher Martha Foley and our faculty advisor Richard Parker for their guidance. Lastly, thanks to our *AAPR* staff members whose commitment and hard work are evident in the diversity of articles we are presenting this year.

Sincerely,



Arlee Vang
Editor-in-Chief

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Building Asian American Political Power through Online Organizing: How Digital Activism Mobilized a Community and Changed the Policy Conversation in Washington, DC

BY OLIVIA CHOW, ROHAN GROVER, CAMDEN LEE, VINCENT PAOLO VILLANO

ABSTRACT | *In response to anti-immigrant remarks made by District of Columbia City Councilman Marion Barry, a group of young progressive activists launched the “Say Sorry Barry” campaign to engage the city in a dialogue about respectful rhetoric. Barry’s comments contributed to a dangerously xenophobic narrative present throughout the 2012 election cycle. To combat this, the Say Sorry Barry campaign used online organizing to build public grassroots pressure and to successfully hold Councilman Barry accountable for his actions. From this we learned a larger lesson: that the future of Asian American advocacy hinges on how and when—not whether—our community is engaged online. Using this campaign as a case study, Asian American activists can draw lessons for their own organizing as one approach for ending the anti-immigrant dialogue in politics and for influencing public policy.*

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2012, District of Columbia City Councilman Marion Barry instigated a community dialogue when he denigrated Asian American store owners and health care professionals. Weary of being ignored, we turned this moment into an opportunity to add Asian American voices to the conversation by organizing an online campaign to build political power.¹

On 3 April 2012, Councilman Barry, a former four-term DC mayor who now represents Ward 8 on the City Council, said at a campaign victory party: “We got to do something about these Asians coming in and opening up businesses and dirty shops. They ought to go. I’m going to say that right now. But we need African American businesspeople to be able to take their places, too” (Blinder 2012).

Local and national Asian American groups in DC quickly circulated a sign-on letter condemning Councilman Barry for his comments. The letter also called for an apology, an official retraction, and a commitment to develop meaningful relationships within the Asian American community. Members of the DC Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs attempted to schedule a meeting with Councilman Barry and his senior staff, but his office cancelled the appointment at the last minute, leaving the community without a forum to voice their concerns.

Fewer than three weeks later, Councilman Barry again used Asian Americans as scapegoats, this time targeting Filipino nurses: “In fact, it’s so bad, that if you go to the hospital now, you find a number of immigrants who are nurses, particularly from the Philippines.” He added, “And no offense, but let’s grow our own teachers, let’s grow our own nurses—and so that we don’t have to be scrounging around in our community clinics and other kinds of places—having to hire people from somewhere else” (Gartner 2012).

Throughout the 2012 election cycle, several campaigns perpetuated false fears of immigrants “stealing” American jobs, including Pete Hoekstra’s “Debbie Spend-it-Now” commercial (Hoffman 2012). Hoekstra, a US Senate candidate, ran a political advertisement during the Super Bowl that exploited voters’ fears of China’s economic dominance. His campaign recruited an aspiring Asian American actress to ride a bicycle down a dirt road and assert, in fake broken English (Ngo 2012), that Hoekstra’s opponent would bolster China’s economy: “Your economy get very weak. Ours get very good. We take your jobs. Thank you Debbie Spend-it-Now!” (YouTube 2012).

Councilman Barry’s comments fit neatly into this resurging anti-immigrant rhetoric in the midst of economic conditions alarmingly similar to those that precipitated Chinese American Vincent Chin’s murder thirty years ago. Callously singling out Asian American store owners and nurses implied that immigrants cannot be successful American workers who contribute positively to society, let alone be respected by their own city council representative. Referring to Asian American residents as “others” unnecessarily roused racial tensions among Barry’s constituents and offended several business owners who take great pride in the lives they have built for themselves (Kang and Tsoi 2012).

SAY SORRY BARRY

As a group of Asian American activists, we recognized Councilman Barry’s remarks as a tipping point in xenophobic rhetoric in Washington, DC. We decided to organize a response to foster a productive dialogue about respecting immigrant communities.

Councilman Barry represents a predominantly African American district that was extremely strained by the recession, and residents now compete in a climate generally unfriendly to small businesses (Williams 2012). Addressing Councilman Barry's hope for economic restoration was possible, but not without inviting diverse partners, including community groups, business owners, residents, and elected officials. Our goal became clear: we should try to repair the damage caused by Councilman Barry's comments by continuing to demand an apology and seeking sincere, proactive efforts to mend community relations.

“We got to do something about these Asians coming in and opening up businesses and dirty shops. They ought to go. I'm going to say that right now.”

To achieve this, we turned to the most effective strategy in our hands: online organizing.

Within thirty-six hours of Councilman Barry's comments about Filipino nurses, local community members came together to launch the “Say Sorry Barry” campaign. Within forty-eight hours, we released the campaign to the press, hosted a launch event, and created a Web site (SaySorryBarry.com, which is no longer active) with a targeted online petition. By the end of the first week, twenty-four local and national Asian American social justice nonprofit groups stood behind us in calling on Councilman Barry to apologize.

Four weeks later, under the heat of local and national media attention and after meeting with the Say Sorry Barry campaign team and our coalition partners, Councilman Barry apologized to the Asian American community in a public event. His constituents filled the room, joined by civil rights leaders such as members of the DC Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs; Floyd Mori, then-executive director of the Japanese American Citizens League; and Angela Oh, advisory board member of President Bill Clinton's One America Initiative on Race. The campaign had successfully secured a sincere apology from him and a commitment to improve community relations.

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

The Say Sorry Barry campaign was composed of several online and offline tactics that strategically centered on rapid response to optimize our turnaround and growth. Turnaround was measured by the length of time necessary to set up our online tools for taking action and also by how well they accommodated

daily priority shifts; growth was measured by garnering press hits and engaging more people to take action and share our campaign. The following sections provide an overview of our organizing tools and the strategy behind each one.

Web Site and Petition

The primary strategy engaged Asian Americans both in DC and across the country with an online petition. The Web site, SaySorryBarry.com, had a very simple layout based on other effective campaigns; we did this so it could be built in fewer than twelve hours and immediately host the petition. Other pieces on the site, such as press releases, social media feeds, and event details, were built around the petition. Each signature triggered an e-mail to Councilman Barry and his staff. By the end of the campaign, the Web site welcomed more than 1,000 visitors per week and sent about 230 e-mails per day urging the councilman to rescind his comments.

Integrated Social Media Strategy

Facebook and Twitter were the initial launching points for engagement and sharing. To build pressure, we publicized a Facebook page and pushed an active Twitter feed using the hashtag #SaySorryBarry. We used this to share details as they unfolded, including when Councilman Barry defended his inflammatory remarks at an emotional DC Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs budget hearing. Tweeting quotes from the meeting generated traffic and incited more people to take action. Direct asks to share our content encouraged supporters to share our campaign to their own networks. In the end, social media drove more than half of the campaign Web site traffic.

Online Advertising

Facebook and Google advertising broadened the campaign's reach and visibility. Facebook ads targeted DC residents who were likely supporters, Councilman Barry's staff, and local press. Google ads targeted people who searched for terms related to the campaign and retargeted people who had visited our Web site. Retargeting past visitors led them up a ladder of engagement that transformed visitors into supporters, then into action takers, and finally into evangelizers who brought additional visitors to the Web site.

E-Mail

In addition to using the Web site to send e-mails to Councilman Barry, we also used an online relationship management tool to communicate with supporters and also cultivate new ones by proactively reaching out to likely supporters in our personal networks. Collecting e-mail addresses allowed us to continuously

ask them to share information on social media and take additional actions both online and offline. This was critical to translating a single interaction on an online petition into deeper involvement throughout the campaign.

Media Outreach

Press and blog outreach was essential to the campaign's success. Gaining coverage of the campaign in popular blogs such as *DCist*, *Prince of Petworth* and *Angry Asian Man* helped us reach local DC and national Asian American audiences. Saturating online outlets set the campaign up for further coverage in mainstream print, radio, and television media. Over four weeks, the controversy received more than 250 media mentions including from the *Washington Post*, the *Huffington Post*, National Public Radio, the *Washington Times*, and *Hyphen* magazine, with one-fifth of these press clips specifically citing the Say Sorry Barry campaign. As the story developed, message discipline kept the narrative focused on the problem, our goal, and our strategy of applying additional pressure on Councilman Barry and his staff.

Outreach and Collaboration

Our work was only part of the activism that responded to Councilman Barry's anti-Asian comments. Coalition work with local and national advocacy organizations was a core part of the campaign strategy. Many Languages One Voice (MLOV), which advocates on behalf of people in DC who do not speak English as their primary language—including many business owners in Ward 8—led the initial petition and empowered local business owners by amplifying their voices throughout the process. Meanwhile, members of the DC Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs negotiated with Councilman Barry's staff to schedule community meetings and organized the final event where he issued his apology. We also invited advocacy groups to join as campaign partners by spreading the petition to their membership and e-mail lists, donating to the campaign for online advertising, and inviting participants to demonstrations at public events that Councilman Barry was scheduled to attend.

Together, these pieces formed an “echo chamber” such that our message reverberated in the DC community and the press to sustain and escalate pressure on Councilman Barry's office to respond. Campaign tactics were driven by strategy focused on rapid response in order to drive our campaign narrative in the media and show a growing concern for the issue. In every form of communication, Say Sorry Barry responded to the changing story by reinserting itself in the narrative with the clear message that public servants owe constituents their respect.

LESSONS IN ONLINE ORGANIZING

Principles of online organizing are rooted in practices of traditional organizing: identify a solution, target a decision maker who has the power to provide that solution, and leverage your relationships to build power until the target gives you what you want. If the target is unaffected by initial attempts, then escalate the action sequence to build additional pressure.

The Internet is the future of organizing the next generation of Asian Americans, especially given our community's high rates of use and engagement in the digital world: 86 percent of Asian households—more than any other racial group—own computers at home (ESA and NTIA 2011), and 63 percent of Asian American Internet users are young people between eighteen and thirty-four years old (Spooner 2001). The Internet has changed the way we interact such that online organizing is incredibly practical: it lowers barriers of entry for Asian Americans to connect with each other from across the country and advocate for themselves, while traditional organizing is limited by geography. Using digital tools, we activated and engaged Asian Americans on an issue that affects a community larger than DC itself, ultimately strengthening our community's voice.

Despite the campaign's overall success, we faced several challenges that limited our impact. First, as volunteers, we balanced the Say Sorry Barry campaign with other personal and professional obligations, which limited our ability to fully commit to a rapid response strategy. Second, the campaign was only executed in English, which cut a significant portion of potential supporters and action takers, and further excluded some of the most marginalized populations in our community. Finally, we relied on inexpensive or free digital technology to execute the campaign. These tools certainly helped us achieve our goals with a limited budget, but they lacked the sophistication of more costly tools that would have enhanced our organizing.

We have seen the salience of online communities through Facebook, Twitter, and emerging platforms. These tools allow people to not only tell their stories but to also broadcast them to a wider audience and organically find others who identify with their experiences. Asian American groups could play a critical role in that process by proactively facilitating interactions—especially among their memberships—and then amplifying them to build authentic, influential grassroots narratives in online and offline advocacy campaigns. This would also serve the organizations well by growing their memberships and enhancing their level of engagement.

Moreover, advocacy groups should tap into their supporters' personal networks to expand the reach of e-mail and social media messages. Oftentimes individual organizers will work on similar advocacy efforts through different

employers and campaigns. By formalizing an e-mail list and an e-mail program across the Asian American advocacy community, groups can build organizational infrastructure for comprehensive engagement and increasingly impactful action.

THE FUTURE OF ASIAN AMERICAN ADVOCACY

Asian Americans were the subject of an unprecedented amount of attention throughout the 2012 election cycle. As part of the rising American electorate, the country took an interest in our community as an emerging political force. Ideally, this should translate into an influential seat in setting policy priorities and making substantial gains for Asian Americans in health care, immigration, language access, social services, and more. However, we also saw many political candidates attempt to authenticate their pro-American jobs stances by employing xenophobic rhetoric that effectively instills anti-Asian fear and anger.

“The Internet has changed the way we interact such that online organizing is incredibly practical: it lowers barriers of entry for Asian Americans to connect with each other from across the country and advocate for themselves, while traditional organizing is limited by geography.”

Asian American communities are not new to such attacks, but the consequences are alarming. Rhetoric such as Councilman Barry’s holds us back from full, legitimate participation at policy-making tables by dismissing our authenticity and misrepresenting our identities. Therefore we must insert ourselves into conversations that impact our livelihoods—especially when we are not actively included.

Given the success of Say Sorry Barry, we are optimistic about the future of Asian American mobilization and political power through online organizing. One of the most important lessons learned was that this work does not depend on expensive technology or consultants; indeed, a small group of volunteers with limited resources can create change in policy arenas. Although we benefited from our backgrounds in organizing in other spaces and from working in a city that is home to many national advocacy organizations, we gained support from across the country by tapping into existing infrastructure—technology,

social networks, and media—and applied strategies and tactics that originate from organizing theory and are observed as best practices. These resources are broadly accessible, and we hope that our campaign serves as a compelling case for organizations to invest further in digital strategy and organizing tools.

Our challenge to Asian American advocacy communities, then, is to provide more conducive pathways for mobilizing constituents and transforming supporters into activists by harnessing existing resources and prioritizing greater investment in digital advocacy tools and training.

We look forward to the growing strength of online organizing campaigns in order to continue building Asian Americans' political power and to ensure a strong voice in public policy.

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ENDNOTE

The authors of this article are all volunteer board members of Asian Pacific Americans for Progress-DC, which worked with Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance-DC to coordinate the "Say Sorry Barry" campaign.

Educational Equity: Where We Are and Where We Need To Be

BY CONGRESSMAN MICHAEL M. HONDA

Almost sixty years after the 1954 landmark ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which declared that separate but equal education was unconstitutional, American schools are still woefully unequal along ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic lines. Quick glimpses into urban, rural, and suburban schools expose the vast differences in the quality of education and resources that children in America receive. These are not just incremental differences but reflect qualitatively different educational experiences. These differences are especially worrisome because they result in achievement and opportunity differences for children. Students attending schools in impoverished areas are subject to under-resourced and underperforming schools. Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) children, like all other children in America, are subject to this disparity. As a result, America is facing two major achievement gaps: (1) between its own students along socioeconomic and ethnic lines, and (2) between American students and students in other countries.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

The founding core of our nation is that it has been a nation of immigrants who have enriched and contributed to the fabric of America. Over the last several decades, with the increase of immigrants from Asia and Latin America, the changing face of America has never been more prevalent (Pew Social & Demographic Trends 2012; U.S. Census Bureau 2004). From 1989 to 2009, the AAPI K-12 community grew fourfold (National Center for Education Statistics 2011). AAPIs now represent the fastest-growing ethnic population. In fact, by 2019, the number of AAPIs is expected to increase by 31 percent (National Center for Education Statistics 2011; Pew Social & Demographic Trends 2012). This demographic change is more than just skin-deep; there are practical implications for the education system. For instance, nearly 40 percent of AAPIs are nonnative English speakers, and local schools will have to adapt to address this changing demographic (Takeuchi and Hune 2009). Public education can no longer be “one size fits all” if it aims to meet the needs of each and every child and afford them every opportunity to be a contributing member of society.

STATE OF ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN EDUCATION

AAPIs are often lauded for their academic performance. Reports cite the high levels of educational attainment and achievement AAPIs demonstrate as a whole (Pew Social & Demographic Trends 2012). For instance, 49 percent of AAPIs in 2010 had a bachelor's degree or greater compared to the national average of 28 percent. However, this model minority myth dangerously deludes the sad reality that not all AAPI children excel academically. The Asian American and Pacific Islander community encompasses forty-eight distinct ethnic groups, and to presume that all of these groups perform in the same manner would be a disservice to the community and our nation (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center 2012). To assume AAPIs are one homogenous group ignores the group's rich diversity with regard to language, history, culture, socioeconomic background, and country of origin.

Disaggregating the AAPI community to its different groups reveals a dramatically different story. Although the previous statistic painted a positive picture of college education among AAPIs (49 percent), a closer examination shows that approximately two-thirds of Cambodians, Laotians, and Hmong and half of Vietnamese adults have not even attended college (National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education 2011). Taking one step back from that, 34 percent of Laotian, 39 percent of Cambodian, and 40 percent of Hmong adults over the age of twenty-five do not even have a high school diploma (National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education 2011).

A look at my home state of California unveils a similar alarming trend in AAPI educational attainment. A 2010 study of high school students noted that 64 percent of AAPIs were proficient or advanced in Algebra 1 by the end of the course, compared to only 39 percent of Whites. However, this aggregate statistic hides the disparities among the AAPIs who were documented: specifically, 79 percent of Koreans and 77 percent of Chinese were proficient or advanced, whereas only 35 percent of Cambodians and Laotians were at the same level (Education Trust – West 2010). With respect to English language arts proficiency, we find similar trends in AAPI achievement. Seventy-two percent of AAPIs demonstrate English language arts proficiency, but disaggregation of the data demonstrates another large disparity in achievement. Chinese (89 percent) and Korean (88 percent) students achieved a high degree of proficiency, but under the same umbrella of AAPIs, the needs of Samoan (53 percent), Tahitian (53 percent), and Laotian (57 percent) students were lost (Education Trust – West 2010). If we look at the aggregate data, we are left to believe that AAPI students are faring well, if not better than the larger population of students. However, closer examination of AAPIs unveils disparities in the

education system. As policy makers, researchers, and caretakers of America's children, we cannot afford to view children in the aggregate and must take into account the needs of each and every child.

To be sure, there is no one root cause that explains why certain AAPI groups are or are not thriving in their educational pursuits. Two major barriers have been documented to affect the AAPI community: limited English proficiency and poverty (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center 2012). At a national level, only 9 percent of the population speaks English less than "very well," however, 39 percent of Cambodians, 38 percent of Hmong, and 52 percent of Vietnamese adults cannot speak English "very well" (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center 2012). These limited English proficiency groups represent those who have settled in disproportionately impoverished neighborhoods and thus lack the resources to learn English. However, Chinese, Korean, and South Asian communities often settle in middle-class communities that have resources, and they often have knowledge of the English language prior to immigration. Lack of proper skills to communicate in English limits one's ability to do well in English-intensive courses. Moreover, research shows a correlation between AAPI students who failed their English courses and those unlikely to graduate from college (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center 2012).

The other major educational barrier for some AAPIs is poverty. Approximately 11 percent of American families live below the federal poverty line. Unfortunately, the state of some AAPI communities is far worse than the national average. For instance, 27 percent of Hmong, 18 percent of Cambodian, and 13 percent of Vietnamese families live below the poverty line (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center 2012). Additionally, 30 percent of AAPIs attend high poverty schools. Living in poverty, besides having limited financial means, presents a host of other consequences for child development, including, for example, decreased brain development and underdeveloped cognitive and social skills (Duncan and Magnuson 2011). Moreover, early childhood poverty can have a long-reaching influence on children's adult lives. For instance, a child growing up in poverty will make on average 39 percent less than the national median income (Holzer et al. 2007). These poverty consequences are further exacerbated by relegating these students to schools that are ill-equipped or ill-funded to provide the assistance that would allow children to have the same opportunities as children in low poverty areas, such as wraparound services (e.g., after-school tutoring, school psychologists, nurses, and social workers). This lack of proper wraparound services and other disparities contribute to the growing achievement gap among American children.

AMERICAN EDUCATION FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The second achievement gap between America and its economic counterparts is readily demonstrated through recent international comparisons that ranked American students around the international average score for reading, mathematics, and science. These scores ranked American children virtually indistinguishably from children in Portugal or Italy, while children in countries like Korea, Finland, and Singapore topped the charts (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2010). Closer examination of these scores reveals a distinct relationship between academic achievement and race and poverty status (Hanushek and Woessman 2010; Ladd 2012). While AAPIs were lauded for scoring as well, if not better, than their peers in Asian countries, these numbers mask the academic reality of numerous AAPIs who struggle and fail to attain a proper basic education. Sadly, this situation is not endemic to AAPIs alone, but affects other students of color and those in poverty.

After accounting for the role of poverty in a country's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) score, two clear messages emerge. First, with one in five children in poverty, the United States has one of the highest child poverty rates for a First World nation (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2012). Second, poverty has a clear impact on a country's PISA score (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2012; Hanushek and Woessman 2010; Ladd 2012). When America's test scores are disaggregated by different levels of poverty, there is a clear linear relationship; lower poverty schools achieved high PISA scores, whereas high poverty schools demonstrated the poorest scores. Schools from America's most affluent areas easily score among the top countries, whereas schools in impoverished areas do worse. Poverty relegates students to underfunded, poorly staffed, and dilapidated schools that cannot offer a high-quality education.

California's 17th district, my home district, exposes this sad reality. The top-scoring schools in my district are also the schools from low poverty areas, whereas the lowest-performing schools are from impoverished areas. The students that need the most help—those from impoverished backgrounds—are the very ones who are receiving the least amount of help. To achieve high-quality education for each and every child requires a paradigm shift in the way we approach education, from providing parity in resources to addressing equity in educational opportunity for children in America.

THE COST OF EDUCATIONAL DISPARITIES

Beyond a moral argument that we should properly educate each and every child, the need to address these educational disparities is a real and present

economic concern. A 2009 McKinsey & Company report analyzed the costs of the two achievement gaps that face America. It reported that the achievement gap between America and its economic counterparts costs the American economy upwards of \$2.3 trillion in lost economic output per year (McKinsey & Company 2009). Additionally, the achievement gap along racial and socioeconomic lines deprives the American economy of a financial boost upwards of \$700 billion per year (McKinsey & Company 2009). Shockingly, these persistent gaps have negatively affected the American economy more than all the recessions in the last third of the twentieth century.

If America is to remain competitive in the twenty-first century marketplace, then it needs to properly educate its children to be ready and able to enter the workforce. Granted, education is not the sole contributor to America's economic woes, but it speaks volumes that people cannot apply for jobs because of a lack of requisite skills and education. Education cannot be seen solely as an expenditure and must instead be seen as an investment in this nation's children and future.

THE VISION FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

My vision for educational equity is that each and every child receives the resources necessary to learn and thrive. As it stands now, our federal government aims to provide parity in educational funding, but parity is not equity. Each child is unique and has different needs that may make him or her more or less ready to learn compared to his or her peers. To provide parity in resources assumes that all children need the same amount of resources; whereas, equity is when each child has the resources available to make him or her ready to learn. There is no one easy solution to this problem, nor can it be solely approached from one perspective. Therefore, I propose systematic policy changes that address school funding, teacher preparation, and early education programs as a means of meeting the needs of each and every child. The decentralized nature of our nation's public education system makes it difficult to provide systemic educational reform. Thus, it becomes incumbent for the federal government to help set the agenda and provide tools that empower state and local educational agencies to provide an equitable and excellent education for all children.

SCHOOL FINANCE

American schools are woefully underfunded and inequitable in their distribution of funds. Most states have a school funding formula that provides parity in funds but not equity in funds. Often per-pupil spending is cited to demonstrate parity in funding of schools, however, as mentioned, parity does not necessarily translate to equity in education. For example, two districts may

spend the same per pupil, but one district may be largely suburban upper-middle class and not be burdened with transportation costs (i.e., buses), whereas the other district may be in an urban setting and require a significant portion of its per-pupil funding to be allocated toward transportation costs. After accounting for transportation costs, the two districts no longer spend the same in per-pupil spending for children's education. Moreover, local districts can serve vastly different communities (e.g., predominantly upper class or high poverty, English language learners), and as such they require different resources to provide equivalent educational opportunities. For example, an urban school may require more money per pupil, compared to a wealthy neighborhood school, to fund after-school tutoring, school psychologists, special education programs, and other resources that allow its students to achieve the same opportunities that the wealthy school can provide. Currently, underserved and under-resourced schools that need the funds are the very schools that do not receive the funds.

School systems are funded by local, state, and federal sources. The bulk of the money schools receive is primarily from local and state sources. School finances are extremely volatile when they are tied into property taxes. Moreover, it naturally creates a funding disparity between wealthy and poor areas. Poorer communities collect substantially lower property taxes compared to wealthy communities, and as a result, schools in these communities have less money to spend on school facilities, educational curriculum and programs, and staff. Currently, each state allocates a certain portion of its budget for public education and disburses that allocation to schools utilizing different school funding formula. These school funding formulas differ in every state and can be based on a strict dollar amount per pupil, based on weighted formulas that consider the needs of certain student populations (e.g., English language learners, special education), or myriad other methods. This current mode of funding schools is predominately based on attendance, and not on student population needs, which exacerbates and perpetuates educational inequities.

New methods of school finance that promote educational equity need to be developed to ensure that each and every child has an equal opportunity to excel. To that end, educational budgets cannot be dictated by a reaction to the economy (i.e., budget cuts), but rather must be predicated on evidence-based models. These models consider what has empirically been demonstrated to improve children's achievement and then cost out those strategies (e.g., school psychologists, after-school programs, early education) before setting budgetary constraints. Additionally, the amount of funding schools receive takes into account the student population (e.g., percent in poverty, English language learners, special education, etc.) and the types of programs they will need

to be able to succeed in the classroom. Therefore, the goal of school finance reform can no longer be parity and must be equity. It is when we have equitable distribution of funds that each and every child can have the opportunity to learn and achieve.

EARLY EDUCATION

Early education can be a valuable, influential tool that prepares children to learn. Research is unequivocal in its findings that children enrolled in high-quality early education programs reap tremendous long-term benefits (Heckman 2008; Heckman et al. n.d.; Vandell et al. 2010). Additionally, research demonstrates that early childhood is a critical time for the development of cognitive and social skills (e.g., neural development, motivation, inhibition skills) that will give children a foundation to learn in K-12 (Duncan and Magnuson 2011). High-quality early childhood programs have been demonstrated to foster the development of these cognitive and social skills (Heckman 2008). Although all children benefit from these programs, these effects are especially pronounced among children of disadvantaged backgrounds. Often children from impoverished backgrounds have working parents who are unable to foster these skills due to time constraints. As poverty can also be intergenerational, the parents themselves may lack the education to impart such skills onto their children. Early education programs can help to close the achievement gap by ensuring all children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

When state and federal governments invest in these programs, there is a substantial return on investment through greater economic output, lower crime rates, and lower participation in government assistance programs. Moreover, the impact of early childhood programs increases when wraparound services are added to ensure a child's development and readiness to learn on all fronts. Therefore, policy should reflect the wealth of research regarding prekindergarten education and support the provision of high-quality early education programs for all children. U.S. President Barack Obama's 2013 State of the Union address signaled an understanding of the need to provide high-quality early childhood education for all children if we are to guarantee equal opportunity for every child to learn. If this administration enacts policies that reflect this priority, then we will begin to see long-term social and economic returns that will far outweigh the initial investment.

TEACHING, LEADING, AND LEARNING

Teachers play a central and vital role in the public education system. While there is little doubt about the passion and care teachers possess for their students, our public education system needs to improve how we equip and support our

teachers. An investment in the preparation of educators is necessary to attract and retain highly trained talent. Additionally, underserved schools need high-quality teachers who are willing to invest a career in these communities; these schools often experience a revolving door of educators coming into and out of the classroom. Methods and infrastructure need to be developed to ensure that quality teachers are evenly distributed among all schools and not concentrated in high-performing schools. For instance, decreased salary disparities between high- and low-needs schools would help to attract and retain high-quality teachers. In addition, increased local teacher autonomy to address school issues would increase the value of teachers working in these schools. Further, clinical experience should be a part of all teacher preparation programs. Research demonstrates that quality clinical preparation is strongly tied to the quality of teachers and their long-term retention in the profession. These rigorous clinical programs would also ensure that teachers are culturally competent to work with all students (e.g., English language learners, minorities, children in poverty, and students with disabilities). Systematic changes need to be implemented in order to make teaching a viable career option by promoting pathways for teacher leadership, implementing rigorous preparation and retention of teachers, and producing teachers who are committed to the communities in which they teach.

CONCLUSION

Educational equity is not just an issue for the AAPI community. It is our nation's issue, and it is humanity's issue. We know our nation has been, and continues to be, a beacon of hope and a land of opportunity for generations of Americans and for new Americans of tomorrow. Therefore, as a nation, we must seriously reconsider how we educate our children. With a changing demography, the "one size fits all" approach to public education is outdated and ineffective, overlooking the diversity of its people. Moreover, to close the two achievement gaps in America and maintain our economic competitiveness in the world economy, it is imperative that we address the needs of each and every child. This vision for educational equity will not be an easy path. There will be many hurdles to overcome as we work together to engage our family, friends, colleagues, policy makers, and communities in this dialogue. Ultimately, fighting for education equity secures America's dreams. But, more importantly, in doing so, we are fighting for the needs of each and every child.

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Filipino Americans and Educational Downward Mobility

BY PAUL ONG AND KATE VIERNES

ABSTRACT | *This article challenges the simplistic narrative of Asian Americans as a singular high-achieving racial group in terms of college attainment. It focuses on Filipino Americans, a subgroup that literature suggests experiences a pattern of downward intergenerational mobility, due in part to racialized segmented assimilation. Analysis of micro-level data from the U.S. Census Bureau supports the hypothesis that U.S.-born Filipinos are less likely to have a bachelor's degree than Filipino immigrants and other U.S.-born Asians, even after controlling for age, sex, region of birth, and race/ethnicity of parents. The study's findings point to the necessity to move beyond stereotypes and to instead examine the complex relationship between ethnicity and race.*

INTRODUCTION

In June 2012, the Pew Research Center released a report entitled “The Rise of Asian Americans” that heralded a positive socioeconomic portrait of Asians in the United States. Based on an analysis of the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS), the well-respected research organization proclaimed Asians as the best-educated racial group in the nation (Taylor et al. 2012). The data shows that Asian Americans as a group leads all Americans in holding bachelor's degrees or higher by more than 20 percentage points. These base numbers and Pew's glowing report arguably reflect and confirm several common perceptions of Asian Americans: that they are a smart and hardworking racial group, that they play by society's rules, and that they push their children to succeed.² The report implies that these seemingly inherent qualities enable Asian Americans to reach the markers of educational achievement that all Americans aspire to—and that since they are clearly getting ahead, there is little need to worry about their socioeconomic prospects.³

One major problem with the above assertion is that it buries competing explanations of educational attainment deep in the text, privileging one based on culture and individual drive over structural explanations. As noted in earlier scholarly writings, much of the socioeconomic achievement of Asian Americans is anchored in highly selective migration after the 1965 Immigration Act

eliminated racially biased restrictions. The pattern involves creaming the best educated and most ambitious from the sending country through explicit and implicit U.S. policy and law (Ong et al. 1994; Hing 1993; Hing and Lee 1996). This occupational-based immigration has enabled foreign graduate students in American universities to stay in the country permanently as needed high-skilled labor and opened the door for those with advanced degrees from the best Asian colleges and universities. In turn, these immigrants become family sponsors, creating a modern chain of migration that favors the upper classes and educational elite (Liu et al. 1991). Although many highly educated immigrants have encountered problems translating their training into comparable jobs, they nonetheless are not forced to start at the bottom of the economic ladder.

Given some immigrants' "head start," the issue of educational attainment should be evaluated not just by comparing Asian Americans to other racial/ethnic groups. An equally important question is whether there is intergenerational upward mobility, or if subsequent U.S.-born generations rise from their parents' socioeconomic status (SES). The statistics do not give a resounding positive answer. Among those twenty-five years and older, 49.4 percent of U.S.-born had at least a bachelor's degree, only marginally higher than the 48.9 percent for foreign-born (Taylor et al. 2012, 10). This apparent lack of dramatic progress raises doubt about improving beyond the base built by selective immigration.

An equally important problem with the assertion is that it offers only a static view of achievement relative to the total population or the non-Hispanic White population. It fails to adequately analyze intergenerational changes, including the possibility of downward educational mobility from one generation to the next. Several studies have documented that educational attainment for Asian Americans stalls or declines by the third generation (Yang 2004; Takei and Sakamoto 2009), along with a shift away from the technical and scientific fields (Sakamoto et al. 2009). Moreover, educational mobility varies across Asian ethnic groups due to segmented assimilation, the idea that different immigrant groups may assimilate into different classes in their new society based on the structural resources and barriers presented to them (Zhou 1997). The Asian American contingent is made up of well over twenty different ethnic and national-origin groups, each of which comes from a specific immigration, historical, and cultural context (Zhou 2004). The act of lumping these many groups together to form one "race" may have certain political benefits, but it has the pitfall of obscuring important intragroup differences that can pose unique and frustrating barriers to some subpopulations. A closer look at these differences is needed in order to recognize the wealth of diversity that exists within a racial group often singularly dubbed as America's "model minority."⁴

Given Asian Americans' ethnic diversity, it would not be surprising to see systematic differences in intergenerational trajectories. Upward mobility is a given for ethnic groups with a high percentage of immigrants who have little or no formal education, such as some Southeast Asian refugee groups. The intergenerational increase is partly the product of compulsory education in the United States. Moreover, some of these immigrants were minorities in their home countries, encountering restrictions to higher education and suffering a "glass ceiling" on college attainment. Another possible phenomenon that is equally interesting is intergenerational downward mobility for ethnic groups with highly educated immigrants. This could be particularly true if the U.S.-born children encounter racial or ethnic discrimination, thus creating hurdles to completing college.

FILIPINO EXCEPTIONALISM

We examine the possibility of intergenerational downward mobility by focusing on Filipino Americans, a group that the literature has identified as being at risk. This population, the second largest Asian ethnic group in the United States,⁵ differs from other Asian Americans for a number of reasons. The Philippines is the only Asian country that is a former U.S. colony. As a result of nearly 500 years of Western colonization in the Philippines, Filipinos to this day embody many Spanish cultural influences and are taught English and U.S. history in schools. The presence of U.S. military and educational systems over the past century has influenced Filipinos' professional patterns and migration, including an upsurge in naval personnel, nurses and engineers, military brides, and their movement to the United States and beyond.

In addition to these unique immigration, historical, and cultural contexts, existing research suggests that U.S.-born Filipino Americans (i.e., the second generation) have markedly lower college completion rates than their immigrant parents, who often hold bachelor's degrees from the Philippines. Such an intergenerational discrepancy has not been found among other Asian American populations (Nadal 2011). According to the 1990 Census, 22 percent of second-generation Filipino Americans achieved a bachelor's degree, as compared to 43.8 percent of all Filipino Americans (Nadal 2011, 143). A decade later, the 2000 Census again revealed a wide intergenerational gap with 44 percent foreign-born versus 31.5 percent U.S.-born Filipino Americans holding bachelor's degrees (Bankston 2006, 195). Regionally, the 1991-2006 Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey demonstrated that the young adult population of second-generation Filipino Americans in San Diego showed remarkably lower occupational and educational achievements than their parents (Zhou and Xiong 2005).⁶ Numerous authors have also

shown how second-generation Filipinos are falling behind their other Asian American counterparts, such as East Asians and Vietnamese, both in college attendance and retention rates (Zhou and Xiong 2005; Nadal 2011; Okamura and Agbayani 1997; Okamura 2008).

While there is no single explanation for Filipino Americans' decreasing levels of college completion, several factors might be at play. We know that race/ethnicity is generally an important variable in school achievement, in that non-Hispanic Whites and Asians tend to have higher levels of educational attainment than Blacks and Hispanics (U.S. Census Bureau 2012, 1-2, 13). While theories explaining the educational achievement gap are complex, many focus on how structural disparities—for example, differing socio-historical contexts; varying levels of socioeconomic status; and social capital based on racial/ethnic position—shape students' environments and opportunities to succeed in school (Kao and Thompson 2003). Structural theories also consider how racial/ethnic discrimination, whether embedded in school structures or perceived at the interpersonal level (or a combination of the two), constrain the educational mobility of minority groups (Solórzano and Ornelas 2002; Cabrera et al. 1999). Other variables may cause educational outcomes among and between racial/ethnic groups to vary even further. For instance, men and women continue to exhibit differences in high school and postsecondary completion rates, indicating that sex/gender plays a role in school achievement (U.S. Census Bureau 2012, 1, 4). Regional differences, which manifest in differing structures of opportunity for educational attainment in different locations or parts of the country, may also be considered (Kodrzycki 2004). Finally, a growing number of people across the United States identify as more than one race or ethnicity, and research has begun to explore how the experience of being mixed race or mixed ethnicity shapes social outcomes, particularly those of young adults (Johnson and Nagoshi 1986; Choi et al. 2012).

The aforementioned factors affect both Filipino Americans and other Asian Americans, but the specific nature of the factors is especially unique to the former, which may affect their trajectory of intergenerational educational mobility. Some authors suggest that Filipino Americans today are socioeconomically disadvantaged, having lower per capita income levels than other racial and ethnic groups (Lai and Arguelles 2003; Nadal 2011) and experiencing high levels of difficulty in translating former training into comparable occupations (Espiritu 2003). Others focus on racial/ethnic discrimination, such as college admissions policies that limit the access of Filipino Americans as a disadvantaged student population (Buena Vista et al. 2009; Okamura 2013) and how Filipino Americans are racialized in ways that are more similar to Black and Latino Americans than to other Asian Americans (Ocampo

2010; Nadal 2008; Teranishi 2002; Okamura 2008).⁷ To the degree that the latter is true, one could expect that Filipinos experience an intergenerational decline similar to that of Mexican Americans (Telles and Ortiz 2008). These experiences may be further stratified based on gender, location, and racial/ethnic background. Educational outcomes may differ among young Filipino and Filipina Americans, whom studies show receive differing levels of parental support for higher education (Maramba 2008) and participate in varying levels of gender-specific “deviant” adolescent behaviors (Alsaybar 1999; Mayeda et al. 2006; Weitz et al. 2001). We might expect educational attainment levels to vary based on regional location, since California and Hawaii, home to the two largest Filipino populations in the country, have very different structures of educational opportunity. Moreover, in both locations, Filipino Americans have occupied a lower SES and political position than other Asian Americans (Okamura 2010; Okamura 2013). Finally, because Filipino Americans are more likely than other Asian Americans to marry outside their race and ethnicity (Qian et al. 2001), it makes sense to ask how multiracial and/or multiethnic Filipino Americans adjust in terms of their educational outcomes.

“In addition to these unique immigration, historical, and cultural contexts, existing research suggests that U.S.-born Filipino Americans (i.e., the second generation) have markedly lower college completion rates than their immigrant parents, who often hold bachelor’s degrees from the Philippines.”

One last possible factor for downward mobility may be due to culture. Although our study’s methodology does not allow us to directly observe the influence of culture on college completion, we raise the question of culture for a reason. Due in part to the Philippines’ unique history of colonization by both Spain and the United States, Filipino cultural influences are quite different from those of other Asians, particularly the East Asians who are most readily perceived to be model minorities. This difference, in turn, could produce a different intergenerational trajectory. However, there is a major inherent contradiction within a cultural explanation for downward mobility. Why should Filipino culture play a disparate role among immigrants and their U.S.

children? In other words, culture seems to have an extremely positive effect in promoting college attainment in the Philippines for the immigrants but a noticeably weaker effect in the United States for those born here.

One plausible explanation is that there is a deleterious interaction between U.S. structural factors and culture, which some believe explain unique patterns of educational achievement exhibited by the children of immigrants (Zhou and Kim 2006). One might posit that Filipino ethnic culture makes U.S.-born Filipinos more susceptible to acculturation because of a shared language (English) and religion (Catholicism, a form of Christianity) with the dominant culture. When combined with a Latino racialization process, the result is downward-segmented assimilation. While we are not suggesting a simplistic cultural explanation for intergenerational mobility, we acknowledge that the interaction between cultural and structural factors can hypothetically play into Filipino Americans' educational experiences.

While the literature suggests a general pattern of downward educational mobility among Filipino Americans that differentiates them from other Asian Americans, most of the quantitative studies have a couple of limitations. First, the existing analysis is based on case studies, cross-sectional studies, or studies of subjects who at the time are still only young adults.⁸ While these studies are important, they are less useful in providing more widespread evidence for downward mobility as well as evidence that this is a general trend among both younger and older cohorts of second-generation Filipino Americans. On the other hand, census data studies that have the benefit of demonstrating a national trend like downward mobility do not always provide further details on the particular variables leading to the phenomenon (or not). We might wonder *who* among second-generation Filipino Americans are not completing college (for example, whether downward mobility is particularly common to Filipinos in a certain part of the country). Existing interpretations of census data lack rigorous analysis of multiple variables. Our study attempts to fill some of these gaps in the previous quantitative research.

BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The quantitative analysis starts with bivariate comparisons based on data from the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) public use micro-sample (PUMS). A PUMS data set contains micro-level (individual level) observations of persons and households, and its main advantage is the ability for an analyst to customize tabulations for statistics not published by the U.S. Census Bureau. Released on an annual basis, the ACS is a continuous survey that collects detailed demographic, socioeconomic, and housing data. This includes place of birth, educational attainment, sex, age, and racial/ethnic

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background. The ACS PUMS contains roughly a 5 percent sample of the total population. This analysis focuses on U.S.-born adults (twenty-five years and older) who identified themselves as Filipino alone (parentage only Filipino) or Filipino in combination with one or more additional racial/ethnic groups. We also use information tabulated from the 1990 PUMS to examine adult Filipino immigrants, which is used to approximate the educational attainment of the foreign-born parents. The 1990 PUMS is based on a household survey during the decennial census and contains data similar to the ACS. The data set contains 5 percent of the population. For both periods and groups, the key indicator is having at least a bachelor's degree.

Table 1 provides an overview of educational attainment for Filipinos and other Asian adults based on the 2006-2010 ACS, and the statistics are consistent with the hypothesis of downward mobility for Filipinos.⁹ The overall college completion rate (percent with at least a bachelor's degree) is slightly lower for Filipinos than for other Asians (46.9 percent versus 50 percent). However, the pattern is different when broken down by nativity. Among immigrants, the completion rates are roughly the same, with approximately half having at least a bachelor's degree. It is worth noting that the proportion of foreign-born Filipinos is lower at the two extremes of the educational attainment distribution (less than high school and graduate degree). Among U.S.-born adults, the completion rate for Filipinos is substantially lower than for other Asians (37 percent versus 53 percent). Moreover, the completion rate for U.S.-born Filipinos is substantially lower than for Filipino immigrants, indicating group-level downward educational mobility across generation defined by

TABLE 1 | EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN 2006-2010, TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AND OLDER

	FILIPINO		OTHER ASIANS	
	Immigrants	Natives	Immigrants	Natives
LESS THAN H.S.	8.3%	5.5%	17.4%	5.0%
H.S. OR GED	14.6%	20.8%	16.9%	16.1%
SOME COLLEGE	27.5%	36.9%	16.5%	25.7%
BACHELOR'S	41.4%	27.2%	26.3%	33.1%
GRADUATE DEGREE	8.2%	9.6%	23.0%	20.1%
BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER	49.6%	36.8%	49.3%	53.2%

Distribution of ethnic-nativity group by highest degree

SOURCE: Tabulations by authors from 2006-2010 ACS PUMS

nativity. The pattern is the opposite for other Asians, indicating group-level upward mobility.

An alternative way to examine educational mobility is to compare college completion rates of the U.S.-born populations with the rates for foreign-born populations roughly a generation earlier. This approach accounts for both generational differences defined by nativity and chronological time. The comparison is done by looking at U.S. natives in 2006-2010 and foreign-born individuals in 1990. The results in Table 2 reveal similarities and differences compared to the previous analysis. Among the immigrants, Filipinos had a higher college completion rate than other Asians (43 percent versus 37 percent).

**TABLE 2 | COLLEGE COMPLETION RATES,
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AND OLDER**

	FOREIGN-BORN, 1990		U.S. BORN, 2006-2010	
	Filipinos	Other Asians	Filipinos	Other Asians
ALL	42.7%	37.0%	36.8%	53.2%
AGE				
25-34	41.4%	43.5%	44.0%	60.8%
35-44	51.2%	40.3%	39.3%	59.0%
45-54	52.4%	37.6%	25.8%	50.9%
55-64	34.0%	20.1%	21.5%	49.0%
65 AND OLDER	15.8%	12.8%	13.7%	25.9%
SEX				
FEMALE	45.5%	28.6%	33.9%	53.8%
MALE	38.8%	46.3%	33.8%	52.5%
RESIDENCE OF IMMIGRANTS				
PLACE OF BIRTH OF NATIVES				
HAWAII	14.0%	20.1%	18.7%	37.4%
WEST COAST	53.6%	41.9%	37.7%	54.8%
OTHER	40.0%	30.8%	49.9%	59.8%
SPOUSE OF IMMIGRANTS PARENTAGE OF NATIVES				
SAME ETHNICITY	49.5%	41.7%	40.4%	58.2%
WITH NH-WHITE	36.8%	30.0%	33.6%	46.2%
WITH OTHER	32.7%	30.7%	22.7%	33.2%

Percent of a subpopulation with at least a bachelor's degree

SOURCE: Tabulations by authors from 1990 PUMS

SOURCE: Tabulations by authors from 2006-2010 ACS PUMS

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In other words, Filipino immigrants in 1990 started with a more substantial foundation for a possible intergenerational transfer of educational attainment. Clearly, this did not materialize for U.S.-born Filipinos a generation later, while the intergenerational increase in college completion for other Asians is greater than seen in Table 1. This suggests that the degree of downward mobility experienced by Filipinos is higher than indicated by just examining the 2006-2010 ACS data.

Table 2 provides additional insights by reporting the college completion rates by demographic characteristics. Rates for Filipino immigrants for each ten-year age group are higher than for other Asians, with the exception of those between the ages of twenty-five to thirty-four. The opposite pattern holds for U.S.-born Filipinos and other Asians, indicating that downward mobility has affected U.S.-born Filipinos of all ages. Disaggregating by age also enables us to better examine intergenerational changes by shifting the comparison of completion rates to approximate changes between parents and their adult children. For example, immigrants who were between the ages of thirty-five to forty-four years in 1990 would be between the ages of fifty-one to sixty-four years in 2006-2010, and many of their adult children would be in their thirties in 2006-2010. Comparing these two cohorts shows that more than half of these immigrants (those thirty-five to forty-four years old in 1990) had a bachelor's degree, but less than half of their adult children did (those in their thirties in 2006-2010). The pattern is the opposite for other Asians, with less than half of the immigrants attaining a four-year college education and more than half of their adult children doing so. Although the comparison is imprecise, it nonetheless provides evidence of the divergent intergenerational trajectories of Filipinos and other Asians.

The breakdowns by other demographic characteristics show important variations. Immigrant college completion is higher for Filipino females than males, perhaps the byproduct of the large numbers of nurses who came to the United States. A generation later (by nativity and chronological time), the gender difference disappears, with both sexes experiencing downward mobility. There are also geographic variations.¹⁰ One consistent pattern is a lower completion rate in Hawaii, due perhaps to a history of more extreme racism, less demand for highly educated workers, and a less developed system of higher education (Okamura 2010). These geographic differences appear to reproduce across generations; consequently, those born in Hawaii have lower rates of college completion than those born elsewhere in the United States. Finally, there are differences across groups defined by race and ethnicity. For an immigrant, the definition is based on the spouse's race or ethnicity, and for someone born in the United States, the definition is based on the parents'

race or ethnicity. In general, we see that endogamy (defined as a couple with the same race and ethnicity) is associated with higher college completion rates. Among those with mixed heritage, the rate tends to be higher when it involves a non-Hispanic White parent. These differences in the foreign-born parent generation also appear to be reproduced in the subsequent generation.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The analysis in the previous section shows that college completion rates of U.S.-born Asian Americans vary significantly by observable demographic characteristics (age, sex, place of birth, and parents' race/ethnicity). Systematic variations in the demographic compositions of U.S.-born Filipinos and other Asians contribute to an inter-group gap in educational attainment. For example, a lower percentage of Filipinos have parents of the same ethnicity (endogamous

TABLE 3 | 2006-2010 CHARACTERISTICS OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AND OLDER, U.S.-BORN

	% DISTRIBUTION WITHIN DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS		% WITH ENDOGENOUS PARENTS	
	Filipinos	Other Asians	Filipinos	Other Asians
AGE				
25-34	45.8%	39.3%	70.9%	70.8%
35-44	27.4%	21.4%	67.0%	65.5%
45-54	13.4%	16.1%	61.9%	72.3%
55-64	7.2%	10.3%	61.4%	79.5%
65 AND OLDER	6.1%	12.6%	69.7%	88.0%
SEX				
FEMALE	49.4%	50.3%	71.9%	66.7%
MALE	50.6%	49.7%	74.0%	69.0%
PLACE OF BIRTH				
HAWAII	26.0%	33.1%	60.4%	67.4%
WEST COAST	33.0%	32.7%	72.2%	78.8%
OTHER	40.9%	45.1%	71.9%	72.2%
PARENTAGE				
BOTH SAME ETHNICITY	67.9%	73.0%	100.0%	100.0%
ONE WHITE PARENT	13.3%	13.8%	0.0%	0.0%
ONE OTHER PARENT	18.8%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%

SOURCE: Tabulations by authors from 2006-2010 ACS PUMS

parents), and endogamy is associated with higher college completion rates (see Table 3). In other words, downward mobility of Filipinos is associated in part by the relative concentration in the exogamy category (parents of mixed race and ethnicity). The relationship is further complicated by the fact that the rate of endogamous parents is correlated with the other demographic factors. For example, those on the West Coast are relatively more likely to have both parents of the same ethnicity. Consequently, the observed bivariate association between endogamous parents and college completion captures some of the association between location and college completion.

It is possible to separate out the effects of observed demographics on college completion by using multivariate models. For this article, logistic regressions are used to estimate the independent effects of observed factors. The logistic function is defined as:

$$\text{Probability (Completing College)} = e^{bX} / (1 + e^{bX})$$

for Completing College $I(1,0)$

X is the vector of independent variables, and b is a vector of coefficients. Maximum likelihood is used to estimate the parameters. Of course, the model cannot account for important unobserved characteristics because of data limitation in ACS PUMS; nonetheless, the analysis can test whether being Filipino is associated with a lower probability of completing college after controlling for other factors. Along with a dummy variable denoting whether an observation is Filipino, the model includes variables denoting age and age square, being female, place of birth and the race/ethnic characteristics of parents. The excluded categories (benchmark comparison group) are other Asians, male, locations outside of Hawaii and the West Coast, and endogamous parents. Four models are estimated: (1) with only the Filipino independent variable, (2) all independent variables, (3) Model 2 for those between the ages of twenty-five and forty, and (4) Model 2 for those forty years and older. The age division roughly differentiates those born before and after the implementation of the 1965 Immigration Act, as well as major civil rights legislation.

Table 4 reports the logistic results. All four models are statistically significant, and nearly all of the estimated coefficients are highly statistically significant. In Model 2, relative to the excluded category, the *ceteris paribus* (controlling for all other factors) probability of completing college decreases with age, born in Hawaii, and to a lesser degree, born on the West Coast, and having mixed parents. Overall, females are more likely to have a bachelor's degree, *ceteris paribus*; however, this appears only true for the younger cohort. Two notable differences in the last two regressions are the estimated effects of age

TABLE 4 | LOGIT RESULTS
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: WITH AT LEAST A BACHELOR'S

	% DISTRIBUTION WITHIN DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS		% WITH ENDOGAMOUS PARENTS	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
INTERCEPT	0.128**	1.633**	0.053	2.571**
FILIPINO	-0.669**	-0.769**	-0.698**	-0.964**
AGE		-0.026**	0.022**	-0.041**
FEMALE		0.164**	0.393**	-0.109**
WEST COAST		-0.224**	-0.307**	-0.084**
HAWAII		-0.632**	-0.844**	-0.465*
ONE WHITE PARENT		-0.668**	-0.692**	-0.723**
ONE OTHER PARENT		-0.983**	-1.013**	-0.995**
LIKELIHOOD RATIO	1,725	10,858	4,740	4,961
SAMPLE SIZE	90,289	90,289	44,596	45,693

*P<.01, ** P<.0001

SOURCE: ANALYSES BY AUTHORS USING 2006-2010 ACS PUMS

and gender. For the younger cohort (twenty-five to forty years old), the odds of having a BA/BS degree increase with age. This may be due to incomplete observation of college completion for the youngest respondents—that is, some may do so at a future point in time. For the older group (forty-one and older), the estimated effect of age is negative, perhaps due to fewer opportunities and more hurdles encountered by the oldest respondents who grew up before the full impact of the civil rights movement. The impacts of gender are also in the opposite direction for the two age groups, perhaps due to historical differences in sex-related educational opportunities and expectations.

Being Filipino is consistently associated with a lower probability of completing college, and the estimated effect (measured by the size of the coefficients) is of roughly the same magnitude across models. The multivariate results can be interpreted as an adjusted difference in the probability of completing college (DPr) by using the following equation:

$$DPr = B(p(1-p)) * Dx$$

B is the estimated coefficient for the variable of interest (i.e., being Filipino), p is the observed probability of having at least a bachelor's degree, and Dx

is the difference in the independent variable, which by definition is equal to one. The calculated difference between Filipinos and other Asians from Model 1 is 16.7 percentage points, which is very similar to the difference in the observed completion rate reported in Table 1. After accounting for other factors, the gap increases to 19.2 percent, indicating that systematic differences in other demographic factors do not contribute to the lower completion rate for Filipinos. Also, the inter-group gap is greater among older adults (23.5 percent for those forty-one years and older) than younger adults (17 percent for those twenty-five to forty years old). The overall results indicate that there is a substantial and independent negative effect of being Filipino.

CONCLUSION

The above findings provide support for the hypothesis that Filipinos experience intergenerational downward mobility in terms of educational attainment, a pattern that differs from that of other Asian Americans. This is consistent with previous studies, but this article provides evidence that this is not just a localized phenomenon. The article also shows that U.S. Filipinos have lower rates of college completion within subgroups defined by age cohort, sex, region of birth, and the race/ethnicity of their parents. Moreover, just being Filipino lowers the odds of having a BA/BS degree after accounting for these factors. The results reveal segmented assimilation, or differing levels of SES attainment, among second-generation Asian American subgroups.

The analysis should be considered partial, an initial quantitative inquiry that should be re-examined with other data when available. While PUMS data is very useful, it has only a limited number of variables that are relevant to analyzing intergenerational mobility. The data is cross-section (collected at only one point in time), and there is essentially no information on the characteristics of the parents of U.S.-born Filipinos. Therefore, we are not able to directly examine at the individual level the role of parents' educational attainment, household resources, values and aspiration, or other important factors influencing their children's educational attainment. Further, place of birth is a very crude proxy for geographic variation in the structure of educational opportunity and the quality of public schooling. A final consideration is that the PUMS immigrant sample includes members of the 1.5-generation, or Filipinos who came to the United States when they were young children. While this contingent grows up with school experiences similar to that of the second generation, its education levels are nevertheless counted with the foreign-born. Despite these limitations, the findings nonetheless have some useful implications.

One of the most important implications is that the article has demonstrated at least one Asian American subgroup's experience in downward mobility,

starting with an extremely high level due to policy-induced selective migration but moving downward in the subsequent generation. This challenges the simplistic narrative of Asian Americans as high achievers, particularly when perniciously compared with other minority groups. Model-minority framing is often used to argue that the United States does offer opportunities to succeed through individual efforts. Moreover, the model minority thesis implicitly shifts the focus to notions of cultural deficiency as the cause for low achievement among African Americans and Latinos, which in turn undermines affirmative action programs.

What we have shown as Filipino exceptionalism needs to be carefully interpreted. The difference may not be simply that Filipino Americans experience downward mobility while other Asian Americans do not. Instead, the trajectories may be different in terms of timing. As mentioned earlier, educational achievement among all Asian Americans either stalls or declines by the third generation. In other words, what is being observed in this article is the phenomenon that this process starts earlier for Filipino Americans, beginning in the second generation. Some have argued that this pattern for Filipino Americans represents a “regression to the mean,” an element of assimilation where they become indistinguishable from the total population. However, this leaves unanswered the question of why this is the case for one Asian American subgroup but not for other ethnic subgroups, such as Jewish Americans (Chiswick 1993). In other words, we wonder why a rather educationally elite group of Asian American immigrants is unable to maintain its initial level in the second generation.

We believe that an important, if not the primary, reason for the modified Filipino American exceptionalism is the process of racialization. Filipinos have not always occupied a comfortable position in the pan-Asian American construction. Historically, there have been debates about whether Filipinos would be better served by being more closely aligned with Latinos because of a shared experience with Spanish colonialism, a common religion, the use of Spanish surnames, and their roots as agricultural laborers (Scharlin and Villanueva 1992). Equally important, non-Asians and societal institutions have often treated or perceived Filipinos as Hispanic, and at the individual and subjective level, some Filipino youth identify with Latinos (Ocampo 2013). These factors differentiate the racialization of Filipinos and other Asians and thus can contribute to the differences in the timing of their trajectories in educational attainment. Many of these hypothesized phenomena require qualitative research, which should complement the additional quantitative research needed to examine educational mobility among Asian Americans and its meaning in terms of how society functions with respect to race.

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ENDNOTES

- ⁱ In 2011, Amy Chua published *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, a parenting memoir where she claimed the superiority of her Chinese mothering technique. Her book sparked a global debate over the cultural legitimacy of strict “Asian” parenting practices.
- ⁱⁱ A number of community-based and advocacy organizations, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and several academic organizations have objected to the way the report was framed because it glosses over some glaring problems and challenges facing Asian Americans and some ethnic populations.
- ⁱⁱⁱ When used to describe Asian Americans, the term “model minority” indicates the widely held perception of their universal, unparalleled academic and occupational success. Ingrained in this notion are several misconceptions about Asian Americans’ experiences, such as minimizing the racial issues they face (Museus and Kiang 2009).
- ^{iv} According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are 3,416,840 Filipinos in the United States, or 19.7 percent of all Asians. Chinese rank as the largest Asian ethnic group in the country, at 4,010,114 or 23.2 percent of all Asian Americans (Taylor et al. 2012).
- ^v It is worth noting that these authors explain this somewhat surprising pattern of intergenerational mobility among Filipino Americans as horizontal rather than downward, representing a “regression to the mean.” In other words, the

children of highly educated, high socioeconomic status Filipino immigrants become “average,” much like non-Hispanic Whites. We revisit this concept in our conclusion.

- vi Racialization within the educational system is complex and can take many forms. For example, teachers could have low expectations for minorities based on negative stereotypes, which in turn adversely affects both the way teachers interact with minority students, and the attention and effort given to those students. This type of racialization affects African Americans and Latinos, an observation supported by the studies cited in the main text of this article. When Filipinos are perceived as being Latinos, then it is likely that they are treated as if they were Latino. While this is a plausible logical assertion, additional research is needed to determine both its prevalence and the consequences on educational outcomes on Filipinos.
- vii Zhou and Xiong’s (2005) analysis of CILS data considers second-generation Asian Americans’ academic achievement only from adolescence through their mid-twenties. They acknowledge that for various reasons, U.S.-born members of particular Asian immigrant groups may not attend college directly from high school, or it may take them longer than others to finish their postsecondary degrees. This leads us to believe it is important to assess whether older cohorts of second-generation Filipino Americans also have relatively low rates of college completion.
- viii It could be argued that the educational attainment of Filipino immigrants is overstated because of the difference between Philippine and U.S. educational systems; however, this does not appear to be the case. Based on a spot check, graduate programs in major U.S. universities accept the bachelor’s degree from reputable colleges and universities in the Philippines. Moreover, the quality of typical colleges and universities in other Asian countries may not be much different than in the Philippines.
- ix The location is defined as the place of residence in 1990 for immigrants and the place of birth for U.S.-born.



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Disparities in Health Insurance Coverage Among Asian Americans

BY ANDREW HUANG

ABSTRACT | *Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial group in the United States, and yet they have some of the highest rates of being uninsured when disaggregated into ethnic subgroups. Analyzing U.S. Census data from the 2008 to 2010 American Community Surveys, this article seeks to identify factors contributing to disparities in health insurance coverage among the six largest Asian American ethnic subgroups: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese Americans. Multiple regression analysis done through IBM SPSS Statistics found that a combination of socioeconomic factors (household income, rate of self-employment, and educational attainment) as well as acculturative factors (percent native-born and percent limited English proficient) each produced statistically significant correlations with the differences in health insurance coverage observed among Asian American ethnic subgroups. Policies aimed at improving health outcomes for Asian Americans in the United States will therefore need to address both the socioeconomic and acculturation issues potentially preventing emerging Asian American ethnic groups from accessing the health care system through health insurance and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.*

INTRODUCTION

The passage of the U.S. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) in March 2010 has left a profound impact on the future of the U.S. health care system, as state and federal governments continue to implement provisions of the ACA to expand health insurance coverage and affordable access to care for millions of uninsured Americans. Along with a federal mandate for individuals to purchase health insurance by 1 January 2014, the ACA also contains additional provisions aimed at increasing health insurance rates, either by expanding public health insurance eligibility or by encouraging Americans to purchase affordable private health plans through federal subsidies and insurance reforms. Some of the ACA's major reform items include: setting uniform standards for states to expand Medicaid eligibility for those up to 133 percent of the federal poverty line; establishing state and federal health exchanges with federally subsidized health plans available for those up to 400

percent of the federal poverty line; prohibiting insurers from denying coverage based on preexisting conditions; and ensuring that young adults up to twenty-six years of age can remain covered under their parents' insurance plans.

Despite Congressional opposition to the ACA legislation and legal challenges raised by a few states, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in June 2012 to uphold the constitutionality of the ACA's individual mandate as well as the re-election of President Barack Obama in November 2012 indicate that most provisions of the ACA will remain to be implemented, significantly affecting how health insurance will be accessed by millions of Americans for the foreseeable future.

The importance of health insurance coverage in producing better health outcomes has been studied and documented extensively. In February 2009, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a summary report, the last of a series of seven reports spanning from 2001 to 2004, citing a number of research studies with evidence linking attainment of health insurance coverage with direct improvements in health outcomes. According to these studies, health insurance coverage was more often than not the major factor determining in whether children and adults had access to the preventive, diagnostic, and treatment health care services crucial for preventing illness, suffering, and death (Institute of Medicine of the National Academies 2009). Based on this, the IOM made strong recommendations for the United States to implement a health reform policy to achieve health insurance coverage for all Americans, arguing that continuing rising health care costs and a weakened economy would lead more people to avoid paying premiums for health insurance and exacerbate an already severe decline in health insurance coverage.

But while the IOM report established a clear need for the United States to provide coverage for the 45.7 million Americans currently uninsured, it also noted that other socioeconomic and acculturative factors such as financial resources, geographic location, language, culture, and transportation are also important in determining a person's likelihood to access effective health care services. Although stronger research is needed before establishing causal relationships in any of these areas, it is fairly conclusive that health insurance coverage is a strong predictor of health outcome status and plays a significant role in reducing the burden of providing care for many vulnerable populations in the United States (Kaiser Family Foundation 2008).

Asian Americans will be among the population groups in the United States affected by health care reform. A recent Pew Research Center report released in June 2012 found that the Asian American population grew 46 percent in the last decade, surpassing Hispanics as the fastest-growing racial group in the United States. More than 14.7 million Asian Americans reported living in the United States in 2010, and while most have been traditionally concentrated

DISPARITIES IN HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

in coastal areas and cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, a growing number of Asian American populations are moving inland, with Asian American communities emerging in cities such as Chicago, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Las Vegas, Dallas, and Houston (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

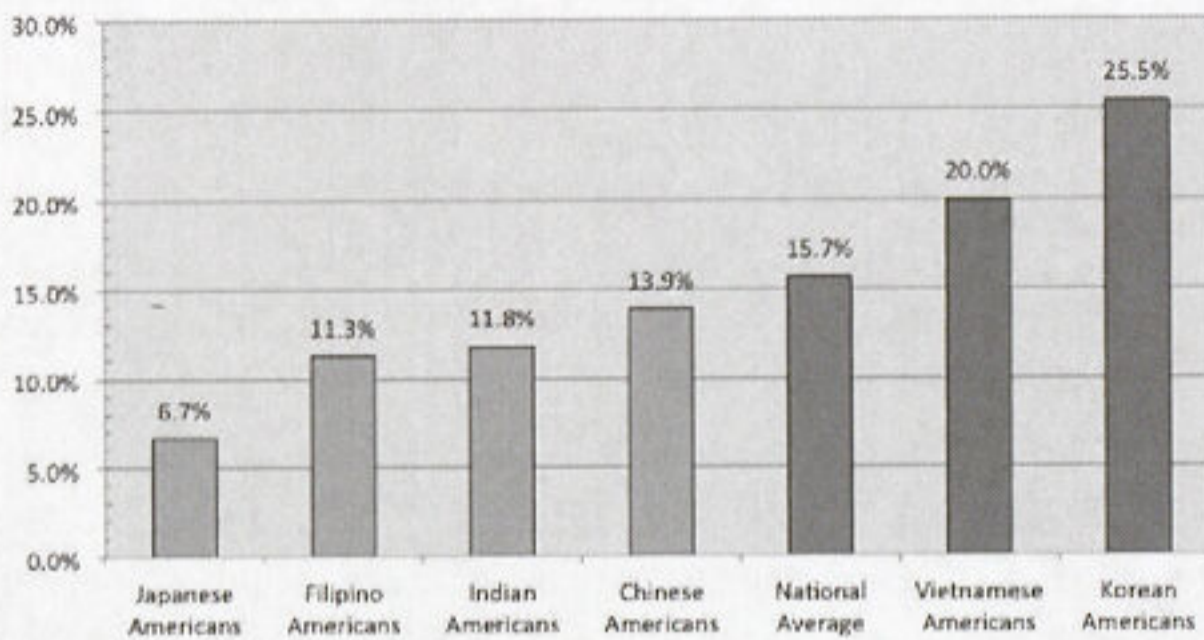
According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, a projected 2 million Asian Americans will become newly insured by 2016 from the ACA, primarily based on expected expansions in Medicaid coverage and the creation of state and federal health insurance exchanges. Additionally, more than 120,000 Asian American young adults up to twenty-six years of age were able to acquire coverage from their parents' health insurance plans by the end of 2011 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2012). As it currently stands, Asian Americans will continue to be one of the largest population groups affected by implementation of the ACA and health policy reform in the United States in the next few years.

However, one issue that has constantly prevented effective Asian American engagement in government policies, particularly in health, is a lack of data disaggregation for Asian American ethnic groups. Because information is collected and then characterized for Asian Americans as a whole, research studies, including the Pew Research Center report, are limited in their ability to accurately identify and disseminate information about the issues affecting specific Asian American subgroups.

The significance of data disaggregation in policy making for Asian Americans is most apparent when looking at health policy areas such as health insurance coverage. When taken as an entire aggregate, 14.9 percent of Asian Americans do not have health insurance, a percentage slightly lower than the national average of 15.7 percent for all Americans (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2012). But when looking at Asian Americans by disaggregated subgroups, the extent of health insurance coverage varies dramatically, even among the six largest Asian American ethnic subgroups (see Figure 1).

Rates of the uninsured for the six largest subgroups begin, at the low end, at 6.7 percent for Japanese Americans, 11.3 percent for Filipino Americans, 11.8 percent for Indian Americans, and 13.9 percent for Chinese Americans. While rates of the uninsured for these Asian American ethnic groups are lower than the national average of 15.7 percent, Vietnamese and Korean Americans suffer from some of the highest uninsured rates in the country, with almost one in five, or 20 percent, of Vietnamese Americans and more than one in four, or 25.5 percent, of Korean Americans not covered by any health insurance plan. Furthermore, these statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services do not include many minority South Asian and Southeast Asian groups, for whom rates of the uninsured

FIGURE 1 | HEALTH UNINSURANCE RATES AMONG ASIAN AMERICAN ETHNIC GROUPS



have been reported to range from 17 to 20 percent (Kaiser Family Foundation 2008).

While the ACA mandates that every individual in the United States be covered by either an employer-based, public, or private health insurance plan by 1 January 2014, it is still critical for policy makers to identify why racial and ethnic disparities in health insurance coverage exist. Even though it has been strongly correlated with better health outcomes, health insurance in and of itself does not improve health outcomes. Instead, health insurance should be considered a policy tool that is used to encourage healthier decision-making behavior through the provision of affordable access to preventive and treatment care. The factors preventing Asian American ethnic groups from obtaining health insurance are the same factors that might prevent Asian American ethnic groups from seeking health services, and it is only through reform of the U.S. health care system that access to health care and better health outcomes can be made more readily available to racial and ethnic minorities.

Therefore, in order to get a more accurate representation of the health status of Asian Americans in the United States, as well as a more comprehensive understanding of how the ACA will affect Asian Americans in the United States, this article examines and identifies the factors responsible for racial and ethnic disparities in health insurance coverage among Asian American subgroups.

RESEARCH METHODS

The 2008 to 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) three-year estimates were used as the source of socioeconomic and demographic data for Asian Americans living in metropolitan areas in the United States. The ACS is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau every year and contains a compilation of socioeconomic and

demographic data from a random sample of 3.5 million households across the United States, collected through a consistent methodology of legally enforceable mail questionnaires, phone interviews, and in-person interviews. This specific data set consisted of values averaged over three years from American Community Surveys conducted in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Because of limitations in Census data reporting, this study focuses on the six largest Asian American ethnic subgroups identified in the Census 2010 report: Asian Indian Americans, Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, and Vietnamese Americans. Data samples from the 2008 to 2010 ACS three-year estimates were filtered and categorized using these six Asian American ethnic subgroups and metropolitan areas with populations of 20,000 or more defined as the search criteria. Data samples on Asian Americans living in rural or non-metropolitan areas were not available by the Census to be included. A total of one-hundred data samples were compiled, containing ACS data ranging in ethnicity and geography from the Asian Indian population in Atlanta to the Japanese American population in Honolulu.

The first part of this analysis focuses on identifying the socioeconomic and acculturative factors that correlate with the differences in health insurance rates across the six Asian American subgroups. By placing ethnicity aside and identifying the combination of factors that can help explain these health coverage disparities, these factors can then be used as the benchmarks by which to identify why certain Asian American ethnic subgroups are either doing well or doing poorly in terms of health insurance coverage.

Using IBM SPSS Statistics, linear regression analysis was performed for each of the forty topics measured by the American Community Survey, which include income, occupation, educational attainment, language spoken at home, nativity, ancestry, and selected monthly homeowner costs. Individual measures determined to be significantly correlated with rates of uninsured were isolated and placed together under multiple regression analysis, which takes into account possible confounding effects between explanatory variables. Any issues of multicollinearity between explanatory variables were identified and adjusted for.

DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Linear regression analysis found that three socioeconomic variables (median household income per year, percent self-employed, and percent high school graduate or higher) and two acculturative variables (percent native-born and percent limited English proficient) produced statistically significant correlations at the 5 percent level with the dependent variable, percent uninsured. Despite not adjusting for outliers, each of these independent variables was shown to have an explanatory effect for why differences in health insurance coverage exist

between communities of Asian American subgroups, barring consideration of ethnicity (see Figures 2-6).

Multiple regression analysis confirmed that the correlative relationship between all five explanatory variables and the dependent variable of percent uninsured was also statistically significant at a 5 percent level. Although the explanatory variable of percent limited English proficient showed a significance level higher than 5 percent, this was found to be attributed to the variable having correlative relationships with the other explanatory variables of median household income per year, percent self-employed, and percent high school graduate or higher. Removing the influence of these variables showed that the explanatory variable of percent limited English proficient was still correlated with the dependent variable of percent uninsured at a statistically significant level.

From this data set, the final equation of the multiple regression analysis consists of the five explanatory variables above and is as follows:

$$\% \text{ uninsured} = m_1 (\text{median household income per year}) + m_2 (\% \text{ self-employed}) + m_3 (\% \text{ high school graduate or higher}) + m_4 (\% \text{ native-born}) + m_5 (\% \text{ limited English proficient}) + b + e$$

The adjusted R square value for equation is 0.676, indicating that this combination of variables has a relative explanatory power of 67.6 percent. This supports the hypothesis that acculturative factors, in addition to socioeconomic factors, play a role in determining health insurance coverage for communities of Asian American subgroups.

The most interesting aspect of this study is that even though this data set encompasses Asian American communities of different population sizes and geographical locations, data points for all five explanatory variables appear to be clustered by ethnicity (see Figures 2-6). The next part of this analysis will look at the scatterplots of each explanatory variable to subjectively identify where certain Asian American ethnicities fit along these variables and use these variables as a model to determine whether that explains why certain subgroups have lower rates of health insurance coverage than others.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER YEAR

Linear regression showed an inverse relationship between percent uninsured and median household income per year, that is, the greater the value of median household income per year, the lower percentage of uninsured there was among all Asian American communities (see Figure 2). This relationship is very intuitive; those living in communities of Asian American subgroups with higher median household incomes are wealthier, more likely to be employed, and if not receiving health insurance through an employer, are more likely to be able to afford private health insurance plans.

DISPARITIES IN HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

FIGURE 2 | PERCENT UNINSURED VERSUS MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER YEAR (USD)

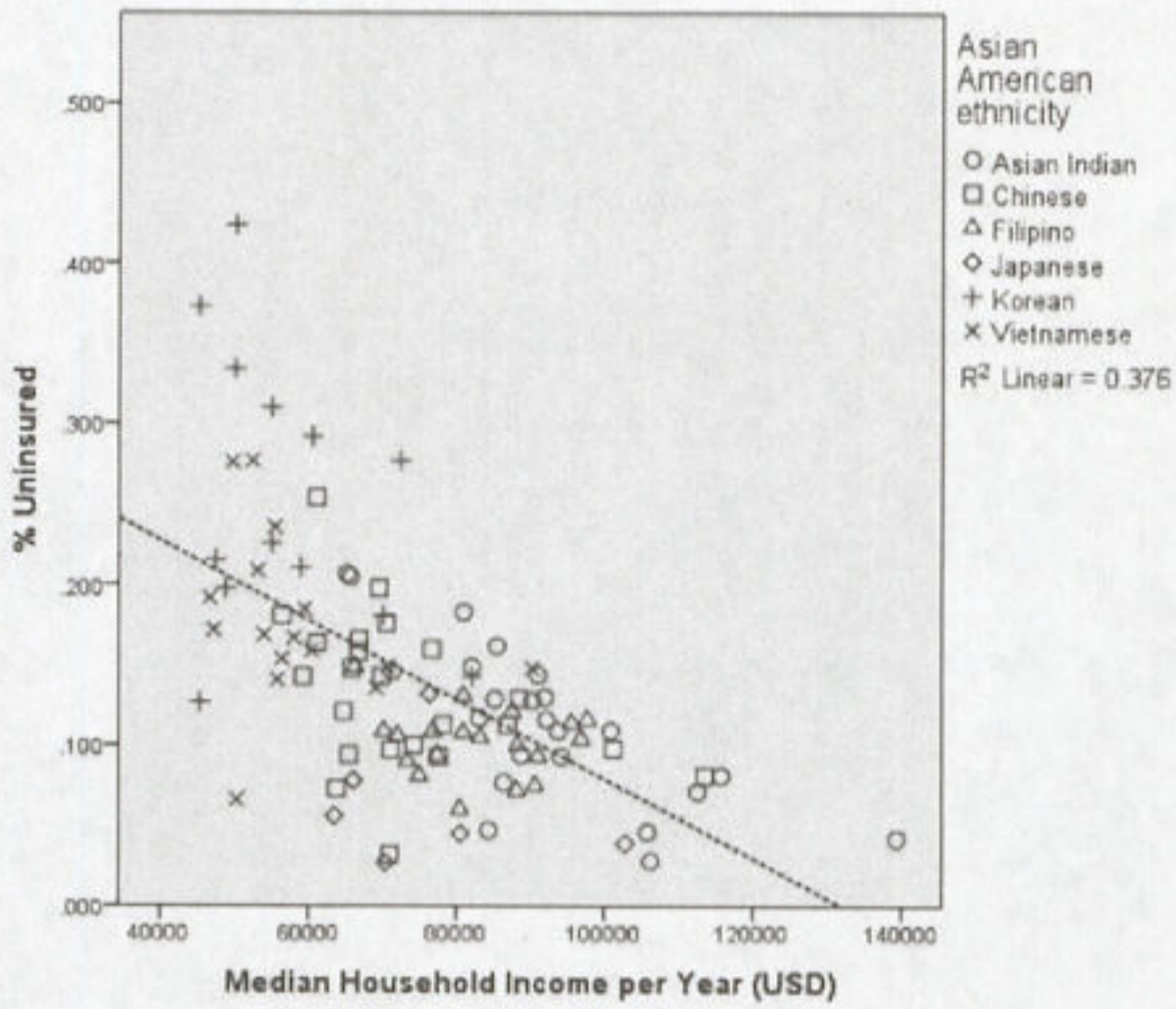


FIGURE 3 | PERCENT UNINSURED VERSUS PERCENT SELF-EMPLOYED

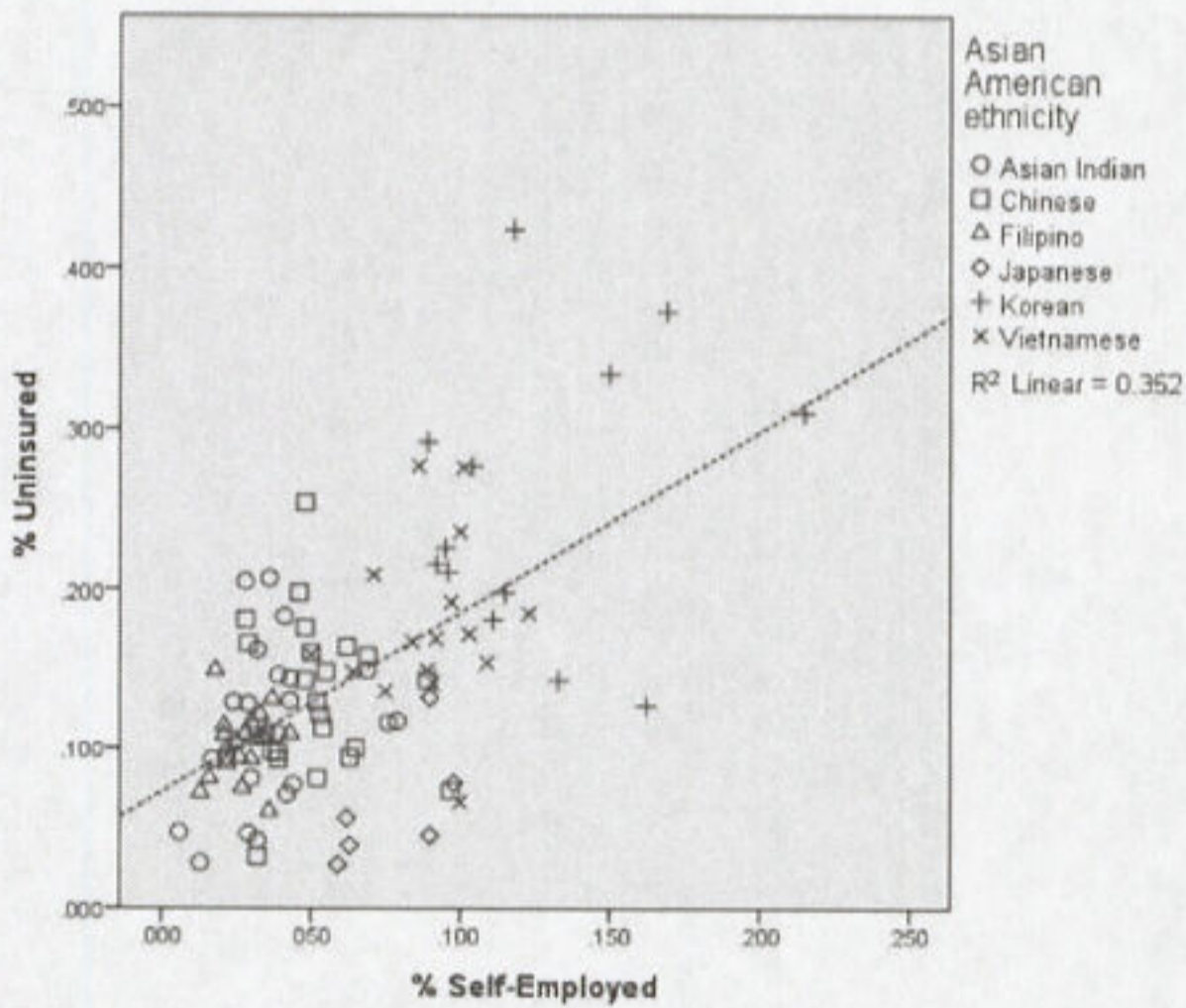


FIGURE 4 | PERCENT UNINSURED VERSUS PERCENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR HIGHER

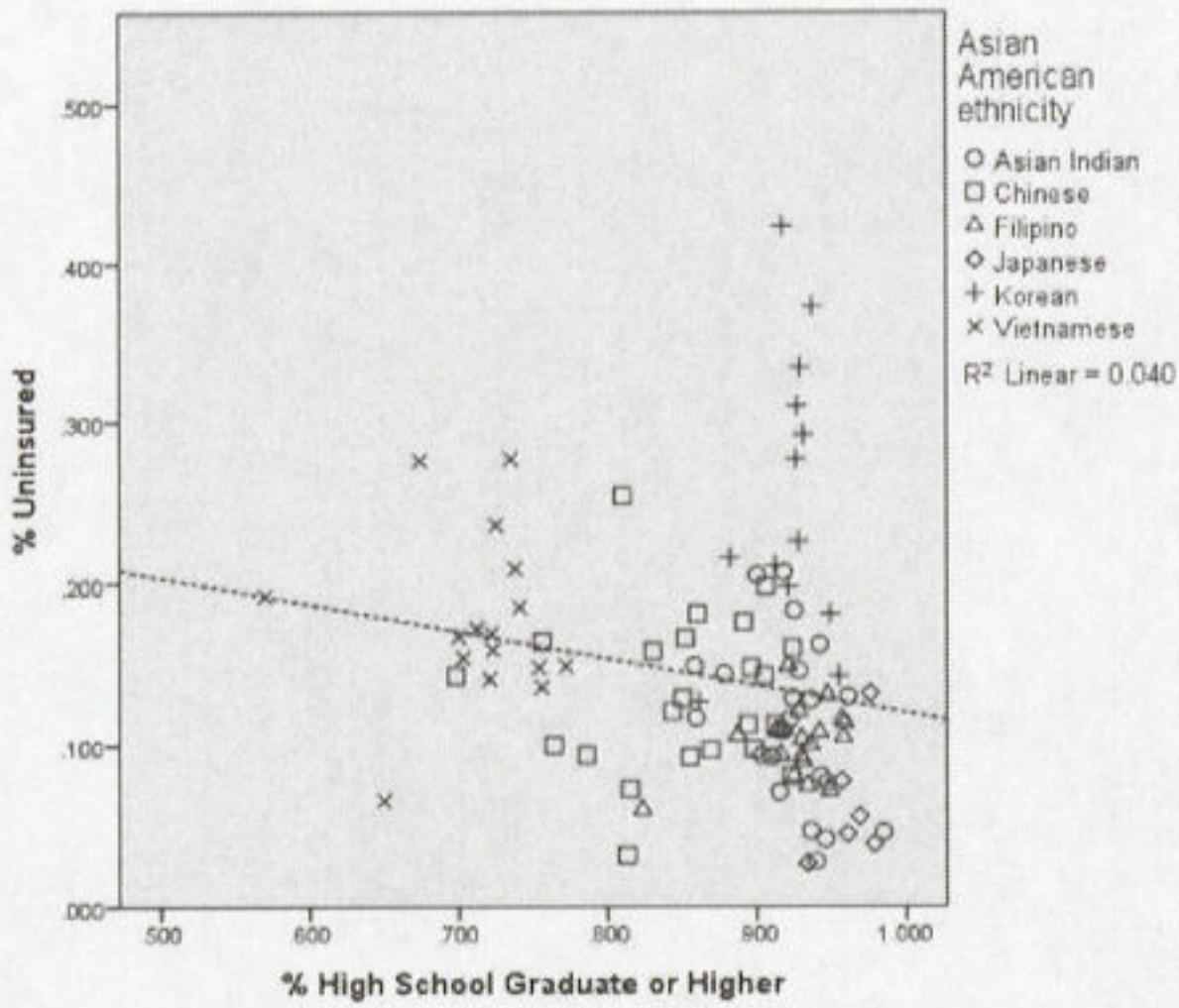
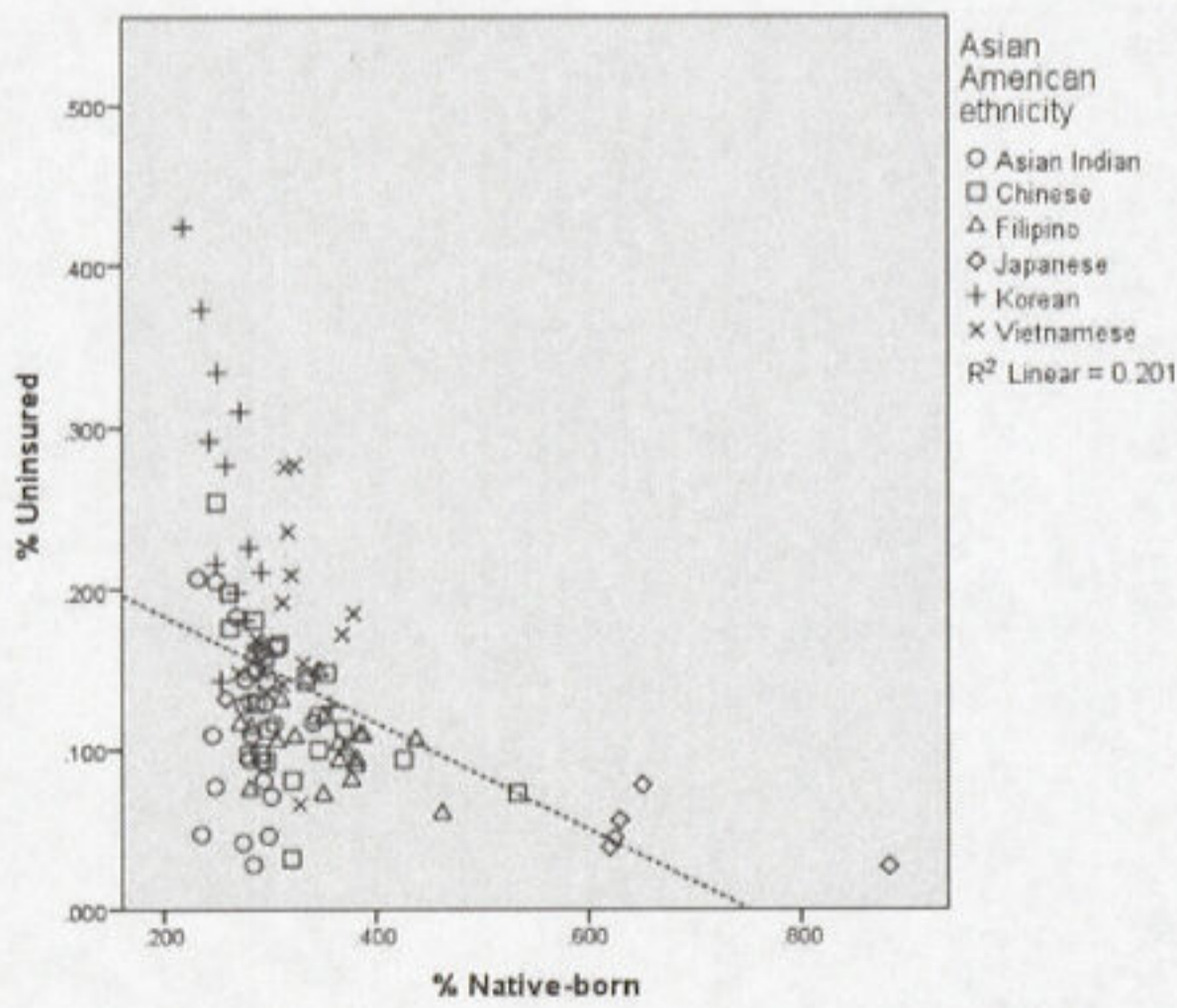
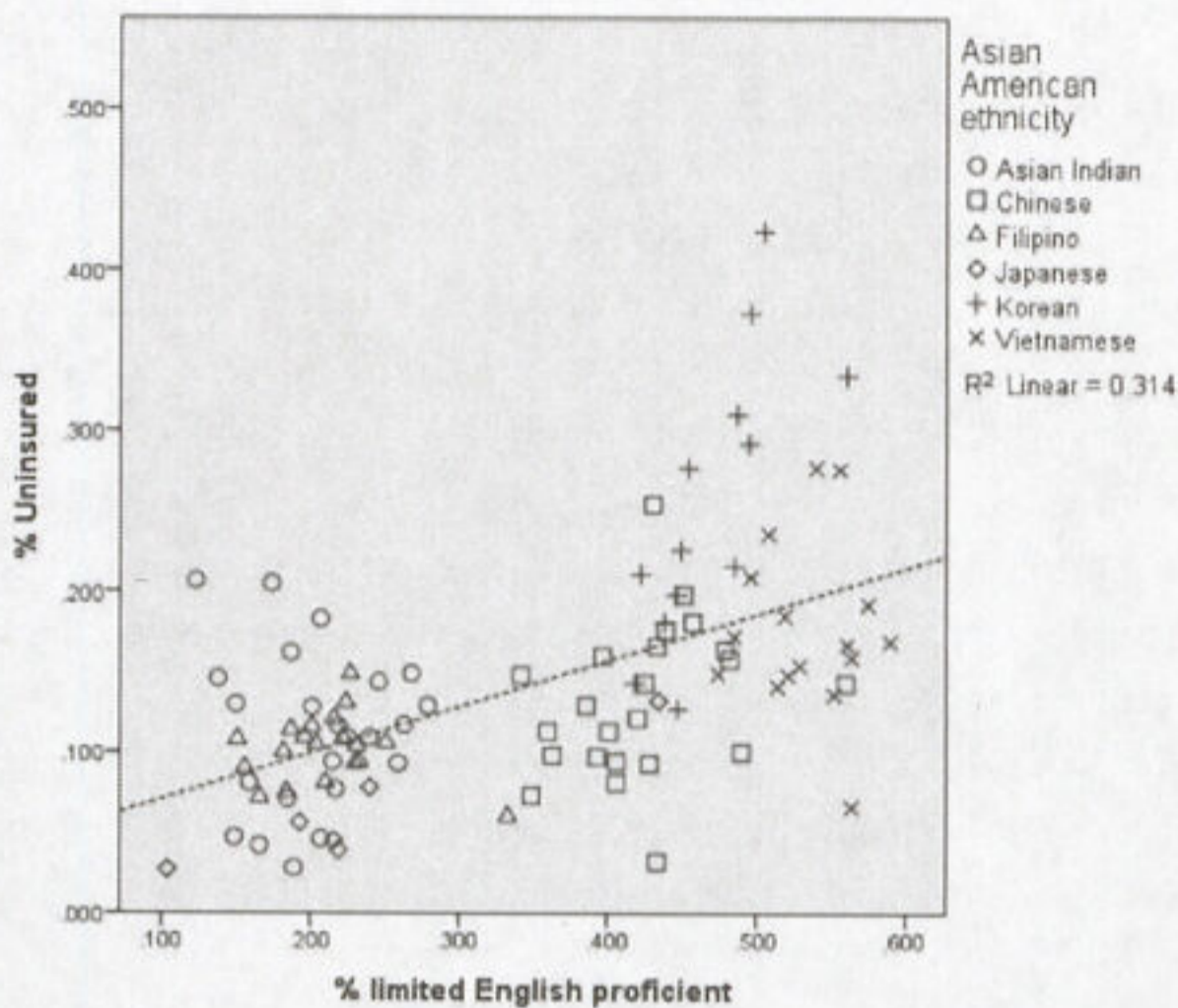


FIGURE 5 | PERCENT UNINSURED VERSUS PERCENT NATIVE-BORN



DISPARITIES IN HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

FIGURE 5 | PERCENT UNINSURED VERSUS PERCENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENT



When considering ethnicity, however, it is also important to note that the figure shows Vietnamese American and Korean American communities as having had the lowest median household incomes per year among all Asian American subgroups surveyed (see Figure 2). Reasons for this may be due to a variety of factors, but is consistent with studies done by Kathie Huang and Olveen Carrasquillo (2008) showing that a disproportionate number of Korean and Vietnamese workers find employment in the service industry, blue collar occupations, and small business firms, which are less likely to provide health insurance due to lower revenues and lower salaries.

PERCENT SELF-EMPLOYED

On the other hand, rates of self-employment showed a positive correlative relationship with rates of uninsured (see Figure 3). This relationship is also intuitive as those who run their own businesses are more likely to be uninsured and less likely to purchase health insurance because of its direct cost on their livelihood. The choice to forgo health insurance is a common practice for self-employed business owners to improve the profitability of their business by taking on greater potential health risks.

The graph for this variable also shows Vietnamese and Korean Americans as being more likely to be self-employed among all Asian American subgroups, resulting in a greater percentage of uninsured Vietnamese and Korean Americans (see Figure 3). While this result is also consistent with the studies by Huang and Carrasquillo (2008), the reasons behind this phenomenon may also be related to ethnic enclaves. A Chicago Federal Reserve report performed by Maude Toussaint-Comeau (2008) suggests that there may be a relationship between ethnic geographical concentration and propensity for self-employment among immigrant groups in the United States. Although ethnic geographical concentration was not measured in this study, a strong correlation was found between the variables of percent self-employed and percent limited English proficient. This may suggest one of two causal relationships: Vietnamese and Korean Americans are either self-employed because limited English proficiency prevents participation in the mainstream job market, or because of limited English proficiency, there is a demand for Vietnamese- and Korean American-owned businesses to provide services in these ethnic communities.

PERCENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR HIGHER

Educational attainment, measured by the percentage of high school graduates or higher in each Asian American community, showed a weak negative correlation with percent uninsured (see Figure 4). Asian American subgroups with greater educational attainment were slightly less likely to be uninsured. A paper by David Cutler and Adriana Lleras-Muney (2006) provides evidence of a relationship between educational attainment and health, due to higher-educated individuals being able to recognize the benefits of healthier behaviors, such as attaining health insurance coverage, when making decisions. In this data set, however, educational attainment may have a diminished effect on rates of uninsured at higher percentages. Additionally many exceptions to the linear model can be seen, suggesting that educational attainment plays a limited role in producing health insurance coverage.

The clustering of ethnic data samples is less distinguished for educational attainment than for other explanatory variables (see Figure 4). Vietnamese Americans have the lowest percentages of high school graduates, which may account for their higher uninsured rates. However, Korean Americans have high percentages of high school graduates but still demonstrate higher uninsured rates as well. For Korean Americans, variations in income, occupation, and acculturative factors may play a bigger role in determining health insurance coverage than education.

PERCENT NATIVE-BORN

According to the linear regression, Asian American communities with greater percentages of native-born population were less likely to be uninsured (see Figure 5). One possible explanation is that those communities with a greater proportion of native-born population are more well-established, are more strongly integrated into the general population, and have a larger population of second-generation American citizens that are born in the United States and can not only navigate past linguistic and cultural barriers, but also understand the technical language barriers of the United States health care system. When looking at the figure, however, the data points weakly fit the linear model, and it is possible that this relationship is more hyperbolic than linear.

Additionally, the differences in ethnic clustering are the most distinct in this figure than for any other explanatory variable. Five out of the six Japanese American communities surveyed in the United States had a percentage of native-born that was over 60 percent, while most of the communities of other Asian American subgroups fell below 40 percent (see Figure 5). While this result is consistent with patterns of immigration throughout history, it also strongly supports the hypothesis that ethnic subgroups that have acculturated over time will be more likely to be covered by health insurance. However, it is also possible that age may play a role in this, as ethnic communities primarily made up of foreign-born immigrants may also simply be less eligible for public health insurance programs such as Medicare or Medicaid due to either age or legal restrictions.

PERCENT LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

Limited English proficiency showed a positive correlation with percent uninsured (see Figure 6). While this relationship might be the most intuitive, as those who cannot speak English are less likely to be able to purchase or attain health insurance, it is also the most difficult relationship to understand due to English proficiency being the most multicorrelated variable in the study. Reasons for why limited English proficiency plays a large role in health insurance coverage are varied and many have been covered above. Language access is a huge predictor for the strength and concentration of an ethnic group in a geographic location, which may be related to rates in self-employment and income levels. Language access is also strongly correlated with educational attainment, with limited English proficiency able to act as either the cause of or the result of lower educational attainment. In and of itself, English proficiency is one of the best indicators of an ethnic group's ability to integrate in the United States, and those with lower percentages of English proficiency find it

difficult not only to purchase health insurance in the United States, but also to find culturally competent and linguistically capable care.

Ethnic disparities in language access are also clearly visible in the graph of percent uninsured versus percent limited English proficient (see Figure 6). While a majority of Japanese, Indian, and Filipino American communities have less than 30 percent of their population self-reported as limited English speakers, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese American communities have the highest percentages of limited English proficiency, translating into higher percentages of uninsured. These results are consistent with studies done by Ami M. Shah et al. (2010), where Chinese, Cambodian, and Vietnamese communities surveyed in Chicago all had higher rates of limited English proficiency, which also correlated with corresponding lower rates in health insurance coverage. In a similar study, Margarita Alegria et al. (2005) conducted interviews for the National Latino and Asian American Study and found that Vietnamese Americans had the highest rates of limited English proficiency, which correlated with Vietnamese Americans having the lowest rates of health insurance coverage out of all Asian American subgroups surveyed.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study have several important implications for health policy, especially with the provisions of the ACA being put into effect during the next few years. As the ACA continues to be implemented, now is a critical time for policy makers to consider the needs of Asian American communities across the United States.

The importance of median household income as a correlative factor means that economic policies that can increase the household income of Asian American or immigrant minorities would have a contributory effect on health insurance coverage among these population groups. This also means that if policies were made to make health insurance plans more affordable, there is a strong chance that these population groups would be more receptive to obtaining coverage. The Affordable Care Act tries to do this through the establishment of federal and state health insurance exchanges where federally subsidized health plans will be available for purchase for those with household incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty line. However, greater pressure also needs to be placed on all state governments to provide financial assistance for those that cannot afford health insurance plans by extending Medicaid eligibility to include those up to 133 percent of the federal poverty line.

The difficulty of self-employed workers purchasing health insurance means that there needs to be ways to encourage Asian American entrepreneurs and small businesses to provide health insurance for themselves and their employees.

DISPARITIES IN HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Although the Affordable Care Act does address this issue through the federal mandate, provisions to exclude businesses with fifty or less employees means we may still see an increase in the number of small businesses that employ less workers, as business owners use the exemption as a way to avoid paying for health insurance or the mandate's penalty fee. Although the ACA does provide a tax credit to help small businesses provide health insurance for their employees, the U.S. Small Business Administration needs to do a better job in making sure businesses in ethnic communities, especially Vietnamese and Korean American communities where self-employment rates are the highest, understand the importance and availability of the tax credit for their businesses.

The correlation of high school educational attainment means that education policy will also play a role in increasing health insurance coverage. Increasing educational attainment will still be important for promoting healthy behavior and health insurance attainment, but because a great proportion of Asian Americans are still foreign-born, education programs will need to be targeted toward this audience. State and federal agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (OMH) and those participating in the Financial Literacy and Education Commission, need to provide guidance on as well as coordinate on creating programs to educate foreign-born citizens in health care literacy and financial insurance literacy; they also must provide detailed information about how citizens can participate and utilize the federal and state health exchange markets provided by the Affordable Care Act.

Finally, one of the important points of this study is that it shows that acculturative factors such as the percent of native-born and rates of English proficiency in Asian American communities play a major role in determining health policy and health insurance coverage. The fact that communities with greater native-born generations and greater English proficiency correlate strongly with health insurance attainment suggests that it is the foreign-born, non-English speaking generation of Asian Americans that requires the most help in terms of integration and participation in the U.S. health care system.

Several policies can be implemented to help resolve this acculturative disparity. To assist Asian American communities with limited English proficiency in attaining health insurance, policy makers in the OMH and Office of Civil Rights should ensure that state and federal health insurance exchanges provide equal language access, with exchange materials being made available in the appropriate languages of Asian American ethnic groups residing in each state.

Another method to provide better health care access to Asian Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities is for the Department of Health and Human Services to provide additional funding and guidance to support

the establishment of more Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) in medically underserved Asian and Asian American communities. FQHCs are community-based health centers that receive federal funds for providing comprehensive primary care services in medically underserved areas, regardless of a patient's ability to pay. This important stipulation not only acts as a safety net for the uninsured, but also acts as an incentive for the FQHCs to adopt culturally and linguistically competent practices necessary for treating their communities. These practices, if proven to be successful, can then serve as models for other health care providers to better access ethnic communities.

One of the failings of the ACA is that it continues a policy of not allowing new immigrants to participate in Medicaid or receive the new federal subsidies for health insurance obtained in the exchanges. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) should reconsider its decision not to include immigrants in the state and federal health exchanges, as a large proportion of Asian Americans are foreign-born immigrants who would be ineligible to participate in the exchanges under these current policies.

Most importantly, the policy change that needs to occur is for more accurate data to be collected on Asian Americans, especially data that is disaggregated by ethnic subgroup. If this study has proven anything, it is that health insurance coverage and health outcomes for Asian Americans cannot be understood if data is not disaggregated to incorporate the diverse needs of each Asian American subgroup. Unless OMH and CMS ensure that state and federal health exchanges collect comprehensive data on the ethnic demographics of its participants, health policies toward Asian American groups will continue to be flawed in their approach.

CONCLUSION

Using 2008 to 2010 American Community Survey data, differences in rates of uninsured among Asian American ethnic subgroups were identified and attributed to five distinct socioeconomic and acculturative factors. But while each of these factors held independent correlations, it is important to note that degrees of correlation exist even among these factors, which means that when creating policies to improve health insurance coverage among Asian Americans, policy makers will need to consider all five of the socioeconomic and acculturative factors rather than resolve insurance coverage through piecemeal reform. There are a wide variety of comprehensive policy reforms available to help emerging Asian American communities access the U.S. health care system, and it will be the responsibility of policy makers to help resolve these racial and ethnic disparities in health care access to ensure that minority groups stand on equal footing in our health care system.

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18 Million and Rising: The Fight Against Asian American Voter Suppression

BY DIANE WONG AND NICOLE FINK

ABSTRACT *In the 2012 election cycle, a new wave of restrictive voting laws were passed to prevent voter fraud. These preventative measures included mandatory photo identification procedures, massive voter purges, shortened early voting periods, and proof of citizenship mandates. This article provides an analysis of the restrictive measures that affect the growing Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) electorate by weaving together interviews with advocacy organization leaders, poll volunteers, and community activists. These interviews highlight the experiences of AAPIs who have been disproportionately affected. To understand the recent trends and their influence on the AAPI electorate, this article is divided into four sections. The first presents information on the demographic changes and challenges that the growing AAPI electorate faces. The second examines the most common forms of voter suppression as exemplified in the 2012 presidential election cycle. The third documents how the AAPI community has fought voter suppression. The final section assesses the broader policy implications and provides recommendations for how AAPIs can fight against voter suppression.*

INTRODUCTION

The freedom for individuals to participate in politics is at the heart of American politics. The activities that define political participation can take many forms, ranging from casting a vote to participating in demonstrations to writing to legislators to joining civic associations. Although voting is not the only way to participate in politics, it is one of the most fundamental features of any democratic regime. The process of casting a ballot is crucial for preserving and protecting our basic constitutional rights as human beings regardless of gender, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and national origin.

Currently, one of the greatest challenges to American democracy is the increase in voter suppression measures at the local, state, and national levels of government. In the 2012 election cycle, a new wave of restrictive voting laws was passed under the auspices of preventing voter fraud. These included mandatory photo identification procedures, massive voter purges, shortened early voting periods, proof of citizenship mandates, and other preventative

measures. These restrictive voting laws disproportionately impact particular segments of the polity including elderly, minority, low-income, disabled, and other traditionally underrepresented groups.

This article adds to the scholarship on voter suppression by providing an analysis of the various restrictive voting measures that affect the growing Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) electorate by weaving together in-depth interviews of advocacy organization leaders, poll volunteers, and community activists. These interviews highlight the experiences of AAPIs from across the country who have been disproportionately affected by voter suppression measures. In order to make sense of the recent trends in voter suppression and their influence on the AAPI electorate, this article is divided into four complementary sections. The first section presents essential information on the demographic changes and challenges that the growing AAPI electorate faces. The second section provides an analysis of the most common forms of voter suppression as exemplified in the 2012 presidential election cycle. The third section documents the ways in which the AAPI community has fought against voter suppression at the local and national levels. The fourth and final section assesses the broader policy implications and offers recommendations for how AAPIs can fight against voter suppression.

18 MILLION AND RISING: THE ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER ELECTORATE

AAPIs are among the fast-growing minority groups in the United States. According to the 2010 U.S. Census report, there are approximately 18 million AAPIs living in the United States, representing close to 6 percent of the total population. While the AAPI population continues to rapidly grow in traditional gateway states such as California, New York, and Hawaii, the population has nearly doubled in twenty-seven states across the nation. Many of these are key electoral battlegrounds states such as Florida, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Nevada, and Georgia. Within the past ten years, the AAPI population grew 57 percent in the West, 79 percent in the Northeast, 84 percent in the Midwest, and 107 percent in the South (U.S. Census Bureau 2010a). In some larger states, such as California, Texas, New Jersey, North Dakota, and Illinois, AAPI population growth is even outpacing that of Latinos and African Americans.

Along with this high rate of growth, the AAPI population has been diversifying in terms of geographic concentration, socioeconomic status, immigration history, and national origin. With regard to population diversity, the number of Asian ethnic groups recognized by the 2010 U.S. Census report has grown from four to forty-eight since the 1970s, and the list of recognized subgroups

now includes Far East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Indian subcontinent, Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, and the Pacific Islands. The largest AAPI ethnic group living in the United States is that of Chinese Americans, followed by Filipinos, Indians, Vietnamese, and Koreans (U.S. Census Bureau 2010a). In addition, the fastest-growing AAPI ethnic groups include Bangladeshi Americans, followed by Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, and Indians (U.S. Census Bureau 2010a).

There has been a considerable amount of attention paid to the dynamic changes and shifts within the community, however, it is equally important to consider the emerging challenges AAPIs are facing. For instance, most of the AAPI population resides in the metropolitan areas and urbanized cities of California, New York, Hawaii, Texas, and New Jersey. In some of these areas, AAPI residents are experiencing deteriorating living conditions, especially with increases in rent and cost of living, forced evictions and displacement, gentrification, and police harassment (for more information about these issues in New York City, see CAAAV 2008). Throughout the United States, there are widening disparities between AAPI ethnic groups in terms of educational attainment, unemployment rates, socioeconomic status, housing opportunities, and health status (Asian Pacific American Legal Center and Asian American Justice Center 2011). In light of these challenges and contrasts within the community, it has become increasingly important for AAPIs to gain equal access and representation at the local, state, and federal levels of government to ensure that the community has a voice in the policy making process.

While the AAPI community has experienced an overall increase in citizenship and naturalization cases, there are still significant obstacles that hinder the full potential of AAPI political participation and civic engagement.

WHAT IS VOTER SUPPRESSION?

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, and the Help America Vote Act of 2002 are written into the nation's federal laws to protect the right of American citizens to vote. However, tactics have been used to make it difficult for individuals to exercise this right. While voter suppression is a large issue that encompasses a wide range of grievances, the most basic definition includes any and all processes that prevent eligible voters from casting ballots in order to affect the outcome of an election. Voter suppression is not limited to instances on Election Day, but can also include public policies, laws, and deceptive practices that curtail voting. The following sections provide a comprehensive analysis of the four major forms of voter suppression as recorded through our interviews, including efforts to pass voter identification laws, create citizenship challenges, curtail early voting periods, and restrict voter registration drives.

Voter Identification Laws

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 mandates that states must confirm the identity of any voter who registered by mail and has not voted in a previous federal election through a valid photo identification or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or other government document with name and address. Many states have passed stringent voter identification laws that require registered voters to show some form of identification either at registration or prior to voting. The voter identification bills vary according to the state with some requiring government-issued photo identification and others requiring non-photo identification. As of November 2012, the states that request photo identification at polls include Arizona, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Ohio, South Dakota, and Georgia. The states that require identification without photo include Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington (Brennan Center for Justice 2012).

While supporters of voter identification laws contend that they help to ensure voter integrity and protect against voter fraud, evidence indicates that the restrictive identification provisions disproportionately impact elderly, minority, low-income, and other traditionally underrepresented communities. A recent study found that immigrant and minority voters in California, New Mexico, and Washington are especially impacted by the voter identification laws since members of these groups are consistently less likely to have the required forms of identification needed for voting (Barreto et al. 2007). For instance, AAPIs were 20 percent less likely to have two forms of identification as compared to Whites. AAPIs were almost 24 percent less likely to have access to a recent bank statement, 18 percent less likely to be able to produce a utility bill, and 11 percent less likely to be able to produce a property tax bill that would contain their name and current address (Barreto et al. 2007). In addition, the process of obtaining a government-issued form of photo identification can be costly and burdensome. For example, the cost to obtain a U.S. passport ranges from \$55 to \$165. It is estimated that only 30 percent of citizens possess a U.S. passport (U.S. Department of State n.d.). The cost and time needed to acquire identification for voting may deter many eligible AAPI voters from casting a ballot (Asian American Justice Center 2011).

As a result of these voter identification laws, there has been increased reports of election poll workers singling out AAPI voters based on their skin color, accent, or foreign-sounding names (Tran 2012). In some instances, many AAPI voters are improperly or excessively asked for identification when only first-time voters should be asked for identification. In a Minnesota precinct, a

group of elderly Hmong American voters was asked by poll workers to provide identification while a White male in line behind the group was told he did not need to provide identification. The poll worker then continued to only ask Hmong voters for identification (Tran 2012).

Proof of Citizenship for Voter Registration

In addition to stringent voter identification laws, many states have considered and enacted proof of citizenship policies for voter registration. In 2004, Arizona passed Proposition 200, becoming the first state to require that prospective voters provide documentation of citizenship in order to register to vote. The citizenship-based policies for voter registration are in effect in Georgia, Alabama, Kansas, and Tennessee and are pending in a number of states (Brennan Center for Justice 2006). Although the policies are directed to prevent noncitizen voting, there is no existing documentation of widespread noncitizen voting, and most studies have shown that noncitizen voting is rare, and in most cases, unintentional.

The proof of citizenship registration policies adversely affect the AAPI electorate as many are foreign-born naturalized citizens who are less likely to be aware of voting requirements. In the three states that have passed proof of citizenship requirements, approximately 70 percent of AAPIs are foreign-born and roughly 34 percent are naturalized (U.S. Census Bureau 2010b). According to the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), a national organization that protects and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans by combining litigation, advocacy, education, and organizing, several AAPI voters in Atlanta reported that they were unable to vote in the 2012 election cycle because they had not provided documentary proof of citizenship as is required under Georgia's proof of citizenship law (Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund 2012a). In Cobb County, Georgia, an AAPI voter was turned away from the polls and sent to the county clerk's office to prove eligibility to vote despite having shown a U.S. passport as documentary proof of citizenship (Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund 2012a). The proof of citizenship requirement creates an atmosphere of fear where newly naturalized voters might feel threatened by the idea that their registration may not be valid or may be challenged at the polling sites.

The necessary forms of documentation for AAPI voters to prove their citizenship can also be burdensome to obtain. In most cases, the acceptable forms of documentation to prove citizenship for registration include birth certificates, naturalization documents, driver's license numbers, and other hard-to-obtain documents. Again, the process of securing these types of

documents requires an abundance of time, money, and some degree of English proficiency, which pose as obstacles to the newly naturalized AAPIs.

Eliminating Early Voting Opportunities

In general, states offer three ways for voters to cast ballots before Election Day: early voting, absentee voting, and mail-in voting. The early voting process allows voters to cast ballots several days prior to an election via mail or in-person usually in designated early voting polling stations. As of November 2012, a total of thirty-two states and the District of Columbia allowed for some sort of early voting with no excuse or justification required (Brennan Center for Justice 2012). However, in recent years, more local and state governments have pushed for measures to curtail the early voting period.

Limiting early voting opportunities has a negative impact on many segments of the electorate, especially those who have jobs, child care obligations, or other commitments that make it difficult to reach the polls on Election Day. Since AAPIs currently have the lowest voter registration and turnout rates of all racial groups, cutbacks on early voting have an especially disproportionate effect on the AAPI community. The option of early voting helps to increase the rates of AAPI voter turnout at the polls by making the process of casting a ballot more convenient and accessible (Asian American Justice Center 2011). For instance, data from the 2010 U.S. Census population survey indicates that approximately one in four nonvoting AAPIs gave “too busy” and/or “conflicting schedule” as the most popular reasons for not turning out to vote (U.S. Census Bureau 2010b). The convenience of casting ballots around their schedules in advance of Election Day has made early voting an increasingly popular choice for AAPI voters. Any attempt to cut early voting prevents a large segment of the AAPI electorate from making its voice heard in the political process.

Restrictions on Voter Registration Drives

In a veiled attempt to protect against voter fraud, several states including California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, and Washington have enacted laws such as strict deadlines enforced by fines and criminal penalties that restrict voter registration drives (Brennan Center for Justice 2012). In lawsuits filed in Ohio and Florida in 2012, proponents have been unable to prove that voter registration drives cause voter fraud or other related problems. Again, real instances of voter fraud are rare, and in most cases, unintentional.

The restrictions on voter registration drives have a negative impact on voter turnout since they limit the number of organizations conducting the drives. The community-based voter registration drives are essential to

ensure political participation from a diverse constituency since they are able to target immigrant, elderly, disabled, low-income, and other traditionally underrepresented groups. Recent studies indicate that more than 12 percent of minority voters reported registering through a voter registration drive as compared to 6 percent of non-minority voters (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). As there are only a few voter registration drives that provide bilingual volunteers to assist immigrant and minority communities, these community-based voter registration drives are essential to ensuring AAPI voter registration. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 68 percent of AAPIs old enough to vote are U.S. citizens, and of those eligible to register to vote, only 55 percent has done so (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). As a response, many nonprofit groups in the recent election cycles have organized get-out-the-vote activities and voter registration drives to help mobilize AAPI voters.

In order to comply with the strict voter registration drive laws, however, nonprofit organizations have decreased their voter registration efforts or have shut down operations entirely. According to Asian American Justice Center (AAJC) election monitoring efforts, the Florida state legislature recently enacted several laws that place restrictions on voter registration that make it virtually impossible for community organizations to run voter registration drives (Lee 2012). A wide variety of voter registration drives are essential to mobilizing and energizing AAPI participation in politics, especially in battleground states such as Florida.

Language Barriers and Inadequate Assistance

Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act mandates that citizens facing limited English proficiency (LEP) are able to equally participate in the electoral process. As evidenced by the previous election cycle, there has been an increasing number of instances of inadequate language assistance for AAPIs at polling sites (Lee 2012). Depending on the state or county, the covered jurisdictions are required to provide bilingual election assistance, including translated election materials, bilingual ballots, and oral assistance.

According to AALDEF poll monitoring efforts during the 2012 election cycle, a number of polling sites were reportedly providing inadequate language assistance. For instance, even though Queens County, New York, qualifies for Asian Indian language assistance under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, the board of elections failed to provide Bengali language ballots to voters (Tran 2012). In Hamtramck, Michigan, which meets the threshold of language minority populations under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, poll sites had shortages of Bengali-speaking interpreters (Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund 2012a). At one site, no Bangladeshi interpreter was assigned,

while at another site, the interpreter was absent for long periods of time. AALDEF also reported that while the City of Hamtramck did provide Bengali-translated ballots, the candidates' names were not transliterated, making it difficult to identify the correct candidates (Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund 2012b). Several of the poll workers also complained that voting machine scanners could not read the translated Bengali ballots.

Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act provides aid for voters who require assistance because of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write English. This provision allows any voter to be given assistance by a person of the voter's choice, with the exception being that the assistance may not be provided by the voter's employer, an agent of the employer, or an agent of the voter's union. Section 208 applies nationwide, regardless of whether or not the jurisdiction meets the threshold of the certain language group set forth under Section 203. In a Minnesota precinct, a volunteer attorney and interpreter was told that she was only allowed to help a maximum of three voters. The head election judge called the police to the polling location to confront the volunteer attorney for providing language assistance to Hmong elders who were having difficulty reading election materials and ballots (Lee 2012). In another incident, the city of Philadelphia committed to providing Chinese, Khmer, Korean, and Vietnamese interpreters at six poll sites pursuant to a 2006 settlement of *United States v. City of Philadelphia*. However, in the 2012 election cycle, there was only one interpreter at one poll site who only spoke one Asian dialect (Tran 2012). Furthermore, at another poll site, the judge of elections and a poll worker violated an elderly Chinese American voter's right to privacy as they held the curtains open as the voter cast his vote and instructed the individual to push certain buttons (Lee 2012).

There has also been an increase over the years involving instances of racial profiling and discrimination against AAPI voters with LEP. More than one-third of AAPIs have LEP and one-quarter of AAPIs live in households without a member aged fourteen or older who possesses English proficiency (Asian American Legal Center and Asian American Justice Center 2011). Chi-Ser Tran, voting rights coordinator for AALDEF, mentioned that in a previous year, there was an incident at a polling site in Massachusetts where several poll workers created two separate voting lines to segregate the Chinese voters and non-Chinese voters (Tran 2012). In a similar incident during the 2012 election cycle, in Annandale, Virginia, poll workers directed all Korean American senior citizen voters to stand in a separate voting line in order to eliminate the long lines (Tran 2012). According to Virginia's voting procedures, poll workers are required to ask all voters to repeat their name and home address. However, many of the Korean American senior citizens, most of whom had

never voted in previous elections, had difficulty responding to the poll workers. The poll workers then became frustrated with the seniors who were having difficulty answering due to language barriers and placed the LEP Korean American seniors in a separate line and then proceeded to help the English-speaking voters regardless of who arrived at the poll site first. The elderly Korean American voters who had LEP reported that they felt uncomfortable, confused, and irritated with their treatment by the poll workers.

Clearly, the new wave of voter suppression measures has had a negative effect on the AAPI electorate. Many AAPI voters are unfamiliar with the voting process, and these obstacles create a climate of fear that discourages AAPI political participation. As exemplified in this section, voter suppression measures can take many forms and can collectively lead to significant barriers for eligible voters to exercise their right to vote.

THE FIGHT AGAINST VOTER SUPPRESSION

In spite of the increase in voter suppression laws and policies at various levels of government, community activists have fought hard to protect the rights of voters. In the 2012 election cycle, there has been an impressive number of national and local initiatives led by advocacy organizations to protect the AAPI vote. This section highlights the work of these advocacy organizations, poll volunteers, and community activists who have fought hard to ensure that AAPIs have an equal voice in our democracy.

Several advocacy organizations have partnered at the national level to advance the issue of voter suppression. Jeanette Lee, a staff attorney at the AAJC, stated that in the 2012 election cycle, the staff was involved with a national election protection and monitoring project. The AAJC partnered with other Advancing Justice members and civil rights organizations to closely monitor the types of voter suppression legislation being introduced at various levels of government. In addition, the AAJC maintained connections with local organizations in order “pick up on voter suppression legislation across states and to provide technical support to fight off such bills” (Lee 2012). Lee mentioned that the AAJC also launched a “Know Your Rights” campaign with other national AAPI organizations around the country to produce state-specific “Know Your Rights” palm cards that were distributed in nine states: Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia. In each of these states, the palm cards were published in four languages including English and three Asian languages chosen in consultation with local partners. The palm cards provided basic voting rights information, such as where to vote, what to do when there is a problem at the polling location, and how to find out about registration status.

Viva Mogi, the national field director for APIAVote, a national nonpartisan organization that works with partners to mobilize AAPIs in electoral and civic participation, mentioned that the organization also worked closely with “local partners to focus on direct voter contact, voter registration, and voter protection” (Mogi 2012). In order to ensure voter protection in certain states like Virginia and Florida, the organization had local partners to focus on voter suppression cases. To assist AAPI voters, APIAVote partnered with the AAJC to launch the first-ever Asian language Election Day hotline with the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. On the day before and on the day of the election, the hotline hosted fifteen call-in lines with volunteers answering calls in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Thai. The volunteers worked with AAPI voters who called in to resolve any issues with the voting process and connected with local organizations in order to make certain that someone from the board of elections was dispatched to a particular polling site if necessary. According to the AAJC’s Lee, several New York and New Jersey AAPI voters called in to inquire about polling places as a result of the confusion caused by Hurricane Sandy (Lee 2012).

In addition to the national-level support for the AAPI vote, several organizations worked hard at the state and local levels to ensure voter protection. For instance, Tran mentioned that AALDEF partnered with other civil rights organizations and elected officials to engage in voter protection in fourteen different states, including the District of Columbia. In every major election, AALDEF staff conducts multilingual exit polls and partners with community organizations to dispatch attorneys, law students, and community volunteers to polling sites with large numbers of newly registered AAPI voters, jurisdictions in which Asian language assistance must be provided, and sites where AAPIs have reported barriers to the voting process (Tran 2012). At the ground level, the voting rights staff observed with an eye toward bilingual materials, interpreters, and compliance with language provisions of the Voting Rights Act. AALDEF also conducted voter registration drives and checked with the board of elections databases to ensure that newly registered voters were properly entered into the system. Tran added that “as a result of technical errors on the part of the board of elections, many AAPI registered voters had improperly spelled names, swapped first and last names, or were missing all together from the voter rolls” (Tran 2012).

In addition, many community activists have taken on an essential role in protecting the AAPI vote. Ramey Ko, judge of the City of Austin Municipal Court and long-time advocate for the AAPI community, mentioned that he helped organize U-Talk sessions about voting rights in Texas. In an effort to make voting information more accessible to the general public, Ko wrote simple

FAQs that described the voting process in Texas in order to help AAPI voters “figure out where to vote, whether or not they were registered, and what their voting rights are” (Ko 2012). The FAQs were translated into Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese and published in a variety of the Asian language newspapers in Texas. Ko also worked with civil rights organizations including the Texas Asian American Redistricting Initiative in Houston on redistricting policy to ensure that the AAPI community was adequately represented as “redistricting can be a form of voter suppression if used to dilute and diminish the voting power of certain communities” (Ko 2012).

Johnny Thach, a volunteer at the poll places in New York City’s Chinatown, said that volunteering for AALDEF gave him the opportunity “to ensure that AAPIs understood their rights and voter protections” (Thach 2012). Thach made sure that the poll workers were complying with language assistance provisions and also helped to administer exit polls to AAPI voters after the voting process. In describing an incident of voter suppression, Thach witnessed an elderly Chinese man who was abruptly turned away from the polls and told that he had to travel to Brooklyn to another polling site in order to cast a ballot. AALDEF poll workers were able to bring the man back and to provide him with an affidavit ballot in accordance with Governor Andrew Cuomo’s Executive Order 62, which was designed to assist New Yorkers who were affected by Hurricane Sandy and allowed voters registered in a federally declared disaster county to vote on an affidavit ballot at any poll site in New York State, regardless of where they were registered. Thach concluded that the most valuable lesson learned from his community work was that “while the polling site that I was assigned to may have had profound assistance, other sites might not have been as fortunate” (Thach 2012).

THE FUTURE FOR AAPI VOTERS: POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to ensure that AAPIs can exercise their right to vote, there must be steps taken to guarantee fairness in our system of democracy. First, poll workers need better preparation and training on election procedures and voters’ rights, especially on language assistance and cultural competency. The current poll worker training period is typically not an adequate amount of time to prepare poll workers on proper election protocols. For instance, depending on each jurisdiction, poll worker training can be as little as two hours. The lack of adequate training and intolerance of poll workers is confirmed by our interviews with poll workers and community activists.

Second, there must also be better Section 203 compliance with regard to bilingual written materials and language assistance to voters. Particularly,

translation and transliteration of information must be correct and accurate. During the 2012 presidential primary elections, in Quincy, Massachusetts, ballots that were translated into Chinese had a small translation error (Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund 2012c). Voters were to elect two state committee members: one man and one woman. The translation for “state committee woman” was correct, however the translation for “state committee man” was translated to mean “state committee member.” While this gender-neutral term is accurate, it did not indicate that the candidate chosen must be a man and not another woman. If the LEP voter had voted for another woman, his or her vote would have been voided. In addition, none of the jurisdictions transliterated the candidates’ names on the ballots making it difficult to identify candidates. A Chinese interpreter in Quincy, commented that having transliterated names on the ballots would be helpful. There must be correctly translated and transliterated information so that LEP voters have a fair and equal opportunity to vote.

Third, it is important that poll workers be adequately aware of Section 208 in order to ensure that LEP voters receive fair and equal treatment and access to voting in future elections. During the 2012 election cycle, many poll workers were not aware of Section 208 and refused to allow language minority voters to take someone into the voting booth or limited the number of voters a volunteer could assist. Since LEP individuals are less likely to vote than other American citizens, an essential way to ensure full political participation is by providing language assistance to LEP voters. Language assistance is key to Asian American participation since it can help increase voter confidence and comfort with the political process.

Fourth, it is critical for local, state, and federal governments to recognize the importance of community organizations that work to mobilize limited English proficiency AAPI voters. As noted earlier, community-based voter registration drives are essential to ensuring political participation from a diverse constituency since they are able to target traditionally underrepresented groups. In particular, there should be more support from the local government to provide adequate resources to community organizations for organized get-out-the-vote activities and voter registration drives prior to elections. These types of initiatives are imperative in order to increase the number of LEP voters in the political process.

Finally, there needs to be a greater societal effort to increase awareness about voting rights. This is particularly important in areas with a growing AAPI population, such as in Georgia, Florida, Nevada, or North Carolina, which often implement the most stringent forms of voter suppression measures. By educating the larger community, voters will be knowledgeable about their

rights and be empowered to speak out against any violations that may occur at the polls.

CONCLUSION

The political participation and involvement of diverse constituencies represents one of the central tenets of a representative democracy. As the AAPI community grows in the United States, the number of AAPI voters will only increase. If meaningful efforts are not taken to protect against voter suppression, the number of violations could also increase in each election cycle, which would result in the loss of the AAPI community's voice in the political process. This article highlights the stories, narratives, and experiences of AAPIs who have been disproportionately affected by voter suppression measures across the nation. In weaving together interviews conducted with advocacy organizations, poll volunteers, and community activists, this article seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding on the topic of voter suppression within the AAPI community. There is much work left to do, as the fight against voter suppression is hardly over.

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Get Off the Sidelines and Get into the Game: An Interview with Senator Mazie Hirono

INTERVIEWED BY MARIEL LIM



Born in Fukushima, Japan, Mazie K. Hirono was nearly eight years old when her mother brought her and her older brother to Hawaii to escape an abusive husband and seek a better life. Hirono served in the Hawaii House of Representatives from 1981 to 1994 and earned a reputation as an advocate for consumers and workers. After being elected as Hawaii's lieutenant governor in 1994, Hirono led efforts to support Hawaii's vital tourism industry through visa reform. Voters in Hawaii's second congressional district elected Hirono

to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2006. The people of Hawaii then elected her to the U.S. Senate in November 2012 by a twenty-five point margin. Upon her swearing in, Hirono became Hawaii's first female senator and the country's first Asian American woman senator to ever serve in the upper chamber. Hirono was appointed to sit on the Armed Services, Judiciary, and Veterans Affairs committees.

AAPR: You have dedicated much of your life to public service. What or who inspired you?

HIRONO: My greatest inspiration continues to be my mother because she showed me that one person can make a difference. She changed my life by bringing me to this country—escaping a terrible marriage in Japan. It is also true that other experiences turned me to public service as a way to make a difference. Protesting the war in Vietnam made me think that political change is a good way to help.

AAPR: As someone who has served in the Hawaii state legislature, as a statewide elected official, and as a member of Congress, what unique perspectives do you bring to your new role as senator?

HIRONO: I think that diversity in the Senate is really important and certainly important in the House too. When you have people of diverse backgrounds

and experiences come together to make decisions, I think that we make better decisions that reflect the diversity of our country. And, I certainly represent some of this diversity in the Senate as a woman, Asian, immigrant, and Buddhist.

AAPR: What do you think are the most pressing issues facing Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Native Hawaiians (AAPINH) in your state and across the country?

HIRONO: There are a lot of specific issues, but from a political standpoint I think that it's clear that AAPINHS can have a much greater influence in the political arena. Right now, they may not necessarily be as engaged. This can change if AAPINHS become much more actively involved in the political arena by supporting their candidates who are running for office or by running for office themselves. I think that's one of the challenges facing the APPINH community.

AAPR: Many Asian Americans choose more traditional career paths as opposed to a political career. Do you have any advice for aspiring politicians or public policy makers?

HIRONO: They have to be willing to take a risk and get off the sidelines. I know that sometimes our culture does not point us toward the public arena, but we could all push ourselves. I am a perfect example of someone who you would have never thought would be in politics for the length of time that I have had the privilege to serve. But if you are empowered by a desire to make a difference and you look to politics as a way to make social change, you should go for it. Take the risk. I think this is one of the biggest traits that people who run for elected office share.

AAPR: There is a wave of newly elected Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) leaders at the local, state, and federal level in the United States. The 2010 U.S. Census also shows that the AAPI community is one of the fastest-growing segments of the country. What can we do as a community to influence and mobilize around the political process?

HIRONO: Clearly, with more AAPIs running for federal office and being elected than ever before and with the difference AAPIs have made by voting in elections, this is a really good time for the AAPI community to become more engaged and understand the power that they have. They should consider running for office or helping people run for office. Let's face it. All communities are affected by the political decisions that are made, and so each community should get engaged, especially one that is growing in influence.

AAPR: With a seat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, is there a certain issue that you are looking forward to addressing in this committee?

HIRONO: One of the most complex issues will be immigration reform, and that is something near and dear to my heart. I want to make sure that immigration reform follows some guiding principles, of which one should be family unity—family reunification. In particular, there is one group that has long been waiting to be reunited with their children, and that is the Filipino World War II veterans. I hope that any comprehensive immigration reform will have a special provision for them. Again, family reunification continues to be an important guiding principle.

AAPR: The recent string of gun violence these past several years has brought gun control back to the forefront of the policy debate. What are your thoughts on gun control?

HIRONO: I hope that we can close major loopholes in our gun control laws. This is not about abrogating the Second Amendment's rights to guns, but there are some substantial loopholes. This includes loopholes around background checks. I also think we can pass laws that deal with gun trafficking. I hope that we can have some positive movement in reducing gun violence in our country, and I think these are some of the ways we can do just that.

AAPR: Given the president's remarks in the 2013 State of the Union address and your own family's history of immigration, what would you consider to be the most important components of a comprehensive immigration reform bill? Earlier you mentioned the importance of family reunification.

HIRONO: Again, family reunification is an important guiding principle. We also need to create a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented persons who are living in the shadows. I'd also like to see our current immigration process addressed. There is a huge backlog of people who want to come to this country and reunite with their families, and most of this backlog is comprised of those from Asian countries.

In addition, I hope that we can put in some visa changes, specifically tourist visas. Particularly, I'd like to have a bill that would encourage more of them to come visit the United States. I'm currently working on a bill that would do just that.

AAPR: What has been the most challenging part of your transition from the U.S. House of Representatives to the U.S. Senate?

HIRONO: Well, for one thing, I'm really glad to be here. While I miss my friends in the House, I'm glad to be able to continue my work in the Senate. This is a very different place with different rules, different people, and a different number of members. But I am focused on getting to know my colleagues on my committees and getting to know the lay of the land so that I can do a good job for the people in Hawaii.

Multicultural Cooking: An Interview with Anita Lo

INTERVIEWED BY REBECCA YANG



*Anita Lo, chef and owner of Annisa, is one of the most respected chefs in the country, earning numerous accolades for her inventive contemporary American cuisine. In 2000, Lo opened Annisa, an intimate restaurant in Greenwich Village. In June 2009, a fire destroyed the restaurant. While plans for rebuilding Annisa got underway, Lo appeared on the television show Top Chef Masters, where she finished fourth out of twenty-four chefs. In April 2010, after a complete renovation, Annisa reopened. In October 2011, Lo released her first cookbook, *Cooking Without Borders*, which highlights her passion for bringing multicultural flavors to her American kitchen.*

Rebecca Yang interviewed Anita Lo on 4 January 2013.

AAPR: Can you tell me a bit about your background?

LO: I grew up in Michigan. My mother was Chinese Malaysian, from Kuala Lumpur, and my father was from Shanghai. My father died when I was three, so I grew up mostly with my stepfather who was from Denver. His family was German. Both my mother and stepfather worked, so we had nannies to take care of us. When I was fifteen, I left to go to high school in Concord, Massachusetts. I then went to college at Columbia here in New York, where I majored in French. I came from a big foodie family, so I was already enamored with all things culinary. The summer after my junior year in college, I lived in Paris and took some cooking classes and fell in love with it. I spent three summers in France between high school and college. Then after college, I worked in New York at Bouley, and then after that I went back to Paris to get my degree at the Ritz-Escoffier. That time, I stayed a year, and after I got my *grande diplome*, I worked in several restaurants there. When I returned to New York, I worked at Chanterelle, Can, Maxim's, and Mirezi. I opened my own place, Annisa, in 2000.

AAPR: Did the immigrant experience of your parents influence you and your cooking?

LO: I get inspiration from everywhere. Much is from childhood. I grew up in a very multicultural environment. We traveled a lot, often just for food. My food memories sometimes inform my cooking. My time in France was very valuable and gave me the technique and the foundation for my cuisine. I still come back to my experiences there. Right now, I have a dish on the menu inspired by classic French cuisine: it has duck confit and a foie gras fat hollandaise. I've traveled a lot. I love Japanese cuisine. I take a lot of direction from there. I learned about Japanese cuisine just from eating out and reading. The cuisine really reaches me because it's just about the food and the contemplation of an ingredient in its prime, at the peak of its season.

AAPR: What is it like being a female chef in a predominantly male industry?

LO: It can be difficult. When I was growing up in the restaurant world, there was clearly a lot of bias, especially in France. But now on some level, being one of the few executive female chefs, you get a lot more media attention, which is good for your restaurant. I certainly wouldn't have it any other way. [Lo laughs.]

AAPR: Do you plan on staying at Annisa or working on other ventures?

LO: Annisa is my baby. I've had it for twelve years, and I definitely plan on staying here. I don't know if I'll be working on other restaurant projects. If I were to work on another restaurant project, it would have to be largely driven by one of my managers—either front of the house or back of the house—I'd like to help them open their restaurant and be involved that way. But it's hard to open a restaurant in New York City. It takes enormous sacrifice and dedication. When we opened Annisa, we didn't pay ourselves for over a year. It was really hard. We made really horrible salaries for another five years after that.

AAPR: Is it difficult being a chef in New York?

LO: I got lucky. Yeah, it is very hard. When I look at the numbers, I don't think people understand how much capital it takes to run a restaurant. On the other hand, it's a great place to be for ingredients and originality. I've got farms and the ocean right here. And it's very inspiring to be around other great restaurants. It's a great city to eat out in and to be around and learn from other chefs. And there are so many different cultures here as well. I can go eat at a Senegalese restaurant, or you name it. That's exciting, and that makes it easier.

I always try to go out to all the new places, but I love L'Artusi, which is right in my neighborhood. It's an Italian restaurant run by Gabe Thompson, and it's really comfort food for me. And there's Jewel Bako in the East Village, it's a sushi bar—their omakase is awesome.

AAPR: What do you think about sustainability or food policy in this country?

LO: It's very important to me to be a responsible steward of the ocean as I'm an angler. Sometimes, we make mistakes. It's really hard to say. I got an e-mail the other day saying: "Where is your meat from, where is your seafood from, I can't eat there unless it's local." What does local mean to you? My focus is multiculturalism, which I think is also important. It's important to open people's eyes and see other cultures, and I think you can do that through food. And sometimes to do that you have to get something flown in from Japan. But I try to buy the best. The best is seasonal and much of the time local. I try to buy the best from local sources, but sometimes the best is from farther away. I feel that there are a lot of food police out right now around us. But I still want my Bordeaux from France.

AAPR: Have you found that consumer tastes have changed over the past ten years, and has that changed your approach at all?

LO: I worked with David Bouley before they even had the term "farm to table," and we were buying food from local farms. I don't like to be swayed by popular demand. I cook because it's a passion for me. I cook because it has meaning for me and hopefully people like it. I've got a really tiny restaurant for that reason.

AAPR: Has New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's food policies (such as no trans fats in restaurant food and the soda ban) affected your restaurant at all? If so, do you think they have been harmful or beneficial?

LO: I think they're absolutely beneficial. High-end restaurants are never going to be using trans fats—that just doesn't happen. There's no way. That affects fast-food restaurants and lesser restaurants. No one [in higher-end restaurants] is using that kind of fat, and no one was ever using that kind of fat. That doesn't affect me at all.

AAPR: What do you like to cook for yourself at home?

LO: I don't cook in my apartment. I have a house in Long Island, and that's where I cook. I tend to warm up soup here. I'll make a batch of soup and freeze it. Oftentimes, I'll have a bowl after service in my apartment. If I'm on

a healthy kick I'll sometimes eat arugula salads with stuff in it. When I'm not on a healthy kick, I'll eat a bag of Doritos or whatever—I'm not a food snob.

AAPR: What is your favorite thing to eat?

LO: I don't have a favorite thing to eat. I'm an omnivore, and I like to try new things. I like to be challenged. I find it exciting to go try new places and new things and travel.

AAPR: Is cooking a stress reliever or stress inducer?

LO: It can be both. It depends. If you're cooking at home, that's definitely stress relieving. If you're cooking in a restaurant on the line, and you get in the zone, and you're going fast, it becomes a dance almost, and it's exciting, it's challenging, you're multitasking twelve things, and to see it all come to fruition in the way that you planned is—not really a stress reliever—but certainly satisfying.

AAPR: What is one kitchen utensil you can't live without?

LO: There's a spoon that I really like, that I have, that I use on the line. I love plating with spoons, I like cooking with spoons. I like the feel of this one spoon that I have. It was in the restaurant when I took it over. There was a lot of equipment in the restaurant when we took it over, and this spoon was one of them, and it says "Diva" on it. It's totally opposite of who I am, so I liked it.

AAPR: Do you have any advice for aspiring chefs?

LO: I think it's important to find a restaurant where you really love the food and where you're going to be happy, and once you do that, you need to stay there for at least a year, and then you can go on to other things. But you can't hop from place to place. You're going to ruin your ability to find work, and you're not going to learn as much. To really understand a restaurant, you need to be there at least a year. And that way you increase your chances of being promoted. Most people hire from the bottom, in fine dining at least.

AAPR: How was your experience on *Top Chef Masters*?

LO: [Laughs] Oh, that was silly. It was exciting. It was great to be with all those chefs. A lot of those chefs are from a generation before me, chefs that I looked up to for a long time when I was a cook. It was great to be cooking with them. That was really amazing, and it was great to see that no one was really crazy competitive. It's about the food, it's about sharing, and I think that's what food really *should* be about. Cooking is not a competition.

Can Military Courts Deliver Justice to a Subordinate Hazed by Superiors?

BY ELIZABETH R. OUYANG

Can military courts deliver justice to a subordinate hazed by his superiors? If Pvt. Danny Chen's case is any indication, the answer is a resounding "no." After six weeks of physical abuse and unrelenting racial taunts by superiors, Pvt. Chen was found dead in a guard tower in Afghanistan on 3 October 2011 with a bullet to his head. Cited by Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow specializing in national security and defense at the Brookings Institution, as "one of the major cases of the last two wars" (Nessen 2012), Chen's case has enraged the Asian American community nationwide and galvanized it to seek justice. From the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the post 9/11 anti-immigrant climate, Asian Americans have repeatedly been subjected to hate crimes fueled by negative stereotypes like the "Yellow Peril" or the perpetual foreigner, but Pvt. Danny Chen's case hits a raw nerve. To serve in the U.S. military and be willing to sacrifice your life for your country is the greatest contribution an American can make. Born in New York City and raised in Manhattan's Chinatown, Danny Chen enlisted in the military to do just that. And this is how an Asian American soldier is treated?

OCA-NY, formally known as the Organization of Chinese Americans, has led the advocacy efforts to ensure the government did what it was supposed to do: conduct a thorough and transparent investigation and prosecute those responsible to the fullest extent under the law.¹¹ With help from numerous organizations and thousands of individuals,¹² the community signed petitions, marched in rallies, participated in a nationwide birthday card campaign for what would have been Danny's twentieth birthday during the Memorial Day 2012 weekend, and educated the world about Danny's plight through ethnic, mainstream, and social media, including two YouTube videos: "What Happened to Danny?"¹³ and "Bring It Home."

In December 2011, eight White superiors were charged in connection with Chen's death (Semple 2011). Seven were tried at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, from July to November 2012. The last to stand court-martial was Lt. Daniel Schwartz, the platoon leader and the only commissioned officer charged with several counts of dereliction of duty. In December 2012, Lt. Schwartz resigned from the Army to avoid a court-martial. Instead, as part of an arrangement he

made with the prosecutors, Schwartz underwent an Article 15, a nonjudicial proceeding closed to the public (Brooks 2012c). His punishment, if any, has not been released to the public. The other seven have been convicted of charges ranging from assault, maltreatment, and dereliction of duty.¹⁴ However, only one was discharged for bad misconduct, only three actually served jail time, and the most jail time received was six months. Platoon Staff Sgt. Dugas, the second in command, was found guilty of dereliction of duty and sentenced to three months in jail. However, the military judge granted him three months time-served because he had his gun taken away prior to being convicted, which the judge found was tantamount to unlawful pretrial punishment (Brooks 2012a). The most appalling sentence was rendered on 21 November 2012 involving squad leader Staff Sgt. (now specialist) Andrew VanBockel. Not only did VanBockel fail to prevent lower-ranking superiors from hazing Chen, in my view (having attended the trials and read many newspaper accounts of the case), VanBockel was the ring leader who instigated the verbal and physical abuse that escalated into a state of hopelessness for Chen.

Based on both what I witnessed as an observer at the trials as well as accounts in the press, the following is a summary of the abuse Chen experienced. Chen was dragged on his back over rocks, kneed in his thigh, and made to do pushups with water in his mouth and sandbags on his back. This treatment was in addition to excessive guard duty and corrective training. VanBockel allowed Chen to be falsely accused of and punished for graffiti in the guard tower. He abused his authority by ordering Chen to call a superior by his first name, knowing Chen would be punished for it. Staff Sgt. VanBockel called Chen "Dragon Lady" and "Fortune Cookie" and made him give instructions in Chinese to his fellow privates in front of the entire platoon to "break him out of his shell." On the day Chen died, VanBockel ordered him to low crawl in full gear over 100 meters of rocks while two superiors kicked and threw rocks and water bottles at him. This was punishment for failing to put his helmet on before entering the guard tower. A military jury found VanBockel guilty of hazing, maltreatment, and dereliction of duty. However, the punishment meted out to VanBockel was merely a reprimand, reduction in rank of two levels, and sixty days of hard labor, of which forty-five were credited for one month of pretrial detention (Brooks 2012b). That equates to fifteen days of hard labor for a death that presumably could have been avoided if the squad leader had simply said "stop."

These light sentences have grave ramifications for ending a culture of hazing in the military that has gone unchecked for far too long. It is leaders who are charged with setting a climate of integrity and respect for everyone. These "slap on the wrist" sentences give no protection for lower-ranking soldiers who

become pawns for the entertainment of superiors at a post far removed. These light sentences provide no incentive for subordinates under fear of retaliation to come forward to report abuse, let alone for young men and women to enlist in the Army. And they send the message that the Army prioritizes chain of command over its professed values of respect and integrity.

While the prosecution was aggressive with what charges remained and all eight were found guilty of a range of these lesser charges, the sentencing system allows the military judge and jury to consider a soldier's good combat history. This essentially shields a superior with more combat duty from meaningful punishment for unlawful treatment of his subordinates. These cases also highlight the issue of whether justice can be served by a military jury composed only of officers and not privates as well.

This case only scratches the surface of a deep-seated culture of unchecked hazing in the military. In addition to judicial reform, it cries out for reforms at the executive, legislative, and administrative levels as well. When hazing goes unpunished, not only are subordinates at risk and the integrity of our military compromised, but unity among troops is destroyed. This broken bond adversely affects combat readiness and our country's security.

On 13 January 2012, Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh, along with the chief of staff of the Army and sergeant major of the Army, echoed these sentiments in a letter they co-signed to all Army personnel affirming a zero tolerance for hazing (Vergun 2012). The letter states, "The very foundation of what we do depends on trust, and trust depends on the treatment of all soldiers with dignity and respect by fellow soldiers and leaders. Without this, our profession is placed in jeopardy, our readiness suffers, and our mission success is at risk." It goes on to say, "We expect every member of the Army, military and civilian, to vigilantly guard against any form of hazing and to report any incident of hazing to the chain of command" (Vergun 2012). While this was an important message to send from the top down, it clearly is not enough to undo an entrenched culture of unchecked hazing. Despite all the publicity Chen's case has engendered, in the midst of these highly publicized court-martials, a YouTube video was released capturing the hazing of an officer at a promotion ceremony in Fort Bragg, Michigan, showing him being slammed in the chest with a mallet that caused him to fall down, hit his head on a chair, and sustain several stitches to his head.

Some of the blatant, institutional barriers to justice that these court-martials exposed could be remedied by reform legislation. Motivated in part by Chen's case, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand from New York and U.S. Representative Judy Chu from California introduced bills that addressed reporting and tracking of hazing incidents, including a definition of hazing to be defined

in the U.S. Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Gillibrand's bill also included a provision requiring the armed forces to devise a procedure for anonymously reporting incidents.

Representative Chu's nephew, Cpl. Lance Harry Lew, committed suicide after being a victim of hazing in the Marines just six months prior to Chen's death (Associated Press 2012). And in New York, Chen's death was also preceded by the death of Pvt. Hamson McPherson, Jr., a Staten Island African American Marine who committed suicide in May 2011 after he was allegedly hazed (Siemaszko 2011).

U.S. Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, whose district includes Manhattan's Chinatown, introduced an anti-hazing bill, part of which was attached as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that passed in the House on 18 May 2012. This amendment dealt with an expedited transfer policy for soldiers who are victims of hazing and required annual reporting by the Armed Forces to Congress on what they are doing to prevent hazing. On 5 December 2012, the U.S. Senate passed the National Defense Authorization Act for 2013, which included portions of Gillibrand's legislation that dealt with reporting requirements to Congress on the military's policies to improve anti-hazing training, tracking, and responding to incidents.

On 2 January 2013, President Barack Obama signed into law the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, which contains anti-hazing provisions. The provisions in the final bill are stronger than those in the Senate version but weaker than those in the House version. It calls for the different branches of the Armed Forces to report to Congress within 180 days of the law's enactment what they have done to prevent hazing, how they have responded to incidents of hazing, and what additional actions, if any, they propose to take to further address the incidence of hazing in the Armed Forces. The bill goes beyond the Senate version by requiring the report to assess the extent to which the UCMJ specifically addresses the prosecution of persons alleged to have committed hazing. The report must include "any recommended changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice or the Manual for Courts-Martial to improve the prosecution of persons alleged to have committed hazing in the Armed Forces." This legislation is an important first step in a long road of reforms that must lie ahead to protect servicemen and women from maltreatment by their superiors.

It remains to be seen if the Army's plan will include stronger accountability up and down the chain of command; expedited transfers for victims or witnesses who report incidents of hazing; and stiffer punishment for failure to report harassment and abuse. Mandatory minimums for conviction of hazing and maltreatment, including discharge, must be part of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

And for Asian Americans, the light sentences received by those charged in connection with Pvt. Danny Chen's death are a wakeup call. Do they signal a return to the shocking sentence of a fine and three years' probation given in 1982 to the murderers of Vincent Chin, an Asian American who was bludgeoned to death by a baseball bat on the eve of his wedding (Yip 1997)? Asian Americans constitute 4 percent of the military, but the suicide rate for Asian Americans is triple that of other soldiers and four times higher than other soldiers in a combat zone (Zoroya 2011). These cases are the beginning of further inquiry into whether hazing is a contributing factor to these grim statistics and to educating vulnerable communities of the risks of enlisting in the U.S. military.

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ENDNOTES

- i OCA-NY is one of more than eighty chapters and affiliates of OCA nationwide. OCA-Georgia and OCA National Center have sent representatives to help monitor the court-martials. The Long Island, Westchester, and New Jersey chapters of OCA have been part of the local organizing efforts, and several OCA chapters have assisted with the nationwide Chen birthday card campaign and online petitions.
- ii Supporters include New York City Councilwoman Margaret Chin, U.S. Congresswomen Nydia Velázquez and Judy Chu, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and Retired General Tony Taguba, as well as more than one-hundred organizations nationwide, including Chinatown Head Start (where Danny attended); Interfaith Center of New York; NAACP-New York Chapter; Service Women's Action Network; Servicemembers Legal Defense Network; Japanese American Citizens League; Asian American Justice Center in Washington, DC; and numerous university and college

student organizations. The OCA-NY Fall 2011 and Winter 2012 newsletters have a full chronology of the advocacy efforts and partial listing of coalition members.

- iii This YouTube video was filmed by Mansee Kong, an independent filmmaker, and as of 8 March 2013, has been viewed 45,716 times (www.youtube.com/ocanyvideos).
- iv While five of the eight were initially charged with involuntary manslaughter, this charge was dropped in the 32J hearings in Afghanistan, which is a proceeding to determine if there is enough evidence to be tried in a court-martial, leaving the five being tried on the next highest charge of negligent homicide. In *U.S. v. Holcomb*, the first court-martial, the accused was charged with negligent homicide. In the subsequent four court-martials, the charge of negligent homicide was dropped. Since the eight were being tried individually, it was difficult to prove a negligent homicide charge because the prosecution was limited in what could be introduced into the court-martial regarding the actions or inactions of what the other seven did.

Advancing Our Narrative in an Age of Pervasive Media

BY DONALD YOUNG

At the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM), especially in recent years, at times we've felt a certain disconnect with the rapid changes taking place all around us. All of a sudden, Asian Americans have advanced from decades of being the butt of jokes, like the oft-cited and infamous Long Duk Dong character in the film *Sixteen Candles*, to becoming some of the leading jokesters, like Indian American Aziz Ansari, who stars in the NBC television show *Parks and Recreation*. Everywhere you look from film to television to commercials, Asian Americans are portrayed as quirky, funny, and relatable. In that context, what is the value of social justice when a community is portrayed as having "made it?"

While I do believe this recent development is a step forward, I would argue that upon further analysis, it still results in a vastly incomplete picture and the continuing simplification of a community. I'm reminded of the recent controversy surrounding the Pew Research Center's 2012 publication, "The Rise of Asian Americans." That report was widely criticized by Asian Americans for perpetuating the model minority myth and for failing to accurately portray the full diversity of the Asian American community—good and bad alike. Similarly, entertainment and mass media have followed suit, creating a filtered portrait of Asian Americans that they believe exists instead of a full-dimensional one that reflects our reality.

Even a mere decade ago, would anyone have predicted the vast presence of Asian Americans throughout media that exists today? By any measure, the rapid ascent of representation of Asian Americans in entertainment and culture is impressive. But this newfound exposure begs the question: Are we in a new sort of Golden Age, or have the rules of the game changed so much that we must redefine success?

It's 2013. Asian Americans are more broadly visible in the world of media and entertainment than ever before and in many ways have made the most progress of any community of color. Up until now, Asian Americans have suffered pernicious portrayals including one-dimensional stereotypes, or at best, invisibility. But it appears significant change has come and seemingly faster than anyone might have predicted. Here's a quick sampling.

In Hollywood, film director Justin Lin is a legitimate studio juggernaut, while film director Ang Lee remains one of the medium's finest auteurs. This past decade has witnessed the rise of the most popular Asian American film series ever, the *Harold and Kumar* trilogy, which interestingly is neither produced nor directed by Asian Americans. It is thrilling to witness the success of the television show *The Mindy Project* by emerging comedic powerhouse Mindy Kaling, who is an Indian American. Kaling was a major contributor on the acclaimed television show *The Office* and is perhaps an emerging Tina Fey-type media mogul of her own right. Through YouTube, there's been an explosion of a new generation of young talent, from singers to actors to filmmakers, blazing trails on the Web including Wong Fu Productions, Michelle Phan, Ryan Higa, Kevjumba, and Freddie Wong, not to mention Justin Lin's YOMYOMF channel.

There's also the recent development of Asian Americans becoming pop culture phenomena, illustrated by two iconic catch phrases: "Linsanity" and the "Tiger Mom." When Houston Rockets basketball player Jeremy Lin conquered Madison Square Garden and New York City in 2012, he captured the imagination of basketball fans worldwide unlike any Asian American athlete has ever done before. In 2011, a new term for over-controlling Asian American mothers arose with Amy Chua's book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*.

There's no question that Asian Americans are now leading voices in America's changing social consciousness. But what does this all add up to? Or more appropriately, what's missing? From my perspective as someone committed to social progress through media, there is unquestionably much to celebrate. Yet, I am concerned that the representation of our community has practically taken a 180-degree turn, and I feel what is missing most are the much more rich, complex, and real stories that make up Asian America.

CAAM, formerly the National Asian American Telecommunications Association, was founded in 1980 by burgeoning filmmakers, community activists, arts leaders, and academics. Their explicit goal was to develop generations of Asian American storytellers who, through filmmaking, would chart their own path of cultural production—not one dictated by the misrepresentations invented by the mainstream media. While in college in the late 1980s, this group's urgent focus synched up perfectly with my own belief that to affect change in society, only we could tell our stories best.

The purposeful work of the independent documentary community has always been driven by the principles of political activism and reclaiming history. From that perspective, independent documentary makers' films would be the antidote to society's ills as expressed in the media. It has often been

suggested publicly that once they achieved their goal of equitable justice and representation, they might no longer need to exist.

Many of these independent films, the vast majority of which have been documentaries produced for national PBS, have become some of the most acclaimed in any documentary genre over the years, having won top accolades, including ones from the Academy Awards and the Emmys. Some of the most important landmark films Asian Americans have produced include: *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* directed by Christine Choy and Renee Tajima, which premiered on PBS in 1989; *a.k.a Don Bonus*, directed by Spencer Nakasako and Sokly Don Bonus Ny, which premiered on PBS in 1996; *Days of Waiting*, directed by Steven Okazaki, which premiered on PBS in 1990; *Sentenced Home*, directed by Nicole Newnham and David Grabias, which premiered on PBS in 2007; and *A Village Called Versailles*, directed by S. Leo Chiang, which premiered on PBS in 2010.

It's clear to us at CAAM that the rules that have existed for decades must now shift. Simplistic and pernicious stereotypes were very obvious targets to attack head-on, and reclaiming our histories was a vital necessity. With the general public's shift in perception of Asian Americans, as well as the current ability to create and distribute stories across media platforms, there now exists a very different potential.

For many Asian American independent documentary filmmakers, the key question remains: What does it mean to have media about Asian Americans that is relevant toward a larger public good? We must provide our perspectives to the significant conversations—and surface those conversations that should be started. In this age of pervasive media, we can now chart our path directly for the larger public. That is the real opportunity for all of us.

Recently, there have been plenty of examples of films that inspire us to keep pushing forward—that provide a more real sense of the world that Asian Americans are a part of. Stephanie Wang-Breal explores the world of a Chinese adoptee girl and her Jewish family in *Wo Ai Ni Mommy*. S. Leo Chiang provides an intimate look at Anh “Joseph” Cao’s turbulent single Congressional term as an Asian American conservative in the predominantly Black district in New Orleans. Jason DaSilva courageously takes on his early onset of multiple sclerosis in *When I Walk*.

In journalism, Asian Americans have helped bring international reporting to a new level of excellence, leveraging their unique experiences from bicultural backgrounds to create a fuller understanding of a changing Asian diaspora. Organizations like the South Asian Journalists Association have been key for encouraging a more responsible, accurate, and sensitive style of journalism covering Asia and Asian America.

Print/online hybrids like *Hyphen* magazine and *KoreAm* magazine continue to set the bar high in terms of the pressing conversations surrounding identity, culture, and society. And blogger *Angry Asian Man* has been an important resource for thought leaders during the past decade. Many of these entities continue to work outside of the journalism mainstream, but their value is undeniable.

How much further can we go from here? Given how much progress has taken place this past decade, the future is very promising. At CAAM, we are encouraged by the promise that our storytellers hold to capture the vast breadth of our community. Technology and opportunity dictate that we take control of our images and define who we are. But it's important that we all now take the lead.

Contributors



Olivia Chow is a progressive field and online organizer, most recently leading “get out the vote” efforts with Obama for America, Nevada, running social media for the 2012 Democratic National Convention, and building community partnerships for civil rights advocacy at the Asian American Justice Center. She is a volunteer board member of Asian Pacific Americans for Progress-DC, which worked with Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance-DC to coordinate the Say Sorry Barry campaign.



Rohan Grover is the data and analytics associate at the Planned Parenthood Federation of America & Action Fund, where he empowers field and electoral programs with data management, microtargeting, program analytics, and organizing technology. He is a volunteer board member of Asian Pacific Americans for Progress-DC, which worked with Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance-DC to coordinate the Say Sorry Barry campaign.



Camden Lee is a digital strategist at New Partners, a political consulting firm that serves progressive candidates, organizations, and campaigns. In the 2012 elections, his portfolio included Nate Shinagawa’s close Congressional race and online voter engagement across the country. He is a volunteer board member of Asian Pacific Americans for Progress-DC, which worked with Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance-DC to coordinate the Say Sorry Barry campaign.

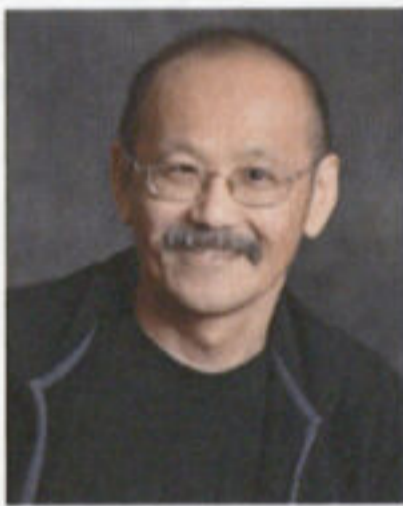


Vincent Paolo Villano is director of communications for the National Center for Transgender Equality and vice president for administration for the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, one of the nation’s oldest LGBT Democratic clubs. He is a volunteer board member of Asian Pacific Americans for Progress-DC, which worked with Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance-DC to coordinate the Say Sorry Barry campaign.



Since 2001, Congressman Michael M. Honda has represented the 17th Congressional District of California in the U.S. House of Representatives. His district includes Silicon Valley, the birthplace of technology innovation and the leading region for the development of the technologies of tomorrow. First as a Peace Corps volunteer in El Salvador, then as an educator for more than three decades, and later as a San Jose Unified School Board member, Santa Clara Board of Supervisors member, and

California State Assemblyman, Honda's commitment to public service is unparalleled and unwavering. Along with serving as a member of the House Appropriations Committee, he is Chair Emeritus of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, after having served as chair for an unprecedented seven years. As an appropriator, he continues to champion educational equity by securing funding to convene twenty-seven of the nation's foremost leaders in education to serve on the Equity and Excellence commission.



Paul Ong is a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, with joint appointments in Asian American Studies, Luskin School of Public Affairs, and Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. He has a master's in urban planning from the University of Washington and a doctorate in economics from the University of California, Berkeley. His research focuses on socioeconomic inequality and spatial structures.



Kate Viernes is a master's student in Asian American Studies and Social Welfare at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her research interests focus broadly on international migration, second-generation immigrants, race and ethnicity, and education. Specifically, she is interested in the educational experiences of Filipino Americans and further exploring how racialization affects their life outcomes in the states of California and Hawaii. She holds a BA in sociology from the University of San Francisco.



Andrew Huang is a third-year B.A. candidate at Cornell University, majoring in China and Asia-Pacific studies with a minor in health policy. His academic interest in public health started with an internship at the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health, where he conducted research and organized outreach efforts on hepatitis B and other health disparities affecting Asian and Asian American communities in New York City. Huang most recently completed an internship

at the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, where he assisted with the health policy portfolio.



Diane Wong is a doctoral student at Cornell University's Department of Government. She received her BA from SUNY Binghamton in political science and Asian American studies with a concentration in the Chinese language. Wong is a 2012-2013 American Political Science Association Minority Fellow whose research stems from her passion for community engagement and civic activism. Her areas of interest include American politics, Asian American politics, (im)migration, urban politics and policy, race and ethnic relations, and youth activism. She has recently traveled to New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Jose, and Chicago to examine the process by which Asian American and Pacific Islander immigrant communities are incorporated into the political process. As the director of advocacy at the East Coast Asian American Student Union, Wong is working with students, faculty, and administrators from various colleges and universities to establish Asian American studies programs across the country.



Nicole Fink is a first-year law student at New England Law Boston. She graduated in 2012 with her master's degree of social work with a concentration in community organization from the University of Connecticut (UConn) School of Social Work. She received her BA from UConn in 2010. Fink has been actively involved with the Asian Pacific American community. As an undergraduate, she was the coordinator of Kids & UConn Bridging Education, a multicultural mentoring program. As a graduate student at the School of Social Work, she served as cochair of several student organizations. She also serves as the associate director of the East Coast Asian American Student Union. Fink was the recipient of the 2010 Roger N. Buckley Scholarship, the 2011 UConn Provost's Award for Excellence in Public Engagement, and the 2012 Outstanding Senior Woman Academic Achievement Award for her contributions to the University of Connecticut and the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.



Mariel Lim was most recently Legislative Counsel to Congressman Albio Sires (NJ-13). Her primary role was to staff the congressman at the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. She spent more than five years on the Hill where she advised on issues including civil rights, education, health care, labor, and women's issues. Lim has played an active role in her community and served on the Asian Pacific American Bar Association from 2009 to 2012. She also served on the board

of the Women's Congressional Staff Association from 2008 to 2010 and was president of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Staff Association in 2009. Lim graduated from Valparaiso University School of Law and received her bachelor of arts degree in political science from Binghamton University.



Rebecca Yang was born and raised in Ithaca, New York, and is a 2014 Master in Public Policy candidate at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. After volunteering in China in the village of her late grandfather, she established a foundation that supports rural education and environmental protection in China. While studying at Georgetown University, she served as a research assistant at the Library of Congress and interned at the Department of Commerce and the Senate

Foreign Relations Committee. She is a member of Alpha Sigma Nu, the national Jesuit honor society, and Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society.



Elizabeth R. OuYang is president of OCA-NY, a nonprofit volunteer civil rights organization whose mission is to protect and advocate for the political, economic, and cultural rights of Asian Americans. OCA-NY is the lead organization advocating for justice for Private Danny Chen. A civil rights attorney for twenty-six years, she teaches at Columbia University's Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race and New York University's Department of Social and Cultural Analysis. With Danny

Chen's family and a contingency of supporters, OuYang has monitored the court-martials in North Carolina involving the death of Private Danny Chen.



Donald Young is the Director of Programs for the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM). He oversees CAAM's program areas including CAAMFest, film funding, productions, and national PBS broadcasts. As a producer, he has worked both on documentaries and independent feature films including *The Princess of Nebraska*, directed by Wayne Wang. His most recent productions include documentaries on ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro and former Louisiana U.S. Congressman Anh

"Joseph" Cao. Young has also taught film at the University of California, Davis.

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