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We look forward to having their diverse backgrounds and experiences enhance the conversation about Asian American and Pacific Islander policy, and we thank them in advance for their contributions.

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foreword

Becoming Authentically Asian American

Daniel Cheung, editor-in-chief

The Roots of Asian America

“There was a time when the term ‘Asian American’ was not merely a demographic category, but a fight you were picking with the world.”¹

We live in turbulent political times, and whether we are looking for it or not, a fight seems to be brewing.

But this fight is not new. The term now used to describe the Asian American community—and the namesake of this journal—reclaimed the political identity of a people who have been rendered historically and culturally invisible. Sometimes, this invisibility was literal, as in the case of the invisible Chinese railroad workers standing in the margins at Promontory Point.² At other times, the invisibility was sociocultural. Asian Americans are the perpetual foreigner, and the “race so unlike our own,” whose struggles are masked by the tired myth of the model minority, used to wedge other minority groups against one another.³

Neil Gotanda describes this phenomenon as “citizenship nullification”—the denial of full citizenship and ownership of the American story.⁴ The earliest people of Asian origin to arrive in North America was a group of Filipino sailors who landed on the California coast in 158, more than thirty years before the Mayflower landed in Massachusetts.⁵ Asian migrants began arriving in large numbers in the 1830s and 1850s, and by the latter half of the nineteenth century, sadly familiar nativist hostilities led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which would remain good law for eighty-three years.⁶ *Chae Chan Ping v. US*—the so-called “Chinese Exclusion Case”—decided in 1889, is today being cited as precedent for the idea that any ban on immigrants, no matter how discriminatory, is within the power of the executive branch.⁷ When it comes to racial discrimination, there is nothing new under the sun.

And yet there is great hope in our history from which we would do well to draw inspiration. The conscious memory of the Asian American political identity began in the 1960s and 1970s,

driven largely by student activists who were motivated by the Black power and anti-Vietnam War movements. This period saw the coming together of diverse communities with different histories under the umbrella of Asian America, the birth of Asian American studies, and the awakening of scores of activists who have continued to define what this movement could be. As one history puts it, “Challenging stereotypes about Asian ‘passivity,’ and rejecting the exoticism and racism of ‘oriental’ labels, Asian American activists mobilized this new consciousness to demand an end to racist hiring practices, biased school curricula, demeaning media stereotypes, residential discrimination, and the gentrification of historically Asian American neighborhoods.”⁸

These issues remain salient to our community today, and are explored in this volume through Kartik Naram’s piece on **Racial Capitalism, Gentrification, and the Identity of Chinatown**, Paul Ong, Candara Pech, and Alycia Cheng’s research on **Wealth Heterogeneity Among Asian American Elderly**, and in an adapted version of the National CAPACD and CNHA **#OurNeighborhoods Report on Anti-Displacement Strategies**.

Today, we are still told to “go back where you came from,” but some of our ancestors have been here for generations. We are told Asian Americans are politically passive, but there is a rich legacy of Asian American activism and formal political participation. We have always been here, but we are rendered invisible through the “alternative facts” that have

for centuries fed a narrative of racial denial and subjugation.

This is the “grand narrative” of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in this country: no matter how long we have occupied the land, no matter how hard we work toward the American Dream, and no matter how much we assimilate, our standing as citizens in this country can be challenged in an instant.⁹ We still find ourselves needing to prove we belong, and while some commentators are hopeful about demographic changes that will make the US a majority-minority country by 2040, I suggest our optimism be more measured.¹⁰ Racial lines can be redrawn. Immigration can be stopped. Communities can be bullied into silence. Having numbers alone does not translate into power, and the roots of our history make it clear those in power will not voluntarily give it away.

The Pursuit of Authenticity

A few weeks after the election, I found myself reading an article that suggested so-called “identity politics” gave rise to the divisive situation in which we find ourselves today, some going so far as to suggest one party lost because of its obsession with identity.¹¹ Setting aside the fact this notion has largely been hijacked as a form of racial denial, I found myself stuck with a surprisingly difficult question: for what exactly are we looking?¹²

It is simple enough to define this world in the negative: for example, a world free of hate crime and racial bigotry, a society absent of coercive assimilation. But what will success look like—in the affirma-

tive—for those who are advocating for a better world?

I will borrow from Professor Gary Okihiro, who argues for the reintroduction of third world studies, “an academic field that never existed because it was extinguished at birth” during the same era that gave rise to the Asian American political identity, among many others.¹³ He cites self-determination and liberation—or *authenticity*—was the goal of third world studies, and I propose adopting it for Asian Americans as well.

On the one hand, authenticity requires we are present to our historical selves. For Asian Americans, this not only requires a deep understanding of the struggles and triumphs that brought our ancestors—sometimes just one generation away—into this country, but also the parallel struggles of activism that have made this country the way it is today. Being authentic to ourselves must mean we understand the history of Asian American orientalism *and* the enslavement of black and brown bodies and the wholesale theft of native lands that made America possible.

Authenticity, however, must also allow for the flourishing of our present selves. To be free is to be able to move about in this world unencumbered by arbitrary expectations or assumptions. Being authentic means I ought to be able to enjoy country music without being “whitewashed,” that I ought to be able to love kimchi without being “so Asian.”

After a trip to Korea, my partner told me about a restaurant she had visited where they put American cheese in traditional Korean fried rice, or *bokeumbap*.

I found the idea appalling, and told her it couldn't possibly have been *authentic*. If my ancestors a century ago didn't put cheese in their *bokeumbap*, I wouldn't either.

I am not looking for a pretty picture to capture the heart of “diversity,” and I am certainly not arguing for the metaphor of the cheese *bokeumbap* to replace the banal and imprecise metaphors of the melting pot or salad bowl. I want merely to suggest that notions of authenticity and self-determination are difficult to capture, and what I declared as *authentic* in my self-righteous Korean American zeal reveals the challenges of moving between two identities—both of which are tenuous in American society.

The formation of Asian American identity, with the added complexity of intersectionalities, remains difficult to capture, in part because of the heterogeneity of the Asian American experience. We are not all alike, and this volume speaks to some of these challenges with Elizabeth Lin's piece on **the Loneliness of the Progressive Asian American Christian**, Ivan Rahman's commentary on **Three Things Asian Americans Don't Want to Talk About**, and through the creative work of uyên phu'o'ng hoàng (“**When Hate Came**”), Kimberly Zin (“**Hyphens**”), and Shuroog Al Jewari (“**Islam**”).

“Self-determination,” Okihiro writes, “requires a strategic mastery of the language and ideologies of the ruling class to engage and upend oppression. But liberation also demands discourses and practices not of the master's creation.”¹⁴ The goal—and indeed the intellectual

root of this journal—is to reclaim Asian American identity, to encourage authenticity, and to spark conversation about how we can define for ourselves what it means to be Asian American.

The Process of Becoming

We are at our best, I believe, when we play by our own rules.

One such rule is we assume racism is not normal, but that it has nevertheless become endemic in American life.¹⁵ Another is that we value and re-legitimize the narratives of our struggle, so policies begin to take shape based on the lived experiences of the marginalized. We must constantly be asking “tell me more.” A third is we not give into the cynicism that plagues political discourse today. The truth is we as ordinary citizens are fighting for our democracy and institutions.¹⁶ The fight is not new, and the fight is certain to continue.

As Professor Okihiro urges us, we must learn how to engage on two fronts: both within the institutions of the ruling class *and* outside of those same institutions. I must confess this can be particularly challenging within the confines of an institution like the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and others like it for at least two reasons. First, at an institutional level, we supposedly represent the “hollowed-out . . . overeducated, bi-coastal elite” some claim was explicitly rejected in the most recent election.¹⁷ Second, the field of public policy was not exactly designed to push against the boundaries of the system—if anything, it was designed to maintain and to reinforce it.¹⁸

The process of becoming must, however, be driven by community, which I was lucky to have found at the Harvard Kennedy School, and for which I am extremely grateful. It cannot be driven by the institution, for the institution will almost certainly default to becoming “of the master’s creation,” even though the discipline of public policy lies in the useful intersection of theory and praxis, allowing us to “master their language and ideologies.”¹⁹ We must be vigilant about rejecting partisan politics because it, too, is often merely a tool of subjugation.

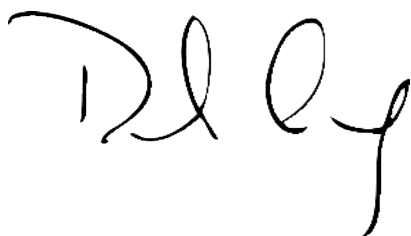
To this end, we are including three discussions examining the nature and role of AAPI political participation. The first, by Ga Young Chung, examines the role of DACA in mobilizing political action by undocumented Korean Americans who are **At the Crossroads of Change**. The second, by managing editor Claris Chang, analyzes **Asian American Lobbying**. Third, Elena Ong presents a brief excerpt from her piece about **the Future of Asian American and Pacific Islander Political Power**. Finally, we profile a number of prominent Asian American leaders in politics and the arts.

One final note: in this process of becoming, it can be easy to look over and assume everyone should be equally educated and committed, and that anything less is unjust or irresponsible. I will be the first to confess I am relatively new to this endless process of discovery. My journey began a little over two years ago at a small workshop on microaggressions. I still do not use the right words. I still do and say the wrong things. But I hope I am able listen a little bit more at-

tentively—please tell me more, because I am in the process of becoming.

The Asian American Policy Review is and always has been in the process of becoming. This year, we reconvened an advisory board with six incredible individuals who bring a wealth of on-the-ground experiences that will inform the direction of this becoming. Our team is asking, “What’s next?” as we scan the landscape of incredible activism and scholarship that pushes us ever closer to reclaiming our identity.

We look forward to having you join us, with this twenty-seventh issue and beyond, in becoming authentically Asian American.



Daniel Minyong Cheung

editor-in-chief

Endnotes

1 Chang, Jeff, “Foreword,” *Serve the People: Making Asian America in the Long Sixties* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2016): i.

2 See “A Legacy From the Far East,” National Park Service. Accessed on 13 February 2017.

3 *Plessey v. Ferguson*, 163 US 537, 561 (1896), (Harlan, J., dissenting); for example, see Lam, Tracey, and Jonathan Hui, “The High Cost of the Model Mi-

nority Myth for Asian and Pacific Islander Americans,” *Kennedy School Review* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 24 August 2016).

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5 Borah, Eloisa Gomez, “Filipinos in Unamuno’s California Expedition of 1587,” *Amerasia Journal* Vol. 21, No. 3 (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 05 February 2008): 175-183.

6 Chinese Exclusion Act, ch. 125, 22 stat. 58.

7 *Chae Chan Ping v. United States*, 130 US 581 (1889); see e.g., Planas, Roque, “US Immigration Law Is Racist Enough To Allow Trump’s Muslim Visitor Ban,” *The Huffington Post* 08 December 2015.

8 “Seattle’s Asian American Movement,” University of Washington-Seattle, n.d. Accessed 13 February 2017.

9 See generally, Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Post-modern Condition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

10 See generally, Ong, Paul, Elena Ong and Jonathan Ong, “The Future of Pacific Islander America in 2040,” *Amerasia Journal* Vol. 14, No. 1 (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center Spring 2016). I certainly understand the arguments made by those who are optimistic about the possibility this demographic change can lead to meaningful social change, and we are featuring one of the authors of the article above in this journal to invite further discussion.

11 Lilla, Mark, “The End of Identity Liberalism,” *New York Times*, 18 November 2016.

12 Weigel, Moira, “Political Correctness: How the Right Invented a Phantom Enemy,” *The Guardian* 30 November 2016.

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15 Delgado, Richard, and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, second ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2012): 7-9.

16 Obama, Barack. “President Obama’s Farewell Address,” n.d. Accessed 13 February 2017.

17 Riehl, Dan, “Caddell: Democrats ‘a Hollowed-Out Party’ of ‘Bi-Coastal Elites,’ Unable ‘to Reach Out Beyond Identity Politics,’” *Breitbart News*, 21 November 2016.

18 Harvard Kennedy School of Government, “History,” n.d. Accessed 13 February 2017.

19 Okihiro, supra note 13.

Wealth Heterogeneity Among Asian American Elderly

by Paul M. Ong, Chhandara Pech, and Alycia Cheng¹

Abstract

This paper examines wealth distribution and ethnically structured inequality among Asian American elderly. This paper uses three different datasets—the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), Health and Retirement Study (HRS), and micro-level data from the American Community Survey (ACS)—to examine wealth, home equity, and asset income among Asian American elderly. We also analyze ethnic variations in asset ownership. We find income is highly correlated with the distribution of wealth, although wealth is much more unequally distributed than income. Because the poor have limited assets, their poverty cannot be offset by drawing upon savings. Home equity accounts for more than half of net assets, but many elderly have a mortgage. Furthermore, there are large disparities between ethnic groups across home equity and income-generating assets. Southeast Asian elderly are at particular risk of living in poverty with little or no assets.

Introduction

Asian Americans are often portrayed and perceived as wealthier, educated, and more financially secure than other minority racial groups. However, because socioeconomic statistics and studies on Asian Americans often aggregate data for all Asians as a homogenous group,

the wide variation between Asian ethnic groups and the current reality of poverty and wealth for these communities are obscured. Asian Americans have systematic differences, structural heterogeneity, and economic disparities, with overrepresentation at the high and low ends.² These differences are structured around ethnicity and nativity, which

in turn are associated with variations in immigration, education, marketable skills, human capital, and acculturation. For example, there are particularly glaring differences between economic immigrants, such as the highly educated, skilled, and relatively affluent immigrants from China and India who come to the US seeking economic opportunities, compared to many Southeast Asian immigrants who arrived as political refugees with fewer marketable skills and very little capital.³ Whereas previous reports examine economic disparities among Asian Americans more generally, this report focuses on these disparities as they relate to Asian American elderly.

Among Asian Americans, the elderly is an often overlooked group, despite literature showing they are among the fastest-growing demographics in the United States.⁴ By 2040 one in five US residents will be sixty-five years or older.⁵ Among Asian American elderly, their share of the Asian American population is set to grow in the next twenty-five years from 10 percent of the Asian American population to 16 percent.⁶ In order to develop a more inclusive, fair, and comprehensive narrative about ethnic inequality, we require an understanding of the economic state of Asian American elderly. This paper fills the knowledge gap examining the heterogeneity of wealth among Asian Americans. The research uses data sources and analytic methods to develop a multidimensional understanding of the elderly (persons aged sixty-five years and older). The first section offers an overview of wealth distribution and characteristics of elderly Asian Americans; the second section examines ethnic variations and the

factors associated with wealth; and the final section concludes with a discussion of implications.

Asian American Elderly Wealth

Overview of the Data

This section uses the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) to provide an overview of key characteristics of the distribution of wealth among elderly Asian Americans.⁷ We use data from multiple SIPP panels with a focus on the most recent panel from 2008. We selected 2008 SIPP data from Wave 10 Core microdata, which includes information on general demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and program eligibility. The Wave 10 Topical Module file allows us to derive wealth information (total net worth, total debt, etc.). We restricted the sample to Asian elderly, those aged sixty-five years and older, who are not residing in group quarters and are designated as the reference person or householder.⁸ Setting these criteria resulted in a total sample size of 116 Asian elderly households for the SIPP.

The second dataset for the analysis is the 2014 public-use version of the HRS. The HRS is a longitudinal survey conducted every two years on retirement and health among those aged fifty and older in the United States. The survey is produced and distributed by the University of Michigan, with funding from the National Institute on Aging and the Social Security Administration. As discussed earlier, one of the major limitations

of the HRS is its small sample size for Asian Americans, which is folded into the “other” race category in the dataset. This category includes all other groups who are not White or Black. Given this limitation, we separated out Asian Americans by extracting from those who are designated as “other” race individuals who are also foreign born and “non-Hispanic.”⁹ The HRS results reported in this paper are therefore presented for estimated non-Hispanic, foreign-born Asians. However, using the ACS public use microdata sample (PUMS), we find the majority, or 88 percent, of Asian elderly are foreign born.

Unlike SIPP, the HRS does not include a variable identifying the “reference person” or “head of household.”¹⁰ In order to come close to obtaining household-level data with one record for each household (done in SIPP using the refer-

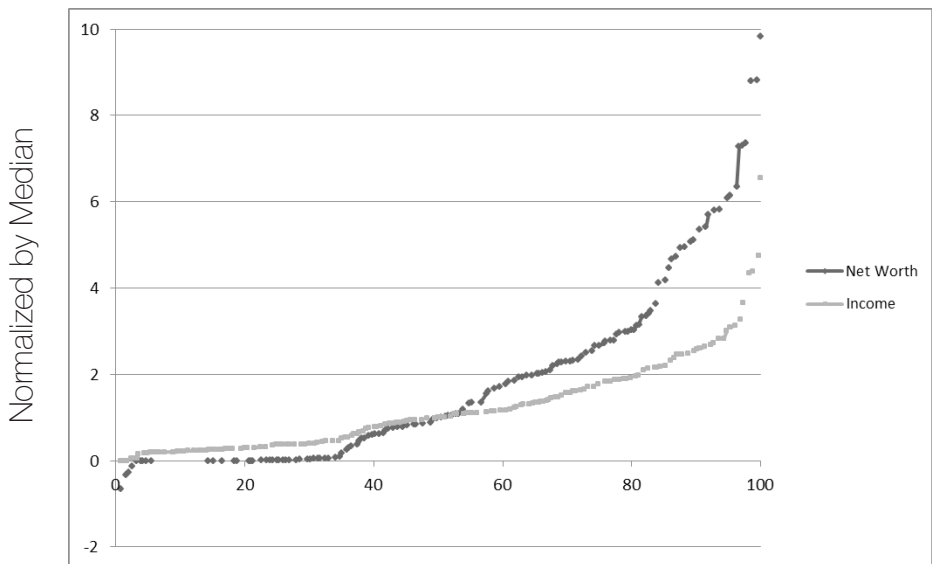
ence person), we used the oldest person in the household as a proxy to represent the “reference person.” Applying all the criteria leaves us with a total sample size of eighty-eight elderly Asian households.

Inequality in Wealth is Greater Than Inequality in Income

We first examine the relationship between income and wealth—with wealth defined as all assets that have financial value—using SIPP and find that both are correlated with a Pearson’s correlation coefficient of 0.34 and a p-value of less than 0.001.

The distribution of the two can further be observed in Figure 1. The x-axis represents income and wealth ranked from lowest to highest; the y-axis represents both measures normalized by the median for each. Households in the bottom

Figure 1. Net Worth and Income of Asian Elderly Households by Percentile



Source: Tabulated by authors using SIPP 2008 Panel, Wave 10 Core, and 10 Topical Module.

half proportionally have far less wealth than income, while households in the top half proportionally have more wealth than income, illustrating greater inequality. In other words, the bottom half of the distribution is poorer in wealth relative to their income standing and the upper fiftieth percentile is richer in wealth relative to their income. Because the poor have limited assets, much tied to home equity among the few who are homeowners, they cannot offset their low income by drawing on accumulated assets.

Table 1. Measures of Inequality

	Net Worth	Income
80:20 Ratio	1,867	6.5
Gini Coefficient	0.62	0.45
Coefficient of Variation	70.1	48.9

Source: Tabulated by authors using SIPP 2008 Panel, Wave 10 Core, and 10 Topical Module.

Three different metrics were further used to examine the distribution of wealth and income among Asian American elderly: an 80:20 ratio, a Gini coefficient, and a coefficient of variation (CV). The 80:20 ratio is calculated as the wealth (or, alternatively, income) at the top eightieth percentile divided by the wealth at the twentieth percentile. The Gini coefficient is a second, widely accepted measure of inequality reported with a score between zero and one, with zero representing perfect equality and one indicating perfect inequality. The CV is calculated by dividing the standard deviation of the wealth distribution by its mean. More equal wealth distributions will have smaller standard deviations;

as such, the CV will be smaller in more equal societies.¹¹ All measures consistently show the distribution of net worth is a more unequal than income. The Gini coefficients between measures, for example, is 0.45 for income, but 0.62 for net worth (see Table 1).

Income inequality for elderly Asian Americans seems to mirror the inequality of society as a whole. The statistics confirm wealth is considerably more unevenly distributed. This can be seen in both the Gini and CV. What is astonishing is the 80:20 ratio, which indicates that for every dollar an elderly Asian household at the twentieth percentile has in wealth, the household at the eightieth percentile has roughly \$1,900. As with income, the rough magnitude of inequality for elderly Asian Americans is comparable to that reported for other groups, indicating the wealth inequality affecting the nation is also afflicting elderly Asian Americans.

Home Equity and Other Assets

Using the SIPP, we examined the role of homeownership in assets. We find that ownership varies with income and wealth. The poor are predominantly renters, and the rich have higher homeownership rates. Among homeowners, many still have a mortgage to pay (roughly a quarter of elderly Asian households). Among those with housing debt, equity increases with home value and years in the unit. Mean and median net worth and home equity are reported in Table 2 and are broken down by wealth quartiles. Based on our analysis, among all elderly Asian households, home equity accounts for more than half

of net assets and an even higher proportion for those in the middle. We test whether the difference between quartiles is statistically significant using an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. For each of the measured outcomes, the differences in means by wealth category are statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level.

Home equity accounts for a majority of wealth in Asian American elderly house-

holds. In addition to home equity, however, wealth accumulation also comes in other forms, including rental properties, stocks, and savings. Table 3 provides a breakdown of some of these asset types using data from the HRS. We find that a large majority of those with certain types of assets also receive income from these sources (rents, dividend, interest, etc.). In other words, the presence of income from these assets can serve as a proxy for having the associated base asset.

Table 2. Average Net Worth and Home Equity by Wealth Category

	Net Worth		Home Equity	
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Total	\$278,496	\$154,226	\$155,879	\$100,000
Top Quartile	\$758,600	\$761,334	\$354,235	\$350,000
2nd Quartile	\$280,627	\$298,589	\$230,980	\$250,000
3rd Quartile	\$65,236	\$57,865	\$37,306	\$0
Bottom Quartile	\$-5,885	\$0	\$-4,551	\$0

Source: Tabulated by authors using the SIPP 2008 Panel, Wave 10 Core, and Wave 2 and 10 Topical Modules.

Table 3. Asset Ownership by Types

	Percent with Asset	Percent with Income from Assets (rents, interest, dividends, etc.)
Real Estate Asset	20%	16%
Stock and Stock Mutual Funds	27%	22%
Bond Assets	4%	4%
CDs, Government Saving Bonds, or Treasury Bills	18%	13%
Other Asset	32%	3%
w/ Any of the Above	56%	43%

Source: Tabulated by authors using the 2014 Health and Retirement Study.

Ethnic Variations

This section examines variations in wealth among elderly Asian Americans by ethnicity. The analysis is divided into two parts. The first examines variations in homeownership, equity, and income from assets by ethnicity. The second examines the major factors associated with these outcomes. The analysis is based on data from the 2012, 2013, and 2014 ACS PUMS. With its relatively large sample size, the ACS allows us to disag-

gregate the information by Asian ethnic subgroups. Despite its larger sample size, however, the ACS has only limited and indirect data on wealth. Nevertheless, we can examine two major indicators as a proxy for wealth identified in the analysis of SIPP. Based on our analysis, the first is homeownership; the second is housing equity, which makes up more than half of total net wealth, and even more for those in the middle of the economic distribution (see Table 2). In the ACS, housing tenure is directly reported,

Table 4. Homeownership Rate and Mean Home Equity

	Percent Owning Home	Home Equity	
		Unconditional Mean	Conditional Mean
Total	67%	\$244,110	\$364,210
Taiwanese	83%	458,047	549,305
Japanese	80%	337,774	421,402
Asian Indian	81%	294,951	365,448
Chinese	61%	287,823	471,326
Pakistani	63%	204,322	324,139
Thai	80%	194,142	243,128
Filipino	73%	189,797	260,755
Korean	53%	175,384	330,631
Vietnamese	50%	103,500	206,437
Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian*	47%	61,604	130,036
Other South Asian**	58%	170,752	294,728
Other Asian***	70%	189,473	270,379
All Combinations of Asian Races****	62%	202,743	327,869

*Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian were grouped together due to small sample size and similarity in culture and immigration experiences.

**Similarly, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Nepalese, and Sri Lankan are consolidated as Other South Asian.

***All other remaining Asian subgroups were assigned as Other Asian.

****Asian Americans who identified as multiple Asian ethnic groups received their own separate category of All Combinations of Asian Races.

Source: Tabulated by authors using 2012–2014 ACS PUMS.

and home equity is estimated (see Table 4). For homeowners without mortgage or who are “free and clear,” home equity is set to equal home value, which is self-reported in the ACS. Equity is estimated for homeowners with a mortgage using regression results from the SIPP. With the SIPP, we model home equity for homeowners with a mortgage where equity is a function of home value and years in the unit.

The sample for this analysis is restricted to only those households with an elderly Asian (aged sixty-five and older) who is designated as the reference person. The resulting pooled sample has 23,917 households. Individual estimates are reported for those subgroups that had a minimum sample size of at least one hundred elderly households.¹²

Home Equity and Income from Assets

About one-third of elderly Asian Americans own their home. There are ethnic variations in homeownership with Taiwanese, Asian Indian, and Japanese more likely to own homes, with homeownership rates of 80 percent or more, and Southeast Asians being the least likely, with an observed rate of less than 50 percent (see Table 4). We also observe differences in the mortgage status of homeowners. Overall, nearly 44 percent of all elderly Asian homeowners still owe mortgages on their homes. These rates also vary across groups, with Filipinos (62 percent) having the highest mortgage rate, and Chinese (31 percent), the lowest. Table 4 reports both the unconditional and conditional mean home equity, presented in ranked order from

highest to lowest by the unconditional mean. The unconditional mean takes into account households with zero home equity (including renters), and it allows us to examine where each group stands overall. The conditional mean is the mean value of equity restricted to only homeowners. As with homeownership, there are also differences in equity by subgroups. Once again, Taiwanese, Japanese, Asian Indian, and Chinese have the highest home equity and Southeast Asians have the lowest, which in large part may also be due to their lower homeownership rates. The ANOVA test shows at least one of the mean home equity values differs from the other ethnic groups, and there is a strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis with p -value < 0.001.

Income from assets is the second wealth indicator examined. The ACS defines asset income as “interest on savings or bonds, dividends from stockholdings or membership in associations, net income from rental of property to others and receipts from boarders or lodgers, net royalties, and periodic payments from an estate or trust fund.”¹³ Information on income from assets, however, is collected only at the person level. In order to get household level data on asset income, we aggregated the income from assets for all individuals in the same household.

Table 5 reports the percentage of households in each ethnic group having asset income and mean asset income. Again, we report both the unconditional and conditional means, and table is rank ordered by the unconditional means. As with the previous analysis on homeownership and equity, there are differ-

Table 5. Receiving Income from Assets

	Percent Receiving Income from Assets	Income from Assets	
		Unconditional Mean	Conditional Mean
Total	35%	8,571	24,668
Taiwanese	55%	8,571	33,112
Asian Indian	50%	14,284	28,469
Chinese	38%	10,803	28,341
Japanese	51%	10,053	19,854
Korean	22%	7,176	32,098
Pakistani	27%	7,063	26,359
Other Asian	29%	6,967	24,500
Thai	32%	6,156	19,145
Filipino	26%	4,328	16,737
Vietnamese	14%	2,064	14,491
Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian	9%	858	9,720
Other South Asian	24%	6,516	27,227
All Combinations of Asian Races	28%	10,813	38,195

Source: Tabulated by authors using the 2012–2014 ACS PUMS.

ences in the distribution of income from assets by ethnicity. More than one-third of all Asian elderly households receive income from assets. At least half of Taiwanese, Asian Indian, and Japanese elderly households have asset income, the highest share among all Asian elderly households. Southeast Asians Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian elderly households rank lowest among the subgroups, being two to three times less likely to have income assets relative to all Asian elderly households (i.e., 9 percent versus 35 percent). We see roughly the same pattern and ranking in terms of the actual amount of the mean income from assets. Strikingly, the mean value for the Southeast

Asian groups, Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotians elderly households, for example, have approximately one-tenth the amount of asset income compared to all elderly Asian households. Since the ANOVA test performed indicates at least one of the mean asset income values differs from the other ethnic groups, there is strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis with $p < 0.001$ level.

Some of the observed differences exhibited in the previous two analyses can be attributed to differences in personal and household characteristics, which can affect individuals' ability to accumulate wealth through homeownership and income-generating assets (i.e., dividend-

Table 6. Means of Selected Key Variables by Subgroups

	Percent Married Couple Household	Average Years in School	Percent with Poor English*	Average Household Income
Total	55%	13.4	29%	72,653
Asian Indian	75%	16.2	8%	124,976
Taiwanese	73%	16.2	27%	99,222
Pakistani	71%	15.1	14%	95,778
Other South Asian	75%	13.0	27%	86,457
Filipino	55%	14.3	7%	79,576
All Combinations of Asian Races	59%	12.8	31%	78,016
Japanese	38%	13.8	9%	69,811
Thai	47%	13.3	15%	67,826
Other Asian	56%	13.2	19%	63,480
Chinese	55%	12.4	46%	60,504
Korean	53%	13.1	53%	54,331
Vietnamese	58%	10.7	61%	49,740
Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian	50%	6.5	65%	45,327

* Those who indicated they spoke English “not well” or “not at all” were considered to have difficulty with English—identified also as people who spoke “poor English.”

Source: Tabulated by authors using the 2012–2014 ACS PUMS.

paying stocks, bonds). Education and income, for example, are two major socioeconomic variables considered in the literature. Generally, households with higher levels of educational attainment and income are expected to have higher probability of achieving homeownership and a greater likelihood to take in income from assets. A simple correlation between years in school and equity (0.22), as well as income and home equity (0.32), all show positive relationships. These variables are also positively correlated with income from assets and vary across ethnic groups.

Table 6 reports on four key household and personal characteristics. We see noticeable differences in the probability of being a married couple household, years of schooling, English language ability, and household income by ethnic subgroup. There are also huge ethnic variations in English language-speaking ability. Over 60 percent of Vietnamese and Cambodian households have only limited proficiency—speaking it “not well” or “not at all”—while Asian Indian, Filipinos, and Japanese have higher rates of proficiency, with 90 percent or more being proficient. The differences in

mean household income are also reported since it is positively correlated with both equity and asset income. Again, we see significant differences in income among subgroups. Southeast Asian households, for example, have a household income that is nearly three times less than that of the highest household income ethnic group (Asian Indians). Although not reported in Table 6, we also observed differences in other key variables including age, percent foreign born, and years in the US. These factors are also related to the ability to accumulate wealth and income. The differences observed in terms of home equity and income assets may further be explained by these personal and household characteristics.

Modeling Homeownership

We use multivariate statistical models to account for the influence of personal and household characteristics and determine if ethnic differences hold, after controlling for non-ethnic independent variables. For each outcome, we ran three separate regression models. The first is a logit model to determine the probability of homeownership and whether the household receives income from assets.

The logistic function is defined as:

$$\text{Probability}(Y > 0) = \frac{\exp(a + bX_i + gZ_i + e_i)}{1 + \exp(a + bX_i + gZ_i + e_i)}$$

for observation “i” and asset Y (housing equity or asset income) $\hat{Y}(1,0)$

where a is a constant, b is a vector of coefficients, X is the vector of non-ethnic key control variables, g is a vector of coefficients, Z is a vector of ethnicity indicators, and e is a stochastic term.¹⁴

The second model is a conditional ordinary least square (OLS) regression that looks at equity among homeowners and income from assets among those who have assets. The conditional OLS regression is defined as:

$$Y_i = (a + bX_i + gZ_i + e_i)$$

for observation “i” with asset (housing equity or proxied by asset income) > 0

where a is a constant, b is a vector of coefficients, X is the vector of non-ethnic independent variables, g is a vector of coefficients, Z is a vector of indicators for ethnicity, and e is a stochastic term.¹⁵

The final model performed is a Tobit model, and it takes into account households with zero equity (including renters) and households with no income from asset. The Tobit model is defined as:

$$Y_i^* = (a + bX_i + gZ_i + e_i) \quad e_i | (X_i, Z_i) \sim \text{Normal}(0, \sigma^2)$$

and observe only $Y_i = \max(0, Y_i^*)$,

where Y_i^* is the latent variable, a is a constant, b is a vector of coefficients, X is the vector of non-ethnic independent variables, g is a vector of coefficients, Z is a vector ethnic (dummy variables), and e is the stochastic term. The Tobit model estimates both β , g and σ for the model. β and g estimate the effects on X and Z on the latent variable Y_i^* rather than Y .¹⁶

Each model contains a set of key control variables. These include variables relating to the demographic characteristics of the reference person such as age; nativity; years in the United States (foreign born); English language-speaking ability; family

composition variables, including male- or female-headed household with spouse present (married couple household is the reference group); and socioeconomic variables such as household income and years of schooling. While these variables are consistent across all models, we also included additional independent variables that may be related to one outcome, but not the other. For example, when modeling home equity, we included a dummy variable for homeowners without a mortgage because generally those who are “free and clear” have higher home equity. The full model also includes a set of dummy variables identifying each of the different Asian ethnic subgroups. The ethnicity category for Taiwanese was used as the reference group—the excluded group—in the model because they have the highest mean home equity and the highest income from assets (unconditional mean) among all of the elderly Asian subgroups reported in this study. In the next section, we present our multivariate analysis.

Ethnic Differences in Homeownership and Equity

This section reports on the analysis of and findings for homeownership and home equity. Logit regressions are used to model the dichotomous homeownership variable, and OLS and Tobit are used to model equity. The coefficients are largely consistent with the predicted impacts (see Table 7). The socioeconomic variables—income and years of schooling—had the expected effects of increasing homeownership and equity. Not surprisingly, we expect to see a decrease in odds of homeownership and

equity for individuals with poor English-language ability and foreign-born status. For foreign born, however, we see the number of years in the United States increases the odds of homeownership and home equity. Household composition also has an impact. Non-married, male- and female-headed households are less likely to own a home and, if they do own a home, tend to have lower home equity relative to married couple households. As expected, “free and clear” homeowners—those who have paid off their mortgages—have higher home equity relative to homeowners with a mortgage. These patterns are consistent across all three models.

The major finding from the models is that many of the observed ethnic differences still hold even after controlling for differences in household and personal characteristics. Relative to the Taiwanese subgroup, all other ethnic subgroups had lower odds of homeownership and lower home equity. The magnitude of the gap varied across subgroups.

Figure 2 shows the differences among ethnic subgroups in unadjusted and adjusted mean home equity for households with equity. The unadjusted figures are the observed mean differences and do not control for any of the observed differences in personal and household characteristics between the selected subgroups and Taiwanese subgroup. The adjusted equity differences are the coefficients from the OLS regression and control for differences in personal and household characteristics. Each bar shows the equity held by each ethnic subgroup relative to the Taiwanese subgroup. The chart is ordered from groups

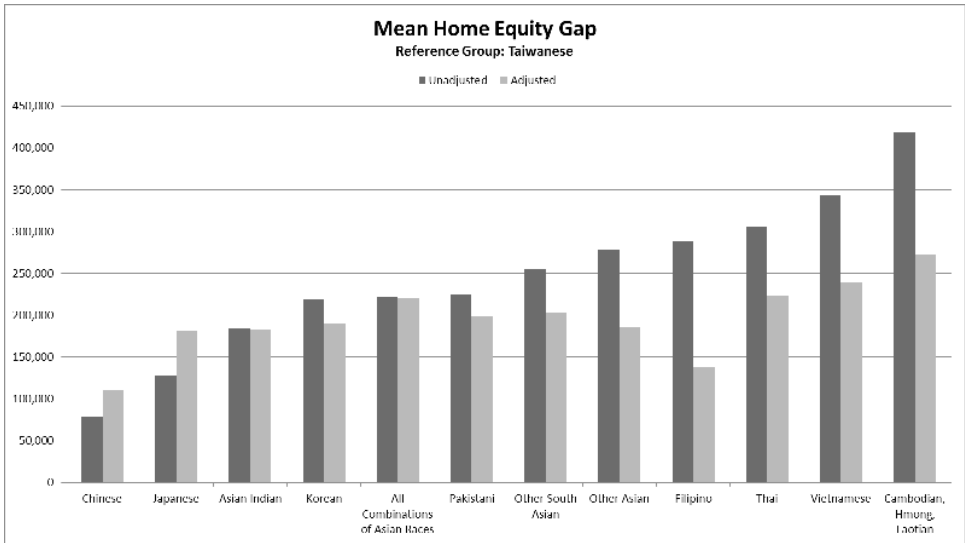
Table 7. Assets in Homeownership, Multivariate Results

	<i>Own Home</i>		<i>Home Equity</i>			
	Model I		Model II		Model III	
	Logit		Conditional OLS		Tobit	
Intercept	4.04	***	199,992	***	498,269	***
Age	-0.04	***	1,459	***	-6,186	***
Male Headed, No Spouse	-0.88	***	-52,982	***	-134,103	***
Female Headed, No Spouse	-0.51	***	-24,821	***	-86,750	***
Years in School	0.04	***	6,453	***	9,518	***
Foreign Born	-2.32	***	-184,795	***	-369,619	***
Years in the United States	0.05	***	2,992	***	6,654	***
Poor English	-0.61	***	24,532	**	-71,879	***
Household Income (/1,000)	0.01	***	951	***	1,303	***
Year 2013	0.03	***	-3,129		-5,963	***
Year 2014	0.02	***	14,182	*	4,326	***
Homeowner, Free and Clear			155,341	***	449,111	***
Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian	-0.86	***	-290,300	***	-272,305	***
Vietnamese	-0.87	***	-243,171	***	-239,423	***
Thai	-0.27	***	-240,564	***	-223,955	***
All Combinations of Asian Races	-1.18	***	-191,818	***	-220,990	***
Other South Asian	-1.00	***	-198,872	***	-203,632	***
Pakistani	-1.08	***	-186,845	***	-199,132	***
Korean	-1.08	***	-157,733	***	-189,544	***
Other Asian	-0.54	***	-215,329	***	-185,327	***
Asian Indian	-0.67	***	-184,145	***	-183,310	***
Japanese	-0.95	***	-219,162	***	-181,228	***
Filipino	-0.51	***	-136,260	***	-137,233	***
Chinese	-0.71	***	-58,274	**	-109,971	***
Scale					423,311	***
Pseudo R-squared	0.26					
Adjusted R-squared			0.15			
Log Likelihood					-6,912,052	
n	23,917		16,919		23,917	

* < 0.10 ** < 0.05 *** < 0.01

Source: Tabulated by authors using the 2012-2014 ACS PUMS.

Figure 2. Mean Home Equity Gap Relative to Taiwanese



Source: Tabulated by authors using the 2012-2014 ACS PUMS.

with the smallest to largest unadjusted equity gap relative to Taiwanese. As discussed earlier, the gap between Chinese, Japanese, Asian Indian, and Korean is smaller, relative to Taiwanese compared with that of Southeast Asians. Controlling for variables helps explain some of these differences, particularly for Filipino and the Southeast Asian groups. For the more prominent Asian subgroups, such as Asian Indians and Koreans, they only slightly lower the gap. For Chinese and Japanese, the control variables actually increase the gap; nonetheless, their gap relative to Taiwanese remains significantly smaller than those exhibited by Southeast Asians.

Ethnic Differences in Asset Income

The last section examines differences in the probability of receiving income from assets. Table 8 reports the regression results for the three different models.

Model IV models the probability of receiving asset income, and Models V and VI model the actual income received from assets. As with the previous analysis on homeownership and equity, we see similar patterns and effects of the independent variables. The probability of receiving asset income increases with age, years of schooling, being married with a spouse present in the household, being US born, and having more household income. Conversely, the probability of receiving asset income decreases for unmarried householders, foreign-born individuals, and those who with poor English language-speaking ability. These patterns are consistent across all three models, and each control variable is statistically significant.

A key finding for this paper is that ethnic differences persist after controlling for factors associated with the probability of receiving income from assets. In

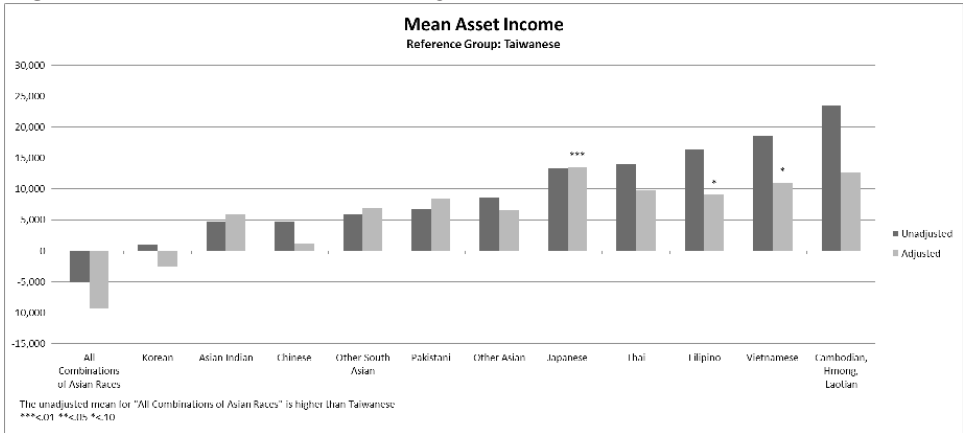
Table 8. Income from Assets, Multivariate Results

	<i>Receives Income from Assets</i>		<i>Amount of Income Received from Assets</i>			
	Model IV		Model V		Model VI	
	Logit		Conditional OLS		Tobit	
Intercept	-1.00	***	-11,173		-59,929	***
Age	0.01	***	249	**	237	***
Male Headed, No Spouse	-0.42	***	-4,872	**	-14,393	***
Female Headed, No Spouse	-0.28	***	-3,134	**	-10,054	***
Years in School	0.08	***	1,207	***	2,883	***
Foreign Born	-1.74	***	-16,406	***	-59,111	***
Years in the United States	0.03	***	425	***	1,194	***
Poor English	-0.56	***	-427		-18,169	***
HH Income Minus Income from Assets (/1,000)	0.00	***	43	***	85	***
Year 2013	0.10	***	2,895	*	4,378	***
Year 2014	0.08	***	2,494		3,509	***
Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian	-1.48	***	-12,610		-48,989	***
Japanese	-1.35	***	-13,526	***	-44,078	***
Vietnamese	-1.24	***	-10,996	*	-41,203	***
Pakistani	-1.15	***	-8,364		-36,970	***
Other South Asian	-1.07	***	-6,946		-31,818	***
Other Asian	-1.04	***	-6,522		-31,296	***
Korean	-1.10	***	2,532		-30,251	***
Thai	-0.88	***	-9,817		-29,880	***
All Combinations of Asian Races	-1.02	***	9,254		-23,050	***
Filipino	-0.47	***	-9,044	*	-17,640	***
Asian Indian	-0.40	***	-5,890		-14,112	***
Chinese	-0.33	***	-1,120		-9,348	***
Scale					66,890	***
Pseudo R-squared	0.152					
Adjusted R-squared			0.0293			
Log Likelihood					-3,343,910	
n	23,917		8,906		23,917	

* < 0.10 ** < 0.05 *** < 0.01

Source: Tabulated by authors using the 2012-2014 ACS PUMS.

Figure 3. Mean Asset Income by Ethnic Differences



Source: Tabulated by authors using the 2012-2014 ACS PUMS.

large part, most of the observed ethnic stratification observed in home equity still holds even with control variables. Relative to Taiwanese, all groups, again, have lower odds of receiving income from assets, but the odds ratio are much higher for Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotians and lower for Chinese and Asian Indian, *after adjusting for the aforementioned factors*.

There are shifts in the ethnic ranking. For example, after accounting for variables associated with receiving asset income, the ranking for elderly Japanese drops and their odds of receiving income from asset nears that of Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotians. Elderly Filipinos, by contrast, move up in their ranking closer to that of Chinese and Asian Indian, which suggests the difference observed in asset income relative to Taiwanese is larger due to differences in personal and household characteristics compared to difference observed in home equity. These patterns are consistent in the Models V and VI. And, while most of the ethnic variables in the conditional

OLS models are insignificant, in large part due to the model's smaller sample size (it is restricted to only households with asset income), the coefficients for Japanese and Filipinos are significant. The Tobit model has a larger sample size since it includes observations with zero asset income. The findings show all of the ethnic coefficients being statistically significant.

Figure 3 shows the ethnic differences in both unadjusted and adjusted asset income among those with asset income. Taiwanese are the reference group. Each bar represents the mean difference or gap in asset income between the listed ethnic group and Taiwanese. The smallest gaps observed were those between Taiwanese and Koreans, Taiwanese and Asian Indians, and Taiwanese and Chinese. The gap between Taiwanese and Southeast Asians—Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese—is the greatest among ethnic group differences.

Conclusion

Asian American elderly are not homogenous. Like other elderly populations, a significant proportion has income below the federal poverty level—13 percent according to the most recent 2015 ACS.¹⁷ At this stage in life, assets are an important source of financial security, enabling individuals who are no longer working to live off savings. However, this is not the case for all Asian Americans as seen in sizable subgroup differences. Fourteen percent have zero wealth and more than half (58 percent) have less than \$250,000 in assets (which would yield about \$10,000 annually to cover expenses using the common 4 percent rule for dissaving). Taking out the net value of the home, only one-sixth have at least \$250,000.

Low wealth is correlated with high poverty rates among the elderly. Thirty percent of the elderly Asian Americans in the second-lowest wealth quartile have income below the federal poverty level, and 43 percent of those at the bottom wealth quartile fall below the federal poverty level. Among those with income below the federal poverty level, 22 percent have no assets and 93 percent have less than \$250,000. Wealth inequality has an ethnic dimension. Using the ACS proxies, the worst-off group has between 13 percent and 24 percent of home equity and 5 percent and 30 percent of asset income of the most affluent group. The rank order of wealth, not surprisingly, is correlated with intergroup differences in income and poverty. Three Southeast Asian refugee populations—Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian—for example, rank at or near the bottom of

the economic ladder along three dimensions: wealth, income, and poverty.

These ethnic variations are a product of policy-based migration patterns that cream the most educated from some nations and admit the most disadvantaged, such as the humanitarian flow of Vietnamese immigrants after the Vietnam War.¹⁸

Given the magnitude and nature of wealth inequality—and its correlated income inequality—policies that address the needs of impoverished elderly must be inclusive of Asian Americans and made accessible for the groups in greatest need. In our opinion, this includes affordable housing, support services, and health care programs that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, and, therefore, more accessible for the many Asian American elderly who are in need and who may also be linguistically isolated, as 30 percent of Asian American elderly households are linguistically isolated.¹⁹ Having identified ethnic groups in the greatest need, it is imperative that some resources be dedicated to ensuring programs and support services actually reach these elderly.

Meaningful implementation of such policies and programs requires detailed information. While this study produced new empirical insights, one conclusion is that current data on wealth are insufficient to adequately examine Asian American elderly. For example, the major surveys have relatively small samples and few questionnaires are translated into Asian languages. Additionally, the datasets do not fully identify Asian American respondents, and agencies do

not adequately fund research for this population. We believe it is critical that government- and foundation-supported surveys include adequate samples of Asian Americans—including a strategy to oversample—that the data is sufficient enough to be disaggregated by ethnicity and nativity, and that Asian Americans are systematically and explicitly analyzed. The Ford Foundation's "Building Economic Security over a Lifetime" initiative is an example of how this can be implemented. The results will greatly enhance our ability to identify and address the financial challenges facing elderly Asian Americans. Additional research is needed to address where specifically policies and systems of support for the elderly are missing for AAPI elderly and subgroups. However, based on our findings, we have been able to identify groups who may face the challenges of poverty and low wealth. Because we have found wealth inequality to exist among ethnic lines, a first step toward reaching these groups in need may be to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate programs for those groups.

Endnotes

- 1 This project is made possible by the generous support of the Ford Foundation's Building Economic Security over a Lifetime initiative. We would like to thank Jenny Chhea for her assistance in the early data work and assessment. The authors are also grateful to Melany De La Cruz-Viesca, assistant director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Silvia Gonzalez from the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge for their support and technical assistance.
- 2 Ong, Paul, "Asian American Pacific Islander Economic Justice," *AAPI Nexus Journal: Policy, Practice, and Community* Vol. 14, No. 1 (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 2016): 30-48.
- 3 *The New Asian Immigration in Los Angeles and Global Restructuring*, eds. P. M. Ong, E. Bonachich, and L. Cheng, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).
- 4 He, Wan, Manisha Sengupta, Victoria A. Velkoff, and Kimberly A. DeBarros, "65+ in the United States: 2005," US Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, 2005.
- 5 Ong, Jonathan, Paul Ong, and Elena Ong, "The Future of Asian America in 2040," *AAPI Nexus Journal: Policy, Practice, and Community* Vol. 14, No. 1 (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 2016): 14-29.
- 6 Ibid
- 7 The SIPP is administered by the Census Bureau, and its purpose is to collect information on "various types of income, labor force participation, social program participation and eligibility, and general demographic characteristics to measure the effectiveness of existing federal, state, and local programs." Because of small sample sizes, we are unable to examine nativity and ethnic differences with either dataset. However, the datasets are useful because they include information on net wealth, home equity, and income, including income from assets.
- 8 According to the US Census Bureau, "[T]he householder refers to the person (or one of the people) in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented (maintained) or, if there is no such person, any adult member, excluding roomers, boarders, or paid employees. If the house is owned or rented jointly by a married couple, the householder may be either the husband or the wife. The person designated as the householder is the 'reference person' to whom the relationship of all other household members, if any, is recorded."
- 9 By adding the foreign-born-only restriction, we exclude two other major racial groups that could potentially be collapsed under the "other" race category, but who are primarily native or US born. These include American Indian/Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians. By further restricting the sample to non-Hispanic

foreign born, we exclude Hispanics who proportionally make up the largest share of foreign-born people. Asians are the second-largest foreign-born group following Hispanics.

10 Instead, it includes a “First R,” which is the first respondent interviewed in a household in a given wave; “Family R,” which answers child and household member related questions; and a “Financial R,” which answers the money questions for a household. However, these assignments can change from wave to wave and neither respondent is considered more important than the other.

11 De Maio, Fernando G, "Income Inequality Measures," *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* Vol. 61, No. 10 (London: BMJ Publishing Group, 2007): 849-852.

12 The following Asian ethnic groups met this threshold and their respective sample sizes are reported: Asian Indian (2,850), Chinese (6,261), Taiwanese (299), Filipino (4,653), Japanese (3,871), Korean (2,510), Pakistani (195), Thai (271), and Vietnamese (1,992). Due to their small size and since these groups share similar cultural and immigration experiences in the US, Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian were grouped together. Similarly, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Nepalese, and Sri Lankan are consolidated as “Other South Asian.” All other remaining Asian subgroups were assigned as “Other Asian.” Asian Americans who identified as multiple Asian ethnic groups received their own separate category of “All Combinations of Asian Races.”

13 “American Community Survey” and “Puerto Rico Community Survey,” US Census Bureau, 2014.

14 “Proc logistic” in SAS is used to estimate the model using the sample of Asian American elderly households.

15 “Proc reg” in SAS is used to estimate the model using the sample of Asian American elderly households with assets.

16 “Proc Lifereg” in SAS is used to estimate the model.

17 “American Community Survey 2015 1-Year Estimates,” US Census Bureau, 2015.

18 “The Political Economy of Capitalist Restructuring and the New Asian Immigration,” *The New Asian Immigration in Los Angeles and Global Restructuring*, eds. P. M. Ong, E. Bonacich, and L. Cheng, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

19 Tabulated by authors using 2012-2014 ACS PUMS.

No Place Like Home

Racial Capitalism, Gentrification, and the Identity of Chinatown

by Kartik Naram

The forces of gentrification have reached the gates of Chinatowns. Across America, upscale property developments threaten to encroach on venerable ethnic enclaves that happen to sit on very valuable real estate. While Chinatown gentrification in some ways repeats a pattern played out in other ethnic- and minority-dominated neighborhoods, Chinatowns differentiate themselves by their symbolic importance, their history of racialization, and the ongoing transformations that embroil these spaces. Today's Chinatowns are alive with contradictions. The very "foreignness" that once forced Chinese immigrants into these self-sustaining enclaves has been repackaged to create economic value—often at the expense of the neighborhood's poorer, more vulnerable residents.

This paper will specifically examine the racial, legal, and economic underpinnings of gentrification in New York City's Chinatown. Overarching questions, however, extend well beyond the streets of lower Manhattan. What role has racial stratification played in the

development of Chinatowns? How do state-sponsored economic development strategies change the makeup of Chinatowns today? What legal protections do ethnic enclaves receive? And what do they deserve? These questions lurk behind the ongoing dialogues between cities and their Chinatowns.

Land of Outsiders

The nexus between race and gentrification in America's Chinatowns can be described by "racial capitalism," a theory developed by Nancy Leong to explain "the process of deriving social or economic value from the racial identity of another person."¹ Although Leong's article focuses on racial capitalism in the affirmative action context, she uses the concept as part of "a long tradition of assigning value to race."² The pernicious effects of racial capitalism stems from its external, outward orientation. As Leong points out, racial capitalism cedes "a stake in one's racial identity" to others, meaning "outsiders" can influence "the way that racial identity should

be performed.”³ The consequences are two-fold: (1) racial capitalism exploits non-White racial value, and (2) “in so doing it instantiates race as a commod-

Chinese labor pleased employers and fueled California’s growing economy. But a confluence of factors, prominent among them the rise of the White labor

Chinatowns differentiate themselves by their symbolic importance, their history of racialization, and the ongoing transformations that embroil these spaces.

ity.”⁴ Chinatowns illustrate the problems racial commodification can create.

Chinatowns rose out of involuntary, reflexive reactions to racial commodification.⁵ Leong’s premise, that America’s history of “assigning value to race” underlies the racial-market paradigm, finds a potent parable in the origins of Chinatowns.⁶ Prior to the mid-1800s, American society harbored an “ambivalent” view toward the Chinese.⁷ Discrimination and sinophobic ideologies existed, to be sure, but records also suggest many Americans respected both the Chinese work ethic and China’s standing among the world’s civilizations. A California newspaper described the Chinese as “amongst the most industrious, quiet, patient people among us.”⁸ The governor of California declared them “one of the most worthy of our newly adopted citizens.”⁹ Peter Kwong and Dusanka Miscevic explain this in terms that echo Leong’s theory. Until the mid-1800s, “the American racial construct had not yet assigned [the Chinese] a definite position in the social hierarchy.”¹⁰ Cheap

movement, put an end to society’s ambivalence about the Chinese. From the mid-1800s onward, American society assigned the Chinese a low racial value and reinforced it with overt acts of racial animus.

The legal system helped legitimize anti-Chinese racial commodification. In 1854, the California Supreme Court adjudged the Chinese race to be inferior to Whites in the case *People v. Hall*.¹¹ At issue was a state statute that barred “Black,” “Mulatto,” or “Indian” witnesses from testifying against a White man.¹² The court decided the statute also barred Chinese witnesses, defining in the law an underlying racial dichotomy: White and non-White. The court grouped the Chinese with other legal inferiors, and for good measure launched into a tirade about the deficiencies of the Chinese people:

The anomalous spectacle of a distinct people, living in our community, recognizing no laws of this State except through necessity, bringing with them

their prejudices and national feuds, in which they indulge in open violation of law; whose mendacity is proverbial; a race of people whom nature has marked as inferior, and who are incapable of progress or intellectual development beyond a certain point, as their history has shown; differing in language, opinions, color, and physical conformation; between whom and ourselves nature has placed an impassable difference, is now presented, and for them is claimed, not only the right to swear away the life of a citizen, but the further privilege of participating with us in administering the affairs of our Government.¹³

By giving the court's imprimatur to the idea the Chinese were incurably alien, *Hall* "opened the way for almost every sort of discrimination against the Chinese."¹⁴

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 crowned the anti-Chinese era in America, marking the first and only time in US history a racial group was singled out and blocked from entering the country.¹⁵ The legal blockade reflected and reinforced other, more primitive means of exclusion. Anti-Chinese violence spread. By the late 1800s, 153 anti-Chinese riots were reported in America's still-sparse western territories. In 1885, 150 White miners in Rock Springs, Wyoming, expelled their Chinese neigh-

bors by "setting fire to their homes and businesses and murdering twenty-eight people."¹⁶ Kwong and Miscevic refer to the period after the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act as an "open season" on the Chinese in America.¹⁷ Unable to seek protection from the law, many Chinese sought refuge in numbers. Some Chinese moved into cities along the West Coast like San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento, so the Chinatowns there became "entrenched as permanently segregated" communities.¹⁸ Other "refugees" of anti-Chinese animus moved east, and joined New York City's burgeoning Chinatown.¹⁹

Chinatown's immigrants soon discovered their new neighborhood was penned in by restrictive laws designed to keep them out of mainstream society.

This was the double-meaning of Chinatown—a safe haven for its inhabitants, and an enclosure. Indeed, those on the outside of Chinatowns saw them "as a way to contain a very threatening population in American life."²⁰ Containment—not assimilation—defined these spaces. Employment and housing discrimination made it "difficult for Chinese immigrants to find a place to live outside of Chinatown."²¹ And within

Chinatowns, residents lacked basic legal protections like citizenship. Overall, the cities that encircled Chinatowns ignored, or actively antagonized, their needs.

This was the double-meaning of Chinatown – a safe haven for its inhabitants, and an enclosure.

In the vacuum left by traditional government institutions, “Chinatown provided social, economic, and political mechanisms” that promoted self-sufficiency.²² Economically, the success of Chinatown’s robust ethnic enclave depended on several factors. First, Chinese employees worked for Chinese proprietors within the community. Second, Chinatowns’ businesses catered to the needs of co-ethnic customers. The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund’s (AALDEF’s) 2013 study of New York City’s Chinatown found that 94 percent of the neighborhood’s commercial ventures were small businesses, most of which were “geared towards residents’ everyday use and purchase of affordable goods and services.”²³ For customers, the connection these businesses seem to provide to a shared homeland can be powerful. One study found that Chinese immigrants prioritized “sociocultural factor[s]” like ethnic identity over economic variables like “accessibility and store attributes” when choosing where to shop.²⁴ Third, the “spatial concentration” of Chinatowns facilitated “access to co-ethnic clientele, ethnic resources, credit and information, and ethnic labor sources.”²⁵ The combination of co-ethnic labor, co-ethnic clientele, and close proximity created powerful networks. This allowed businesses to coordinate distribution, manufacturing, and services so each individual firm faced lower operating costs.

Outsiders have exploited Chinatown’s nonwhiteness by commodifying its racial identity to derive economic value.

The neighborhood’s compactness is a boon for new residents, who “rely on networks of friends and relatives and on affordable housing, food, and goods in the neighborhood.”²⁶ Proximity also allows newcomers to locate essential social services, like doctors’ offices, which was especially critical at Chinatown’s formation, a time when “city governments often paid little attention to [the neighborhood’s] needs.”²⁷ For some poorer, relatively uneducated immigrants, Chinatowns provided better job prospects than the mainstream American economy.²⁸ One

study has suggested the “ethnic network passes on valuable information that increases annual earnings by increasing the job-worker match quality and thereby the hourly wage rate, irrespective of skill level.”²⁹ Recent immigrants’ skills can yield better economic returns in Chinatowns than in the jobs available in the mainstream labor market. In that way, Chinatowns can serve as “concrete manifestations of ethnic solidarity.”³⁰ Although economic researchers “disagree on the rate of convergence and about whether immigrants ever reach earnings parity with native workers,” studies have “invariably found evidence in support of the general pattern of economic assimilation.”³¹

At the same time, however, Chinatown’s spatial concentration stoked racial prejudice. It did so first by contributing to the narrative of Chinatown as

a crowded, unsanitary ghetto. Public health authorities eyed Chinatowns warily as a “discrete racial territor[y],” and the resulting investigations “established the Chinatown spatial elements of dens, density, and the labyrinth.”³² The “labyrinth” concept refers to a recurring narrative in early Chinatown reportage, which “described the Chinatown labyrinth as hundreds of underground passageways connecting the filthy cellars and cramped garrets where Chinese men lived.”³³ Spatial concentration fed the image of cramped quarters: “[i]n their salacious portrayals, journalists related how dozens of Chinese men slept on narrow wooden shelves squeezed into claustrophobic rooms, which was considered close quarters for a single White man.”³⁴

Gentrification

Chinatown’s history of racial commodification plays a major role in its rapid development today. The word many critics use to describe this development, “gentrification”, brims with negative connotations: it can imply cultural sterilization, homogeneity, and displacement.³⁵ Typical of Chinatown’s history, gentrification intertwines problems of race and economics---the process “by definition devastates the economic and racial diversity of city neighborhoods.”³⁶ In the Urban Justice Center’s definition, gentrification ties together race, displacement, and economic planning. It is “a physical, economic, and cultural process in which private developers, aided by city policies, invest in low-income and underserved neighborhoods, causing high-income people to displace low-income people, often people of color, from their homes

and businesses.”³⁷ This section will focus on the cultural costs of gentrification in Chinatowns, and specifically the consequences of racialized development on the neighborhood’s longtime inhabitants. First, it is important to get a sense of how gentrification has changed the composition of Chinatown communities. Most visibly, gentrification has altered the racial and ethnic makeup of the neighborhoods. White populations in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York City’s Chinatowns have grown rapidly since 2000. In New York City, the Asian and Latino populations dropped by 11 percent each from 2000 to 2010, while the White population rose by 19 percent.³⁸ The number of multigenerational immigrant families, too, has been dwindling as more and more young professionals move in.³⁹ The White newcomers to these Chinatowns generally have more money than the non-White residents they replace, another classic harbinger of gentrification. Data from New York City shows the bifurcation in process. In 2000, the median household income among Whites was \$35,904, while Asian Pacific Islanders’ household income was \$31,368. By 2010, White median incomes in Chinatown had risen to \$58,265, while the neighborhoods’ Asian household incomes had *dropped* to \$29,524.⁴⁰

Gentrification and racial capitalism coincide when economic development depends, at least in part, on exploiting “the commodity of nonwhiteness” for value.⁴¹ Marketing the diversity of Chinatown has in fact been part of developers’ gentrification strategy.⁴² Outsiders have exploited Chinatown’s non-Whiteness by commodifying its racial identity to

derive economic value.⁴³ Indeed, Leong's article examines similar commodification in the context of college and workplace diversity. Economic development in Chinatowns takes the same tactic—diversity as a value-creating draw—and applies it to urban landscapes. But just like racial capitalism in the admissions context can do violence to an admittee's sense of identity, so, too, can racial capitalism in the gentrification context warp a community's.

Longtime residents and advocates find wry irony in the fact Chinatown's distinctive features, forged by discriminatory pressures, now “attract not only

looking vegetables and fruits accompany Florida oranges.”

“New York's Chinatown represents a thick slice of foreign culture dropped directly into the socio-ethnic stew that is Manhattan . . . *Chinatown's Blade Runner ambience and still-exotic charm reinforced its appeal.*”

“It's unclear how much someone who can afford a \$2 million pad will enjoy the one-of-a-kind bodegas-cum-mini-groceries that stock frozen squid snacks.”⁴⁶

The marketing blurbs manage to echo hoary notions of Chinatown in a mod-

Depicting Chinatown as an exotic designed to lure “hip” New Yorkers to forge relationships within the

tourists to the neighborhoods' ‘exotic’ products and experiences, but also more affluent residents to conquer a hip and unexplored ‘frontier’ in city living.”⁴⁴ Property developers routinely peddle the neighborhood's “authenticity” as a way to lure more affluent residents into the area, who will pay higher rents than existing tenants. “Nonwhiteness,” to use Leong's racial-capitalist framework, “has therefore become something desirable—and for many, it has become a commodity to be pursued, captured, possessed, and used.”⁴⁵ For example:

“Chinatown is a sensory experience. People pushing past stalls of fresh produce on crowded streets. *Exotic-*

ern idiom. At the height of anti-Chinese antipathy in America, visitors to Chinatowns “delineated the utter foreignness, exoticism, and evil of the place.”⁴⁷ Notably, they marveled at the “visual and olfactory sensations” the neighborhood offered.⁴⁸ The sights, sounds, and smells of Chinatown no longer inspire racial animus, but descriptions of Chinatown still emphasize it as “a sensory experience.” Moreover, outsiders continue to market the neighborhood by gesturing at its vestigial traces of danger, along with assurances of safety. Tour guides in 1914 San Francisco, for example, called its Chinatown “the most fascinating city of America,” and made sure to tell patrons

that “nowhere is the White visitor more secure in property or person.”⁴⁹ Generations later, “[r]eal estate brokers appeal to the exoticism of Chinatown’s culture [and] reference the safety and style of neighboring SoHo and Tribeca.”⁵⁰ The relationship between gentrification and racial capitalism has thus been fueled, in part, by the media and real estate industries, which advance the idea of Chinatown “as an exotic yet chic neighborhood on the cusp of a major transformation.”⁵¹

Selling Chinatown’s culture is not a recent phenomenon. During the exclusion era, outsiders viewed the insular

Nor is using racial commodification to drum up economic development a practice unique to Chinatowns. The racial-value marketplace has been utilized all over the world in conjunction with urban renewal:

The commodification of ethno-cultural diversity . . . creat[es] new opportunities in otherwise blighted neighborhoods. Once the rundown neighborhoods of the marginalized, they now flaunt their ethnic diversity and are colorfully described in visitors’ guides and on Web sites to promote tourism and investment. [Such commodification] fuels employment, enhances livability,

frontier, tinged with adventure, seems into the neighborhood rather than community.

neighborhoods as “a sort of human zoo.”⁵² Enterprising spirits quickly seized on outsiders’ fascination, finding ways to monetize on racist caricatures of the Chinese. San Francisco’s tours of Chinatown in 1914 represent only one early example. In the 1920s, New York City’s tour guides extolled the macabre attractions of its own Chinatown, pointing out “clandestine opium dens,” gambling dens, “hidden dungeons,” and “mysterious underground tunnels.”⁵³ Chinatown’s residents looked on as sightseeing buses trundled through the streets, spinning outlandish yarns. “They relate stories of crime that never took place,” complained a local businessman to the *New York Times* at the time.⁵⁴

generates urban socio-economic development, and fosters the branding of cities.⁵⁵

The question, however, is whether these benefits of “ethno-cultural” commodification reach the subjects of commodification.

Leong argues racial capitalism “harms nonwhite people: it fractures identity, creates pressure for nonwhite people to engage in particular identity performances, and inflicts economic harm by placing nonwhite people at the greater mercy of the market.”⁵⁶ These two types of harm—identity-based and economic—correlate to the criticisms

leveled at Chinatown's gentrification. For some, the primary concern is a hollowing-out of Chinatown's cultural identity (in other words, its authenticity). Andrew Leong at AALDEF frets Chinatown is being transformed into "a sanitized ethnic playground for the rich to satisfy their exotic appetite for a dim sum and fortune cookie fix."⁵⁷ Another identity-based harm relates to the role of Chinatown's inhabitants. Nancy Leong discusses how racial capitalism "degrades nonwhiteness by commodifying it and that relegates nonwhite individuals to the status of 'trophies' or 'passive emblems.'"⁵⁸ That is certainly how many twentieth century White visitors saw the Chinese of Chinatowns—as emblems of their race's characteristics—and critics worry that twenty-first century marketing strikes a similar, if less explicit, tone.

At any rate, the cultural value featured in Chinatown's marketing seems oriented outward. Depicting Chinatown as an exotic frontier, tinged with adventure, seems designed to lure "hip" New Yorkers into the neighborhood rather than to forge relationships within the community. And the marketing, it must be said, often works. During the first wave of Chinatown gentrification in the 1980s, for example, one new resident explained to the *New York Times*, "It's the best all-round deal for my money, because it's beautiful and peaceful and you can smell spices all over."⁵⁹ As a *Time Out* excerpt observes, the wealthier newcomers do not seem poised to mix into Chinatown's "socio-ethnic stew."⁶⁰ Chinatown locals, again, appear more like "passive emblems," rather than full-standing neighbors.

The other type of cultural harm caused by Chinatown's gentrification goes to economics. The marketing push surrounding gentrification allows development projects to draw economic value from Chinatown's non-Whiteness without ensuring Chinatown itself benefits from the bargain. Property developers and brokers capitalize on Chinatown's non-Whiteness—using bywords such as "exotic" and "foreign"—to generate higher rents and greater economic value. But for whom? Critics point out Chinatown's existing residents cannot consume the high-end goods and services ushered in by new businesses. According to a 2013 survey by AALDEF, median income in the New York's Chinatown area is \$36,899, "with 27 percent of residents making below \$16,556."⁶¹ Similarly, new development could push out Chinatowns' small businesses, the lifeblood of the community's exotic charm. A 2008 survey found almost half (48 percent) of small-business proprietors in Chinatown considered relocating out of Chinatown or shutting down altogether.⁶² Such incongruity between the economic influx and the existing inhabitants suggests economic value may not inure to the benefit of Chinatown's poorer and more vulnerable residents.

To be sure, "economic development" writ large carries with it both harmful and beneficial consequences. Gentrification can lead to displacement, but it can also lower crime rates, broaden the tax base, and bolster public finances.⁶³ Indeed, discussing gentrification by solely fixating on its positive or negative aspects risks, creating a false dichotomy between unbridled growth and no development. Chinatowns can benefit,

of course, from economic growth. Its housing stock, small business revenues, and employee wage rates could all use improvement. But what Chinatown's supporters demand is growth that fairly accommodates the existing population. As social theorist Karl Polanyi has argued, "[t]he rate of change is often of no less importance than the direction of the change itself."⁶⁴ And while external forces can dictate the latter, "it is the rate at which we allow change to take place, which well may depend upon us."⁶⁵ Polanyi calls on the rule of law, specifically, to regulate the rate of change so that vulnerable members of society may adapt. In the case of New York's Chinatown, however, the state's legal system has abdicated that role.

Seeking Protection in the Courts

Chinatowns today receive scant protection from development policies or legal precedents, perpetuating the neighborhood's history of racial commodification. The recurring narrative has been "powerful institutions and callous government agencies [. . .] continually mistreat[ing] a small and vulnerable community."⁶⁶ New York City's Chinatown is a prime example—and two cases, in particular, frame the legal obstacles in the way of residents, activists, and advocates seeking to challenge gentrification projects in that neighborhood.

Chinese Staff & Workers Ass'n v. City of New York

In 1981, New York City created the Special Manhattan Bridge District (SMBD), a zoning district that prompted the first wave of gentrification in Chinatown. The SMBD initiative, which was passed

as an amendment to the city's zoning resolution, centered on fourteen street blocks near the Manhattan Bridge that included part of Chinatown.⁶⁷ When the city studied the area in developing the SMBD plan ("the Study"), it took note of the ethnic enclave economy rooted there:

[T]he Study observed that Chinatown offers its residents a cohesive, self-sufficient community, which serves as home, workplace, cultural center, financial center, and retail and service hub for its residents. Problems of assimilation for new immigrants are minimized by the absence of language and cultural barriers and the opportunities for employment from Chinese-owned businesses within walking distance from their homes.⁶⁸

The study also recognized a need for affordable housing in the area, but concluded that "new housing, financed either privately or through public programs, is not a realistic possibility for meeting the majority of the area's housing needs."⁶⁹ The SMBD's plan to stimulate the construction of affordable housing in Chinatown through a program of "incentive zoning" proved toothless.

The construction of affordable housing under an incentive-zoning scheme depends, predictably, on the incentives offered to developers. And the incentives for building affordable housing in the SMBD paled in comparison to other incentives on offer. To illustrate: a developer who agreed to build a community facility in the SMBD would receive a zoning bonus of seven square feet for ev-

ery square foot spent on the community facility.⁷⁰ “Rehabilitated housing” (new, but not affordable, housing stock) could earn a zoning exception of six square feet for every foot built. That spurred new construction, which revitalized dilapidated housing stock and attracted new residents to the area. But the zoning incentive for *affordable* housing amounted to only two additional square feet for every square foot of low- and moderate-income housing provided, the lowest of

ment” (emphasis added).⁷⁴ What the city agencies did *not* do was examine whether the high-rise would “accelerate the displacement of local low-income residents and businesses or alter the character of the community.”⁷⁵ The city determined Henry Street’s development would “not have any significant effect on the environment if certain modifications were adopted.” Henry Street accepted the modifications. Because no significant effect on the environment was foreseen,

But what Chinatown’s supporters demand is growth that fairly accommodates the existing population.

the three zoning incentives. Unsurprisingly, the affordable-housing incentive “failed to attract a single developer.”⁷¹ Fearing imminent and uncontrolled development, members of the Chinatown community banded together to form the Manhattan Bridge Area Coalition, “declaring war on the [SMBD] in particular and gentrification in general.”⁷²

Chinatown activists sued the city over SMBD development in an important case called *Chinese Staff & Workers Ass’n v. City of New York*.⁷³ The controversy arose when Henry Street Partners, a property developer, sought to build a luxury high-rise building on a vacant lot in the SMBD. The city, pursuant to regulations promulgated under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), conducted a “thorough review of the effects of the project on the *physical* environ-

the city avoided having to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The city granted Henry Street Partners a permit to commence construction. At that point, a group of Chinatown residents and activists brought a suit to challenge the approval of the permit. The controversy reached the Court of Appeals, New York’s highest court, where it turned on the “proper interpretation of statutory language.”⁷⁶ Namely, the court had to decide whether the term “environment”, as used in the SEQRA and CEQR, included considerations of effects like population displacement and community character.⁷⁷ This was critical because if “environment” did include such effects, the city agencies had failed to take the requisite “hard look” at all “relevant areas of environmental concern” before deciding whether or not to prepare an EIS.⁷⁸ The court concluded that “both SEQRA and CEQR require a lead agency to consider more than

impacts upon the physical environment in determining whether to require the preparation of an EIS.⁷⁹ Specifically, “the potential displacement of local residents and businesses is an effect on population patterns and neighborhood character which must be considered.”⁸⁰ Since the city failed to satisfy the statutory requirement, the court declared Henry Street’s permit “null and void.”⁸¹

Chinese Staff & Workers Ass’n produced a favorable ruling, but no dependable precedent for Chinatown residents and activists. Community groups tend to overstate the significance of the victory in *Chinese Staff & Worker’s Ass’n*. AALDEF, which represented the plaintiffs in the case, still calls it a “precedent-setting case” that “ultimately stopped a developer from building luxury residences on a vacant lot and sparked discussion about changing the City’s environmental review process.”⁸² That is all true, but the precedent set has been, unfortunately, a modest one. Most New York court opinions cite *Chinese Staff & Workers Ass’n* now for the proposition that it *limits* what a court can review.⁸³ And the discussion it sparked has focused on the shortcomings of the judiciary’s role vis-à-vis Chinatown’s development. For activists, the limited reach of *Chinese Staff & Workers Ass’n* “highlighted the legal system’s disappointingly narrow construction of its role in remediating environmental justice problems.”⁸⁴

Moreover, the legal standard articulated by *Chinese Staff & Workers Ass’n* requires only that government agencies identify “the relevant areas of environmental concern”, take a “hard look” at them, and state a “reasoned elaboration”

when they issue a determination on the project.⁸⁵ Thus, cases in which plaintiffs attack the substance of a well-considered plan, arguing for example that the city *should* provide for affordable housing in a zoning plan, but failed to do so, do not fall within the ambit of *Chinese Staff & Workers Ass’n*.⁸⁶ While New York’s courts “endorse the position that the need for low-income housing should be addressed by government,” they have simultaneously maintained “there is no affirmative obligation imposed upon municipal authorities to provide for the housing needs of low-income residents.”⁸⁷ Chinatown residents and activists have thus been frustrated in seeking judicial intervention because the courts have not recognized any substantial legal duty on the part of the city to provide affordable housing. To overcome this obstacle, advocates have tried to find a constitutional basis for the argument that lack of affordable housing invalidates the city’s zoning plan.

Asian Americans for Equal. v. Koch

Under the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, a zoning plan can be declared unconstitutional only if its “provisions are clearly arbitrary and unreasonable, having no substantial relation to the public health, safety, morals, or general welfare.”⁸⁸ *Euclid’s* test, which gives deference to government discretion, has foiled numerous challenges to exclusionary zoning plans.⁸⁹ But in the landmark case of *Southern Burlington County N.A.A.C.P. v. Township of Mount Laurel (Mount Laurel I)*, the New Jersey Supreme Court found in *Euclid’s* “general welfare” requirement

“a sword to attack exclusionary zoning, rather than as a shield for [its] defense.”⁹⁰ The court held that New Jersey’s municipalities must fulfill their “fair share of the regional need for low- and moderate-income housing.”⁹¹ Specifically, the court premised its ruling on provisions in the New Jersey constitution that guarantee equal protection and substantive due process. A few years later, in *Mount Laurel II*, the court clarified the *Mount Laurel* doctrine applied to “urban areas” as well as suburban ones, and reiterated municipal zoning provisions should not exclude nor displace an area’s “indigenous poor.”⁹² The *Mount Laurel* rationale, if applied in New York, would conceivably require city agencies to affirmatively ensure the provision of affordable housing as part of gentrification projects.

New York courts, however, have distanced themselves from *Mount Laurel*. This became apparent in another case involving a challenge to the SMBD called *Asian Americans for Equal. v. Koch*.⁹³ The *Koch* plaintiffs sued the city because of the meager incentives for affordable housing provided by the SMBD. They sought (1) a judgment declaring the SMBD unconstitutional “because it was not enacted pursuant to a well-considered plan,” and (2) an injunction, along the lines of *Mount Laurel*, ordering the city “to create a zoning plan for the [SMBD], which provides for and mandates a realistic opportunity for the construction of low income housing.”⁹⁴

The New York Court of Appeals rejected both claims, extending the reasoning of an earlier case called *Berenson v. Town of New Castle*.⁹⁵ *Berenson* involved a town

zoning law that forbid the construction of any multi-family dwellings, like apartments or condominiums, in an effort to preserve the town’s bucolic character. The court in that case applied a two-part test to assess whether the town’s zoning plan violated New York law: (1) “whether the [zoning] board has provided a properly balanced and well-ordered plan for the community,” taking into account that “what may be appropriate for one community may differ substantially from what is appropriate for another”; and (2) whether, “in enacting a zoning ordinance, consideration [was] given to regional needs and requirements.”⁹⁶ The court did espouse two different views on its role in zoning: while it said “[c]ommunity efforts at immunization or exclusion would not be countenanced,” the court nonetheless noted that zoning was “essentially a legislative act,” so it would be “quite anomalous” if courts were “required to perform the tasks of a regional planner.”⁹⁷

The laissez-faire attitude toward zoning pervaded the court’s opinion in *Koch*. Several aspects of the court’s reasoning merit close attention. First, the court drew a distinction between the explicit exclusion in *Berenson*—where the town allowed *no* new multi-family buildings—and the situation in New York City. Unlike New Castle, New York City never “excluded low-cost housing in Chinatown or in the City generally”, and the existence of low-income residents already in Chinatown confirmed the difference.⁹⁸ Next, both the Court of Appeals and the lower court rejected the parallel to *Mount Laurel* by differentiating between the affordable-housing situations in New York and New Jersey.

According to the appellate division, “[n]ot by the widest stretch of the imagination [. . .] could the fact pattern in *Mount Laurel* be applicable to New York City’s record for providing for low- and moderate-income housing.”⁹⁹ Third, the Court of Appeals further distinguished *Mount Laurel* by limiting its reach to “expanding suburban communities,” while New York City’s Chinatown represented a “densely developed area [. . .] with substantial low-cost housing.”¹⁰⁰ Finally, the *Koch* court defined the “community” in question as New York City as a whole, rather than the SMBD area. So, the SMBD had no obligation under *Berenson* to provide affordable housing, because New York City “already ha[d] made extensive allowance for a variety of housing opportunities within *its* boundaries.”¹⁰¹

Despite its unfavorable ruling, Chinatown advocates feeling optimistic could draw at least two positive implications from *Koch*. First, it left open the possibility that a zoning district *could* violate the *Berenson* rule and be deemed exclusionary on the basis of population displacement.¹⁰² This is important because *Berenson* itself did not address

displacement of any existing residents, only a prohibition on new construction. *Koch* thus extended (without comment) *Berenson* to cover displacement.¹⁰³ Second, *Koch* suggested a zoning plan that leaves residents with no alternative “housing opportunities” in the locality

could be unconstitutional. That is, *Koch* may “come to stand for the principle that a zoning ordinance resulting in full-scale displacement is legally indistinguishable from one that excludes on its face.”¹⁰⁴ To be sure, “full-scale displacement” presents a high bar for plaintiffs in New York City’s Chinatown to meet, because the court considered all of New York City in deciding whether other affordable housing options existed. Nonetheless, the court

“recognize[d] plaintiffs’ concerns over displacement and gentrification in the Chinatown area.”¹⁰⁵

As of yet, no community group has successfully blocked a development project by fashioning a legal argument out of the sympathetic strands scattered about the *Koch* opinion. This is because, while the court expressed “concerns over displacement and gentrification,” no concomitant doctrine has materialized to give those concerns any real legal heft.

**Specifically,
‘the potential
displacement of
local residents
and businesses
is an effect
on population
patterns and
neighborhood
character
which must be
considered.’**

Thus, New York courts have continued to mirror the city's laissez-faire approach to urban development. Looking forward, however, the reasoning in *Koch* seems vulnerable to several avenues of attack, based on the changing realities of New York City, as well as Chinatown's unique character.

The plaintiffs and the court in *Koch* seemed to disagree, fundamentally, on how zoning laws should view small, discrete communities like New York City's Chinatown. Both the Court of Appeals and the lower appellate court defined "community" in terms of physical size and formal legal authority. The Court of Appeals emphasized the SMBD covered only "14 blocks . . .

. . . and includes a part, but by no means all, of Chinatown."¹⁰⁶ (Enough community members believed to spur displacement "in the heart of Chinatown."¹⁰⁷) Ultimately, because "the City is the governing authority, not the District," the strictures of *Berenson* did not apply to the SMBD.¹⁰⁸ The appellate division, too, equated size and legal authority with legal significance, concluding "the applicable zoning district may very well be the entire City of New York, not a fourteen- to twenty-block district."¹⁰⁹ Immunizing small-scale zoning districts from judicial scrutiny frustrates foes of gentrification, because the city often uses such districts. The Broadway theatre district and the special Lincoln Square district, for example, were implemented in the years before *Koch*.¹¹⁰ What future

Chinatown plaintiffs—and critics of gentrification, more broadly—must do is advance a broader, less rigid notion of "community" for purposes of exclusionary zoning.

Chinatown exemplifies the idea that "[l]ocal social and community ties are worthy of at least some judicial protection."¹¹¹ This "community rights" vision of zoning looks beyond a neighborhood's physical size or lack of legal personality, and finds in each *individual* resident a property right that includes "place, posi-

Chinatown exemplifies the idea that 'local social and community ties are worthy of at least some judicial protection.'

tion, relationship, roots, community, solidarity, [and] status."¹¹² By placing focus on the individual, the community rights theory counters the *Koch* argument that development should only be balanced at the level of the zoning authority. Under this view, a development project that causes or will cause displacement threatens to violate the property rights of the displaced. The community rights theory seems consonant with New York's own conception of civil rights, as evidenced by the state's human rights law:

The legislature hereby finds and declares that the state has the responsibility to act to assure that *every individual within this state* is afforded an equal opportunity to enjoy a full and productive life and that the failure to provide such

equal opportunity, whether *because of* discrimination, prejudice, intolerance or inadequate education, training, *housing* or health care not only threatens the rights and proper privileges of its inhabitants but menaces the institutions and foundation of a free democratic state and threatens the peace, order, health, safety and general welfare of the state and its inhabitants.¹¹³

The statute connects equal protection – an individual right – first to housing, and then to the consequences on society (“a free democratic state”) at large. In the same way, community rights can be seen as “an indispensable ingredient in the constitution of the individual as a participant in the life of the society.”¹¹⁴ A court can then balance the public interests in economic development with the private property interests that create a political right of community.

The *Koch* court’s reasoning failed to address the fact that for Chinatown’s longtime inhabitants, an available unit of affordable housing *in* Chinatown is not equivalent to an available unit of affordable housing somewhere else in New York City. The difference is community. For Chinatown’s residents, their location is not fungible—rather, it helps engender a sense of identity and offers concrete benefits. As the SMBD Study itself observed, Chinatown provides a “cohesive, self-sufficient community, which serves as home, workplace, cultural center, financial center and retail and service hub for its residents.”¹¹⁵ That is why a “zoning ordinance that obliterates or divides a local community such as Chinatown has the power to damage seriously the political and cultural

identity of the affected residents.”¹¹⁶ But the Court of Appeals gave those considerations little, if any, weight. Instead, it focused on “the needs of the broader community”—that is, those of “the City as a whole.”¹¹⁷ Once again, a powerful institution ignored Chinatown’s concerns about its own identity.

Conclusion

Unlike counterparts in other major American cities, the fears of an “ethnic theme park” have not yet been realized in lower Manhattan.¹¹⁸ The preeminence of New York’s Chinatown among satellite Chinese-American communities has allowed it to become a cultural hub, with spokes reaching out to many different neighborhoods. Chinatown’s survival today hinges on characteristics that have shaped it throughout its history: expansive co-ethnic networks, self-sufficiency, and a genius for reinvention. But from its origins as a refuge for Chinese immigrants facing discrimination, the neighborhood has been defined by the actions and interests of outsiders. Today, that pattern continues as ordinary Chinatown inhabitants get little say in the character, direction, and pace of economic development in the area. While gentrification can ultimately benefit Chinatown, rudderless development policies ignore the historical fact that “Chinatowns were products of extreme forms of racial segregation.”¹¹⁹ Going forward, a conception of property rights that recognizes community rights may better balance the needs of Chinatown with the expansion of the cities around it.

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- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 *Ibid.*
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- 42 "Converting Chinatown," *supra* note 37.
- 43 I use the term "outsiders" rather than "Whites" to avoid oversimplifying the relationship between Chinatowns and the wider world. Certainly, Whites led nineteenth century campaigns to expel and exclude the Chinese. But the White/non-White binary cannot fully describe the narrative of gentrification. Chinese bosses exploit co-ethnic employees, Chinese landlords harass co-ethnic tenants, and Asian financing has at times hastened Asian American displacement. "Outsider" represents the idea that those in power—White, Asian, or other—exploit those without it. The dynamic still conforms to Leong's theory. What characterizes racial capitalism, after all, is the notion that others can gain from one's own racial identity.
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- 74 *Ibid.*
- 75 *Ibid.*, 363.
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Asian American & Pacific Islander Anti-Displacement Strategies #OurNeighborhoods

This commentary is adapted from the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD) and Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) report on anti-displacement strategies, published on 11 May 2016.¹ The full report is available on National CAPACD's website.

Introduction

A new housing crisis is upon us, and is not so new. Our neighborhoods and economy are facing major transformation as working families fight for their right to cities and land. This commentary bears witness to the complex challenges of displacement and equitable development, and also highlights the innovative work happening on the ground to respond with the power of community activism.

Throughout the history of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, struggles over land, power, and economic rights have shaped our communities and families. As communities of color were redlined, forbidden

to purchase homes, and segregated into cultural ghettos for the larger part of United States history, native lands and ethnic neighborhoods served as spaces of survival. Our historic Asian American and Pacific Islander districts, once neighborhoods of opportunity next to downtowns, now find themselves on the verge of extinction, threatened by skyscrapers, transportation projects, convention centers, and sports stadiums on all sides. The arc of justice has opened opportunities, but the power of capital to displace remains the same.

In this challenging moment, we also face opportunities and see our strength. This commentary features proactive and impactful strategies, tools and policies that expand the power of working families to

shape the future of their neighborhoods, originally published in *Our Neighborhoods: Asian American & Pacific Islander Anti-Displacement Strategies*, a report issued in 2016. We offer these strategies as a beacon of hope when the power of profit-driven development appears insurmountable. Our intent is to link together these local efforts to generate a national conversation and to leverage our collective wisdom to shape policies across the country.

Section one will present data about the state of our current crisis. Section two will highlight five organizations and programs that were successful in advocating for the preservation of their neighborhoods. Finally, section three will present key policy recommendations for preventing the displacement of native lands and historically ethnic neighborhoods.

Where We Are Now

Today, capital moves across the globe faster than ever, and the wealth gap continues to widen. Upper-income people are moving back to cities after decades of disinvestment, and low-income families of color are struggling to retain a foothold. Historic neighborhoods and small businesses are being overrun, and the rising ranks of those in poverty are the most vulnerable to evictions, foreclosures, rapidly rising rents, and unstable incomes. This presents a significant challenge for the AAPI community because the population is concentrated in large, urban areas where these housing trends have been particularly dramatic (see Figure 1).

Figure 2 highlights trends in wealth and housing that paint a troubling picture of where our community is today.

Figure 1. Rising Rents & Housing Costs in AAPI Cities, 2000-2014

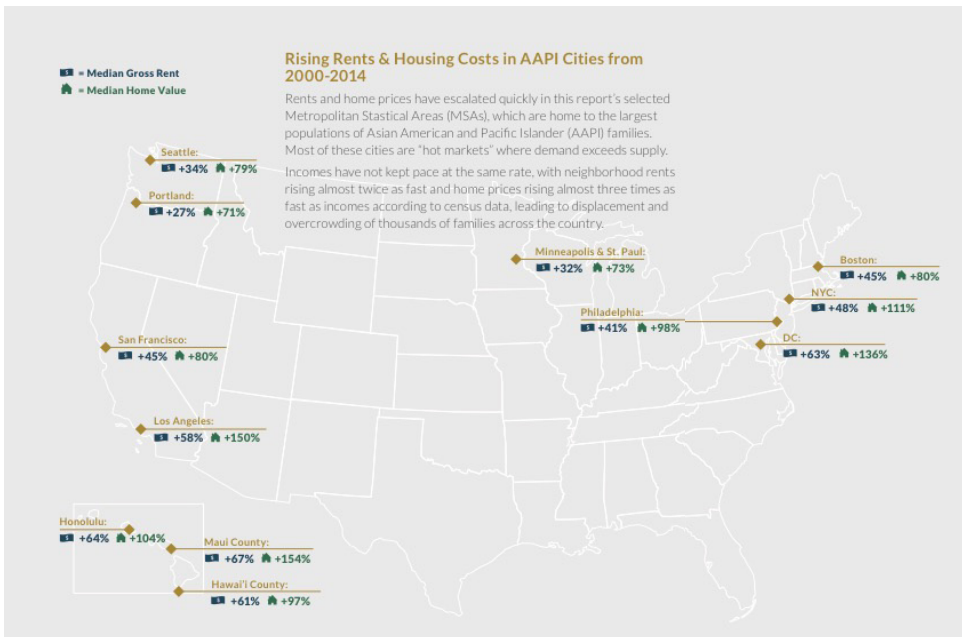


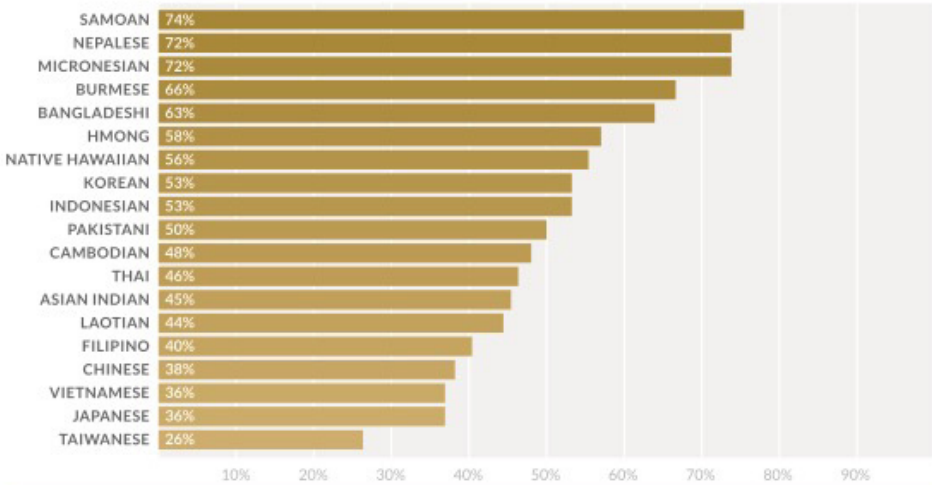
Figure 2. Asian American and Pacific Islander Wealth and Housing Trends

ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER U.S. CENSUS DATA



AAPI Renter Rates

Populations with the highest renter rates (and thus, lowest homeownership rates) are generally more vulnerable to being displaced:



Housing Costs Increasing Faster in Selected AAPI Neighborhoods from 2000-2014



Rents and home prices in the selected markets have shot up since 2000, while AAPI incomes have not kept pace with escalating living costs, leading to displacement, overcrowding, and homelessness for thousands of low-income families.

With 22 million more renters in metropolitan areas from 2006 to 2014, due to the foreclosure crisis, less economic stability, a preference for rental housing by younger populations, and limited housing stock, low-income tenants face tremendous pressure from landlords and predatory equity investors to move and make way for higher-paying tenants. The lack of any rent controls or eviction protections for small businesses can threaten the livelihood of entire neighborhoods and communities.

AAPI median incomes in our neighborhoods are below the county Area Median

Income (AMI) for the average household size, with several significantly lower. What we have found is the county AMI that HUD uses to assess affordability does not match what is affordable for a neighborhood's current residents, preventing many low-income families from affording newly developed units. Additionally, market-rate housing construction prioritizes 1-2 person occupancy for highest profit, preventing families with children and multi-generation households from fair access.

As the wealth gap widens, it appears some families whose businesses and jobs have catered to new, wealthier residents have done better economically, while more vulnerable, low-income AAPIs have fared worse. The decrease in middle-income households in most areas shows the widening wealth gap and the push out of the middle class from cities because of the availability of mostly

Illustration A. Innovative Foreclosure Prevention, HCA, Hawai'i



Native Hawaiian Population	295,409
NHPI Poverty Population	22,809
General Population	1,392,704

% CHANGE from 2010	STATE-WIDE DATA	2014
+6%	NH Monthly Median Gross Rent	\$1,245
-3%	NH Average Home Value	\$432,200
+7%	NHPI Low Income Households	11,163
-1%	NHPI Middle Income Households	15,157
+17%	NHPI High Income Households	8,548
+10%	General High Income Households	140,550
+5%	NH Median Household Income	\$62,852
+3%	General Median Household Income	\$68,201

luxury or dilapidated or restricted affordable housing.

Where We Have Gone

To create the 2016 report, our staff traveled to communities throughout the country to learn about what cities are doing to counter forces of displacement and to create thriving neighborhoods. Where we saw neighborhoods that are surviving amid drastically changing cities, there were always decades of intentional organizing and policy wins that created the relative stability and preservation of affordable housing stock.

Here we present five case studies out of the twenty-four that were featured in our original report.²

Hawai'i homeowners saw a 687 percent increase in home foreclosures between 2008 and 2010, resulting in a loss of

\$15 billion in home equity.³ Mainstream lenders utilize loss mitigation tools, such as principal forgiveness, interest rate reductions, and loan term extensions, to reduce mortgage delinquencies in the state and ensure borrowers are able to sustain affordable monthly payments.

In 2008, Hawaiian Community Assets, a Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-certified housing counseling agency serving all populations in Hawai'i with an emphasis on Native Hawaiians living on native trust lands, established its homeowner program to provide intensive housing counseling to homeowners at risk of foreclosure and to administer the state's only foreclosure prevention hotline. As lease cancellations increased on Hawaiian home lands, the organization secured national mortgage settlement funds to target its services to native Hawaiian homeowners and work

Illustration B. Citywide Anti-Displacement Plan, APANO, Jade District, Portland, Oregon



JADE DISTRICT, PORTLAND, OREGON		% CHANGE from 2010	SELECTED AREA DATA	2014
AAPI Population (Populations Over 500: Vietnamese, Chinese)	9,310	+14%	Median Gross Rent / Month	\$927
AAPI Poverty Population	2,158	+20%	Average Home Value	\$191,500
General Population	62,603	+31%	AAPI Low Income Households	1,526
		+3%	AAPI Middle Income Households	1,136
		-11%	AAPI High Income Households	296
		+20%	General High Income Households	2,499
		-9%	AAPI Median Household Income	\$42,611
		-4%	General Median Household Income	\$42,439

* Multnomah County Area Median Income = \$62,500 for a 3-Person Household

in partnership with Hawaiian homestead associations to conduct free mortgage assistance fairs across the state. The HCA went on to establish third-party loan modification underwriting services for the State Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) mortgages and launched a mortgage reinstatement loan product through its native community development financial institution, Hawaii Community Lending. Since expansion of its homeowner Program in 2012, the HCA has served 314 Native Hawaiian homeowners with HUD-certified housing counseling, third-party loan modification underwriting services, and housing assistance loans. A total of 78 native Hawaiian homeowners have secured loan modifications to prevent lease cancellation on Hawaiian trust lands with the average homeowner seeing a \$457 reduction in their monthly mortgage payments. Overall, the HCA's homeowner program has helped preserve \$4.1 million in home equity for native Hawaiian families.

As one of the West Coast's technology centers, Portland, Oregon, has rapidly gentrified with a disproportionate displacement of communities of color, within the historic context of highly segregated and exclusionary policies in the state. Oregon was one of two states with bans on inclusionary zoning to increase affordable housing. When Portland's planning and sustainability commission opened up public comment on its drafted comprehensive plan in March 2015, APANO and twenty-one other community groups organized to compile a package of eleven land use strategies for inclusion that would fight displacement and expand access to affordable

housing for the next twenty years. All eleven have since been integrated into the comprehensive plan, after the coalition showed up to each public meeting with signs, visuals, and testimony, urging officials to choose the path toward an equitable future.

Advocates designed the eleven points to enhance current policies and propose new ones:

1. Center equity in community involvement policies and eliminate disproportionate burden on underserved groups.
2. Expand the impact analysis tool to anticipate displacement and how development affects affordability, and ensure urban renewal plans are designed to strengthen existing residents and businesses.
3. Require mitigation for displacement and the impacts of development on housing affordability, including 10,000 affordable units by 2035.
4. Use community benefits agreements as anti-displacement tools.
5. Capture value from development to fund anti-displacement tools.
6. Prioritize permanently affordable homeownership.
7. Use land banking as an anti-displacement tool.
8. Include permanent affordable housing in market-rate developments.

9. Protect tenant rights through education and enhanced inspections.
10. Use reconstruction overlay zones to redress past harms.
11. Implement anti-displacement measures in mixed-use zones.

Importantly, the plan emphasizes the city addressing past wrongs and injustices and includes the right to return and restorative justice, particularly for Black communities who have been most displaced. APANO and advocates successfully overturned the state’s seventeen-year ban on inclusionary zoning this year, while APANO is engaged in place-making and stabilizing the Jade district—a 20,000 Asian and Pacific Islander community—through equitable transit-oriented development along the bus rapid transit line.

Located right next to downtown, Little Tokyo and affordable housing has been squeezed by development pressures of new office buildings and redevelopment projects, which destroyed about 1,000 affordable SRO housing units for Japanese-American seniors. Rather than react to each project through opposition and strife, in 2013 LTSC and the Little Tokyo Community Council held a three-day charrette with over 200 residents to envision the future of Little Tokyo, which created the sustainable Little Tokyo vision and plan to ensure the neighborhood’s economic, environmental, and cultural livelihood.

The steering committee, with partners including the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, local Buddhist temples, the National Defense Resource Council, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Global Green

Illustration C. Cultural Eco-District, LTSC, Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, California



LITTLE TOKYO & CHINATOWN, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

AAPI Population (Populations Over 500: Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Cambodian)	18,838
AAPI Poverty Population	6,653
General Population	60,546

* Los Angeles County Area Median Income = \$65,200 for a 2-Person Household

% CHANGE from 2010	SELECTED AREA DATA	2014
+45%*	Median Gross Rent / Month	\$1,055
+34.8%	Average Home Value	\$431,600
-3%	AAPI Low Income Households	5,365
+13%	AAPI Middle Income Households	2,469
+82%	AAPI High Income Households	1,120
+86%	General High Income Households	3,976
+15%	AAPI Median Household Income	\$28,261
+46%	General Median Household Income	32,836

USA, Enterprise Community Partners, the Little Tokyo Community Council, and LTSC, developed three strategic areas of work:

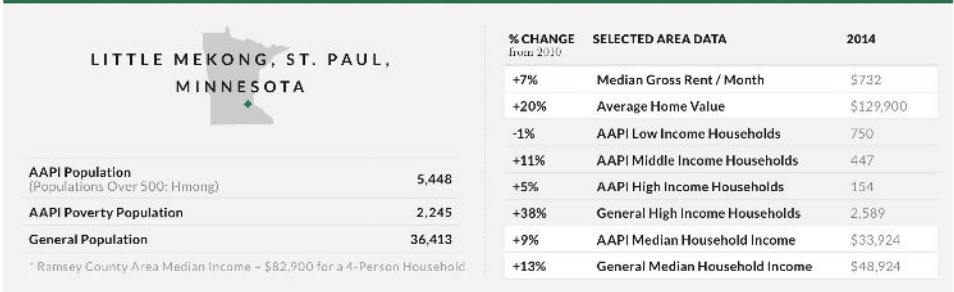
1. Ensuring development and the built environment support the health of residents, including graywater projects, bicycle and healthy transit infrastructure, a mini-solar electric grid, and the development of the last three major public parcels for green infrastructure, affordable housing, and small businesses.
2. Education and community engagement initiatives to involve seniors, youth, and other residents in the process and projects placing community self-determination at the forefront of sustainability.

3. Arts and cultural pathways to preserve the neighborhood’s history and creative life.

The large Hmong refugee community has worked over many decades for political, economic, and cultural representation and power in the Twin Cities, and other Asian and Pacific Islander communities remain minorities often underserved in economic development initiatives.

After branding the Little Mekong neighborhood in 2012, the AEDA decided to build on local assets to bring life to the business and cultural district by creating innovative intergenerational collaboration between artists in the Twin Cities region and immigrant small businesses. The annual Little Mekong Night Market was established to preserve cultural arts and brings together AEDA’s two

Illustration D. Arts-Driven Place-Making, AEDA, Little Mekong, St. Paul, Minnesota



strongest anti-displacement strategies: technical assistance for small businesses to economically flourish, and creative arts as a draw to the neighborhood to highlight its Hmong, Vietnamese, Thai, and other Southeast Asian and diverse communities living in the area. In its first two years, the Night Market has been a citywide success, bringing 15,000 residents from throughout the region in 2015 to learn about local restaurants, enterprises, and cultural institutions.

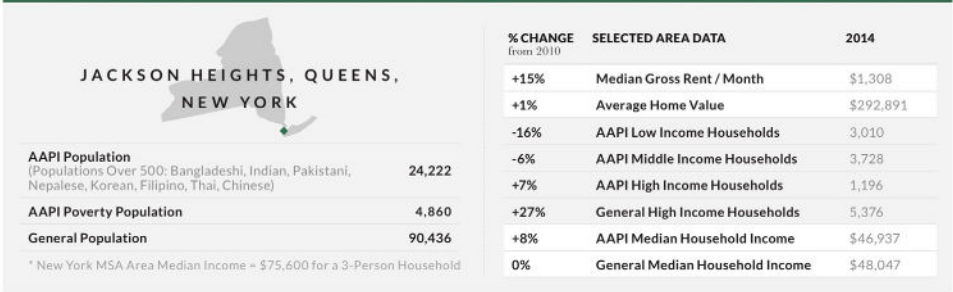
Working with over 560 local artists and 73 small businesses in 2015, artist organizers are hired to contract with and engage local artists to support small businesses and address neighborhood issues:

- Artist Kao Lee Thao was invited to paint community murals and public art over three years,

building visions to activate a new Little Mekong plaza, in partnership with Hmong American Partnership, St. Paul Riverfront Corporation, and the City of St Paul.

- A series of Artist Happy Hours and MANIFEST pop-up arts, culture, and food events intimately engage over 100 artists at each event, including fashion designers, musicians, visual artists, and poets, to make Little Mekong a creative hub for the Twin Cities.
- A Creative Maker Space, an arts, culture and retail incubator, will offer artist studio space, incubate community-based social enterprises, and provide a cultural co-working space to develop

Illustration E. The Basement Campaign, Chhaya CDC, Jackson Heights, Queens, New York



artist entrepreneurs and cultural groups to build their capacity and economic sustainability for themselves and the neighborhood.

- Over 280 artists draw business to over 50 vendors at the Night Market, and throughout the year continue to partner to bring attention to the services and goods offered along the light rail corridor.

Advocates estimate that there are about 100,000 unregulated basement living units in New York City, mostly in the boroughs of Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, which accounted for nearly 40 percent of new housing from 1990 to 2005. In Flushing, Queens, a study conducted by Chhaya found that 82 percent of homes had illegal conversions, with about 35 percent safe enough to legalize. Many of these units are rented by immigrants, who may not be aware of building code requirements and unsafe conditions where there are limited windows or exits in case of fire. In one of the most expensive cities in the country, basement units are often one of the few affordable housing options. These families are more at risk of eviction, illness, and hazards, and their status makes them more vulnerable to housing and economic exploitation. Homeowners can face fines up to \$15,000, are more at risk for foreclosure within unstable income, and the process of legalization is difficult and can cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$45,000.

Chhaya CDC has led the BASE (Basement Apartments Safe for Everyone)

campaign in a coalition of thirty-two other organizations and a handful of city councilmembers to advocate with the city council to pilot the legalization of convertible basement units with 100 homes, through an Accessory Dwelling Unit program using four in-tandem reforms:

- City legislation to establish protocol and a task force across city departments of fire, buildings, planning and housing.
- Zoning changes on floor-area ratio, parking, and housing type.
- Building code equivalencies and a new unit to inspect and certify the basement units.
- Finance mechanisms tied to affordability incentives, including tax abatement and developer credits.

Where We Must Go

The case studies demonstrate that development and investment should be shaped and led by longtime residents who are able to both stay through and benefit from the redevelopment of their communities. Based on extensive discussions with community advocates, residents, and policymakers, the 2016 report presented a number of national policy recommendations for combating displacement that remain important now more than ever.⁴

- **A federal hot markets program to prevent displacement.** Create a federal cross-agency hot mar-

kets program to address displacement of low-income renters, small businesses, and cultural districts.

- **Implement equity in transit-oriented development.** Ensure existing residents and community businesses benefit from equitable transit-oriented development investments rather than be displaced.
- **Meaningful community planning engagement & benefits.** Require funded community engagement processes in any publically supported or tax credit-development projects, including work with local community organizations, impact scorecards, and a baseline for community benefits.
- **Land equity and self-determination for native Hawaiians.** Ensure inclusion of native Hawaiian beneficiaries in Hawaiian homes trust land programs.
- **Mitigate climate change displacement.** Call on federal agencies to further investigate the impacts of climate change on the displacement of Compact of Free Association (COFA) Pacific Islander communities.

This is about more than geography—this is about the shape of our identity, our spirit and wellbeing in a place we call home. These neighborhoods and homelands are places where community building happens, where social networks for survival and economic collaboration

are built, and where we find joy, celebration, and family.

Endnotes

1 The National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD) was founded in 1999 by practitioners across the country to be a voice for the housing, economic, and community development needs of our diverse and growing AAPI communities. With over one hundred members in nineteen states, the National CAPACD created the only AAPI-serving HUD housing counseling network in 2010, facilitates asset-building and small business technical assistance, and brings members and allies together to strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations to create neighborhoods of hope and opportunity. The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) was founded in 2001 to unify and build the capacity of Native Hawaiian organizations. The CNHA's mission is to enhance the well-being of Hawai'i through the cultural, economic, and community development of Native Hawaiians, through policy advocacy, community convening, leadership development, grant training and intermediary services, providing access to capital, and linking resources and solutions to community challenges. The CNHA is a HUD-certified housing counseling agency and a Native CDFI certified by the US treasury department. For information on the remaining case studies, please refer to the National CAPACD and CNHA report.

2 For information on the remaining case studies, please refer to the national CAPACD and CNHA report.

3 Bocian, Debbie Gruenstein, Wei Li, Carolina Reid, and Roberta G. Quercia, "Lost Ground, 2011: Disparities in Mortgage Lending and Foreclosures," Center for Responsible Lending, 2011.

4 Please refer to the full report for a more nuanced discussion of each of the recommendations enumerated above. Additionally, current available data to measure displacement and equitable development is insufficient. The report, thus, made recommendations to help governments, advocates, and residents ensure fair housing is being furthered. Please refer to the full report for a complete list of data-related recommendations.

"When Hate Came"

Act I: When Hate Came

Click, clack, click. I placed the finishing last edits on a PowerPoint for the civic engagement workshop that Jackie couldn't facilitate. Reaching toward the ceiling, I stretched my sore muscles and inhaled the robust coffee aroma wafting in the air. Iced coffee rushed on to my tongue as I took a long swig and exhaled. I needed to wake up before presenting to a group of Muslim youth. Teens can smell weakness. At this rate, they'd eat me alive if I didn't wake up.

Stepping into the building woke me more than the coffee I had at Starbucks. Was . . . I in the right place? These kids can't be older than ten. Five heads turned to stare at me. A warm hand clasped my frozen one.

Hello! My name is Rani. Are you the workshop presenter? I'm sorry the turnout is a little low today, but we are very excited about your workshop!

How old is everyone? I asked.

The oldest is 12.

Ah, I see. I was curious. I smiled at Rani. So, not old enough to vote. Great. There goes the last half of the PowerPoint. Still, I could present on basic concepts. I'd just have to wing it. Anxiety crept up my stomach, as I set up the projector. Their big, glossy eyes watched my every move in genuine curiosity.

So why do we need to vote? I asked with syrupy excitement, hoping these kids would feed off this sugary fakeness.

Because we need a president. If we don't vote, then we won't have a president. A little eight-year-old boy said promptly. The fervent, matter-of-fact tone in his voice made my soul weep. I can't do this, I mourned. They are too young for this.

Because we would want people that we like in the government, right? A voice piped up from the back. A hand pushed up the thick-framed glasses on the twelve-year old girl's face, which was lined with curly, bushy hair.

That's a great answer, Natasha! Rani beamed. My breath caught. Okay, okay, okay. I can work with this. I smiled at them. Natasha and her friend in the back were much more focused in the conversation about how voting is important. The leading questions Rani posed and offered up kept the conversation light and gentle. Everyone was engaged, except for the little eight-year boy who sat cross-legged on the floor, face in fistful hands, distracted, but paying just enough attention to chime in tangents.

The PowerPoint slide flipped to the video, "Hate Comes to Orange County." Cold fingers scraped the pit of my stomach. I forgot about this slide. It showed the ugly head of racism personified with venom spewing from angry pink-faced faces in the neighboring city, Yorba Linda. I couldn't watch it in one sitting in my office and there it was, in front of twelve-year-old-and-under Muslim kids, who were wriggling from excitement of the conversation we just had.

And this . . . is a video that shows an event where some of our elected politicians spoke at. I hit play with the rocks at the bottom of my heart.

I watched their faces somber up as cries of "Go back home! USA! USA! We don't want you here. Stupid terrorists, go home, go home, go home! One nation under God, not Allah! Never forget 9/11!" besieged their ears. I couldn't take seeing innocence getting shredded from their eyes, so I hastily skipped to the part where Congressman Ed Royce was dribbling some political noise to set up my next discussion question.

So . . . do you think these politicians would do what's best for you? I cautiously tiptoed.

The little eight-year-old looked up to me and, with all the determination that was possible to collect in eight short years on earth, said,

No. I don't think he knows what's best for us at all.

Natasha, growing feisty, scoffed at how he claimed to represent people he didn't think mattered. She and her friend dominated the conversation, talking faster and faster, tripping over words and thoughts that appeared to have been marinating for quite some time. Rani and I couldn't help but be energized at the kids' passion. Natasha was radiating.

As I wrapped up presentation and passed out stickers, the little boy told me he was going to tell all the adults he knows to vote because he didn't like Ed Royce.

I left the building, with an odd sense of swelling sadness. They were not old enough to vote, but they understood why it was so important. They were reminded everyday, even at twelve, even at eight. I wasn't sleepy anymore, but I was so very tired.

Act II: When Hate Grew

I went to work one morning,
driving people through the blood veins of LA,
cross crossing cities,
cross crossing lives.
I picked up a group of four
as my first fare.
Bags under their eyes,
the smell of musty adventure on their rumpled clothes,
they desired more decadent indulgences.
I took them to where they could bathe their sins
in bottomless mimosas.
They drove around in lazy circles in their conversation,
speckled with, "yesss"es and "ohmygod"s,
a road that went nowhere.
The bleary-eyed backseat passenger
stuck his head out the window
as we neared toward the Grove.
Shaking out his greasy locks, he called out,
Look at all these Middle Easterns!
This place is going to blow up!
The quick chastise from his friend
didn't loosen my white knuckles clenched at the wheel.
Bombs, he sang, in their turbans!

His friend snapped, Stop, that's racist.
But still he dribbled filth from his mouth
and out my window.
Boom! An explosion erupted
LEAVE, I roared.

. . . In my head.

Finally, I dropped them off
in relief
and in guilt.
Because
I had let them
go.
And
I had let
them go.
We both traveled on roads that went nowhere.

Epilogue: When Hate Continues

[INT. KITCHEN -DAY]

Slow pan across a coffee cup and today's headline in a newspaper:

“AMERICANS ARE STILL ATTACKING SIKHS BECAUSE THEY
THINK THEY'RE MUSLIMS”

At the Crossroads of Change

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, Undocumented Korean Americans' Political Participation, and Upcoming Challenges

by Ga Young Chung

On January 14, 2017, a week before President Donald Trump's inauguration day, Junsoo Lee, a nineteen-year-old undocumented Korean American from Virginia, gave a speech at the "Here To Stay" rally in Washington, DC. He said, "Because of the ignorance and hatred toward immigrants and refugees, because visibility means the risk of deportation, we are forced to bite down on our tongues. But we cannot be afraid of standing up for ourselves. Silence is no longer our safety. I speak out in vulnerability because our strength is our resilience. What I ask of the community is not to wait for the leaders to give you a voice but to become the voice this nation needs. My name is Junsoo Lee, I am undocumented, unapologetic, unafraid, and I am here to stay."¹ More than a thousand people, packed into the historic Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church to demand the Trump

administration will not put into effect anti-immigration executive orders, gave him a resounding round of applause. Lee was the only Asian American among the lineup of official speakers at the church rally that day.

Lee is one of 192,000 undocumented Korean Americans, a group that makes up the eighth-largest undocumented population in the United States.² While the reality is such that one out of seven Korean Americans are undocumented, the day-to-day experiences of undocumented Korean Americans have remained largely unexamined.³ This stands in stark contrast to the extensive media coverage and research conducted on Latino/a immigrants. My commentary shows undocumented Korean Americans have not remained silent, passive, or languid on the matter. Rather, since the early 2000s, many undocumented Korean Americans have actively engaged

in political activism that has challenged exclusive frames of citizenship and raised awareness about the existence of undocumented Korean and Asian Americans.

For instance, Tereza Lee, a former undocumented Korean American pianist who inspired Senator Dick Durbin to introduce the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act in 2001—which later became the model for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program—was responsible for bringing to light the desperate circumstances of undocumented youth in the public discourse for the first time.⁴ In addition to her role as a catalyst in the creation of the DREAM Act, Tereza has continued to be politically active by testifying at the Senate hearing on the DREAM Act for the Senate judiciary subcommittee on immigration, refugees, and border security, giving a public speech, providing interviews to the press, and giving artistic expression to her experience as an undocumented minor through her piano performances.⁵

Another case of an undocumented Korean American who has taken on activism since 2000s is Ju Hong. Although he is well known as the “heckler” who interrupted former President Barack Obama during his speech on immigration reform in San Francisco on November 25, 2013, to ask Obama to halt the mass deportation of undocumented immigrants, his involvement in activism started a long time before that incident. In 2009, Ju Hong released a video clip titled “Korean Student Shares a Secret” on YouTube to raise awareness about undocumented Korean Americans by

“coming out” himself as undocumented.⁶ He also practiced civil disobedience at a San Bernardino immigration rally in 2011 that was protesting the broken immigration system.⁷

Their political participation, ignited by the proposal of the DREAM Act in 2001, became more visible and vibrant when the DACA program was enforced in 2012. This commentary highlights the impact DACA has had in promoting the political participation of undocumented Korean Americans and the potential challenges that will arise under President Trump’s administration. In exploring the benefits and the restrictions embedded in DACA, this commentary raises questions about the conditions for a progressive and more inclusive immigration policy. This commentary draws on three years (between 2013 to 2016) of doctoral research fieldwork on the impact of immigration policies on undocumented Korean American young adults. I participated in various activities with the Korean American activism community including petition drives, phone banking, rallies, voters’ registration, community meetings, and press conferences. With consent and support from research participants, I conducted interviews with eighty-eight people, including undocumented Korean Americans young adults, their parents, community organizers, and non-Korean undocumented immigrants in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Virginia, and Washington, DC.

DACA, an executive order by President Barack Obama, was enacted on June 15, 2012. It provided a renewable two-year period of deferred action, protecting

from deportation undocumented minors who came to the United States as children and met the requirements set out by the program.⁸ According to the US Citizenship and Immigration Service, as of September 2016, 752,154 requests for the DACA from undocumented minors have been approved since it was announced in 2012.⁹ Approximately 9,114 undocumented Korean Americans have applied for the DACA.¹⁰

Although DACA did not guarantee a path to permanent residency, the order was considered groundbreaking because it granted undocumented minors eligi-

pus, take care of my younger siblings, I always needed it [a driver's license]. I had just graduated college when the DACA came out. I don't think I would have been able to handle my job and all the family stuff if I couldn't drive," she said. For Shinwoo Park, a twenty-two-year-old undergraduate from New Jersey, the biggest thing the DACA brought was the "advanced parole" program, which allows certain DACA recipients to travel in the case of urgent humanitarian causes or educational purposes.¹¹ "In my major [international relations], it is important to study abroad. I could spend a semester in China through the parole

For many undocumented young adults, these measures meant concrete changes in their access to a driver's license, and better education and work opportunities.

bility to apply for a social security number and work permit. For many undocumented young adults, these measures meant concrete changes in their access to a driver's license, and better educational and work opportunities. I often heard from my undocumented interviewees of how the DACA brought them more opportunities and hope. Caroline Hyun, a twenty-six-year-old undocumented Korean American from southern California, said her newly acquired driver's license drastically changed her life. "I'm not living in a city area, so transportation has been always an issue. To work a part-time job, commute to the cam-

pus, take care of my younger siblings, I always needed it [a driver's license]. I had just graduated college when the DACA came out. I don't think I would have been able to handle my job and all the family stuff if I couldn't drive," she said. For Shinwoo Park, a twenty-two-year-old undergraduate from New Jersey, the biggest thing the DACA brought was the "advanced parole" program, which allows certain DACA recipients to travel in the case of urgent humanitarian causes or educational purposes.¹¹ "In my major [international relations], it is important to study abroad. I could spend a semester in China through the parole

program and wrote a paper with what I learned there. The experience helped me to find out what I can do after I graduate with the major," he said.

Many media outlets drew attention to the positive impact of the DACA, highlighting the humane side of the order as well as the possible economic benefits future DACA recipients could bring to the United States. Nonetheless, there have also been continuous criticisms and concerns about the DACA in regard to its limitations and restrictions. As its requirements for eligibility reveal, the DACA is explicitly aimed at providing

temporary support only to those who satisfy the conditions of the program in terms of age, education or military service, and criminal record.¹² The program can be understood as a gesture on the part of the government for selective inclusion for undocumented immigrants as long as they are young, educated, and moral—qualities deemed as assets for the United States. For the many immigrant activists working for a comprehensive immigration reform wholly inclusive of all members of the undocumented population, the DACA falls short. Even with its many limitations and restrictions, however, the DACA currently has the only program that protects young undocumented immigrants from the risk of deportation.

In addition to these benefits, I found in my research that the DACA spurred once uninvolved undocumented Korean American young adults into political action. I noticed as they broke their silence around their undocumented status and spoke out publicly for the rights of other undocumented immigrants. I also observed the key role of local Korean American community organizations in facilitating this activism. The possibilities created by the DACA prompted many undocumented Korean Americans to make phone calls and knock on the doors of Korean American organizations advocating for immigrants' rights. They asked for detailed information about the DACA and their eligibility. This explosive interest led to stronger interactions between immigration families and Korean American organizations that provided DACA-related services for free or at a very low cost, a service for which immigration lawyers previously charged

hundreds of dollars in fees. For instance, in the years since the DACA has been implemented, the Korean Resource Center in Los Angeles and Orange County, the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium's Virginia office, and the Minkwon Center for Community Action in New York have developed programs offering DACA application services, pro-bono legal consultation from lawyers, and DACA renewal clinics.¹³

In the process of providing information and application services to undocumented Korean Americans, these organizations also created regular gatherings and workshop sessions for the DACA applicants and recipients, establishing peer groups with whom they could share their concerns, anxieties, and future plans. As a result, Korean American youth and young adults who were previously silent about their undocumented status and their experiences as an undocumented person formed safe circles of friends and learned of their rights. In particular, the Korean Resource Center's programs, such as its summer youth camp, volunteering and internship opportunities, and undocumented parents' gathering have connected many undocumented Korean Americans. The Minkwon Center for Community Action runs a monthly gathering for undocumented Korean American youth, titled "Asian American DREAMers' Collective," to share their experiences, hear up-to-date information, and plan solidarity actions. These experiences, in addition to the "deferred action" that guarantees young adults protection from deportation for at least several years, has encouraged young adult undocumented Korean Americans

to speak up about their requests for a more inclusive immigration policy, comprehensive for all immigrants. In fact, some DACA recipients have later become full-time fellows, organizing community events and providing services at their organizations.

The relationship between the non-profit and the DACA recipients clearly reveals the function and necessity of DACA programs. In sum, these actions are remarkable, considering the guilt and shame many undocumented young adults and their families carry on their shoulders. Inspired by the existence of the

DACA, many undocumented Korean American young adults have started to join petition drives, press conferences, rallies, and performances. This energy has continued to build, as evidenced in Lee's speech at the "Here To Stay" rally in January 2017.

Undocumented Korean Americans' participation was also palpable during the Supreme Court hearing for the *United States v. Texas* in Washington, DC on April 15, 2016.¹⁴ The case would ostensibly decide the implementation of the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans program and an expansion of the DACA. On that day, groups of young Korean American DACA recipients from across the country participated in a

On that day, groups of young Korean American DACA recipients from across the country participated in a rally, delivered speeches, and mobilized community members.

rally, delivering speeches and mobilizing community members. Other examples that exemplify efforts in increasing engagement by undocumented immigrants include "DREAM Riders Across America 2013" and "DREAM Riders

Across America 2015"; national road trip campaigns carried out by Korean American DACA recipients and their young allies from the Korean Resource Center; the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium; and the Korean American Resource and Cultural Center.¹⁵ Through the two national road-trip campaigns in 2013 and 2015, undocu-

mented Korean American young adults met local immigrant communities, youth groups, politicians, and media representatives. They also shared their stories at the local community meeting and in interviews with the local media, organized a petition drive for comprehensive immigration reform, made a legislative visit, and conducted a press conference. By expanding the campaign from focusing on undocumented Korean American and Asian American allies in 2013 to a campaign of Korean/Asian American, Latino, and African American young adults in 2015, it evolved to be a more inclusive and pan-racial project that included all immigrants. The DREAM Riders Across America 2015 was also made into an educational docu-

mentary.¹⁶ This has led to documentary screenings in communities, universities, and schools, followed by questions and answer sessions that have helped tear down the stigma surrounding undocumented Korean and Asian Americans.¹⁷

The political participation of Korean American DACA recipients is due to the activism of undocumented immigrants who worked hard to bring about the DREAM Act before them. Their actions provided the inspiration and specific model for the DACA activists in the 2000s. Remembering and appreciating their organizing efforts toward the government to take action on behalf of undocumented immigrants, many Korean American DACA recipients have tried to make their critical voices heard in public. Instead of passively enjoying the “benevolent” treatment of the executive order, DACA recipients have proactively engaged themselves with the limitations of the DACA and requested an expanded version of DACA that can include people from a wider range of age and status conditions.

The DACA, announced as President Obama’s executive order, is now subject to cancellation by the sitting president at any time. Since the election, DACA recipients, as well as many Korean American community organizers, have encouraged Korean and Asian Americans to both register to vote and support candidates who favor policies for immigrant rights. At the time of the completion of this commentary, DACA recipients and their undocumented family members I know are experiencing anxiety and nervousness as President Donald Trump has released several anti-

immigration policies during his short time in office. It is not easy to be hopeful about the future. But one obvious hope remains. The time people have taken in the past few years to discuss, observe, and understand immigration policies for undocumented immigrants, such as the DACA, will generate protest over anti-immigration policy that ignores and discriminates against undocumented immigrants. I strongly believe the political participation of Korean American DACA recipients will continue, bolstered by a robust solidarity of people from diverse communities. There are approximately 1.5 million undocumented Asian Americans, including 192,000 undocumented Korean American. They comprise 14 percent of the total 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States.¹⁸ The future of the DACA is just one part of how the United States welcomes and respects people of color, laborers, queers, and all the marginalized newcomers. Although it will be a challenge, it can also be an opportunity for this country to reconfirm and restore the values of hospitality, coexistence, and democracy. The outcome of these challenges is in our hands.

Endnotes

1 The personal names used here are pseudonyms except Tereza Lee and Ju Hong, who have been featured by multiple media outlets and have agreed to have their real names used in this commentary. The Korean American of organizations’ names mentioned in this commentary have been published with their consent; “National Korean American Service and Education Consortium,” Facebook, live stream, 14 January 2017.

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 - 7 Arbas, Diana, “UC Berkeley Student Ju Hong: Undocumented and Unafraid,” Berkeleyside.com, 03 August 2011.
 - 8 “Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA),” US Department of Homeland Security, n.d. Accessed 25 January 2017,
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 - 10 Malik, Sanam, “More Work is Needed to Increase DACA Applications from Asian American and Pacific Islander Immigrants,” Center for American Progress, 22 June 2016.
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 - 12 Ibid; undocumented minors were able to apply for the DACA if they: (1) were under the age of thirty-one and had no lawful status on June 15, 2012; (2) came to the United States before their sixteenth birthday; (3) have resided in the United States since June 15, 2007; (4) are currently in school, graduated from high school, received a GED, or have been honorably discharged from the Coast Guard or armed forces; and (5) have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.
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 - 17 Bai, Stephany, “National AAPI Video Tour Aims to Amplify Youth and Immigrant Voices,” NBC News, 19 April 2016.
 - 18 Rosenblum and Ruiz, *supra* note 2.

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Past, Present, and Future

by Claris Chang

Despite its dubious reputation, lobbying has evolved into a platform for minority interest groups to voice their concerns. By leveraging this “fourth branch of government,” racially affiliated minority interest groups directly appeal and advocate to members of Congress. Organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) have fought for the civil rights of African Americans since the early 1900s and now annually lobby on dozens of bills.¹ Similarly, the National Council de La Raza (NCLR) fights for the rights of Latino Americans through constant advocacy on Capitol Hill.² As the fastest-growing minority in America within the last ten years, and with 13.2 percent of all Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) still living in poverty, AAPIs need to advocate for and promote the wellbeing of their underserved communities.³ Federal lobbying provides minority interest groups an opportunity to educate the country’s most powerful policy decision makers on the concerns facing minority communities. Without

a unified voice on Capitol Hill, the AAPI community risks erasure of their struggles and a continued false assumption that AAPIs require no political or social support.

This piece will provide a definition of lobbying, an overview of two historic AAPI advocacy groups, a survey of current AAPI-affiliated lobbying activity from the late 1990s to now, and a look into the future lobbying considerations for AAPIs. By examining the historic origins and current state of AAPI lobbying, AAPI advocates can identify barriers and opportunities for refining lobbying practices at the federal level.

Lobbying: Definitions and Disclosures

Information on current lobbying activity comes from the Center of Responsive Politics’ online database, OpenSecrets, which captures federal lobbying information recorded by the Senate office of public records. The Lobbying Dislo-

sure Act (LDA) of 1995 defines lobbying activities as any oral, written, or electronic communication to a covered official.⁴ Under the act, individuals who retain a client for compensation, make more than one contact, write or speak with a covered official about legislation or policy making, or spend at least 20 percent of their time lobbying in the next six months, must register as a lobbyist.⁵ An organization is considered a lobbying firm if their lobbying revenue exceeds \$5,000 in a six-month period, or if lobbying expenses exceed more than \$20,000.

Due to the high expenditures listed in the criteria, lower resource advocacy activities, such as grassroots or social media advocacy efforts, are not registered as lobbying. Furthermore, groups may spend just under 20 percent of their time lobbying and bypass the reporting requirement. Finally, the IRS provides vague restrictions on lobbying by 501(c)(3) nonprofits, stating “[a] 501(c)(3) organization may engage in some lobbying, but too much lobbying activity risks loss of tax-exempt status.”⁶ The IRS limit

Past: Historic AAPI Advocacy at the JACL and OCA

The early origins of several racially affiliated lobbying groups have undoubtedly paved the way for the current state of minority group lobbying. Starting in the 1900s, historic associations like the NAACP, the NCLR, the Japanese American League of Citizens (JACL), and the Asian Pacific American Advocates (OCA), galvanized African Americans, Latino Americans, Japanese Americans, and Chinese Americans to promote and protect their civil rights. However, while the former two associations expanded their lobbying efforts beyond their original mission, the latter two AAPI-affiliated groups effectively lobbied for historic reparations, but filed only one federal lobbying disclosure since 1998, indicating low lobbying activity at the federal level.

Formed in 1929, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) lobbied for legislation to expand the rights of Japanese Americans. While criticized for not leveraging its political power to

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on lobbying activity is “generally based upon the size of the organization and may not exceed \$1,000,000,” another vague criterion.⁷ As a result, 501(c)(3)s may under-utilize their lobbying power for fear of violating the law.⁸

fight against the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, the JACL lobbied heavily for the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.⁹ The act granted \$25,000 as reparations to surviving Japanese Americans whom the US

government placed in internment camps during World War II. Since the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the JACL actively spoke out in support of civil rights issues related to marriage, segregation, and immigration. However, while it is possible

all immigration of Chinese laborers and revoked citizenship from Chinese immigrants already residing in the United States. Lobbying for the resolution by the OCA proved fruitful, as the resolution passed the Senate in 2011 and the

Building a formal coalition would allow the AAPI community to leverage the different experiences, resources, and connections of these various AAPI groups.

JACL continued to expend substantial resources on political advocacy at the state or local level, the JACL is neither registered as a lobbying client nor listed as an organization on OpenSecrets. This indicates the JACL has not engaged in lobbying as defined by the LDA of 1995.

The second-oldest and most well-known AAPI advocacy organization is the OCA. Formerly known as the “Organization of Chinese Americans,” the group started in 1973 and is now a registered 501(c)(3) with over 100 chapters. The organization’s website features an advocacy section and policy objectives that include immigration, education, fair treatment, and broadband access. Despite its clear policy agenda, the OCA’s only recorded lobbying activity is spending \$30,000 in 2011 to hire lobbyist Vincent Eng to press for a resolution of a congressional statement of regret for the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.¹⁰ Initially a ten-year moratorium that Congress extended for forty-one years before finally repealing the Act in 1943, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited

House of Representatives in 2012. The resolution was sponsored by Representative Judy Chu in the House, a Chinese-American member who is currently the acting chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) and Senator Scott Brown in the Senate. Since then, the OCA has not engaged in any formal federal lobbying that required formal disclosure on OpenSecrets.

Present: New AAPI Lobbying Groups Emerging

A survey of OpenSecrets reveals new AAPI groups are emerging and engaging in federal lobbying specific to AAPI ethnicities. The table below compiles information on AAPI-affiliated groups currently employing lobbyists at the federal level.¹¹ Any lobbying clients clearly aimed at only improving US foreign relations or trade, such as the Korean International Trade Association, were excluded. Based on their mission statements and the issues for which they lobbied, lobbying clients were sorted into four categories: “Professional,” “Civil Rights,” “Service Provide,” and “Cultur-

Table 1: Asian American Pacific Islander Lobbying Clients Listed on OpenSecrets

Name of Organization	Type	Yrs Lobbying	Total Amount Spent	Peak Spending Yr	Amount Spent in Peak Yr	Lobbyist(s)	Issues	Bills Lobbied
American Assn of Physician/Indian Origin 2006	Professional	7	\$44,500	2001	\$32,000	Anurag Varma	Health Issues, Medical Research	-
American Coalition for Filipino Veterans 2016	Civil Rights	11	\$482,000	2005	\$60,000	Eric Lachica (IH)1	Veterans Affairs, Immigration	S.733: Filipino Veterans Family Reunification Act of 2015
American Council of Korean Travel Agents 2004	Professional	4	\$50,000	2000	\$20,000	David S Germroth	Immigration	-
Asian American Hotel Owners Assn 2016	Professional	9	\$800,000	2016	\$250,000	Anurag Varma; Jordan Heiliczer (IH); Chirag Shah (IH)	Labor, Anti-Trust & Work-place, Taxes, Small Business	H.R.3459; H.R. 3765; S.201; S.2707; H.R. 4773; H.R. 5813
Asian American Justice Center 2013	Civil Rights	4	\$150,000	2011	\$70,000	Vincent Eng	Justice, Immigration	-
Asian American Lead 2004	Civil Rights	1	N/A	2004	N/A	Shannon Gibson; Marek Gootman; Florence Prioleau; Rodney Slater	Federal Appropriations	-
Asian Americans Advancing Justice 2016	Civil Rights	1	\$10,000	2016	\$10,000	Irene Bueno	Supreme Court Nominations	-
Asian Human Services 2009	Service Provider	1	\$25,000	2009	\$25,000	Kevin Colon	Health and Social Services for Clinic in Chicago	-

Asian Real Estate Assn of America 2016	Professional	2	\$90,000	2016	\$80,000	Irene Bueno	Census, American Housing Survey	-
Asian/Pacific Islander Amer Health Forum 2016	Civil Rights	4	\$60,000	2010	\$40,000	Amina Abbas (IH); Irene Bueno	Health, Immigration, Medicaid & Medicare, Federal Appropriations	-
Asian-American Resource Center 2007	Service Provider	4	\$20,000-\$80,000	2007	Less than \$20,000	Sunghui Chang (IH); Connie Jee (IH)	Immigration	-
Assn/Asian Pacific Amer Cmnty Hlth Orgs 2002	Service Provider	1	Less than \$20,000	2002	Less than \$20,000	Irene Bueno	Health	-
Bangladeshi-American Friendship Society 1999	Civil Rights	1	\$14,000	1999	\$14,000	Wasserstein, Glen D; Wilson, Russell J	Immigration	-
California Japanese Amer Ldrshp Council 2008	Cultural	2	\$5,000-\$15,000	2008	Less than \$5000	John Tagami, John K Wilson,	Economic Development	-
Chinese Community Health Plan 2015	Service Provider	1	\$15,000	2013	\$15,000	Kyah Flickinger; Jason Gromley; Paul Lee; Marian Lowe	Health	-
Chinese Hospital 2016	Service Provider	8	\$604,500	2008	\$88,000	Doyce Boesch; Lara Crapo; Kate Degra-velles; Allison Fox; Paul Lee; Marian Lowe; Daniel Sheehan; Lennie Shewmaker; Elizabeth A Swickard; Margaret E Tighe	Federal Budget & Appropriations	-
Fedn/Indian Amer Christian Orgs of NA 2003	Professional	1	Less than \$20,000	2003	Less than \$20,000	N/A	N/A	-

Filipino Caucus/Hawaii House of Reprs 2008	Civil Rights	2	Less than \$15,000	2007	Less than \$10,000	Vergil Cabasco; David S Germsroth; Gordon Kenny; Bryan Vickers; Amanda Marjorie Walters; James W Wise	Veterans Affairs	-
Indian American Muslim Council 2014	Civil Rights	2	\$40,000	2014	\$25,000	Terry Allen	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	H.Res.417
Indian American National Foundation 2002	Civil Rights	1	\$20,000	2001	\$20,000	Anurag Varma	Health Issues	-
Indian American Republican Council 2007	Civil Rights	6	\$10,000-\$60,000	2007	Less than \$10,000	Jack M Hession	Government Issues	-
Japanese Community Youth Council 2009	Civil Rights	2	\$60,000	2005	\$40,000	Tagami, John Wilson, John K	Education, Family, Abortion & Adoption	-
Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation 2015	Cultural	5	\$25,000-\$75,000	2015	Less than \$5000	George Kopp	Veterans Affairs - Korean War Memorial, HR 1475	-
National Alliance for Filipino WWII Vets 2010	Civil Rights	4	\$20,000-\$100,000	2010	Less than \$20,000	Irene Bueno	Veterans Affairs	-
National Assn of Korean Americans 2002	Cultural	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	Blank Rome LLP	N/A	-
Natl Asian Pacific American Bar Assn 2016	Professional	7	\$244,000	2011	\$70,000	Vincent Eng	Supreme Court Nominations	-
Natl Japanese American Historical Soc 2008	Cultural	3	\$104,000	2008	\$55,000	Tagami, John Wilson, John K	Defense	-
Nisei Farmers League 2016	Professional	15	\$550,000	2014	\$110,000	CJ Lake; Lynnette Jacquez; Monte B Lake; Christopher Schulte	Agriculture, Labor	H.R. 1387; H.R. 1947; H.R. 4800; S. 2389; S.954

Organization of Chinese Americans 2011	Civil Rights	1	\$30,000	2011	\$30,000	Vincent Eng	Civil Rights	Resolution of Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment 2015	Service Provider	8	\$540,000	2014	\$80,000	Irene Bueno	Federal Appropriations, Labor	H.R. 798; S. 1356
South Asian American Forum Action Fund 2010	Civil Rights	3	\$140,000	2009	\$70,000	Robert Raben	Trade, civil liberties, immigration, etc.	-

al” (see endnotes for definitions).¹² Peak spending year, peak spending amount, and total expenditures are included to indicate intensity of lobbying efforts. For a few organizations, upper and lower bounds are given for total amount spent to account for estimates listed in lobbying reports. The table uses each organization’s peak spending year as a marker for the year when the most lobbying activity occurred. Lobbyists, issues, and bills listed correspond with each organization’s peak spending year. Furthermore, lobbyists who worked for more than one organization listed on the table are indicated in bolded font.

The diversity of the AAPI community includes a wide array of socioeconomic backgrounds and unique lived experiences, which results in advocacy groups splintered by ethnicity. Out of the thirty-one groups, only five represent all AAPIs and are not affiliated with a professional organization. Only seven of the eighteen AAPI ethnicities identified by the White House Initiative on AAPI appear with affiliations to lobbying clients. Additionally, two-thirds of the groups have four or less years of documented lobbying experience. Fifteen, roughly half of the groups, focus on advocating for civil rights and civil liberties. Seven groups are professional associations, six are direct service providers, and three focus on cultural issues.

Increased amounts spent on lobbying allows for greater access and engagement with policy decision makers.¹³ However, researchers dispute whether this access and greater overall lobbying expenditures influence favorable policy changes for an interest group.¹⁴ Regardless, spending

amounts do indicate level of advocacy effort and involvement in affecting policy changes. The top four AAPI-affiliated organizations with highest total expenditures include the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) at \$800,000 over nine years, the Chinese Hospital (\$604,500 over eight years), the Nisei Farmers League (\$550,000 over fifteen years), and the Pacific Asian Consortium for Employment (PACE) at \$540,000 over eight years. The combined total expenditures of all thirty-one AAPI organizations would equal \$3,860,200, still about \$3 million shy of the lobbying giants of other racial

minority groups. For comparison, the NAACP has spent \$6,884,892 on lobbying since 1999, and the NCLR has spent \$6,849,380 since 1998, far beyond what any individual AAPI organization spends on lobbying.¹⁵ The discrepancy in AAPI lobbying spending may account for the lack of awareness and political engagement at the federal level with AAPI communities and concerns.

AAPI lobbying activities correlate with the relative financial capacities of each AAPI community. Out of all thirty-one AAPI organizations, only two maintain corresponding political action commit-

The Future of Asian American & Pacific Islander Political Power

by Elena Ong

Prior to 1965, Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) comprised 1 percent of the nation's population; now, Asian Americans (AAs) are the fastest-growing racial group in America. If demographic trends continue, roughly one out of ten Americans will identify as AAPI by the mid-2040s. AAPIs will also emerge as the next sleeping giant as AAPIs increase from 4 percent of America's electorate to 7 percent. The growing AAPI electorate is also associated with a shift in political leaning. In 1992, the majority of AAPIs voted for Republican presidential candidate George Bush, but by 2012, AAPIs made headlines when a supermajority of AAPIs voted for the Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama. By 2016, exit polls indicated that two-thirds or more of the AAPI vote favored Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. If this trend continues, it could shape how AAPIs register, and how major political parties court AAPIs.

Political geography also molds the magnitude of AAPI influence. Enhancing AAPI political power will depend on the redistricting of congressional seats and the drawing of boundaries for local official in 2021, 2031, and 2041. Gerrymandering that unfairly splits AAPI communities or over packs the population can dilute AAPIs' ability to elect public officials of their choice. When possible, AAPIs need to work with other minority groups with shared goals, to create larger "communities of interest" to advance their joint concerns and priorities. Strategic collective political action, guided by a deep understanding of the demographic trajectory of AAPIs, can ensure AAPIs have an effective voice and meaningful political representation.

tees (PACs): the AAHOA and the Nisei Farmers League. Aside from the American Coalition for Filipino Veterans, the two groups have the longest histories in lobbying. The Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) is a primarily Indian American organization, and the Nisei Farmers League is Japanese American, representing two of the wealthiest AAPI communities.¹⁶ On the other hand, some AAPI ethnicities remain completely absent from the lobbying database. The terms “Pakistani” and “Vietnamese” returned organizations and PACs on OpenSecrets, but no lobbying clients, indicating no organizations explicitly affiliated with the Pakistani or Vietnamese community conduct, lobbying at a federally regulated threshold. Hmong and Laotian lobbying clients mostly consisted of foreign relations groups, but OpenSecrets lists no PACs or other organizations connected to these ethnic groups. Along with Cambodians, these five AAPI ethnicities experience some of the highest rates of poverty among all AAPI communities.¹⁷ Organizations advocating for these groups may engage in advocacy work that requires fewer resources, such as grassroots or social media advocacy at the state or local level, and therefore is not captured in OpenSecrets. In any case, increasing lobbying to covered officials for these ethnic communities is essential to raising awareness of underserved AAPIs.

Future: For Further Consideration

Future studies on this topic should delve deeper into where AAPIs advocacy efforts are focused, and the barriers to increasing advocacy activity at the federal

level. For comparison, research could survey individual organizations that lobby and advocate for African American and Hispanic/Latino American civil rights, or any other racially affiliated lobbying groups. An investigation into the bills for which these individual groups lobby, whether they create temporary “lobbying blocks”, and the success of their efforts would give further insight into the effectiveness of coalitions. Further study could also examine groups in the minority group lobbying space, such as LGBTQ lobbying groups, and how they built their presence in lobbying. Asian American PACs, such as the APIA Victory Fund and the 80-20 Block have also played a large role in generating donations and encouraging AAPIs to become a “swing vote” in the most recent elections. An increase of AAPI political voice through PACs unrelated to professional associations and the increase of AAPIs in office may shift access to lobbying for AAPIs.

Another study could examine the value in creating a national lobbying coalition for AAPIs, similar in size and scope to the NAACP and NCLR. Building a formal coalition would allow the AAPI community to leverage the different experiences, resources, and connections of these various AAPI groups. In fact, there is historic precedent and practice in AAPI communities building coalitions. In 1988, 350 AAPI leaders created a statewide lobbying group to influence higher education in California.¹⁸ Many speakers at the coalition emphasized AAPI success in carrying out their agenda depended on their ability to form coalitions with other groups with similar concerns, which included other minority

groups. A formalized lobbying coalition would cement these relationships, circumventing the need to reinvent the wheel each time an issue affecting AAPIs arises.

Building a coalition would also empower individual AAPI organizations to lobby more. In a study on interest group lobbying, Thomas Holyoke found coalition membership increased the probability of an individual interest group's lobbying by 43 percent.¹⁹ Groups were more willing to step out when other more influential groups took the lead.

Furthermore, the AAPI lobbying giant may already exist. Currently, the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) provides a platform for over thirty-five national AAPI organizations. As a coalition of AAPI groups, NCAPA's mission is to strive "for equality and justice by organizing our diverse strengths to influence policy and shape public narratives." An analysis of the barriers to lobbying for NCAPA and its members may better inform the path that NCAPA could follow.

Conclusion

It is undoubtedly important to recognize the nature of AAPI advocacy, and thus lobbying, is different from that of other racially affiliated civil rights advocacy groups. With many different ethnicities, population numbers, financial capacities, and languages, AAPI communities are culturally diverse and socioeconomically stratified. AAPIs do not share a history of slavery and civil resistance like the African American community, nor do they share a language like the Hispanic/Latino community. However, these dif-

ferences should not hinder the extent to which AAPIs engage with the political process and the advocacy arena. AAPIs should and can collectively address the issues that statistically affect only some fractions of our population. Through continuing to investigate and examine the barriers to and opportunities for AAPI advocacy, the AAPI community can better leverage lobbying to amplify the needs of our communities.

Footnotes

1 Refers to an "in-house" lobbyist, or a lobbyist directly employed by the organization, not a contracted third party.

Endnotes

1 "About," National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, n.d. Accessed 22 January 2017.

2 "About Us," National Council of La Raza, n.d. Accessed 22 January 2017.

3 "Moving Beyond the Model Minority Myth," Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, n.d. Accessed 21 January 2017; "Key Facts and Figures on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders," White House Initiative for Asian American Pacific Islanders, n.d. Accessed 21 January 2017.

4 A covered official is defined by the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 as the president or vice president, members of Congress, an elected officer of either the House or the Senate, officers and employees of the executive office of the president, any official serving in an executive level I through V position, any member of the uniformed services serving at grad O-7 or above, Schedule C employees, and any individual working for a member, committee, leadership of the Senate or House, joint committee of Congress, a working group or caucus for members, and any other legislative branch employee. Lobbying Disclosure Act, Section 3.

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11 The following terms were searched on OpenSecrets to compile the table: “Asian”, “Chinese”, “Japanese”, “Nisei”, “Korean”, “Filipino”, “Laotian”, “Southeast”, “Indian”, “Cambodia”, “Bangladesh”, “Hawaii”, “Polynesia”, “Hmong”, “Thai”, “Taiwan” “Indonesia”, “Pakistan”, “Guam”, “Chamorro”, “Samoa”, and “Vietnamese.”

12 “Professional” for professional associations with members of a defined occupation; “Civil Rights” for groups that lobby on civil rights and civil liberties; “Service Provider” for groups that provide direct health care or social services; and “Cultural” for groups preserving culture and heritage.

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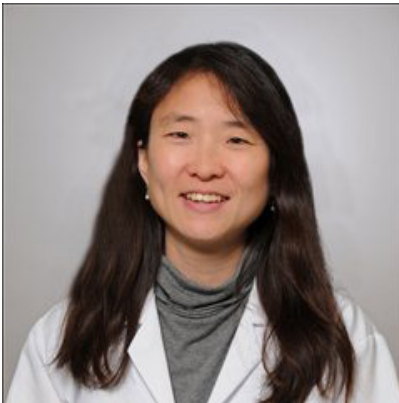
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An Interview with Commissioner Elisa Choi



Dr. Elisa Choi is the Chairperson of the Asian American Commission of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the chair of its Health and Human Services Committee. She is also the Governor-elect of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American College of Physicians, where will become the first

female Governor in the chapter's history, and the first Asian American woman to hold this position. She is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases, and practices both as an Internist and as an Infectious Disease, HIV, and Hepatitis infection specialist. Dr. Choi has a particular interest in health care disparities, and in providing culturally competent care of health issues affecting Asian-Pacific Islander and minority populations. Dr. Choi currently holds various leadership roles in the Company One Theater, Korean-American Citizens League of New England, Massachusetts Asian & Pacific Islanders for Health, and the Boston chapter of the National Association of Asian American Professionals.



The views and opinions expressed in this interview are exclusively those of the interviewee and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of any agency or organization with which she is affiliated.

Asian American Policy Review (AAPR): Dr. Choi, thank you for taking time to speak with us today, and thank you for allowing the Asian American Commission to co-sponsor the Asian Pacific American Institute of Congressional Studies (APAICS) Young Leaders Summit in Boston. You mentioned in your remarks that your involvement in public service was rather unexpected. Could you tell us about your journey from practicing medicine to the many leadership roles that you have today?

Dr. Elisa Choi: It really was an unexpected foray into public service—and more specifically, into public advocacy. I was introduced to the Asian American Commission (AAC) through my work with a community-based organization that was looking at equitable access to healthcare within the AAPI community. I agreed to serve on the Commission because I was interested in generating a political voice for AAPIs.

I'm in my fifth year as a Commissioner, and it has been a real growing experience. My involvement with the AAC lined up with various roles on the American College of Physicians (ACP), which has a strong advocacy arm. So, just as I was joining the Commission, I also became more involved in national health policy advocacy—going to Capitol Hill, meeting with federal legislators, and learning about advancing a legislative

agenda. Understanding the political process, generating a political voice, learning about how bills are passed, showing up and speaking at hearings—these are all tools that I've learned to utilize fairly recently through my involvement with ACP and the Commission.

AAPR: You are a passionate advocate of having people from diverse backgrounds—race, gender, or career field, for example—getting involved in positions of public advocacy. What makes this so important for you, and how have your different backgrounds and experiences shape your approach to public leadership?

Dr. Choi: I became an advocate of diversity in all of its forms because of my interactions with people who come from backgrounds that are very different from mine. I recognized that I had opportunities to sit at the decision making table where it was very clear that I brought a viewpoint from my own lived experiences that would not have been represented otherwise. My commitment to having really good, diverse representation in leadership really stems from seeing how important it is to have different viewpoints represented when conversations happen and when decisions are made.

It comes down to having adequate representation. When I come to the table and I'm the only woman, the only Asian American, the only physician—or whatever it might be—it brings a different perspective. Our country is getting increasingly diverse, and for that not to be represented at every level leads to decisions that do not fully represent all of our communities. I frankly think that

whenever decisions are made that will ultimately affect people's lives without those people being adequately represented, it's a recipe for disaster. No matter what communities we're trying to serve or represent, if we don't have their actual, authentic voices represented, that's really not representation.

AAPR: I really appreciate what you're saying because I've been wondering what it means to have adequate representation. What you're talking about is not just proportional composition, but adequate and authentic representation of the community and its many perspectives in discussions and in decision making—and not just having the “right number” in a board or elected body.

Dr. Choi: That's right. I think that there has to be authenticity behind any attempt to diversify and represent well. And that's where we need to be mindful of being inclusive rather than being exclusive. In my role as the current Chair [of the AAC], I'm very proud to say that we are the most ethnically diverse that we have ever been. That's huge because we're supposed to be representing all Asian Americans—but how can we do that if 80% of the Commissioners are Chinese American? We now have Cambodian, Khmer, Indian, Laotian, Vietnamese, and Korean Commissioners—and all of that has to be there because we're not all the same.

When it comes to Asian representation, I'm certainly feeling the need to make sure that there's authentic representation. There have been far too many situations where I've seen people in decision making groups who supposedly represent

certain constituents but who are not part of those communities. So my question becomes: how can that really be authentic, and what gives you the right to speak on behalf of the community that you're claiming to represent?

AAPR: That's really interesting. I think a lot of people don't realize that the Asian American identity is actually a political identity. It was coined in the 1960's as a way to bring together a lot of different ethnic groups who wouldn't otherwise be working together. Could you elaborate on some of the experiences that shaped or informed the way that you view the Asian American political identity?

Dr. Choi: I think that my first consciousness about these kinds of identities came about in college. Even though I often embarrassingly admit that I never took a Political Science class, I wanted to focus my attention on understanding what it meant to be an Asian American from a political standpoint. As I went through my professional training, this was something that stuck with me, but because of how busy I had gotten, it really didn't had a chance to flourish until the last decade or so.

If I really think back to why I felt the need to get involved, I remember that I come from a family that was never politically engaged. Like many Asian Americans, I was raised by parents who came to this country looking for better opportunity but never felt like they had an entry point into the political process. So in an unconscious way, that feeling of exclusion has resonated with me, and has been a reminder to me that if I feel

excluded, there must be others who feel the same way.

And you're absolutely right what you said about the identity of Asian Americans. We didn't coin a lot of the terms that define us— "model minority," for example. Asia is a huge continent and some of those nationalities and ethnicities don't identify as Asian. I don't want to perseverate too much over the term, but I think that those of us who do identify as Asian American are at a very interesting tipping point. We are currently the fastest growing ethnicity—due to double in size in the next few decades—but we are far from well-represented in the political sphere and at the highest levels of professional life. But we're really growing.

Culturally, there has been a lot of inhibition about being vocal or too aggressive. So where do we take that? I feel that it's been a long process for me to come to terms with what it means to be Asian American—and then translating that into the personal and professional advocacy. It doesn't have to be so obvious. I think that simply having an Asian American in a position that has never been held by someone who looks like us can make a huge statement: our successors now see that as a possibility where it may not have been before.

AAPR: I actually wanted to ask about a part of your bio that was rather unexpected, which is that that you are a very active Board member of Company One Theatre, whose mission is "to change the face of Boston theatre by uniting the city's diverse communities through innovative, socially provocative performance and developing

civically engaged artists." How did you first get involved with Company One, and what is it about the arts that inspires you to be involved?

Dr. Choi: It really does seem unlikely—here I am, a physician who never starred in a production or was involved as a performer. It started as part of this evolution that I've just described to you. Becoming aware of identity and the importance of representation, I began to notice as a patron of the theater scene in the Greater Boston area that shows that had a substantial level of diversity were from Company One Theater. And then I saw one show called *Neighbors* which was riveting—I had never seen such a dynamic and provocative show that really made you think about what it meant to be of a particular race, what it meant to have race and racial identity in America. One thing led to another and I was asked to serve on their Board. I agreed to get involved because their commitment to social justice and to bringing equity through the arts lined up with the work I was beginning to do with the Commission.

So back to the larger question of what the role of arts is in advocacy, particularly as it relates to Asian Americans. It comes back to what the possibilities are for Asians. We're underrepresented in virtually everything; but in the arts in particular, it's particularly insidious. Not only are we underrepresented, but we're also white washed or treated as nothing but invisible background. So for us to start taking a central role in telling our own stories has a huge impact. If we can't tell our own stories, then future generations don't learn about what we've



APAICS Conference: "Dr. Elisa Choi (second from the right) at the APAICS Conference in Boston."

experienced. The arts have a way of bringing issues to light and telling these stories in a way that is uniquely compelling.

Social media has also become a powerful tool. If a movie—take *Ghost in a Shell*, for example—is going to make a conscious decision to obliterate the Asian identity of one of its major characters, then we have an avenue to call that out and say “that’s not okay.” And we’re going to have enough pushback that people may not want to go see the movie anymore. That sends a message that the largely white producers of big Hollywood movies need to think twice about doing that.

The arts are hugely important because they reach the masses in a way that political lectures can’t, and because it affects popular culture which in turn shapes the way that our community is viewed. If we hadn’t progressed from the racist caricature of Long Duck Dong in *Sixteen Candles*, think about how we’d still be viewed. We have a long ways to go, but now there is so much more diversity in shows and movies like *Fresh off the Boat*, and even *The Fast and the Furious* series.

What we see informs how we can view our futures. Frankly, the arts is not seen as a stable or desirable professional career path for a lot of Asians; we’re fighting against our own internal prejudices about it. But breaking through in the

arts really sends a strong message and impacts how the larger society views us.

AAPR: As we close, do you have any particular words of advice for young AAPIs aspiring to careers in government and public service?

Dr. Choi: We really need to look for opportunities to be a leader whether or not a title is involved, especially when we identify a need that faces our community. I think it's great to emphasize the need for leadership, but I would urge that the definition be expanded to reflect that everybody can be a leader even without a title.

For example, if you identify a need to prevent food waste, then figure out a way to mobilize, collect all the food, and get it to shelters. What you're doing is showing leadership through public service. And you may not have any kind of title at all, but you're identifying something that will serve the greater good and making something happen.

To me, that's the kind of leadership that we want to inspire. I'm not suggesting that people shouldn't aspire to high positions—to be sure, Asian Americans need to aspire to positions where they are not adequately represented. But an overly exclusionary view of leadership can lead people to think, "I'm a terrible public speaker," or "I can't imagine ever holding an elected office." Leadership is about identifying needs, taking action, mobilizing, and trying to fix a situation that isn't where it needs to be. And that's something every one of us can do.

I know the title of the Young Leaders Summit was "Rise Up," but I would

frame it differently. Talking about a "ceiling" implies a level of subordination. We're all on equal footing. We're already there. We're at the same level. If anything, I would say: break down the door and take a seat at the table!

Hyphens

by Kimberly Zin

Hyphens, you were always taught to use
To join different words and smush them together
Into new adjectives bound by commitment forever
So closely compounded that the syllables bruise,
Filled with positively negative connotations
That are powered by constructed associations
Like two hands cuffed to show a truce

It is often said that looks can be deceiving
The hyphen reminds that you are but one half
In spite of the carefully assimilated choreograph
It's not enough even with sounding
Like a foreigner in your parents' native tongue
With words that are out-of-tune lyrics sung,
The result of rehearsed fluency and schooling

Even though you've been pledging allegiance
Before you could spell your own name
And everything to you seemed like a game
Before you learned to judge by appearance
And count numbers using your fingers
After many years all that now still lingers
Is the tenacity of your steeled perseverance

Think about a lasting first impression
And how unwaveringly it can remain
No matter how much you try, in vain
It will not change, not even a small fraction
Judging a book from its opening lines
Without bothering to inspect plot designs
Take note: a grave and moral transgression

With only ears open and both eyes closed
Know that your voice is native and does belong
Fight battles with wit and stay strong
In what is a biased nation predisposed
To make assumptions on background character
Relying more on sight to be the listener
When different colors are juxtaposed

Remember the importance of compromise
It never existed, this thing called freedom
Asked to specify until your heart's gone numb
But set all emotions aside, you must categorize
When scientists discover new organisms like these
Kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, species
Answer them slowly with clear and unflinching eyes

Say your full name in anything but English
Adjust the baggage on your shoulders
Filled with the lush history of forefathers
And parents who came to fulfill a wish
Tell yourself that this is also you telling yourself
So these stories don't lay forgotten on a bookshelf
Priceless gems only you can distinguish

Always remember where you come from
Because that's the beginning of your saga
Wear it proudly, without traces of stigmata
Concentrate on your heart's beating drum
For music cannot exist without a tempo
Melodies and harmonies only make it flow
Brush off all concerns, and sway with the rhythm

Only when you truly disregard
Either both or one of the other half
Will turn into an identity complex you have
Each piece is a treasure you must guard
For without one, cannot exist the other
With neither, how can you find another
And risk feeling empty and scarred

It's up to you to choose and define,
As the manifestation of a created word,
Its implications and how it's heard
After all, the hyphen is meant to combine
Like a bridge over water connecting lands,
Unifying two souls like wedding bands
So consider it not a curse, but a blessing divine

The Loneliness of the Progressive Asian American Christian

by Elizabeth Lin

This piece originally appeared in The Salt Collective.

For a long and formative time in my life, the Asian American church was my home. I came to faith at age fifteen in the high school ministry of a Chinese church. This was the place where I started to grasp the idea of a gracious God who loved me unconditionally; it was also where I came to terms with my Asian American identity, something I had been bitterly fighting for a decade. It was the first Asian American community for which I'd ever been a part, and for the first time in my life I felt normal. I now had friends who innately understood how I interacted with my family, how I thought about school, college, and the future—all the experiences that made me so different from my peers at school. I felt accepted and understood, both by God and the people around me.

In college, I was part of a Chinese American campus fellowship, but as the years went on, I started to notice a disconnect between my friends there

and me. I was beginning to care a lot about race, politics, feminism. No one at my fellowship discouraged me from pursuing these things, but for the most part, they weren't interested in discussing them either. Whatever the reason, when I wanted to talk about those issues, I mostly had to look elsewhere.

And then I went to grad school—a clinical psychology graduate program that was housed in a seminary—and my whole world got blown open. I took theology classes and learned the context in which each part of the Bible was written is crucial to understanding the text and applying it appropriately to our context. I hung out with students from a whole spectrum of Christian traditions—most of whom were not Asian—and saw the myriad ways in which they practiced their faith, many of which did not look like mine. I heard theological ideas that were way edgier than my own, espoused by professors who took their

faith seriously. I learned more about power and privilege and the systemic nature of racism in this country. I sat with dozens of clients and heard their stories of pain and trauma and resilience and hope, and I realized all of us have far more in common than not and everyone is doing the best they can with what they have. I finished grad school with a completely different understanding of my faith than when I started. It was no longer just about Jesus as my personal savior and helping people like me; it was about Jesus as a revolutionary who came to set the oppressed free (e.g. Luke 4:18), and it was about using my voice and my privilege on behalf of those who don't have those things. Following Jesus was no longer primarily about my individual relationship with him; it now meant continuing his work of embracing and advocating for the marginalized and fighting injustice.

I'm grateful for how my faith transformed during that time. But it came at a cost: early on in my graduate career, I started to find it difficult to be in Asian American churches. They still felt familiar and comforting in some ways, but the messages I heard, both from the pulpit and the congregation, rarely acknowledged the things that were becoming central to my faith. There was, at least in the communities I visited at that point in time, little mention of injustice or how Christians should respond to it. Aside from musicians in the worship band and the occasional scripture reader, I almost never saw women up front. If LGBTQ issues were ever raised, it was to reiterate the notion that homosexuality was unacceptable. Almost invariably, I left Asian American churches—once the

places where I felt most at home—feeling like I didn't belong.

As I looked for churches with were a better theological fit, I ended up in ones that were predominantly White. For the most part, I haven't minded being in the racial minority. It's an experience I'm used to, having grown up in the Midwest, and I value diversity and having friends of all kinds. But there are times when it wears on me—when I wish that connecting with my Christian community was as effortless as it once was, that I didn't have to explain so much about myself or my experiences. I wish, sometimes, I were a little less alone.

Being a progressive Asian American Christian can be lonely, because for us, finding a Christian community often means having to choose between shared theology and shared experience. We can join churches that match our ideology, which are usually predominantly White or Black. Or, we can join churches that mirror our cultural experiences, which are often silent—if not actively oppressive—when it comes to women, other people of color, and the LGBTQ community. Finding a community often means making a choice between integral parts of ourselves.

It's no secret that Asian American Christianity tends to be conservative. Asian immigrant churches are especially so, and since 92 percent of Asians in America are either immigrants or the children of immigrants, most Asian American Christians have spent serious time in these communities.¹ The conservatism of these churches stems from several

factors. For one, they generally maintain the social norms of their home culture, which are usually more conservative than broader American culture on every front, from clothing and appearance to interactions with elders to dating and sexuality. Then you add the immigrant

can shape how Asian clergy interpret the Bible. Though I don't have hard data, I would bet the majority of Asian immigrant churches don't allow women to hold the same leadership roles men do. I would also wager that many churches targeting American-born Asians, while

Being a progressive Asian American Christian can be lonely – because for us, finding a Christian community often means having to choose between shared theology and shared experience.

mentality of playing everything very safe and going out of your way to avoid trouble; you also mix in the conservative views of White American evangelicalism, upon which Asian churches heavily draw for resources (books, curriculum, etc.), and general direction for how Christians should respond to political issues and current events. You end up with communities that can be even more conservative than the typical White evangelical church: they're vehemently pro-life and anti-gay marriage, and may also perceive questions as challenges to authority and forbid high school dating.

So, if you're in an Asian church and you start to think that, say, women should have the same rights and privileges as men when it comes to doing ministry and church decision-making, you may find yourself at odds with the people around you. While many Asian countries have made strides in this area, patriarchal values still permeate Asian cultures to varying degrees, and these values

somewhat more progressive, don't either. (And many of the ones that do in theory, I suspect, have no female pastors in practice.) So, if you're at an Asian church and you come to the not-so-radical conclusion women should have the same rights and opportunities as men in a church context—since we now have the same access to literacy and education men do, which was not the case when any part of the Bible was written—your perspective may not be warmly received.

And if you're in an Asian church and you start to think that, say, Black people experience more police brutality than other groups do and maybe Christians should talk about that, you may again find yourself at odds with the people around you. Asian Americans are often silent on issues of racism for a number of reasons: the cultural value of harmony, an immigrant mentality of looking out only for yourself, anti-Black racism in both Asia and America, and a belief in the model minority myth.² This tendency can be

especially pervasive in Asian churches, where fear of disrupting the community can make individuals especially reluctant to bring up issues that could be controversial. And since Asian cultures tend to be more hierarchical than Western ones,

do—or any East, Southeast, or South Asian churches, for that matter—though I would love for both of us to be wrong. (If you have a counterexample, please let me know, as I'd love to hear about it.) The only predominantly Asian American

So if you want to talk about systemic injustice at an Asian church, you might not find many willing conversation partners, and you might be silenced altogether.

church leaders may cherry-pick verses about obeying authority to invalidate the idea the police or the government might ever be wrong. So, if you want to talk about systemic injustice at an Asian church, you might not find many willing conversation partners, and you might be silenced altogether.

And if you're in an Asian church and you start to think that, say, LGBTQ folks should be allowed to have the same relationships and rights to marriage heterosexuals have, and should be allowed to fully participate in all aspects of the church even if they're out, you may really find yourself at odds with the people around you. If Asian churches aren't totally sold on women, it's not surprising they're even farther behind when it comes to LGBTQ issues, which are taboo both spiritually and culturally. "There isn't a Korean church in America with a non-traditional view of marriage," an affirming Korean American pastor once told me. I can't think of any Chinese or Taiwanese churches that

church I know of that's engaging these issues at all is Evergreen Baptist Church Los Angeles, but even they don't have an officially affirming stance.³ So, if you're at an Asian church and you start to think the LGBTQ community should have the same rights as cisgender heterosexuals, you may find yourself alone on the issue, if not rebuked for thinking so. (And that's if you're merely an ally; if you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, the ramifications of being in these communities are infinitely greater, and all the more if you come out.)

To be clear, I don't think Asian churches are bad. They understand and are uniquely equipped to meet the needs of their communities (this is especially true for immigrant churches), and they provide a respite for people who have to spend the rest of the week constantly crossing cultural barriers. But for all of the reasons I've mentioned, it's not hard to see why progressive Asian American

Christians often find themselves unable to participate in these communities.

The next step for many of us, then, is to find other churches that care about these issues. But these communities are usually predominantly White (or predominantly Black, though these churches are rarely progressive on LGBTQ issues), and that can carry its own baggage. It can be hard to be the only Asian American person around, or one of only a few, both because of how you stand out and because you have to do so much more work to be heard and understood. You no longer have cultural experiences in common; the shorthand that you can speak in Asian American churches doesn't translate. You may find yourself having to explain a lot—about your family, about your culture, about what your faith looks like—to people who have no firsthand experience of these things. The fear of being misunderstood, or of misrepresenting an entire culture, or of having to defend how you do things is real and exhausting. And it can be hard to be in a community where you don't see your own experiences reflected in any part of the worship or the liturgy or the leadership. It's easy in spaces like these to feel like you don't belong.

And some of these progressive communities, for all of their rhetoric about supporting Black lives and standing against injustice, don't really know how to talk about race or how race and racism affect their members. Some of these commu-

nities think they get it because they say the right things, but don't actually see how pervasive Whiteness is, even within their own walls. So the progressive Asian American Christian may find themselves feeling alone and even alienated, again, this time because of their cultural identity.

So to summarize: I feel out of place in Asian American Christian spaces, though I can't overstate the impact they've had on my life. And while I'm grateful for the progressive Christian spaces I've had—the fact that I have access to any is as gift, as I know they're hard to find in some parts of the country—I often feel out of place there, too. In my most cynical moments, I've wondered why I

bother trying to participate in any of these communities and why I continue to pursue this faith at all. But at the end of the day, I can't get away from the fact that at the core of my convictions about justice is my belief we're all created in the image of God, who values each of us wholly and equally,

and my belief in Jesus as a revolutionary who came to dignify every person and to level the hierarchies our societies create. Try as I may, I can't escape those things. My progressive values and my faith are inextricably intertwined.

So I stick around. And while I love diversity and inclusion and having friends of all stripes, every now and again, it would be nice to have a place where I

My progressive values and my faith are inextricably intertwined.

didn't have to choose between people who get my theology and people who get my experiences. And I know people who get both are out there. I know a lot of them, actually; I made a list, and what started as a trickle became a flood. But we're scattered all over the place, both in terms of geography and the churches we attend. My one-on-one interactions with these folks are normalizing and life-giving; these meals and coffee dates are now my spiritual home. But we don't really have places to more broadly connect.

And I know more of you are out there. Some of you are lucky enough to attend churches like City Church San Francisco and Vox Veniae, exceedingly rare places that are progressive and have sizeable Asian American contingents.⁴ You're fortunate to have a community where you don't have to choose between the two. I get why you're there.

Some of you are sitting in the pews at Redeemer and Pacific Crossroads, at New Song and GrX, in the English ministries of the immigrant churches where you grew up or where you work with students. Maybe you quietly ignore the church's stances about women in ministry and LGBTQ issues or their silence about racial injustice because it's nice to have friends whose stories are similar to yours. I get that. Or maybe, in spite of your ideological differences, this church is still the best option among the ones you have available to you. I get that. Or maybe you're trying to do the incredibly difficult, admirable work of creating change from within. I get that, too.

Some of you, not feeling like you belong at progressive churches or in Asian

American ones because you can't be fully yourself in either, don't go to church anywhere. I get that.

And some of you affirmed women or other people of color or gay folks, but saw no place for that in your church—or, worse, were reprimanded for doing so—so you left the faith altogether. I get that. If the only options I knew of were to dignify these people or be a Christian, and these options appeared to be mutually exclusive, I probably would have chosen the former, too.

I know you're out there, and I wish we all could meet somehow. I'm not arguing we necessarily need progressive Asian American churches, though I'd be stoked to know one exists. But it would be lovely to have spaces where we didn't have to choose between shared theology and shared experience, where we could connect with people with similar stories, where we didn't feel the need to turn down the volume on either our ideology or our cultural experiences. Where we could be fully known and fully understood every once in a while. Where we could feel a little less lonely.

Endnotes

- 1 "Table 12. General Distribution of the Population by Sex, for Asian Alone and White Alone, Not Hispanic: 2013," United States Census Bureau, n.d. Accessed 13 February 2017.
- 2 Lin, Elizabeth, "Why Asian Americans Might Not Talk About Ferguson," The Salt Collective, n.d. Accessed 13 February 2017.
- 3 "Ministries," Evergreen Baptist Church of Los Angeles, n.d. Accessed 13 February 2017.
- 4 "Homepage," City Church of San Francisco, n.d. Accessed 13 February 2017; "Homepage," Vox Veniae, n.d. Accessed 13 February 2017.

Three Things Asian Americans Don't Want to Talk About

Confronting Two Truths and a Lie

by Ivan Rahman

I still recall my father's expression of disappointment when he learned I planned to marry Tina, a multiracial, Catholic Dominican American. He never said it explicitly, but I knew he thought I was making a big mistake by marrying someone of a "lower" racial status. To him, Bangladeshi was best. A non-Bangladeshi Asian—a light-skinned Pakistani, for example—would be okay. A White woman, too, would be acceptable. But, by marrying a Hispanic or, god forbid, a Black person, I would be crossing the line. Tina is both Black and Hispanic.

Seven months into our marriage, Tina, her parents, my parents, and I visited Bangladesh. During our stay, my granduncle joined us for dinner one night. He asked Tina if she had learned any Bangla. Tina responded with a few Bangla phrases she had memorized. He smiled and laughed, pleased with her knowledge and pronunciation. My cousin, also at the table, then asked my

granduncle, in English, if he knew any Spanish. He made a faint expression of disgust and explained, in Bangla, that he did not need to know any Spanish nor did he care to learn it.

Racism is a daily reality for many in the Asian American community. It is often directed toward us. But it also comes from us, belying hurtful and deeply ingrained racial prejudice. This reality makes me think we Asian Americans need to confront two truths and a lie. The first truth is that effective partnership between Asian Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities hinges on our accepting we can be, and often are, prejudiced. The lie is the model minority theory. The second truth is our eagerness to assimilate into White culture—at the expense of being connected to our history, our struggles, our ethnicity—undercuts our capacity to protect our community.

In short, our internalization of the model minority myth deepens the gulf between us and other racial and ethnic groups in the fight for racial justice.

As a Bangladeshi American, my experience with older Asian Americans has been that many harbor biases against Blacks and Hispanics. In the US, we seldom discuss the relationship between Asian Americans and Blacks and Hispanics. If, however, you are able to spark dialogue among older Asian Americans about race, you, too, may bear witness to unadulterated prejudice. You might hear them say, “Black people generally do not achieve high-level positions because they do not apply themselves, even though society provides them countless opportunities to climb the social-economic ladder.” Or, you might hear them say, “Blacks and Hispanics do not value school or hard work, and if they attend a competitive university, their success can be attributed primarily to affirmative action.” Some of my family members suggested as much upon learning an Ivy League medical school admitted Tina.

These views are disturbing. If we as Asian Americans are to more effectively collaborate with other minority groups, we need to admit our own racial biases more openly and more often. That is the first truth. The need for collaboration between Asian Americans and other minority groups, facing increased institutionalized and interpersonal bigotry, could not be more pressing. It is criti-

cal we join forces with other minority groups to resist such bigotry.

Unfortunately, it is not only our belief in our own superiority that’s the problem. We also embrace the model minority theory. The theory, according to Jean Shin, author of *The Asian American Closet*, suggests that, compared to other minority groups, Asians are “unusually motivated and capable of pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps, in order to achieve the American Dream.” This is a lie, however.

Besides undermining the systemic oppression Asian Americans experience and have experienced, this feel-good lie engenders interracial tension. Our problematic adoption of the model minority myth leads people like my granduncle to think the high rate of poverty in the Black community results from a lack of intrinsic drive to work hard. In short, our internalization of the model minority myth deepens the gulf between us and other racial and ethnic groups in the fight for racial justice.

There is also another mindset holding us back. We believe we must downplay, or “cover,” our Asian-ness to fit into and excel in mainstream White America. In my experience, this belief appears to be more common among the younger generation than among older Asian Americans.

In one of my previous jobs in New York, I needed help connecting my computer to the printer. So, I reached out to the IT department. Shortly later, an IT representative arrived at my desk. He was of Bangladeshi descent, and he seemed to be in his early thirties. As he began linking my computer to the printer, I started talking to him in Bangla. He would respond only in English. I then asked him if he spoke Bangla. He said he did. But he continued to speak only in English. In that instance, I thought about how we engage in behaviors or attitudes where we distance ourselves from our own ethnicity. We often do so in an effort to ingratiate ourselves with White people.

This brings me to the second truth. Our desperation to assimilate into White culture—to the point where our own cultural roots and ethnicity seem foreign to us—corrodes our ability to advocate for our people from a place of deep empathy and understanding. We lose touch with the very issues that affect our people.

Ultimately, our belief in our relative racial superiority, our embrace of the model minority myth, and our overzealous focus on fitting into White America create a dangerous recipe. Working together, these three forces cause us to “other” other minority groups. In the movement for equal treatment, racial and ethnic minorities cannot afford to segregate from one another. It is in our long-term self-interest to take action that demonstrates our solidarity with other minority groups. Yet, we should not engage in such action merely because it is in our interest. We should engage in it out of compassion for those who, like

us, have been historically and systemically disadvantaged.

Tina and I have been together for almost eight years now. My father has come around to liking her. His perception of Dominicans and other minority groups has changed for the better. As for my granduncle, he still has a long way to go.

An Interview with Shurooq Al Jewari



Asian American Policy Review (AAPR): Let's start with a little bit about your story. When did you begin to draw, and what does art mean to you?

Shurooq Al Jewari: I was in third grade when I started to draw. You know the coloring books where you color in the pictures? I started to buy the books, but not color in them. Instead, I would copy the pictures. Since then, art has become everything to me.

AAPR: Can you tell us about your submitted artwork?

Al Jewari: The first picture shows a big tree on the beach with the sunset in the background. The second picture shows an ocean with a giant moon over it. In the middle is a sidewalk, which is lit by lights. The sunset inspires me to do art. It makes me want to pick up my pencil and paper and draw.

AAPR: What are some other things that you enjoy doing? What are your hopes and dreams—both in the short- and long-term?

Al Jewari: I love fashion and designing clothes. I like to dance and cook my country's food the most. I want to be an artist, fashion designer, and a surgeon all at the same time in the future.

AAPR: How did you and/or your family come to Utah? What is your family's story—and what does it mean to you?

Al Jewari: I have been in Utah for three years. My dad was working with the government in my home country, and we had to come to Utah for safety. We did some interviews to come to the United States . . . lots of interviews. Finally, they called us, but only my dad, my siblings, and I made it to Utah. My mom came after a month.

Moving to Utah affected me a lot because I left my family in my home country. I left my country that I was in for thirteen years. Yes, it affected me a lot.

AAPR: When did you start coming out to RIU-AAC? What programs do you participate in? What role does the center play in your life?

Al Jewari: I started last October in the afterschool program. It is a good place to be in. I enjoy it because I have many friends to hang out with.

AAPR: Is there anything we haven't asked about that you would like us to convey to our readers?

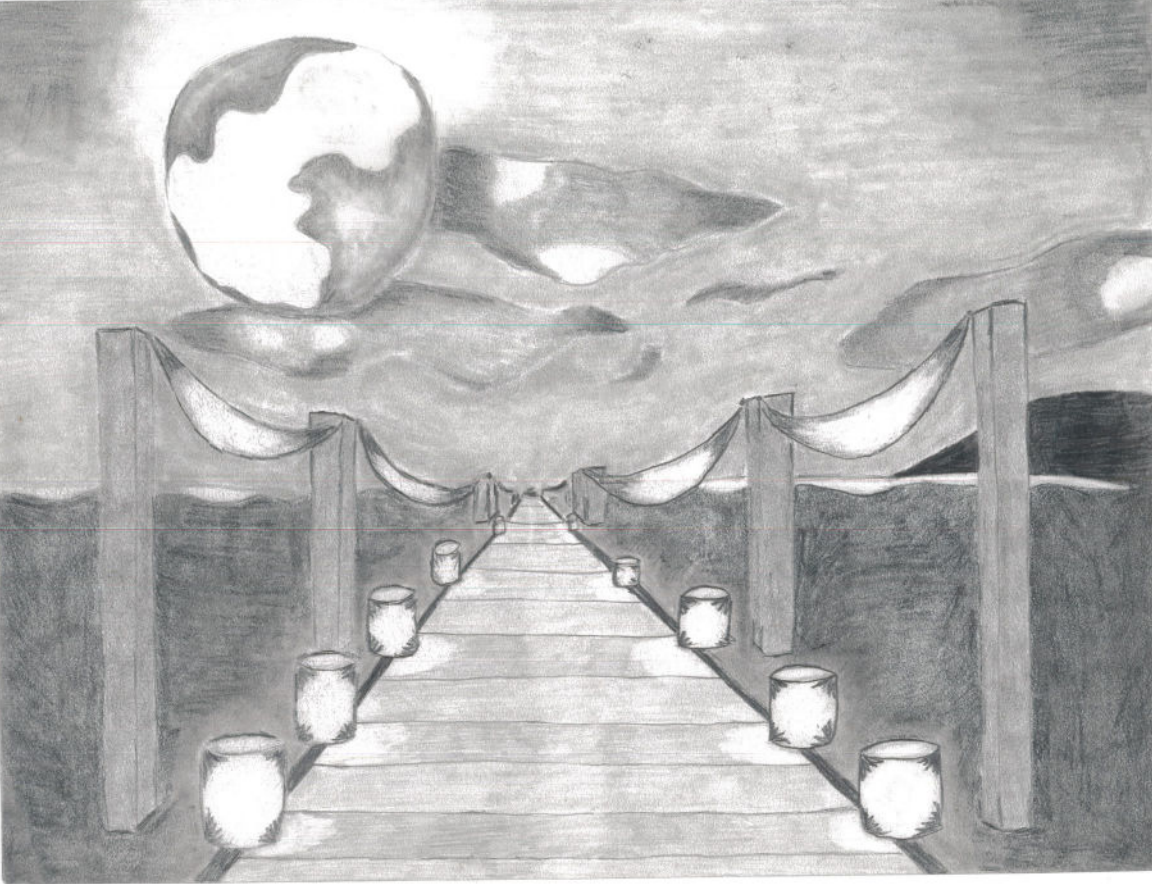
Al Jewari: Thank you for this opportunity!

Islam

Shuroog Al Jewari

I am Muslim
I hear people saying Muslims are terrorists
I pretend I am not nervous
I am nervous
I am Muslim
I speak loudly and say Islam is all about peace and
tolerance
They say Islam is a piece of violence
I understand they don't know much about Islam
I am Iraqi
I understand they don't know how now we hide behind
bombs
Dropped on innocent moms
I am Muslim
I am what I am
I try to be strong and hopeful
I hope that they will understand Islam
I am Muslim

مسلمة و افتخر



The AAPR team was introduced to Shuroog through the Refugee and Immigrant Center-Asian Association of Utah (RIC-AAU), a private, nonprofit, community-based organization founded in 1977 and located in Salt Lake City, Utah. Originally established to support Asian immigrants and refugees in their transition to life in the United States, the organization has expanded its resources and services over the past forty years to assist refugees and immigrants from around the world. Today, they serve over 4,000 refugees, immigrants, and other community members each year. With over sixty staff members, their backgrounds cover seventeen countries and over thirty languages.

The RIC-AAU is devoted to helping clients become more self-sufficient in their daily lives by ensuring that clients have: (1) stability in meeting basic needs, (2) knowledge and tools to navigate systems, (3) a meaningful connection to community, and (4) educational and vocational opportunities that foster intergenerational prosperity. They do this through a comprehensive approach that includes holistic case management, employment services, counseling and mental health treatment, English classes, after-school tutoring, and more.

The RIC-AAU is committed to walking with people on their journeys to self-sufficiency. They know their work not only makes a difference in the lives of those they serve, but changes our whole community for the better.

Call for Submissions

Deadline: December 1, 2017

Articles are also accepted for the online journal on a rolling basis.

The *Asian American Policy Review* (AAPR) of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University is now accepting submissions for its 28th print edition, to be published in spring 2018. Founded in 1989, the *AAPR* is the first non-partisan academic journal in the country dedicated to analyzing public policy issues facing the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. We seek submissions exploring 1) the social, economic, and political factors impacting the AAPI community; and 2) the role of AAPI individuals and communities in analyzing, shaping, and implementing public policy.

We strongly encourage submissions from artists, creatives, and writers of all backgrounds, including scholars, policymakers, civil servants, advocates, and organizers.

Selection Criteria

The *AAPR* will select submissions for publication based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of topic to AAPI issues and timeliness to current debates
- Originality of ideas and depth of research
- Sophistication and style of argument
- Contribution to scholarship and debates on AAPI issues

Submissions Guidelines

- All submissions must be *previously unpublished* and based on *original work*.
- All submissions must be *formatted according to The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition.
- Authors are required to *cooperate with editing and fact-checking* and to comply with the *AAPR's* mandated deadlines. Authors who fail to meet these requirements may not be published.
- All submissions must include a cover letter with (1) author's name, (2) mailing address, (3) e-mail address, (4) phone number, and (5) a brief biography of no more than 300 words.
- **Research articles** should be 4,000 to 7,000 words in length and include a 100-word abstract.
- **Commentaries** should be 1,500 to 3,000 words in length.
- **Media, film, and book reviews** should be 800 to 1,000 words in length.
- **Artwork** includes graphic design, installation pieces, photography, and paintings. Please contact the *AAPR* for more information regarding submission guidelines.
- **Creative writing pieces** should be 500 to 7,000 words in length. This includes short stories, poetry, and excerpts from larger works of all genres.
- **Short films and documentaries** to be featured on our website. Please contact the *AAPR* for more information regarding submission guidelines.
- *Abstracts for proposed pieces will also be accepted.* Final acceptance will be based upon production of a full submission.
- All figures, tables, and charts must be clear, easy-to-understand, and submitted as separate files.

Please email submissions and any questions you may have to aapr@hks.harvard.edu.

Thank you,

AAPR editorial board