

Asian American Policy Review

John F. Kennedy
School of Government
Harvard University

Graduate School
of Public Policy
University of California
at Berkeley

Featuring:

Grant Ujifusa

Don Nakanishi

Angela Oh

Dennis Hayashi & Daphne Kwok

The Asian American Health Forum

Shao Chee Sim

VOLUME III

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The Asian American Health Forum, a national organization established by health professionals and other concerned parties, was formed in response to the special needs of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans. The AAHF is actively engaged in and encourages the development of public policies and programs to promote better health for all Asians and Pacific Islander Americans.

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Asian American Policy Review

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INTRODUCTION

In the last year, a number of events nationwide have dramatically shaped the realm of public policy affecting Asian Americans and the public's awareness of issues important to our community. The Los Angeles riots in April 1992 put Asian American faces on television screens and magazine and newspaper pages, and began to draw attention to some Asian American community concerns. *Civil Rights Issues Facing Asian Americans in the 1990's*, a report published by the United States Commission on Civil Rights in February 1992, also brought public attention to several current, pressing issues, such as anti-Asian violence and unequal educational and employment opportunities.

This issue of the *Asian American Policy Review* features a number of articles which discuss how Asian Americans, the nation's fastest-growing ethnic population, are influenced as a whole by a number of policy issues and current events which have been the focus of broad attention. Many of these articles will also emphasize specific needs of particular Asian American groups. It is essential to highlight the distinctions between the numerous groups that comprise our community to ascertain that our diverse interests are protected and that our various needs are properly met, and to combat negative and damaging stereotypes such as the "model minority" myth. Yet, in the domain of public policy, Asian Americans can also realize tremendous gains by working together to share resources and provide support for each other as a unified community and a viable political force. As the selection of articles and other features in this issue of the *Review* illustrates, rather than making a choice between recognizing the differences within the Asian American community and standing together, we need to do both at once.

Throughout the 1992 Presidential primaries and campaigns, health care was clearly a focal issue. "Dispelling the Myth of a Healthy Minority," by the **Asian American Health Forum**, explains how misperceptions of Asian Americans have led to inappropriate conclusions by the public and by policymakers. The Health Forum's researchers discuss how the very general label of "Asian American" has impeded research into the health needs of the distinct Asian Pacific American communities and has also led the Federal government to falsely conclude that Asian Americans have reached parity in medical school enrollment, and thus no longer deserve or require assistance or attention in that domain. To counteract this tendency, the Health Forum writers recommend increasing and expanding targeted data collection efforts, especially using Asian Pacific American subcategories to recognize various groups and their circumstances and needs.

In his commentary, **Don Nakanishi** also questions the appropriateness of "Asian American" as a term to categorize the heterogeneous combination of groups that fall under this label. Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, Laotians, and a multitude of other Asian groups have unique histories and cultures that differentiate and separate one community from another. The notion of a common and shared sentiment of unity may be viewed as an artificial construct. However, the vision of a "unified movement [remains] a highly compelling, attractive, and important mission" because issues such as anti-Asian violence and college admissions quotas affect Asians uniformly.

Almanac of American Politics editor **Grant Ujifusa** also points out the fallacies in assumptions that Asian Americans are a homogeneous political block. The 1992 elections, in which the Asian American vote was split between the Democratic and Republican parties, provided strong evidence of the political diversity of our community. The fact that Bill Clinton's newly-formed Presidential cabinet, apparently designed to represent a cross-section of America, does not include a single high-ranking Asian American, reminds us that no particular political party can be assumed to be a natural or automatic ally for Asian Americans. It should also remind our community how far we still have to go politically. Ujifusa describes some trends he observes and foresees in Asian American politicization at the community and individual level, and discusses the issues he envisions at the top of Asian Americans' political agendas.

Asian Americans must also recognize and address the shortcomings of the American judicial system in addressing our interests and needs. In 1974, a class action lawsuit was filed on behalf of two thousand Asian Pacific American and Alaskan Native cannery workers, alleging discriminatory intent by their employers. This lawsuit gave rise to *Wards Cove Packing v. Atonio*, a case in which, despite numerous judicial and legislative actions, many still believe that justice has been denied. **Daphne Kwok** and **Dennis Hayashi** provide an analysis of the history of the case, advance arguments in support of the Wards Cove Workers Act, and examine reasons why such remedial legislative action has thus far been unsuccessful.

Shao Chee Sim's article, "Social Service Needs of Chinese Immigrant High School Students," was originally written as a research study for a specific client organization. Sim's article, submitted to the Asian American Federation of New York, challenges the "model minority" stereotype, discussing the multitude of obstacles facing Chinese American students, that impede their success in school. Social service gaps are identified and a new framework of system delivery is offered to address the problem of this special population.

In her interview, **Angela Oh**, a Korean American attorney and community activist in Los Angeles, describes the impact of last April's Los Angeles riots on Korean Americans in L.A. Oh describes how the riots served as a catalyst for community organization, and expresses a tempered optimism for the future of Korean American leadership and grassroots activism. She also discusses different models for future community involvement, the potential for rebuilding Koreatown and damaged businesses, and weighs the importance of factors such as partisan politics, coalition-building, and access to capital and credit in the future of the Korean American community.

From the general to the specific, the articles, interviews, and commentary in this issue of the *Asian American Policy Review* provide a more detailed look at some of the important effects of recent major events and current dynamics in the United States on the Asian American community and on particular Asian subgroups. Our hope is to promote closer examination and more active discussion and communication of Asian American concerns and needs both within our communities and in broader public policy forums.

EQUAL JUSTICE DENIED: Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio

Dennis Hayashi & Daphne Kwok

Introduction

In 1974, a class action suit was filed on behalf of 2,000 Asian Pacific American and Native Alaskan cannery workers against the Wards Cove Packing Company ("Wards Cove"). The federal lawsuit alleged, among other things, that Wards Cove discriminated against Asian Pacific Americans in hiring and in promotions to positions within the company which were virtually all filled by Caucasians. Today, these 2,000 class action members, 85% of whom are Filipino Americans, are in danger of having their case dismissed, not because of court action, but because of Congressional special interest legislation inserted as part of a "deal" to obtain passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1991 ("Civil Rights Act").

In the final hours of two years of negotiations on the Civil Rights Act, Senator Frank Murkowski (R-AK) and Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) quietly planted a provision in the bill which exempted the *Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio* case from coverage by the Act. As a result, 2,000 Americans were exposed to the potential dismissal of their lawsuit and the denial of their basic rights under the Civil Rights Act. Ironically, the *Wards Cove*

Packing Co. v. Atonio United States Supreme Court case was one of the primary Supreme Court cases that was the impetus for the Civil Rights Act, probably the most extensive anti-discrimination bill since the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Historical Background

Since the 1800s, Asian and Asian American laborers have been the backbone of the American salmon cannery industry. Asians were contracted for seasonal work in the desolate fishing villages for salmon processing, a menial and laborious task. Although many workers never survived the ocean voyage to their Alaskan destination, Asians were still willing to sacrifice their well-being in order to make a living.

Chinese laborers were the first to be employed by canneries, followed by the Japanese. When the Japanese Americans were interned during World War II, Filipinos became the next group of laborers. The Indochinese are the latest group to engage in this labor-intensive industry. The pervasive racial overtone of the industry, which utilizes minority workers to fill the lowest rungs of the job ladder, is immortalized by the "Iron Chink," a name given

to a fish gutting and cleaning device which continues to be commonly used.

The Litigation

In 1974, employees in the Alaskan canning industry filed a federal class action suit against several salmon canneries, one of which was the Wards Cove Packing Company, based in Seattle, Washington. The original lawsuit was separated into three cases, two of which were settled. *Wards Cove*, however, remains unresolved. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit are 2,000 past and present cannery workers, primarily Filipinos, Samoans, Chinese, Japanese, and Alaskan Natives, who held low-paying seasonal jobs and were unable to obtain the higher-paying, non-cannery positions at the company.

In almost all the cases, the management and higher-paying positions were held by whites, with almost all of the cannery jobs held by minorities. This segregation was so complete that not only were workers housed and fed separately but linens were even laundered separately.

The case eventually made its way to the United States Supreme Court, where a landmark decision changed the evidentiary standards and shifted the burden of proof from the *employers* to the *employees*. In the past, employers were obligated to prove that their employment practices were not intentionally discriminatory, but following the Supreme Court decision, employees were obligated to prove that intentional discrimination existed. (A review of the relevant court decisions is appended.)

Civil Rights Act of 1991

Negotiations

What does *Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio* have to do with the Civil Rights Act of 1991? The need to overturn the *Wards Cove* Supreme Court decision, which required a higher burden of proof of employment discrimination, spearheaded the need for a comprehensive civil rights act.

Two years of negotiations resulted in legislation that essentially reinstated the legal burden on employers to prove that race was not a factor when statistics showed discrimination in employment. Following President Bush's veto of a civil rights bill in 1990, the Senate sought two more votes in the final hours of negotiations, which would provide a margin to override a potential presidential veto. In closed session negotiations, Senators Frank Murkowski (R-AK) and Ted Stevens (R-AK) provided the two extra votes, but with this came the price of sacrificing the rights of 2,000 Americans.

Senators Murkowski and Stevens sought the exemption of the *Wards Cove Packing Co.* case primarily to end the litigation. In a "Dear Colleague" letter dated October 15, 1991, Senator Murkowski stated:

My amendment will limit the retroactive application of S. 1745 (Civil Rights Act of 1991) with regard to disparate impact cases for which a complaint was filed between March 1, 1975 and for which

an initial decision was rendered after October 30, 1983.

To the best of my knowledge, *Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio* is the only case that falls within this classification ... My amendment will prevent the needless relitigation of a case previously decided under the very same standard of law outlined in *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.* ...

My amendment is very limited in scope and will provide a much needed element of fairness.

The Senator claimed that the case had already been judged under the *Griggs* standard. Actually, out of the nine court rulings handed down so far, only one decision by the Court of Appeals was based on *Griggs*, which was a victory for the plaintiffs.

The Senate Vote

When the Senate voted on the Civil Rights Act of 1991 at the end of October 1991, the compromise bill contained Senator Murkowski's following amendment:

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, nothing in the Act shall apply to any disparate impact case for which a complaint was filed before March 1, 1975, and for which an initial decision was rendered after October 30, 1983.

When the Senate and the House initially voted on the Civil Rights Act of 1991, most members of Congress were unaware that this provision was included

since it had been conceived in backroom negotiations. Those who might have known about the provision may have failed to understand its significance because the amendment language does not specifically name the *Wards Cove* case.

Through an administrative error, however, Senator Murkowski's amendment was not included in the bill that was voted on. If not for the error, the amendment would have slipped into the bill unbeknownst to most everyone. The Asian American community would never have been able to attempt to rectify the situation.

How and why could Asian Americans be singled out? There were no Asian American Senators involved in the backroom negotiations. Had there been Asian American representation in the room there would not have had to be remedial legislation.

On November 5, 1991, Senator Robert Dole (R-KS) offered a "technical" amendment, Senate Resolution 214, to reinsert the *Wards Cove* exemption. However, as Senator Brock Adams (D-WA), a former cannery worker, stated on the Senate floor, "this is not a technical amendment that we are debating, because it contains a very deep and substantive issue that goes to the heart of this bill."

How and why could Asian Americans be singled out? There were no Asian

American Senators involved in the backroom negotiations. Obviously, the bill's authors and those involved in last minute amendments had no interest in protecting Asian Americans and did not acknowledge or want to acknowledge the rights of Asian Americans. Had there been Asian American representation in the room there would not have had to be remedial legislation.

Later it was discovered that Wards Cove paid Washington, D.C. lobbyists \$175,000 to win passage of Senator Murkowski's amendment.

Community Involvement

The Asian Pacific American community learned about the proposed technical amendment less than a week before the Senate revote. Senator Adams had been notified by some of his constituents who had recognized the impact and significance of Senator Murkowski's amendment. An article in the *Washington Post*, dated October 31, 1991, made the issue public.

At the time the community learned of the amendment, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) was holding its national convention in Seattle. Representatives of NAPABA, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), and other Asian American civil rights leaders who attended the convention met to discuss defeating the "technical" amendment, which immediately became a priority agenda item for the community.

Upon returning to Washington, D.C., the three national Asian Pacific American

organizations, in conjunction with Senator Adams, began to alert senators of the impending vote on the Murkowski amendment. It was critical to reach as many key senators and representatives as possible to inform them of the significance of the provision. The organizations worked closely with Senator Adams and Congressman Jim McDermott (D-WA) who led the charge in the Senate and House respectively.

A civil rights coalition was formed that included the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Council of LaRaza, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations, American Jewish Committee, Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. Civil rights organizations readily joined the cause because of the blatant denial of equal justice. The labor organizations viewed the issue as one seriously impacting workers' rights.

Additional national grassroots efforts included outreach to all Asian ethnic presses, Asian labor organizations, the Filipino community, Asian organizational newsletter articles, letter campaigns during Asian Pacific American Heritage Festivals or conferences, legislative alerts, and other contacts. The support was overwhelming as people of all backgrounds became enraged by the blatant injustice of the *Wards Cove* exemption.

The Effort in the Senate

The Asian American community had

only two days to prepare its strategies and materials, distribute information and letters urging opposition to S.R. 214, hold a news conference with Senator Adams, meet with key Senate staff before the vote on the amendment, identify members to speak on the floor, and mobilize grassroots throughout the country to notify members to oppose S.R. 214. Meetings were set up with the offices of Asian American members, Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI). Meetings were also held with Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), original co-sponsor of the Civil Rights Act and key Democratic negotiator, and Senator Jack Danforth (R-MO), key Republican negotiator.

On the day of the Senate vote, November 5, 1991, Senator Adams, Congressman McDermott, Congresswoman Patsy Mink (D-HI), lead plaintiff Frank Atonio (a Samoan American), representatives of JACL, NAPABA, and OCA expressed heightened concern about the pending vote on S.R. 214 at a press conference.

Prior to the S.R. 214 vote, Senators Adams, Akaka, and Paul Simon (D-IL) spoke strongly on the Senate floor against passage of S.R. 214. Because the Murkowski amendment was part of the "deal" made on the Civil Rights Act, many senators were unwilling to vote against S.R. 214. Their decision was based on the possibility that if S.R. 214 was defeated, the compromised Civil Rights Act would unravel. Members were unwilling to lose a civil rights bill that had taken more than two years to negotiate over a "technical" amendment. The amendment passed 73 to 22.

From the start, the community was fighting an uphill battle to defeat S.R. 214. It was a battle that had to be waged.

The Effort in the House

The Senate version of the Civil Rights bill that included the Wards Cove exemption was sent to the House for a revote. The House was the target of intense lobbying for two days prior to a vote by the House Rules Committee. The issue was whether an amendment by Congressman McDermott to remove the Wards Cove exemption would be permitted when the bill came up for a vote. The community targeted members of the Rules Committee; Chairman Jack Brooks (D-TX) of the Judiciary Committee; Chairman Don Edwards (D-CA) of the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, who had jurisdiction over the Civil Rights bill; and House leadership, Speaker of the House Thomas Foley (D-WA) and Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO).

Congresswoman Mink, Congressmen Robert Matsui (D-CA), Norman Mineta (D-CA), Neil Abercrombie (D-HI), Don Edwards (D-CA), Craig Washington (D-TX), and Alan Wheat (D-MO) testified vigorously before the House Rules Committee to request that Congressman McDermott's amendment be considered.

The Rules Committee was concerned that if they allowed one amendment to the Civil Rights bill then they would have to consider a flood of amendments to remedy all the imperfections of the bill. During last minute Committee deliberations, the Administration stated that it would veto the entire Civil Rights bill if the Wards

Cove exemption was removed. Not wanting to be held responsible for the potential presidential veto, the Committee voted for a closed rule which allowed no amendments.

Despite an all-out effort by the community to inform as many members as possible about the Wards Cove exemption through a news conference held by Congressmen McDermott, grassroots constituency calls into members' offices, and lobbying visits, the community effort was unable to remove the provision. During the debate, members spoke emotionally and forcefully on the House floor to encourage their colleagues to vote against the Civil Rights bill. Prior to the vote Speaker Foley in an uncustomary statement pledged that he would work to bring a vote as quickly as possible to redress the Wards Cove exemption. The Civil Rights bill of 1991 passed 381 to 38.

Remedial Legislation

In November 1991, Senator Adams and Congressman McDermott immediately introduced the "Justice for Wards Cove Workers Act," S. 1962/H.R. 3748 respectively, that would have deleted the section in the Civil Rights bill exempting the *Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio* case. Once again, the Asian American community sought to generate the support of members of Congress to repeal this Wards Cove provision.

Passage of the "Justice for Wards Cove Workers Act" would have allowed the 2,000 Asian American and Native Alaskan cannery workers the basic and funda-

mental right to have their case decided under the Griggs standard, which was essentially restored by the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Passage of S. 1962/H.R. 3748 would not have ensured that the plaintiffs would win the case, but would have allowed them to fully pursue their legal case.

Advocates for the "Justice for Wards Cove Workers Act" stressed that:

- The bill was separate from the Civil Rights Act and the deal that was made was antithetical to the whole purpose of the Civil Rights Act.
- A vote against the bills would send a very clear message to the Asian American community that a separate standard of justice applied to them.
- Passage of the bills expressed simple justice and equality.
- The bills would have no impact on the retroactivity debate which would be decided through the judicial rather than the legislative process.

Legislative Status

H.R. 3748 was referred to the Judiciary and Education and Labor Committees. On November 11, 1991, the bill was approved by the Civil and Constitutional Rights Subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee. Unfortunately, the bill did not advance because Chairman Jack Brooks of the Judiciary Committee wanted the Senate to vote on the bill first, ostensibly because it was the Senate's compromise.

On March 11, 1992, the Senate Labor

and Human Resources Committee approved the bill but was unable to move the bill to the Senate floor for a vote. The Senate was waiting for the House to vote on the bill first.

Strategically, an overwhelming House vote in favor of the bill would have added momentum and would have pressured the Senate to pass the bill. The bill needed to gain enough support in the Senate to prevent an anticipated procedural delay in the vote by the two Alaskan senators. Enough votes were also needed to overturn a potential presidential veto. Congressional targets were the members, especially the Republicans, who had voted for the Civil Rights Act of 1990 (CRA of 1990).

Political Climate

The political climate of 1992 was not conducive to passing any civil rights legislation for several reasons:

1. The House banking scandal distracted, demoralized, and preoccupied the members of Congress.
2. Representative McDermott, as lead sponsor of the "Justice for Wards Cove Workers Act," was a member of the House Ethics Committee investigating the House banking scandal.
3. The House Post Office and banking scandals threatened Speaker Foley's leadership and distracted him away from legislation.
4. The threat of a presidential veto was ever present. Successful passage for the legislation would have had to override a veto.

Action

When Congress convenes for the 103rd Congress in January 1993, the community will be faced with the immediate challenge of attempting to pass the "Justice for Wards Cove Workers Act." In the House, Representative McDermott has promised to reintroduce the legislation. In the Senate, a new sponsor will need to be obtained.

The "Justice for Wards Cove Workers" Act campaign clearly indicated that the Asian American community's potential for effectiveness and action were severely hampered by financial and human resource constraints. The community must realize that if it is to have an effective and empowering voice it must be willing to pay for those services.

It is anticipated that there will be political support for the legislation because President Bill Clinton has stated emphatically that he supports the repeal of the Wards Cove exemption (Pacific Citizen, October 23, 1992; Organization of Chinese Americans' Presidential Questionnaire printed in Asian Week, October 23, 1992). In such a case, a simple majority vote for the legislation will suffice to ensure passage as opposed to a two-thirds vote required to override a presidential veto. Yet, because there are over 100 new members of Congress the potential for pas-

sage of any legislation is unclear. Among the new members, either the bill may gain supporters more readily because they were not part of the original deal or the community will have to work much harder to educate the freshmen members about a new issue. Unfortunately with the change in Congressional composition, the bill has also lost many supporters.

Strategy for an early victory will be to get Speaker Foley to fulfill his commitment to getting the bill to the House floor for a vote. In the Senate, enough support will need to be garnered to dispel and weaken any attempts from the two Alaska senators to defeat the legislation. Again, the issue behind the bill must focus on the attainment of equal justice and the combating of special interest rather than simply emphasizing discrimination against Asian Pacific Americans.

Adding to the complexity of passing a bill, a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling of the case is expected to be issued sometime during the year.

Summary and Conclusion

For the 2,000 plaintiffs involved in the *Wards Cove Packing Co.* case, the past year has been a roller coaster ride through the legislative process. To be purposely excluded from a major piece of civil rights legislation after nearly 18 years of litigation has not deterred the former workers who continue to exhibit extraordinary stamina and determination to pursue justice.

The Asian American community placed a thorn in the side of Congress by

not allowing them to forget the great injustice they allowed in passing the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Pursuing passage of the "Justice for Wards Cove Workers Act" has tested the Asian American community's political adeptness, power, and grassroots organization.

With a short amount of time to mobilize a legislative effort, the Asian American community was able to shine a light on discriminatory practices, even though its national resources are limited. With only four paid staff in Washington, D.C., volunteer community members, and a small army of volunteer law and college students, the "Justice for Wards Cove Workers Act" campaign pushed the legislation as far as possible. The mobilization efforts clearly indicated that the Asian American community's potential for effectiveness and action were severely hampered by the financial and human resource constraints. The community must realize that if it is able to have an effective and empowering voice it must be willing to pay for those services. Civil rights of Asian Americans must be protected to ensure that they are not sacrificed and trod upon by others.

Appendix

Since it was filed in 1974, there have been ten hearings on the Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio case and nine decisions. Yet the case has never been fully decided on the district court level under what is called the "Griggs standard." In the landmark case of *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.*, 401 U.S. 424 (1971) the Supreme Court stated that Title VII prohibited "not only overt discrimination but also practices that are fair in form but discriminatory in practice." Under this standard, a racially neutral hiring practice could be illegal without subjective discriminatory intent. Proven with the aid of statistics, the "disparate impact" theory put the legal burden on the employer to show that the seemingly illegal business practice was necessary to run the business.

The only time that the Griggs standard was applied to Wards Cove was by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals which ruled in favor of the plaintiffs. A three judge panel was asked by the full Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to apply the Griggs standard to the Wards Cove hiring process, which was based on a subjective evaluation of job applicants, rather than objective criteria. In discussing the statistics produced by the plaintiffs, Judge Thomas Tang emphasized the validity of a Griggs analysis, stating that:

The comparative statistics offered by the cannery workers are sufficient to support an inference of discrimination in hiring practices both as to unskilled and skilled jobs.

While the district court discounted the comparative statistics in evaluating the claim of intentional discrimination in skilled jobs, we find them sufficiently probative of adverse impact. The statistics show only racial stratification by job category. This is sufficient to raise an inference that some practice or combination of practices has caused the distribution of employees by race and to place the burden on the employer to justify the business necessity of the practices identified by the plaintiffs.

In asking the lower court to reconsider its decision regarding hiring, the Court of Appeals also felt that the District Court had not paid enough attention to the racial atmosphere which could clearly have impacted hiring decisions:

Race labeling is pervasive at the salmon canneries, where Filipinos work with the "Iron Chink" before retiring to their "Flip bunkhouse." The District Court did not find the conduct laudatory but found that it was not "persuasive evidence of discriminatory intent." Perhaps not, but the court must carry the analysis further and consider whether such a practice has any adverse impact upon minority people, i.e., whether it operates as a head-wind to minority advancement.

The District Court went on to add:

In assessing how racial labeling and segregated housing and messing facilities may cause an adverse impact we suggest that the court consider the message that such practice conveys to the general population. As the Supreme Court has warned: 'The ["whites only"] message can be communicated to potential applicants more subtly but just as clearly by an employer's actual practices—by his consistent discriminatory treatment of actual applicants, by the manner in which he publicizes vacancies, his recruitment techniques, his responses to casual or tentative inquiries, and even by the racial or ethnic composition of that part of his work force from which he discriminatorily excluded members of minority groups.' [citation deleted]

The Wards Cove defendants immediately appealed to the United States Supreme Court, rather than risk having the case decided on its merits under the Griggs standard. In 1989, the Supreme Court heard the case and, while sending it back to the lower courts for further proceedings, issued a very important decision, *Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio*, 490 U.S. 642 (1989).

The Supreme Court took a very different view of the statistics produced by the Wards Cove plaintiffs and the Court of Appeals' interpretation of the law. It opined that the Court of Appeals' theory would "mean that any employer who had a segment of his work force that was, for

some reason, racially unbalanced, could be hauled into court" and would lead to "racial quotas" (Id. at 152). The Court rejected the statistics produced as sufficient evidence to shift the legal burden of showing a business necessity to Wards Cove. Rather, the Court increased the legal burden on the employee-plaintiffs, stating that

If on remand, [plaintiffs] show that nonwhites are underrepresented in the at-issue jobs in a manner that is acceptable under the standards [discussed above], this alone will not suffice to make out a prima facie case of disparate impact. [Plaintiffs] will also have to demonstrate that the disparity they complain of is the result of one or more of the employment practices that they are attacking here, specifically showing that each challenged practice has a significantly disparate impact on employment opportunities for whites and nonwhites. To hold otherwise would result in employers being potentially liable for the "myriad of innocent causes that may lead to statistical imbalance in the composition of their work forces." [citation deleted]

Writing for the four dissenting Supreme Court justices, Justice John Paul Stevens felt that the plaintiffs had made a compelling initial case of discrimination pointing out that "some characteristics of the Alaska salmon canning industry described in this litigation—in particular, the segregation

of housing and dining facilities and the stratification of jobs along racial and ethnic lines—bear an unsettling resemblance to aspects of a plantation economy.”

On behalf of three of the dissenters, Justice Harry Blackmun added: “The salmon industry described in this record takes us back to the kind of overt and institutionalized discrimination we have not dealt with in years; a total residential and work environment organized on principles of racial stratification and segregation ... This industry has long been characterized by a taste for discrimination of the old-fashioned sort: a preference for hiring nonwhites to fill its lowest-level positions, on the condition that they stay there.”

The remanded case was heard in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on September 17, 1992. Wards Cove stated that the appeal was “superficial” and attempted to show that the plaintiffs had had their day in court. The U.S. Department of Justice intervened on behalf of Wards Cove that the exemption of the *Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio* case was constitutional although admitting that the exclusion is unusual. Six national Asian Pacific American organizations filed an amicus brief challenging the constitutionality of the exemption.

Dispelling the Myth of a Healthy Minority

Asian American Health Forum

Introduction

The myth of Asians and Pacific Islanders as a healthy minority became a landmark fact in 1986, when the Department of Health and Human Services published the *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health*. The report's general conclusion, based on national data, was that "the Asian/Pacific Island minority...is healthier than all racial/ethnic groups in the United States, including whites." This conclusion has contributed to the popularization of the healthy minority myth in research, practitioner, and policy circles.

In 1990, the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, a branch of the Department of Health and Human Services, issued its report *Healthy People 2000*. In this document, over 600 health objectives are listed; of these 600 goals, however, only eight explicitly target Asian and Pacific Islander Americans (A/PIs). Similarly, the Minority Health Improvement Act of 1990 seeks to focus on and expand the development of minority and allied health professionals by the year 2000; like the *Healthy People 2000* report, however, these objectives target African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Alaskan

natives. Asians and Pacific Islanders have not been included as a targeted group in these high-priority initiatives for improving the status of minorities. Despite being the third largest minority group in the United States, the A/PI population is virtually absent in the government's formulation of national health priorities.

The myth is perpetuated by three factors: 1) the absence of quality health care data on the A/PI population, 2) the presence of linguistic, cultural, and financial barriers to health care access, and 3) the myth that A/PIs are adequately represented in the health care professions. This article will address each of these issues in turn, first describing their current status and then recommending policy actions to end the health policy invisibility of A/PIs.

Asian & Pacific Islander Health Data

The American Public Health Association considers race and ethnicity important analytic variables in explaining the disparities in death, disease, and disability. There is increasing evidence that consideration of a patient's ethnic background can improve care and can be a factor in the efficient targeting of scarce resources. Despite the mounting evidence of the importance of

racial or ethnic background, racial differences between African Americans and whites, and ethnicity differences among Hispanics—Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans—are the most salient. It is not yet common practice for the medical and statistical community to differentiate among the various A/PI ethnic groups.

Health problems of A/PIs are ignored because no credible population-based data document their problems; what little data that do exist for this group leave out many A/PI subgroups. Most government statistical agencies neglect to report health and demographic data on A/PIs by different ethnicities—such as Korean, Asian Indian, and Samoan. In certain states like New York, Illinois, and Texas, some agencies fail even to classify A/PI as a separate racial entity. As a result, A/PI health providers are unable to effectively monitor and evaluate the health status, disease patterns, and risk factors that affect A/PIs.

Furthermore, since most national population-based health surveys aggregate distinct A/PI subgroups, conclusions are likely to be distorted generalizations. In the aggregate, if survey respondents are overwhelmingly more assimilated American-born Asians, then their health profiles may significantly obscure the morbidity and behavioral risk-factor patterns of newly-arrived highland Hmongs, Thais, and Tongans.

Thus, two major conditions contribute to the paucity of A/PI health data: 1) the changing demographics of the population create a greater and more diverse demand for better health data, and 2) the rigidity of

the survey and research methodologies currently in use obscures the health status of A/PI subgroups.

Changing demographics.

The socio-economic profile of A/PIs spans a wide and sometimes bimodal range. Ignorance of this bipolarity, supported by aggregating socioeconomic indices or, worse yet, neglecting disadvantaged subgroups, perpetuates the myth of the healthy and model minority.

Over thirty nationalities and many more ethnicities constitute the A/PI community. These populations are unique in their wide and bipolar pattern of socioeconomic distribution. The per capita percentage of A/PIs below poverty level ranges from a national low of 6% among Japanese Americans to a national high of 66% among Laotians, as compared to 12.4% for the overall national population. While 7.5% of A/PI households had an annual income of at least \$50,000, 11.9% had an income of less than \$5,000 and 24.4% had incomes of less than \$10,000. It is worth noting that among families living in poverty, the mean income for poor A/PI households falls below that of every other racial-ethnic group (Lin-Fu, 1988).

Bipolar distribution of socioeconomic indices within the A/PI population is reflected in the health indices. Deaths attributed to conditions originating in the perinatal period range from less than 1% for Guamanian, Japanese, and Chinese to over 8% among Cambodians. Perinatal death may be averted by preventive care, which is often inaccessible or inadequate for those with few socioeconomic resources.

This diversity exacerbates the data collection problem since health status appears to vary according to ethnicity, immigration, and acculturation status. Since national surveys are usually conducted in English only, data collection efforts are further hampered by language barriers and cultural norms. Lack of interpreters and culturally sensitive questions may lead to incomplete or inaccurate responses to survey questionnaires.

The fact that over 70% of A/PIs cluster in California, Hawai'i, New York, Illinois, Texas, Washington, and New Jersey facilitates state and local data collection efforts, but presents a problem for taking national population-based surveys. Of the seven highly-populated A/PI states, the A/PI population share ranges from 35.2% to under 3.6%. Additionally, refugees from Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam tend to be

Asian Pacific Islanders are still lumped together as a monolithic entity, or worse, dumped in the "etc." and "other" categories in national surveys and in vital statistics.

resettled in the Midwest, which differs from the historical coastal Asian and Pacific Islander settlements. This relative dispersion of the population as compared to other minorities impedes efficient geographical sampling of the A/PI population. However, since California—where A/PIs comprise 12% of the state's population—alone has the largest cluster (over 35%) of A/PIs

in the US, it makes sense to concentrate data collection efforts there.

Paucity and aggregation of data

There are flaws in the national data available. A/PIs are still lumped together as a monolithic entity, or worse, dumped in the "etc." and "other" categories in national surveys and in vital statistics (births, deaths, and fetal deaths). National data, reported as mean and median figures, conceal the disparities in the incidence and prevalence of death, illness, and disability across A/PI subgroups.

Over 40% of the *Healthy People 2000* objectives were based on national population-based surveys. However, since national population-based surveys intend to sample minority populations in proportion to their numbers in the total population, there is insignificant representation of A/PI among the total respondents. For example, about 1500 A/PI are sampled out of 150,000 individuals in the yearly National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). For the Secretary's *Report on Black and Minority Health*, the analysis for A/PIs required the pooling of several years of NHIS data to construct adequately large, statistically valid sample sizes. This methodology operates on the far-fetched assumption that A/PI populations do not change much over time.

Quality assurance for A/PI national vital statistics data requires policy action not just at the federal level, but also at the state level. The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) administers 54 registries in the Federal Vital Statistics Program. NCHS often consolidates State Vital Statistics on

specific A/PI groups into broader national categories, aggregating detailed information collected at the state level, especially the data collected by Hawai'i and California. California collects data on 14 different A/PI ethnicities: Filipino, Chinese, Vietnam, Japanese, Korean, Asian Indian, Khmer, Thai, Laotian, Samoan, Hawai'ian, Tongan, Guamanian, and other Pacific Islanders. Hawai'i publishes yearly data on eight A/PI groups: Hawai'ian, part Hawai'ian, Samoan, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese. However, the three states (New York, Illinois, and Texas) after California and Hawai'i with the most A/PIs still collect vital statistics data by "white" and "non-white".

An A/PI statistical constituency has been mobilized to remedy the existing paucity of quality data. The Disadvantaged Minority Health Improvement Act of 1990 (PL 101-527), originated by Congressman Norman Mineta, contains a Data Collection component which recognizes the unique characteristics of different A/PI subgroups. This law mandates NCHS and State registries to collect health status and vital statistics data for the following groups which were check-off entries in the 1980 and 1990 censuses: Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Hawai'ian, Samoan, and Guamanian. Moreover, states with sizable populations of other A/PI groups are encouraged to collect vital statistics data for these groups. This law appropriates \$1 million for NCHS to administer a grants system with the following criteria:

The Secretary, acting through the

NCHS, may make grants to public and non-profit entities for:

A) the conduct of special surveys or studies on the health of ethnic and racial populations or subpopulations;

B) analysis of data on ethnic and racial populations and subpopulations;

C) research on improving methods for developing statistics on ethnic and racial populations and subpopulations.

Despite the positive political outlook for improving A/PI health data, the shortfalls in the current quality of A/PI surveillance have far-reaching implications.

Administrative policy recommendations:

1. Centers for Disease Control/National Center for Health Statistics should appropriately administer the grant program from H.R.5702 to benefit the A/PI population in an effort to improve the deficient national data sets on A/PIs.
2. The Secretary of HHS should appoint an Asian and/or Pacific Islander representative to pivotal advisory committees, such as the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics (NCVHS). A/PI interests have not been evidently represented among the current and past rosters.
3. The Office of Management and Budget should replace the aggregate Asian and Pacific Islander category to at least the nine Census categories of 1990: Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Viet-

namese, Asian Indian, Hawai'ian, Samoan, and Guamanian.

Legislative policy recommendations:

1. Congress should appropriate adequate funding for NCHS to design and conduct national health surveys which fully capture the smallest and most difficult to sample populations. Through PL 101-527, \$5 million was authorized but only \$1 million appropriated for FY 1991. The House Appropriations Committee should ensure that the appropriated levels fully match the authorized amounts: for FY92, \$7.5 million, for FY93, \$10 million.
2. Both the Senate and the House should request a report on the state of A/PI health and vital statistics data, for at least the nine check-off categories in the 1990 Census.

Ethnocultural Barriers to Care

Faced with western medicine and a health care system that is unfamiliar, Americans of Asian and Pacific Island heritage experience unique access barriers to primary care. In addition to linguistic and cultural differences, financial problems beset many subgroups, especially recent immigrants and refugees...

—from *Healthy People 2000*, p. 38

While recognizing the unique barriers to care experienced by A/PIs, *Healthy People 2000* fails to articulate objectives to improving access. Ethnocultural barriers to care persist for A/PIs. Among the

most significant are cultural and linguistic, structural and financial barriers. The myth that A/PIs do not face such obstacles has led to the institutionalization of these barriers. Nevertheless, barriers to access can be effectively confronted. Health services can be adapted to meet the bicultural and bilingual needs of many A/PI clients; the structure of service delivery can be modified to enhance access; and policy can be adopted to alleviate constraints imposed by funding and reimbursement mechanisms.

The goals of this section are to: 1) describe barriers to health care experienced by the A/PI population, 2) examine the underlying conditions and political context which erected these barriers, 3) recommend policy action for improving access to health care for the A/PI community.

Barriers: Culture and Language Gaps

Cultural and linguistic barriers are often cited as the main reason for service inaccessibility. A health provider's appreciation and understanding of A/PI values and practices remain critical factors to access. Imposing Western medical models without considering A/PI responses can lead to confusion and conflict, rather than cooperation and health promotion. For example, bruises on Vietnamese children have been mistaken for signs of child abuse. In fact, these markings are the result of "coining", a practice of dermabrasion with a coin and ointment to release the "bad wind" to which some illnesses are attributed.

Asian and Pacific Islander concepts of the world, the human body, illness and healing counter Western medical practices.

The Hmong hold animistic beliefs. They assign meaning and life to natural and organic objects. The significance of spiritual intervention becomes pivotal in successful treatment. In other cases, Chinese holistic beliefs define food, elements, and treatments as "hot" or "cold", and deem it necessary to balance the two categories to attain or regain health.

Health professionals must also recognize culturally-appropriate responses to illness. For example, high rates of suicide among Samoans have been suggested as either a continuation of a "culturally sanctioned response to inescapable stressful situations," or a conflict between traditional Samoan values (fa'asamoa) and newly introduced values (fa'apalagi).

Offering compatible language services must coincide with culturally appropriate services. There is a serious lack of interpretation services to meet the language needs of A/PIs in various health settings. Where such services are available, the coverage is often limited across different Asian and Pacific Island languages/dialects.

An interpreter/translator must often serve as a cultural agent, providing social reassurance as well as linguistic assistance. The optimal situation would have an A/PI bilingual/bicultural health professional working with an A/PI client.

For A/PI language speakers, the ability to communicate their medical history and

to comprehend Western medical parlance in their native language profoundly facilitates access to health care (cf. Lew, 1990). Fear of difficulties in communication, compounded by shame, guilt, anger, depression, and other affective responses to certain stigmatized illnesses like mental retardation, substance abuse, and HIV infection may deter the A/PI client from seeking care.

An interpreter/translator must often serve as a cultural agent, providing social reassurance as well as linguistic assistance. The optimal situation would have an A/PI bilingual/bicultural health professional working with an A/PI client. Even under major language groups, linguistic needs must be carefully assessed. A monolingual Ilocano patient would not be able to communicate her health needs to a bilingual English- and Tagalog-speaking physician.

However, the ability to communicate across cultures and languages does not help improve access as long as the A/PI client remains locked out of the health care system by structural barriers. That door must be opened first.

Structural barriers

Few centers, programs, or organizations direct health care services to A/PIs. There are only seven A/PI-focused, federally-funded community health care centers nationwide. Furthermore, for A/PI clients who need secured, emergency psychiatric services, only two sites in the US can provide therapy in an appropriate cultural and linguistic setting (Leung, 1990).

Few programs integrate health, mental health, and other social services that facili-

tate convenient access for A/PIs. Rather, services are dispersed physically and are provided without effective linkages.

Other factors play an important role in health access. A/PIs are more likely to use service organizations that are located near corresponding ethnic centers, local businesses, and public transportation. Such placement of services lessens "social" distance. In addition, the pattern of work hours, especially for A/PIs in service-intensive industries, often limits when visits can be made. Services available only during standard work hours hinder access.

Financial barriers

The lack of sufficient financial support for programs and services which target A/PI health consumers reflects the perceived low utilization—no need equation. Since funding must be justified by need, poor data development and surveillance have doomed A/PIs to continually proving that they have unmet health needs.

Funding is hampered by the myth of the healthy minority. According to a 1990 General Accounting Office report on the Office of Minority Health, the pattern of grantmaking by OMH has been skewed towards those organizations serving other minorities, while organizations serving Native Americans or A/PIs have received comparatively few grants.

Like other Americans, many low-income A/PIs face the plight of being locked out of health insurance. A/PI employees often find themselves in service industries or small businesses that rarely offer health insurance or sufficient coverage.

For undocumented A/PI immigrants,

legal uncertainty and complexity deter them from seeking access to care. Undocumented immigrants who qualify for perinatal and emergency services under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1986 may forego needed care so as not to jeopardize their chance of becoming legalized in the future. Exacerbating this fear is the threat that some Medicaid eligibility will result in their being reported to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Inconsistent and com-

The complex of cultural and linguistic, structural, and financial barriers profoundly endangers the health of A/PI individuals. As a result, less intensive and relatively less costly preventive or primary health care is foregone...A/PIs have a disproportionately high usage rate for emergency rooms ...with few choices, A/PI patients must opt for crisis intervention.

plex policies regarding eligibility and benefits from fragmented, piecemeal policymaking may thus deter undocumented immigrants from using their entitlement to access medical care.

The complex of cultural and linguistic, structural, and financial barriers profoundly endangers the health of A/PI individuals. As a result, less intensive and relatively less costly preventive or primary health care is foregone. The results of not receiving necessary health services manifest them-

selves in several forms. For example, A/PIs have a disproportionately high usage rate for emergency rooms (Yu, 1982). With few choices, A/PI patients must opt for crisis intervention. In another example, the case survival rates for A/PI women diagnosed with breast cancer is significantly lower than for other women because early screening and intervention are not accessible.

How barriers were imposed and maintained

Institutionalization of access barriers must be considered in the political context of 1) U.S. immigration laws, and 2) changes in public and private health care sectors.

Most of the A/PI population growth over the past 30 years can be attributed to the lifting of anti-Asian immigration laws in the 1960s which generated a steady stream of immigrants from the Philippines, Korea, India, Hong Kong, and Taiwan to fill domestic labor shortfalls. Immigration was augmented by the sporadic flow of hundreds of thousands of immigrants and refugees escaping the communist regimes of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

With a cumulative resettlement of more than one million refugees from Indochina through the 1970s and the 1980s, the bimodal characteristic of the A/PI grouping is even more pronounced. Even among the Indochinese refugees, bimodality exists: those arriving after 1979 have higher unemployment and poverty rates, and are more likely to be underemployed than other A/PI groups and other minorities (Lin-Fu, 1988).

Among Pacific Islanders, only Tongans are restricted by immigration controls. Although the size of the Pacific Islander populations are relatively small (200,000 in 1980), there are indicators which point to the unique health needs of Pacific Islanders.

Passage of the Immigration Act of 1990 will allow more Asian and Pacific Islander Americans to reunite family members. New immigrants will reinforce the cultural-linguistic diversity and socioeconomic bimodality among A/PI populations within the US.

While immigration from Asia was growing, the 1980s witnessed a shift in public and private attention from equitable access to cost containment in health care. Federal support for community health centers has been diminishing. Block grants have replaced categorical grants, adding to access inequities among areas and populations. The New Federalism relegates responsibility from federal to state and local governments, and from public to private sectors. Budget deficits have constrained state and local responses, enlarging gaps in health care access.

Furthermore, escalating costs of medical care and increasing competitiveness in the health care market have made cost-shifting and cross-subsidizing indigent care less viable. Corporatization of medicine, especially in the for-profit sector, has introduced market ethics and corporate management strategies that often supercede equity concerns. As a result, though the medically indigent population has been increasing, especially among minority communities, there are fewer

financial resources or incentives available to provide for their health needs.

Recommendations to expand access

Ethnocultural barriers to access are perpetuated by the myth that Asians and Pacific Islanders are a healthy minority. This, in turn, is derived from a larger myth. The model minority myth relegates Asians and Pacific Islanders as an invisible minority whose health care and other needs remain largely unmet. These myths continue to misinform policymaking. Policy needs to catch up with the reality of a diversifying society in the US, with Asians and Pacific Islanders leading the way. No longer can policymaking of the past, largely by neglect and exclusion continue to deprive A/Pis from full participation in society and full access to its rights and entitlements.

1. Ensure availability of bicultural/bilingual interpretation services.
 - a) Congress should fully fund \$3 million of federal grants authorized for bilingual services under the Office of Minority Health in the next fiscal year. This has been prescribed by the Disadvantaged Minority Health Care Improvement Act of 1990.
 - b) Office of Civil Rights should expand enforcement of Title VI, the Civil Rights Act of 1965, which requires the provision of bicultural/bilingual services. Compliance needs to be monitored.
 - c) Congress should expand Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement to include bicultural/bilingual interpretation services.

2. The Association of American Medical Colleges and other associations of allied health professionals should require integration of bicultural/bilingual education in their curricula.

- a) The Bureau of Health Professions, PHS, should promote the recruitment of under-represented and foreign-trained health care providers to ensure bilingual/bicultural access.

- b) The Secretary of Health and Human Services should direct appropriate agencies to establish objectives specific to improving access for Asians and Pacific Islander Americans.

- c) The Secretary of Health and Human Services should further direct appropriate agencies to plan and implement these objectives.

Development of A/PI Health Professionals: The Myth of "Over-representation"

In the past decade, a prevailing perception of A/Pis as a "model minority" has emerged suggesting that A/Pis are healthier and more successful than all other minority groups and, in some instances, the white population. The myth of a healthy minority has engendered two related myths: The myth that A/Pis are over-represented in the health professions and the myth that all A/PI groups can be served by a generic A/PI health professional.

The use of aggregate data and a limited methodology perpetuate the first myth. Representation data have increasingly become a way to allocate scarce resources and, therefore, this classification poses tremendous implications for the availability

of adequate federal funds for the future training and development of A/PI health professionals. In the past few years, several agencies of the PHS have published statements shifting the focus of health professionals training and development programs from all minority groups to only those shown to be "under-represented" in the health professions.

The misconception that A/PIs are "over-represented" in the health professions leads too easily to the conclusion that A/PIs are "doing okay" and no longer need the assistance of government or medical schools to recruit, train and retain A/PIs in health-related professional schools. This perception directly contradicts a growing collection of reports which illustrate persistent

ply of foreign-trained physicians, which particularly affects Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian and South Asian communities (Kletke, et. al., 1987). The myth that A/PIs are currently over-represented in the health professions has resulted in a notable exclusion of A/PIs from government policies designed to encourage minorities to enter the field of health.

The second myth supposes that all A/PI patients are alike. It overlooks the heterogeneity of the health needs of A/PI client populations and the maldistribution of bi-cultural/bilingual humanpower, fields of specialization, and orientation of services across regions of the country. Furthermore, the current health care system lacks appropriate translation services and cultural sensitivity with respect to A/PIs. Hence, it is critical to develop a broad base of A/PI health professionals capable of speaking to and understanding A/PI populations in need. Failure to support the development of A/PI health professionals discounts the degree to which language and culture impact access. Reduced access lowers utilization of basic health care services, resulting in unnecessary death and disease in our communities.

The goals of this section are: 1) to illustrate the pervasiveness of these myths, how they began and how they have been perpetuated; 2) to address existing problems with the data and methodology used to create this classification; and, 3) to recommend federal legislative and administrative policy action to rectify the current situation which threatens our ability to recruit, train, and retain A/PI health professionals serving A/PI communities, thereby

...it is critical to develop a broad base of A/PI health professionals capable of speaking to and understanding A/PI populations in need. Failure to support the development of A/PI health professionals discounts the degree that language and culture impact access. Reduced access lowers utilization of basic health care services, resulting in unnecessary death and disease in our communities.

problems such as cultural and linguistic gaps between service providers and patients, and thus hinders the provision of health services to A/PIs, and specifically to Southeast Asian immigrants and refugees. Compounding this is the diminishing sup-

increasing the chances of unnecessary illness and death in our communities.

Conditions resulting in the myth

This subsection discusses some objective conditions such as the model minority myth, historical trends of representation data, inter-ethnic differences, and differences between mainland and Trust Territory populations.

An "under-represented" minority is commonly understood as a statistical definition indicating that a specific race or ethnicity is disproportionately under-represented in politics, employment, or enrollment in educational institutions, based on that group's representation in the total population.

The use of under-representation in the field of health began in the 1960s when the civil rights movement paved the way for minorities seeking careers in medicine. At the same time, 1965 immigration laws abolished national quotas, resulting in an increase in Asian immigration. Correspondingly, reports forecasting a shortage of physicians encouraged the migration of hundreds of health professionals from Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines. The medical field was flooded with Asian health professionals, many of whom filled positions that American educated professionals did not want (Nishi, et al).

In 1969, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) established an Office of Minority Affairs to assist medical schools in their efforts to recruit, to admit, to retain, and to graduate persons from underrepresented minority groups in medicine. In their attempts to monitor the status

of minority physicians the AAMC adapted a "population parity" model, where the group is considered under-represented if the percentage of a specific ethnic/racial group in the physician population is less than the group's percentage in the total population.

According to the AAMC's data, Asian Americans reached parity in the early 1970s and have been over-represented ever since. From that time forward, their reports do not include detailed data on Asian Americans; Asian Americans, along with "other Hispanic," are included with whites in the "other" category.

The Public Health Service developed a similar model for tracking minority health professionals. Within the PHS, "under-representation" is defined as the existence of racial or ethnic minorities in a field or occupation in numbers disproportionate to their proportion in the total population; it is used as a parity index to "describe the degree to which equality of entry of access to a health professions education exists for various segments of the population." Accordingly, mandates such as the following have appeared in PHS mission statements:

Each program...has a mandate to adopt funding priorities and preferences for grant applications which demonstrate significant efforts to increase under-represented minorities in specific health professions.

Like the AAMC, the PHS classified Asian Americans as over-represented in the health professions by the early 1970s.

The influence of the population parity model can be illustrated by the distribution of funds by the PHS's largest health professions development program, the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP); last year, only three were awarded to institutions claiming A/PIs as their primary focus. Of the 13,000 participants in HCOP per year, 76% are black, 16% are Hispanic, 3% are Native American, 2% are white, and 3% are Asian American.

Problems with the data and methodology of under-representation

When the population parity model used by the AAMC and the PHS is applied to the entire A/PI population across several fields including health, science, and engineering, Asian Americans are considered over-represented in health professions. We believe that this conclusion paints an inaccurate and inappropriate conclusion regarding the status of A/PI health professionals.

Of the data cited to justify the myth of over-representation, the following are the most common: "Since the 1960s, A/PIs have shown considerable success in entering medical school; between 1975-1985, first year enrollment of A/PIs in medical schools rose threefold from 1.8% of the total, to 6.9%" (DHHS, 1987). According to AAMC data, "Asian Americans comprise 10% of the physician population but only 2% of the US population" (AAMC, 1989).

However, the aggregation of physician data into one broad category masks the bimodality that exists in A/PI populations; the lumping of A/PIs into one group is inappropriate given the highly heteroge-

neous character of the A/PI population. This classification includes a diverse group of people with different social, cultural, and historical backgrounds. If data were collected for each distinct group, several groups would be shown to be under-represented.

Ironically, although PHS classified A/PIs as "over-represented" as early as 1977, a former director of PHS's Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) noted in 1979 that the Federal government still continued to include A/PIs in its "health manpower thrust" as a disadvantaged group (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1980). He attributed the incongruity to the following qualifications:

...from the narrow perspective of the health manpower opportunities for Asian Americans, we are making some gains. However, these **gains are clustered around the second-and third-generation Asian Americans and specifically Japanese and Chinese Americans** (*Civil Rights Issues of A/PIs*, 1979, emphasis added).

Similar qualifications appeared elsewhere in the literature, but have disappeared in recent years. The above qualifications are important because they acknowledge the fact that certain subgroups of A/PIs are not over-represented in the health professions. However, these qualifications are not included in the recent announcements made by PHS.

Similar to the oversights created by aggregation of data by race, little attention

is given to the distribution of A/PI physicians by specialty or geographical location. Thus, it is possible that certain regions may be over-represented, while other areas are significantly under-represented. If the data are divided by region, Asian physicians are under-represented in the West—where there is a concentration of the A/PI population. In the same manner, some regions may be under-represented in the number of general practitioners. Furthermore, the data fail to confirm or dispel the widespread belief that A/PI physicians will naturally serve patients from the same or similar ethnic backgrounds.

An additional confound in the representation data is that it fails to distinguish between foreign- and native-born or foreign-educated physicians. As a result, knowledge of trends in the distribution and supply of foreign-trained physicians, who can serve A/PI clients, are not included in the calculation of representation. Distribution data suggest that the majority of the foreign medical graduates currently practicing in the US do not specialize in primary care; of 6612 Asian-educated physicians practicing in the US in 1989, only 430 were office-based primary care physicians; the remaining were institutional-based specialists (1989 database from the American Medical Association). The growth in the supply of foreign trained physicians who can serve A/PI clients has been diminishing, and by the year 2000, negative growth in the number of Asian physicians practicing in the US is expected (Kletke, et al, 1987). Further complicating the task of foreign trained physicians currently here in the US is the increasing discrimination in

residency placement and, more often, in licensure. These trends compound the precarious health access opportunities available to A/PIs, particularly Southeast Asians and Pacific Islanders.

The omission of important variables such as race/ethnic group, physician specialty, geographical location, linguistic capability and cultural compatibility illustrate the significant limitations of representation data in accurately determining whether or not there is an adequate number of A/PI health professionals available to the community. The mere existence of A/PI health professionals does not in itself assure adequate service provision; “over-representation” as used in the PHS is not sufficiently tied to the delivery of health care services to A/PI communities and therefore must be narrowly interpreted. While the methodology suggests that a generic A/PI physician can serve a diverse group, in reality, a third generation Japanese neural surgeon in New York cannot be expected to communicate with or provide appropriate care to a newly arrived Hmong seeking prenatal care in California.

The omission of important variables such as race/ethnic group, physician specialty, geographical location, linguistic capability and cultural compatibility illustrate the significant limitations of representation data...The mere existence of A/PI health professionals does not in itself assure adequate service provision to A/PIs.

Political context

The under-representation criterion has become a proxy for health care needs, including professional training and development, without taking into account important variables which may indicate levels of unmet need. With greater budget cuts and an estimated oversupply of physicians for the future, new policies have emerged which limit available funds for minority medical opportunities; A/PIs are unfairly bearing the brunt of these budget cuts.

This is possible because despite its wide usage and acceptance, "under-representation" does not have a legal definition and has never been clearly or objectively defined. As a result, the application of under-representation is not controlled or limited by federal policy. The data used may come from a variety of sources including professional organizations such as the AAMC and the Census Bureau. Data is not standardized with respect to ethnic group or the definition of what constitutes "health professions"; for example, contrary to AAMC and PHS definitions, the National Science Foundation (NSF) does not define Filipinos as "over-represented." Also, unlike the AAMC, the NIH includes science and engineering PhDs—who do not provide direct services to the A/PI community—in their definition of A/PIs as over-represented in the health professions.

The broad application of representation was clearly exercised in the recent silent restriction of Asian American admissions in our universities. The critics argue that "under-representation" was unfairly used to set "glass ceilings" for Asian American admissions by lumping Asian Ameri-

cans into one group, omitting regional differences in population, and using total population as a base instead of the population of educated persons or other categories (Wang, 1988). The issues we address with regard to recent changes in PHS policy are similar to those identified in higher education.

Clearly, there are flaws in the use of representation data as applied to health. The data and methodology are insufficient to determine whether or not there are an adequate number of health professionals. If left unchallenged, the availability of culturally competent health professionals to serve the growing A/PI underserved population will be seriously threatened.

Administrative recommendations:

1. The PHS should establish an objective definition of representation, standardized by racial/ethnic group and occupational categories. The PHS should assure that all agencies using representation data for the purpose of monitoring the status of minority health professionals use similar methodologies and similar data.
2. PHS agencies should disaggregate representation data for A/PI health professionals by at least the nine census categories: Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Asian Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Guamanian, Hawai'ian, and Samoan. Aggregate data mask the bimodality which exists within the A/PI classification. Consequently, physician data should be tracked by specialty, population served, geographical location, and language and cultural capability in order to gain a more comprehensive un-

derstanding of the status of health professionals in the US. Such disaggregation would allow more accurate estimation of the extent to which appropriate linguistic and cultural health care is available to all minority populations, including A/PIs.

3. All PHS agencies, especially ADAMHA, NIH, and HRSA, should assure that A/PIs are eligible for and knowledgeable about available health professions training programs.
4. PHS agencies, including HRSA and ADAMHA, should provide fiscal and research opportunity incentives for health professionals to practice in communities where they share similar ethnic/racial backgrounds. Examples of such incentives should include: partnerships between the government and academics to encourage health professionals to practice in communities, in exchange for research opportunities; or, for foreign-trained physicians, an obligation to work in a community health center in exchange for support in obtaining licensure could be implemented.

Legislative recommendations:

1. Congress should request a report on the status of A/PI health professionals, disaggregated by at least the nine census groups and by specific occupation, for example, mental health professional, primary care provider, health educator, and dentist.
2. Congress should appropriate sufficient funds for programs to improve the quality and availability of health man-

power in the Pacific Island Trust Territories.

3. A/PI Centers of Excellence should be authorized as a part of the Minority Health Improvement Act of 1990. The Act established Centers for Excellence—health professional schools which agreed to establish, strengthen, or expand programs to enhance the participation of African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans in the health professions. The Act should be amended to include the establishment of A/PI Centers for Excellence.

Conclusions

The model minority myth relegates A/PIs as an invisible minority whose health care and other needs remain largely unmet. This mega-myth, in turn, has perpetuated the myth that A/PIs are a healthy minority and that there are “too many” A/PI health professionals in the US.

These myths continue to misinform policymaking. Policy needs to catch up with the reality of a diversifying society in the US, with Asians and Pacific Islanders leading the way. America’s multi-cultural society presents increasing needs and challenges as well as opportunities. No longer can policymaking of the past, largely by neglect and exclusion, continue to deprive Asians and Pacific Islander Americans from full participation in society and full access to its rights and entitlements.

Policymaking by exclusion must give way to policymaking by inclusion, if the goals for *Healthy People 2000* are to be realized.

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Social Service Needs of Chinese Immigrant High School Students in New York City

Shao Chee Sim

"Like so many before them, [Asian immigrants] hoped for a better life and future for their children and a piece of the American dream."

—excerpt from "Outlook: The Growing Asian Presence in the Tri-State Region"

Introduction

During the past decade, New York City absorbed a tremendous influx of Asian immigrants, resulting in the explosive growth of the city's Asian population. Like other immigrants, Asians have had to overcome language and cultural barriers in their new environment. Their needs and problems, however, are often overlooked by policy makers and social service providers, and efforts to assist this needy group are constantly being hampered by the stereotypical notion that all Asian Americans are beyond the need of government assistance. Harvard sociologist Nathan Glazer has questioned whether the Chinese, the largest group of Asian Americans, should qualify for affirmative action programs.¹

While Asian immigrants who came to the United States in the 1960s tended to be professionals, the 1970s and 1980s saw Asian immigrants from Southeast Asia,

China, South Korea, the Philippines and Hong Kong. Many of them lacked the skills to adjust to their new environment. Since most immigrants tended to cluster in ethnic enclaves for language and cultural security, mainstream policy makers and social service providers often underestimated the severity of the problems they experienced with adjustment. In addition, they failed to recognize that each Asian ethnic group, with its distinct characteristics, faces very different needs and problems in this country.

According to Cao O, Executive Director of the Asian American Federation of New York, one of the biggest problems in dealing with the Asian immigrant population and its social service needs is the lack of understanding because of inadequate documentation. Most reports and surveys conducted by mainstream institutions on minority populations have neglected Asian Americans perhaps because of their insignificant size before 1980 and because of misperceptions and stereotypes.

Thus, to diffuse stereotypes of Asian Americans, documenting the problems and needs of Asian immigrants is an important means of forcing policy makers and the larger society to recognize the dilemmas of this population. In addition, in order to

expand social service resources in the growing Asian community, there is an urgent need to conduct research in the human service field for Asian immigrants.

The Focus: Chinese Immigrant High School Students

This paper focuses specifically on Chinese immigrant high school students in New York City. It seeks to determine whether current social service agencies have effectively provided them with the necessary programs to alleviate the unique hardships they face.

Asian children are often perceived to be the best academic performers in school, the "whiz kids." This misperception by the public, however, has obscured the needy and problematic Asian immigrant students at the other end of the spectrum. In fact, Asian immigrant students are similar to other immigrant students and need the same amount of organizational support and resources to help them adjust to their new environment. Most immigrants of high school age who arrive in this country face the immense task of overcoming language and cultural barriers as they prepare themselves for the immediate challenge of college and adulthood. They generally have more pressing needs than their younger peers who still have time to overcome language and cultural barriers.

For many reasons, the high school students face greater difficulty than the younger ones in their adjustment. Their lessons were more advanced, they were more deeply

set in their ways, and they were not as flexible as their younger compatriots. The language was harder for them to learn and many had to work after school to contribute to the family purse as well as attending school.²

As an immigrant population, Chinese immigrant high school students have special characteristics. The Chinese have had a long history in the United States and have maintained ties to their culture for more than a century in this country. They also remain the largest group among Asians to immigrate to this country for political, economic and social reasons.

New York City's Chinese population is essentially composed of foreign-born immigrants. Every year since the 1960s, New York City has drawn from one-fifth to one-fourth of all Chinese immigrants to the United States. According to the 1980 Census, there were 96,980 foreign-born Chinese Americans, compared to only 28,920 native-born Chinese Americans in New York City. Of the 110,000 speakers of Chinese, a little more than 40% reported that they spoke English poorly or not at all.³ In Manhattan's Chinatown, an astounding 80.4% of the population were foreign-born, and 21.9% had lived there for fewer than five years. In addition, 54.8% did not speak English well or not at all, and 71.4% had not finished high school.⁴ More specifically, Chinese immigrant children also far outnumber native-born Chinese American children.⁵ According to the Division of Bilingual Education in New York City's Public Schools,

the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students who speak Chinese at home is 11,729, second only to the Spanish-speaking population.⁶ Because of its large foreign-born and non-English-speaking Chinese population, New York City is an ideal place to study the problems and needs confronting new Chinese immigrants.

More importantly, the social service agencies and programs set up to serve the needs of new immigrants in New York City's Chinese community are by far the most well-developed compared to those in other emerging Asian ethnic communities. Thus, assessing the social service needs for this particular population with the most developed social service programs will have important implications for other growing Asian ethnic groups in New York City.

The Analytical Framework

The primary question this paper seeks to answer is based on an economic principle: is the demand for social services for Chinese immigrant high school students in equilibrium with the supply? This study will determine whether current social service agencies have effectively provided the necessary programs for this group of needy immigrant students.

The research conducted here is intended to resolve four types of issues: the location and magnitude of the influx of new Chinese immigrant students; the nature of their daily needs; the existing set of programs that try to meet those needs; and possible ways to expand the range of services currently offered to them. This study is not meant to provide an effective and

detailed proposal to begin a youth program or to evaluate youth programs serving Chinese immigrant high school students. Rather, it is intended as a stepping stone to a comprehensive, long-term effort to document comprehensively the needs of the Asian immigrant population in New York City. Thus, this paper provides a basic, analytical framework for future research opportunities in the social service area and gives a more insightful perspective on the problems confronting Chinese immigrant students.

Methodology

Chinese immigrant students covered in this study include students from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, and those from Southeast Asia, including Malaysia and Thailand. The research was conducted in two high schools in Manhattan's Chinatown and one high school in an emerging Chinese community in Queens. One of the high schools in Chinatown has an established Chinese bilingual program and the largest Chinese immigrant student population of 1,200 in New York City. Another high school is an alternative school in a Lower East Side neighborhood that serves older disadvantaged Chinese students.⁷ The school in Queens has a mixed ethnic student population, where Asians number close to 1,000 students, or about one-third of the total student population.

Anonymous individual interviews were conducted with principals, bilingual teachers, guidance counselors and college counselors in these high schools. Through vari-

ous informal channels, interviews were also conducted with a wide spectrum of Chinese immigrant students outside of the school environment. These interviews were initiated on a voluntary basis and all were conducted in Chinese.

Some staff and directors of youth programs were interviewed. In addition, family services and mental counseling program staff were interviewed. A Fifth Precinct police officer, who is monitoring Chinese youth gangs, was also interviewed for the study.

The research also includes a literature review of books, magazines, published reports, papers, and a Chinese language newspaper. Two books, *The Adjustment Experience of Chinese Immigrant Children in New York City* (1987) by Betty Lee Sung and *The New Chinatown* (1987) by Peter Kwong, were very helpful in interpreting the nature and scope of the problems facing Chinese immigrant students in New York City.

Historical and Social Context

After President Johnson signed an immigration law in 1965 that ended exclusionary quotas, people from Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, India, and the Philippines poured into the United States in pursuit of better opportunities. As the United States normalized relations with the Republic of China in 1979, the United States expanded its quota for Chinese immigrants. Currently, the number of Asian immigrants from China and Hong Kong ranges from 30,000 to 35,000 each year, and this number does not reflect the sepa-

rate quota of 20,000 assigned to Taiwan in 1981.⁸ It is clear that many ethnic Chinese immigrants and refugees from other Asian countries gravitate toward the Chinese communities after they enter the country.

The first groups of Chinese immigrants in the 1960s were mainly middle-class professionals—doctors, engineers and academics. Later, in the 1970s and 1980s, poorly educated people from rural villages in China and from Cambodia and Vietnam came to escape war, poverty and terror in their countries. As a result, Asian immigrant populations increased dramatically: in 1960, there were 20,000 foreign-born Chinese in New York City; in 1970, there were 37,000, and in 1980, 85,000.⁹

According to Census figures, between 1980 and 1990, the Asian population in New York City has more than doubled in size, from 231,501 (3.3%) to 512,719 (7%). This rapid increase occurred throughout the city, but most prominently in the boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn, where the Asian population increased by more than 150%. On Manhattan's Lower East Side, Asian Americans now constitute one-third of the population. According to the 1990 Census, New York City is home to the country's largest Chinese community, with 238,919 people. Most Chinese concentrate in three boroughs: Manhattan (71,723), Queens (86,885), and Brooklyn (68,191).¹⁰

Besides Manhattan's Chinatown, several Chinese communities are located in the New York metropolitan area. One of these is in upper Manhattan, near Columbia University. Two others are in Brooklyn, near Prospect Park and in the Bay

Ridge area, and three more in Queens. Flushing, a satellite Chinatown, has become the second largest Chinese community in New York City. Elmhurst, a neighborhood of one-, two- and three-family homes, is yet another growing Chinese community, as is Rego Park, along the Long Island Expressway.

Interestingly, the Chinese immigrant population seems highly mobile, based on economic and social factors. Manhattan's Chinatown is the center of activity for most Chinese immigrants in New York City. The newly emerging Chinese-concentrated neighborhoods are all built near major transit or subway stops that are conveniently located in and around Manhattan's Chinatown. Also, privately run van services transport Chinese passengers from Flushing and Brooklyn to Chinatown; these services run every twenty minutes on a daily basis, and the trip, usually takes about one-half hour. This high mobility pattern of Chinese immigrants is an important factor in analyzing the need of social services.

Chinese Immigrant Students

As the Asian population in New York City increases, so does the enrollment of Asian students in New York City public schools. Since 1975, there has been a steady annual increase of approximately 3,000 to 5,000 Asian students in the New York City Public School System.¹¹ In the 1988-89 school year, there were 68,441 Asian/Pacific Islander students in New York City public schools. These students made up 7.3% of the total student popula-

tion, an increase from 38,197 (or 4% of the total student population) in the 1980-81 school year.¹² According to the official figures of the New York City Board of Education, Chinese Limited English Proficient (LEP) students have increased from 8,665 in 1986-87 to 11,729 in 1990-91 city-wide.

However, because of inadequate funding and support for bilingual and ESL programs in certain districts, high school officials often refer their students to Chinatown's high schools, where bilingual programs are available. With easy access to New York City, immigrant students often take the subway to and from school. Thus, it is not uncommon to find students from other boroughs, especially Brooklyn, studying in Chinatown's high schools.

In 1987, there were nine Chinese out of the forty Westinghouse finalists. Out of the nine, five either were born in, or were children of parents from, Taiwan; six had parents who were research scientists, physicians or college professors.

In popular magazines and television programs, Chinese students often are praised as "whiz kids," uniquely capable of academic achievement.¹³ In the last few years, nearly a quarter of the top winners of the Westinghouse Science Talent Search, one of the nation's most prestigious awards for American high school students, went to students of Chinese de-

scent. Asian students were dramatically over-represented at three of New York City's specialized high schools: 24.5% at Brooklyn Tech, 22.3% at Bronx Science, and 36.5% at Stuyvesant High School.¹⁴ It is not surprising that the high achievement of some Asian students stirs widespread media attention and news coverage.

The true picture, however, is more complex. Asian students in specialized high schools are largely American-born, with parents who are professionals. Most winners of the national scholastic awards, according to Peter Kwong, are the offspring of professionals from Taiwan or children of stranded Chinese scholars. In 1987, there were nine Chinese out of the forty Westinghouse finalists. Out of the nine, five either were born in, or were children of parents from, Taiwan; six had parents who were research scientists, physicians or college professors.¹⁵

To assume that all Chinese immigrant students do well in schools grossly misrepresents the facts. According to most high school teachers and counselors, there are basically three different types of Chinese immigrant students in high schools: the type that easily fits into the image of "model-minority;" the type that encounters a multitude of problems in their adjustment experience; and the type that fails to adjust at all. Among the three types, experiences vary widely, and as such, it is terribly incorrect to treat Chinese immigrant students as a "problem-free" population.

Even among Chinese immigrant students, there are differences between those that came from Hong Kong, Taiwan, rural

and urban China, and Southeast Asia. In general, students from Hong Kong and Taiwan are better prepared academically when they first arrive. Students from these areas were exposed to Western culture before coming to the United States, helping to ease their adjustment.

There are basically three different types of Chinese immigrant students in high schools: the type that easily fits into the image of "model-minority;" the type that encounters a multitude of problems in their adjustment experience; and the type that fails to adjust at all.

Immigrant students from China and Indo-China, in contrast, are ill-prepared for the educational challenge that awaits them. Since 1979, large numbers of immigrant students attending Chinatown's high schools have been coming from mainland China, often rural villages in Kwangtung province. Unlike the educational system in Hong Kong or Taiwan, the education system there is poor, and the students come here unprepared. Few know any English. Students from Indo-China are likewise unprepared, since most of them did not have any schooling during childhood.

Understanding Students' Needs and Problems

Language

Language has always been the biggest

problem for Chinese immigrant students. Jennet Chin, a senior at Barnard College, conducted surveys on Chinese high school students and found that language difficulty was consistently ranked as the most important reason why students performed poorly in school.¹⁶ Their inability to speak the language often forces them to be quiet and passive in the classroom, and renders them unable to tell others of their problems. In addition, most immigrant students find that the language barrier deters them from interacting with students from other ethnic backgrounds. More importantly, this factor has prevented Chinese immigrant students from catching up with their school work, from participating in school activities, and from seeking employment outside the Chinese community.

For many recent Chinese immigrants, going to an American high school can be a tremendous cultural shock. They often have difficulties adjusting to a system in which independence, autonomy, competition and competence are required to survive and succeed.

As most educators and students indicated, Chinese immigrant students studying in Chinatown's high schools usually do not make a serious effort to learn English. Some do not see the necessity since living in Chinatown does not require any English skills. Others are reluctant to speak English because they worry that their non-Chinese peers will ridicule their

heavily accented and broken English. One student who arrived in the United States one year ago said:

First, when I attempted to speak, American students laughed at my accented English. It was frustrating and embarrassing. Now, I have met a lot of Chinese friends. Of course, we speak Chinese. Usually, I don't speak English unless it's necessary.

Because most Chinese immigrant students tend to study in high schools in Chinatown or Chinese-concentrated neighborhoods, feelings of isolation may not be serious. However, immigrant students that attend schools in the outer boroughs—where Asian or Chinese immigrant students are not a high proportion—find themselves in a completely isolated environment. Because of the language barrier, they have a tough time adjusting. A Chinese student who transferred from a suburban high school to a predominantly Asian high school described her experience:

When I studied at my previous school, I was so isolated that I always thought I was studying in a prison. Since I didn't understand and could not speak English, I never spoke a word in class. My American classmates often ridiculed me and even called me a retarded person.

Cultural barriers

For many recent Chinese immigrants,

going to an American high school can be a tremendous cultural shock. They often have difficulties adjusting to a system in which independence, autonomy, competition and competence are required to survive and succeed. The different cultural demands create conflicts for Chinese immigrants; they have difficulty in developing a stable identity.¹⁷ One student reports:

When I first got here, I was very scared. Even before I walked into the school, I saw students standing in front of the school building; they smoked, listened to music and chased each other. I did not understand why they were not in classes, like other students. Only later I found out that they were actually cutting classes. In the lobby, students were kissing and hugging. They were so daring. They were disrespectful to their teachers; they smoked in the bathrooms, and schools even distributed condoms to students. I was completely shocked by all these experiences. It was unbelievable.

The tradition of "saving face" is very prevalent in Chinese culture. To most Chinese students, it is very important to maintain self-esteem, to show only their strengths, and not their weaknesses, to their friends. Added to this is the fact that "endurance and tolerance" are highly valued Chinese character traits.¹⁸ Even if a Chinese person experiences difficulties, the more tolerance and endurance exhibited,

the more character s/he feels s/he is showing.

In classrooms, Chinese students tend to accept without question what teachers say. This tendency is due in part to the Chinese system of education in which learning is largely by rote and in part because the students do not feel it is proper to challenge their teachers. The positive image of Chinese students as quiet and disciplined in class contributes to their teachers' perception of them. Thus, American teachers expect Chinese students to perform well in general. According to a survey conducted by Mina Choi, a student from Stuyvesant, high school teachers in Queens have higher expectations for Asian students than for whites or other minorities.¹⁹

However, the high expectation for Chinese students has its negative side-effects. Problems of immigrant students often are not recognized by teachers because they lack the necessary sensitivity. Student passivity is often confused with an absence of problems. As a bilingual high school psychologist, whose job is to observe classes and make recommendations to teachers on their technique, explained:

Often teachers do not realize the specific needs of immigrant students. When students don't talk, it doesn't mean they don't have problems. Constrained by language and culture, they just don't know how to ask.

Emotional stress

In their adjustment process, it is not

uncommon to find that many Chinese immigrant students undergo emotional stress. Especially for older immigrant students, the experience of losing close friends and a familiar environment is a painful one. In school, they often cannot find good friends with whom to talk about their experiences. When they try to seek help from their parents, they find that their parents themselves are trying hard to overcome their own emotional problems. "There is often anxiety and frustration from immigrant parents who are not succeeding in work," according to Billy Yim, the Director of the Chinese Christian Herald Crusade.

As a high school psychologist described, "There are a lot of uncertainties for new immigrant students. Coming to this country means that he or she has to start from ground zero. Besides, for some students, there are expectations in the family to do well in school, which adds tremendous stress." Moreover, immigrant students worry about their future after high school; they are unsure about colleges and career ladders. The school's responsibility, for the most part, is limited to classroom teaching, as the resources for additional counseling are limited. Even worse, Chinese cultural norms prohibit students from taking the initiative to seek help from counselors or psychologists in schools.

Financial hardship

Financial hardship is often severe for the most recently arrived immigrant families. The most commonly cited reason for work after school is to help supplement the family's income. As estimated by various high school counselors, teachers

and students, over 80% of Chinese immigrant students work daily for three to four hours. Since they cannot speak English, they usually work in Chinese sweatshops and restaurants, which are in great need of temporary, low-paid workers. The average weekly working hours for Chinese immigrant students vary, ranging from 20 to 35 hours a week. While most students leave work by seven or eight at night, there are some students who work later. During peak seasons—like Chinese New Year or Christmas—students are often asked to work late.

Once at home, these students are often exhausted and cannot concentrate on school work. As one student put it, "Usually, after I get home, I still have to cook for the family because my parents are not home yet. By the time I finish all the cleaning, it is just time for me to go to sleep." Yet, some students stay awake to watch Hong Kong-made television series to reward themselves for a long day of school and work. Thus, many are unprepared for the next day of class. As one bilingual teacher observed, "In the early morning classes, you usually can find a lot of working immigrant students asleep in the back of the class. And there is nothing I can do about it."

As some students indicated, it is not uncommon to find students copying homework from each other. According to an experienced teacher, "Sometimes you can even see students faint in class or the lobby because they lack adequate rest and the right diet at home." Even though free meals are being offered in school, many Chinese immigrant students are not ac-

customed to eating cereal for breakfast or spaghetti for lunch and often skip these meals.

In addition, some teachers worry that the pressure to survive economically will change students' perceptions of education. "By working in the real world and making money, students will lose vision for their futures," one teacher said. Since their workload can be heavy, immigrant students can hardly find time for leisure activities or for socializing with other students. In Chin's study of Chinese high school students, work and lack of study time were ranked as the second and third most important reasons why students did not perform well in school.²⁰ Furthermore, since they work in the Chinese-speaking community and live in Chinese-speaking families, Chinese students have few incentives to improve their English.

The school environment

In New York's public schools, students are placed in a homeroom class by age, not by the years of schooling they have had. In rural China, children do not necessarily start first grade at six years of age. A child may start the first grade when he is ten and finish elementary education by sixteen. Yet, if he comes to this country, he will be put in the tenth grade with other sixteen year olds. Many students have to confront more advanced work while facing a variety of other problems. As one frustrated teacher put it, "How can you expect someone at a third grade elementary level in China to attend a tenth grade class in America?"

Moreover, the different school envi-

ronment makes it hard for immigrant students to adjust. According to an experienced high school bilingual counselor in one Chinatown school, "In the Asian educational system, students stay in the same classroom all day. Here, students have to change classes every period, and many immigrant students get lost in the system, especially in the beginning since it is no longer easy to build friendships with your classmates."

Chinese immigrant students often bring with them an apprehension regarding unfamiliar institutions and people. Some indicated that they do not trust their classmates. "Since I did not know anything about the system, I never wanted to talk to anyone in school. I always worried that people might take advantage of me," recounts one student.

In schools examined for this study, there is also a high degree of isolation between Chinese immigrant students and students of other races. Although these schools have a large percentage of non-Asians, Chinese immigrant students tend to stay within their own group. This degree of isolation is even more serious for students who are in bilingual classes since the only other time they have the opportunity to sit in a class with students of other races is usually during gym.

Facing a tough time in school, undergoing tremendous emotional stress, and confronting learning difficulties, some students eventually drift away from school. According to most teachers and counselors, students in their first year face the highest risk of dropping out. As a guidance counselor pointed out, "The number

of dropouts these days is much higher than compared to ten years ago. The problem has gotten very serious. Among the new immigrants, I would say about one-third of them have difficulties in school.”

Although the figures on Chinese high school dropouts are not available, statistics on Asian American high school dropouts are discouraging. In 1989, the high school dropout rate for Asian Americans in New York City was 7.4%. In 1991, the rate was 16.4%.²¹ The high school dropout rate for Asian American students has more than doubled during this time period while dropout rates for other groups has remained relatively stable. As some educators criticized, despite the recent increase in the Asian American dropout rate, attention continues to be focused on other major ethnic groups in the city.

The Asian Gang Intelligence Unit, based at the Fifth Precinct police station located in Chinatown, estimates that 95% of the city's 200–300 Asian gang members are dropouts.²² “Not knowing the language actually makes immigrants more vulnerable to gangs,” Lillian Yu, Director of Youth Programs for Chinatown's YMCA, pointed out. For some Chinese immigrants, who feel lost in their new environment, the free and adventurous life of gang members seems attractive and gang membership raises their self-esteem. “Gang members, recruited by adults, are paid to guard gambling houses and massage parlors, to carry out extortion threats, to intimidate local residents, and to serve as runners in the drug traffic,” explained Officer Wang of the Fifth Precinct. According to Officer Wang, even in this com-

munity where most crimes are usually unreported by residents, 158 gang-related incidences were reported at the Fifth Precinct between January 1 and December 10, 1991.

Family Problems

The process of immigration alters family relationships. Often, the immigrant student is the only one in the family who understands English. The youth thus handles all of the family's affairs—with school personnel, the landlord and anyone else who cannot communicate in Chinese. The students find themselves to be the spokesperson in their families. The child and parent often essentially reverse roles.

Interestingly, most immigrant students in this study acknowledged that there is a growing communication gap between them and their parents. Since parents work long hours, students often have no one to talk to at home. As Pat Wong of CPC's Structural Educational Program described, “Last year, our survey indicated that 90% of our program participants who are new immigrant students never eat dinner with their parents.” According to one student:

I don't know why, I just cannot communicate with my parents anymore. We seem to live in a different world. Since immigrating to this country, we don't talk as often as we used to in China. Usually after they come back from work, we'll cook, eat, clean up and sleep. I realize they were tired already when they got home and often they just don't feel like saying anything.

Many Chinese immigrant parents, often uneducated and unable to speak English, do not stress education. They do not check homework, attend open-school nights or PTA meetings. "My parents never encourage me to study hard. They would prefer me to start working right after I finish high school rather than attend college," expressed a student in her senior year. Parents sometimes urge older students to quit school if they can get a full-time job, especially if they do not excel academically. As a teacher with fifteen years of experience said, "Some Chinese parents purposely put their children to work in the same factories after school so that they can supervise their kids. It is a means to exert control over them."

"Parents just don't understand the full extent of the bi-cultural experience of the kids in schools," said a high school counselor. Usually, immigrant students pick up Western values quickly in school. Their parents, however, tend to hold on to Chinese values and fail to understand the growing rebellion of their children. According to Billy Yim of the Chinese Christian Herald Crusade:

It is very ironic that, on the one hand, most Chinese parents immigrated to this country because they wanted to secure a better educational opportunity for their children. But, once they are here, they begin to ignore the educational needs of their kids. There is no doubt they work very hard to make their American dreams come true. Unfortunately, in the process, the

working parents have lost their children.

Most Chinese immigrant parents find employment in their own ethnic enclave, most notably Manhattan's Chinatown. Garment factories and Chinese factories are two traditional sources of employment in the community. According to a recent report, approximately 60% of Chinese adults work in the service and manufacturing sectors.²³ In Chinatown, there are some 450 restaurants employing about 15,000 people, mostly men; 500 garment factories employ roughly 20,000 Chinese women.²⁴ Faced with language and cultural barriers, most Chinese immigrant parents, regardless of their educational background in China, work in restaurants and garment factories.

The working conditions in these areas are extremely exploitative. The wages paid to a typical seamstress, restaurant cook or waiter are extremely low. The average waiter employed by a Chinatown restaurant works 60 hours a week for \$200 per month, without overtime pay, health benefits or job security.²⁵ In a garment factory, the salary is usually based on pieces of clothing sewn, not by an hourly rate.

A garment worker employed near his or her residence usually leaves home at seven in the morning and returns at seven at night. A typical restaurant employee works from noon to midnight. Because Chinese immigrants in New York City are highly dispersed, the hours parents spend away from home are usually longer. A substantial number of parents who cannot find jobs in the city find job opportunities

in Chinese restaurants in Long Island or upstate New York. Often, they sleep in employer-provided dormitories and visit their families every week or two.

In most families, both parents work. Their heavy workload often contributes to the "latchkey kid" phenomenon, where the time immigrant students spend at home is, for the most part, without parental supervision.

Living conditions

The housing stock in the Lower East Side where most Chinese immigrants live is well-known as "a slum area serving wave after wave of new immigrants to these shores."²⁶ New immigrants seeking the security of living with others like them compete fiercely for these rundown apartments. According to a study published by the Chinese-American Planning Council, housing in New York City's Chinatown is characterized by its aged buildings (3,000 existing structures were built before 1900), overcrowded "walk-ups" without adequate plumbing and heating, and high rents.²⁷

Families with more than one child who cannot afford to live in multi-bedroom apartments rent one-bedroom apartments and sleep in one room. This situation is common, especially if the family has just arrived and is insecure about living in a non-Chinese neighborhood. This type of living arrangement, however, is extremely inconvenient, especially for the children. The lack of privacy is not conducive to the maturation of high school students.

Chinatown has one park, Columbus Park, an area the size of one city block. As the major open-space recreational facility,

it is heavily used by children and the elderly. Public schools offer the only other playgrounds. However, most students usually avoid these areas, because they are infested with gangs. Unless the student is a friend or member of the gang, he or she is not allowed to play in these parks after school. According to one student:

Usually after school, I just go straight home. It's not safe to play basketball in the school park. If I go I would have to worry about being asked by gang members for protection money.

Two public libraries within the community are small and crowded and highly inaccessible to most immigrant students. Because of budget cuts, library hours are limited. Most working students never go to the library since they are rarely open at night.

Chinese immigrant students face a range of problems, including emotional stress and language barriers. Social service agencies cannot alleviate these problems without programs that serve both individual and family needs.

Recreational centers in crowded neighborhoods like Chinatown are rare. Thus, most Chinese immigrants rent Hong Kong-made films to view at home. Chinese movie rental is very popular. According to a survey conducted by *Herald*, a Chi-

nese language newspaper, of Chinese immigrants in the community, 95% own a TV but only 50% watch regular American programs; 85% own a VCR.²⁸ The survey respondents indicated that they spend an average of eight hours per week watching Chinese films. Many of these films are filled with sex and violence. In the same survey, it was reported that two-thirds of the Chinese films are unhealthy and harmful for children. Of the four cinemas located in Chinatown, two show X-rated movies imported from Japan and Hong Kong. At times, all four cinemas show X-rated films.

Students who do not work tend to spend time in places like pool halls or video game parlors. Since their parents are usually working, they may stay out until seven or eight at night. In the past few years, a new and emerging entertainment, *karaoke*, is gaining popularity among students. *Karaoke*, imported from Japan, allows students to rent a private room where they spend hours drinking beer and singing.

The Current Service Capacity: Demand Exceeds Supply

Having examined the problems confronting Chinese immigrant students, we now turn to an assessment of available youth services. Services include English as a Second Language (ESL), academic assistance, college counseling, career exploration, drug prevention and recreational activities. Youth programs are often only part of a diverse range of services provided by social service agencies in the community. As some youth service providers indicated, their programs are not

always emphasized by their parent agencies as much as other services such as day care programs, senior centers or employment training programs.²⁹

The demand for services far exceeds the programs available to service immigrants' needs. Despite the tremendous growth of Chinese immigrant high school students, youth programs have not been expanded in the past few years. Some youth agencies under-report their case loads in order to satisfy their funding sources. At University Settlement, Mary Yuen, Director of Talent Search, a program that provides college counseling to immigrant students, puts it bluntly:

I do not need to put any advertisement in the Chinese language newspapers. We have students come to us automatically. We are already overworked now with the number of students we are serving. If I publicize this program, I will lose my dedicated staff as they will be overburdened. I need to maintain the quality and stability here.

In addition, a worsening economy and government cutbacks in social service funding have sharply decreased the service capacity of agencies. Social service agencies that run youth programs serving Chinese immigrant students have been cut in size or eliminated.

Gaps and Unmet Needs in the Youth Service Delivery System: Evaluations and Recommendations

We know for a fact that what these youngsters need is time; time in the school system, time to develop a sense of spontaneity about speech, making friends, having a vision of what their life will be in America, having an idea of what the ultimate goal of being a human being should be in this country.³⁰

As discussed, Chinese immigrant students face a range of problems, including emotional stress and language barriers. Social service agencies cannot alleviate these problems without considering the complete picture. To ease the adjustment difficulties of immigrant students, they must design and implement programs that serve both individual and family needs.

Many youth programs do not address family needs because their programs do not involve parent participation. Social service agencies have greater resources and flexibility than schools to organize workshops and activities to educate Chinese immigrant parents.

Location

While, during the 1980s, the Asian population increased by more than 150% in Queens and Brooklyn, most youth programs are located in Manhattan's Chinatown. Many Chinese immigrant high school students go to school in Chinatown but live elsewhere. In their neighborhoods, they find either inappropriate or limited programs offered by service agencies and churches.

To rectify this, linkages between schools and community-based service

agencies should be established. In future program planning, agencies should be more sensitive toward this demographic pattern.

Bilingual staff

As most social service providers indicated, there is still a critical shortage of bilingual and bi-cultural human service professionals in some agencies serving the Chinese community. As a result, many prospective clients are discouraged from participating. In some youth programs in or near Chinatown, the proportion of participants who are Chinese immigrants is extremely low because they cannot communicate with the staff or other participants.

In the short run, Chinese social service agencies should work with non-Chinese social service agencies in the community. They can run workshops on cultural/language sensitivity issues and provide advice to non-Chinese based agencies in the community on dealing with Chinese immigrant students. At the same time, these agencies should hire more bilingual staff in the field. The presence of Chinese-speaking staff in these agencies is important to attract Chinese immigrant students. In the long run, social service agencies in the community should consider different ways, such as scholarship funding, to encourage more bilingual college students to enter this field.

Communication between high schools and social service agencies

Most high school students do not know about youth programs offered in the community. Even teachers and counselors are

After-school tutoring

Although bilingual and ESL programs are available, homework help is a necessity for most Chinese immigrant students. After-school tutoring provides necessary assistance to immigrant students. Some after-school program participants indicated that they are generally more comfortable raising questions on their school work in this informal setting.

Existing after-school tutoring programs do not have the capacity to serve the increasing number of students. Slots for free after-school tutoring programs are quickly filled, and the staff often must reject many qualified students. As Pat Wong, a Staff Counselor at SES complained, "It is very discouraging to reject immigrant students who are in great need of assistance, but we are left with no choice."

Because of budget cuts, some tutoring programs are charging fees to students. While these programs might help those students whose parents can afford it, the needs of a large number of low income immigrant students are not being met. More importantly, after-school programs do not serve immigrant students who take jobs after school.

Although after-school tutoring programs are now run by college volunteers from Pace University and New York University, many students who work are not able to utilize the services. Volunteer college students not only assist immigrant students with their academic problems, but they also serve as role models. Thus, this type of program should be continued and expanded. To meet the needs of working

immigrant students, local schools and service agencies should collaborate with local colleges to tutor students during weekends and during free periods in school.

Family services

Family conflicts often increase the hardships facing students. As described, Chinese immigrant parents are often unaware of the reversal of the parent-child relationship and of the world outside of Chinatown. Because of language and cultural barriers, many parents are unprepared to deal with the problems confronting their children in school or at work. To admit to friends and relatives that they cannot handle their child is deemed a "shame." Thus, most Chinese parents never seek help when they are facing problems with their children. Currently, only two agencies, CPC's Asian Family Center and Lower East Side Family Union, are providing family counseling to Chinese parents. Both are located in Chinatown.

The Chinese community is too farsighted in concern for the welfare of Chinese millions of miles away while ignoring the welfare of Chinese that only live one block away from them. We have to help our kids who are struggling here in New York City's Chinatown, not Kwangtung or Szechuan.

Chinese parents need to be informed about the changing role of the family and the American educational system. Youth

programs and family service program can run joint workshops and education campaigns to raise public awareness. In developing future youth programs, the agencies can devise creative ways to involve parents. As some service providers indicated, Chinese parents are more willing to talk to them than to teachers or counselors in schools because of the absence of language and cultural constraints.

The Asian American media can coordinate a public education campaign. Most Chinese immigrant parents rely on the Chinese American media, which include nine newspapers, three radio stations and two cable stations. Stories about the realities of students' learning difficulties will raise their parents' awareness about their dilemmas.

It is important to involve Chinese parents in their children's education. Often, these working parents are "hard to reach," due to their long work-hours and their inability to speak English. Community interest groups should insist that schools make reasonable efforts to communicate with immigrant parents across language and cultural barriers. A service agency could create a community center within a school to offer services, from translation to insurance form completion. In the evening, the agency could run adult ESL classes for immigrant parents.

Mental counseling

Chinese immigrant students undergo tremendous emotional stress in their adjustment experiences. Many parents are ignorant of their problems or deny that they exist. "Instead of sending their chil-

dren to the right mental health clinic, they keep their kids at home in order to 'save face' in front of friends," one high school bilingual psychologist explained. According to some psychologists, some parents even send their children back to Asia rather than seek help. According to Mr. Chen, a staff psychologist at the Asian Bi-Cultural Clinic in Gouverneur Hospital, a municipal hospital serving Lower East Side and Chinatown residents, "Within one and a half years, I only took three cases of high school immigrant students who have mental health problems. In all three cases, the families just did not want to come back for follow-ups. I firmly believe mental health problems exist for high school age students, but parents just do not want to deal with it."

College counseling

For most Chinese immigrant high school students, applying to college is extremely difficult and frustrating. Without guidance, they often miss opportunities to apply for financial aid in colleges. Furthermore, Chinese parents often are unable to assist their children. One high school student said:

My parents are very ignorant about my college choice. When I told them that I decided to apply for City College next fall, they asked me why I did not apply for Columbia or Harvard. They said they often learned from the newspaper that a lot of Asians are being admitted to these schools and I should apply as well. They just don't un-

derstand the system here.

Also bilingual guidance counselors and teachers are not equipped to offer college counseling. Currently, two Chinese bilingual college counselors are provided by the Talent Search program run by University Settlement in Chinatown's high schools, but the staff reported that they are overworked.

Hiring more bilingual college counselors is not a feasible short-term goal, given limited funding. School and service agencies can organize local Chinese college students to volunteer to run workshops on college choice and serve as role models for Chinese students.

Work-study programs

As described, a high percentage of Chinese immigrant students work after school because of the economic needs of their families. Because of language and cultural barriers, students often find jobs in the Chinese community. These jobs are not only low paying and require long hours, but they also reduce the opportunity for immigrant students to learn English.

Service agencies and community business groups should work with government agencies to initiate a joint public-private project to create work-study programs for these students to introduce them to jobs outside the Chinese community. This would not only secure a source of income for their families, but also widen the horizons of the students and bring them into contact with the larger society.

Funding for youth programs

Despite rapid economic growth and the real estate boom in Chinatown during the 1980s, little improvement in human resource infrastructure, such as recreational facilities, parks and traffic-free streets, took place

in the community. The Chinese community can be proud of its entrepreneurial attitude, but at the same time, it should pay more attention to the growing human needs of Chinese immigrants.

Furthermore, government funding sources for youth programs are often unpredictable and depend on the economic cycle. Foundation funding lasts for only a short time. Most service providers agree

Since government funds are often lacking, major social service groups in the community must take a leading role in creating a community-wide trust fund that will channel money into youth services.

that the Chinese business sector and the community are not generous in funding youth activities, but they were able to mobilize massive campaigns resulting in tens of thousands of dollars in donations for foreign issues, such as the 1989 democracy movement and the 1990 flood in China. According to a bilingual high school counselor,

The Chinese community is too far-sighted in concern for the welfare

of Chinese millions of miles away while ignoring the welfare of Chinese that only live one block away from them. We have to help our kids who are struggling here in New York City's Chinatown, not in Kwangtung or Szechuan.

Since government funds are often lacking, major social service groups in the community must take a leading role in creating a community-wide trust fund that will channel money into youth services. With this fund, more youth programs and public recreation spaces will be created.

Conclusion

Contrary to popular belief, few Chinese immigrant students fit the image of the "model minority." Most immigrant students encounter a multitude of problems in their adjustment experiences. A sense of cultural confusion, tremendous emotional stress and learning difficulties even force some students to drift away from school. The adjustment experience for many immigrant students is like a vicious cycle as every factor—including language and cultural barriers, emotional and financial hardship, family problems and adverse living conditions—negatively contributes to their adaptability to their new environment.

Existing New York City youth services have failed to sufficiently recognize and meet these special needs. Current programs could be improved and be made more accessible to Chinese immigrant youths by accommodating factors of location and language, and the needs for outreach, tutoring and counseling.

In addition, new youth programs should be created to go beyond employment opportunities, homework assistance and recreational activities to help Chinese immigrant students adjust mentally, emotionally, and academically. According to Billy Yim, the programs should:

Develop different interests for immigrant students, develop their identity as well as explore other things in life. The programs should aim at building their internal strengths, such as self-confidence, learning how to overcome school and family pressure and developing a clear sense of direction for the future.

Notes

1. Kwong, Peter, *The New Chinatown*, p. 58.
2. Sung, Betty Lee, *The Adjustment Experience of Chinese Immigrant Children in New York City*, p. 206-207.
3. "Asians in New York City: A Demographic Summary," p. 16.
4. Kwong, Peter, *The New Chinatown*, p. 26.
5. Sung, Betty Lee, *The Adjustment Experience of Chinese Immigrant Children in New York City*, p. 5.
6. LEP students include people with a non-English language background whose ability to understand, speak, read and write English is limited enough to deny them the chance to learn in classrooms where instruction is only in English.
7. According to school officials, the average age of Chinese students in this school is 20.
8. Sung, Betty Lee, *The Adjustment Experience of Chinese Immigrant Children in New York City*, p. 1.
9. "Asians in New York City: A Demographic

- Summary," p. 6.
10. U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 Census Data.
 11. The figure was reported in the *Asian-American Youth Council Newsletter*.
 12. These figures were reported in the *Report on Chancellor's Task Force on Asian American Concerns*.
 13. The high achievements of the Chinese first drew wide attention on January 9, 1966, when the *New York Times Magazine* published an article about a "model minority" by William Peterson.
 14. The data was take from Selected New York City Public School Data, 1989-90, published by Community Service Society.
 15. Kwong, Peter, *The New Chinatown*, p. 73.
 16. See "Chinese American Students in New York City: The Reasons for Their Successes and Failures," by Jennet Chin, a senior thesis at Barnard College (Spring 1992). Ms. Chin conducted her research in six predominantly Chinese high schools in Queens and Manhattan.
 17. Sue S. & Chin R., *The Mental health of Chinese American Children: Stressors and Resources*.
 18. Sung, Betty Lee, *The Adjustment Experience of Chinese Immigrant Children in New York City*, p. 214.
 19. The project was the only social science project selected to be among the top 40 finalists in the national Westinghouse Search in 1989.
 20. See "Chinese American Students in New York City: The Reasons for Their Successes and Failures," by Jennet Chin.
 21. The data were taken from the *Asian American Youth Council Newsletter* and *The World Journal*, December 31, 1991.
 22. Van Rosendaal, John, "Asian-American in High School: Beyond the Model Minority," p. 12.
 23. "New York's Asian Community: A Status Report," p.12.
 24. Kwong, Peter, *The New Chinatown*, p.26.
 25. Kwong, Peter, *The New Chinatown*, p. 6.
 26. Sung, Betty Lee, *The Adjustment Experience of Chinese Immigrant Children in New York City*, p. 36.
 27. Sung, Betty Lee, *The Adjustment Experience of Chinese Immigrant Children in New York City*.
 28. *Herald*, January 1992.
 29. As most providers explained, this often has to do with satisfying political exigencies of the situation, the interests of those who provide financial support, and the parent agency's agenda.
 30. *New Voices: Immigrant Students in U.S. Public Schools*, p. 92.

Angela Oh

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The Korea Federation, formerly the major civic group in Koreatown, has been disbanded. A younger generation of bilingual Korean Americans has taken its place, in the form of the Korean American Coalition [KAC]. What do you see as the role of the Korean American Coalition and how does that differ from that of the Korea Federation?

The Korean American Coalition is really something very different. I know the Korean American Coalition has always seen itself as the main advocacy group of Koreatown. But in fact it is not. It's a lot of young people who have a lot of energy, and want to do things politically for Korean Americans. The Korea Federation was much more steeped in sort of longer-term, first-generation ideals and visions whereas the Korean American Coalition is comprised of younger people who see from a second generation and 1.5 generation perspective. The Korea Federation was more in the way of a council of different groups and representation. KAC is not, it is a single organization. It has a very broad agenda and goal for itself to pro-

mote the interests of the Korean American community but it is just one of many organizations that is doing that on behalf of Korean Americans in Southern California. So I don't see the KAC as a replacement; I see the KAC as one member of whatever the next evolution of the Korea Federation might be.

So do you think that the evolution that you speak of represents a generational change, a passing of the baton?

No, it is not a voluntary passing of the baton. It is more out of necessity that the baton is being passed. The Korea Federation, even as a symbol, was not very effective, although I have to say that I think symbols are very important to have for any community. But the Korea Federation came apart because, organizationally, there was in-fighting that caused its demise. It is not because its purpose had been fulfilled.

Speaking of symbolic politics, what do you think is the symbolism in the election of Jay Kim?

I think that it depends on what perspective you're taking. Here's my perspective on Jay Kim. He did not run as a Korean American, he is Korean American, but he ran as a politician out of Diamond Bar, a community that is pretty transitional right now in terms of its ethnic makeup. I don't think he has any particular allegiance to Korean Americans, or the Korean American agenda, and I don't know that he will be able to be a particularly effective advocate or representative of Korean Americans because I don't see him or hear him expressing that desire. He

We are at a point here in Los Angeles where dialogue is no longer the priority. In other words, we still have to keep dialogue going, but it is not enough.

acknowledges that, yes, he is Korean American, and privately I understand that he says that he will do whatever he can. But he is going to be limited as would any freshman politician. So I think we have to support him. I think we have to be particularly watchful of his conduct as a public official because he is Korean American and will be picked up by the media and other public spectators as being representative of the Korean community whether or not he is.

Going back to coalitions, what are the future prospects of coalitions and community building given the fact that the Black-Korean Roundtable [or the Black-Korean Alliance (BKA)] has disbanded?

One of the successes of the BKA was that it became a place, a very clearly defined place, where Koreans and blacks could come together and hash out some of their conflicts. They started in 1985, at a time when the tensions were just growing. But they are a dialogue model. We are at a point here in Los Angeles where dialogue is no longer the priority. In other words, we still have to keep dialogue going, but it is not enough, and those of us who have been doing work in this area have come to realize that in the 1990s, we have to figure out what we can do to take us beyond dialogue. So what we are doing is trying to figure out specific projects to which we can draw multi-ethnic players. So we are looking at economic development models, because that is what has to happen in this community. We are looking at joint venture opportunities—we are looking at joint political action or advocacy opportunities.

Some have recently written that one of the reasons for the disbanding of the BKA was the lack of resources, and that maybe a way to get these groups back together is more partisanship in our local politics, having the rise of political parties a way to organize and also dispense benefits to try to promote a general interest for the city.

I suppose that's a model that could work. I am not into partisan politics much. It's fine if people want to participate in the public process that way. I'm into finding whatever vehicles will generate the most amount of interest and activity on the part of those in our community who are just pretty apathetic about what's happening

around public policy issues. So whatever it will take, whether it is to coalesce around a gender-specific agenda, whether it is to coalesce around an ethnic-specific agenda, or a pan-Asian agenda in the case of Korean Americans to try to broaden their base.

I guess one of the reasons why some of these writers, the one in the Los Angeles Times in particular [referring to Los Angeles Times Editorial Contributor Xandra Kayden, a visiting scholar at the Center for Politics and Policy at the Claremont Colleges, and author of "Why Overcoming L.A.'s Ethnic Barricades Will Be So Difficult" (L.A. Times, December 20, 1992)], mentioned that we should have more partisan politics and actually have party identifications instead of trying to alleviate or mollify some of the effects of ethnic identification is [that] ethnic politics are pulling the city apart.

I think you get ethnic politics in the partisan arena as well. Within the democratic structure that's what happens in reality: in a multi-ethnic community people are going to draw together in caucuses since they don't have any other models.

What is the likelihood that the Korean businesses will go back into the places where they were doing business before?

I think much fewer of them will go back. I think initially people didn't want to go back at all. Then there was a period when about half wanted to go back; then more than half because they realized that they didn't have other places to go. Now

the numbers are shrinking again so that I would say that a fair "guesstimate" would be that around 30 percent are saying that they will go back. Those are the really hard-core 30 percent that really don't believe that there's anywhere else that they can go. Most people don't want to go back into communities where they are not wanted.

I'm into finding whatever vehicles will generate the most amount of interest and activity on the part of the too many in our community who are just pretty apathetic about what's happening around public policy issues.

Besides that point, what were some of the other obstacles facing Korean entrepreneurs?

Well, you know the fact of the matter is that access to credit and capital has always been a problem, and this problem have not been taken care of. So again they are starting at point zero. I don't know what kinds of creative means will be used to generate capital to invest in these businesses. But that's an obstacle that's very real.

What has been done in terms of the redlining?

The insurance commissioner has some proposed regulations. I've submitted two declarations of support of the new regulations that would require the industry to

disclose some of the data that it has refused to disclose up until now, saying that it is trade secret type of information that gives competitive information. But we're saying that aggregate figures will not compromise your competitive edge, especially when we're interested specifically in aggregate figures which would reveal your activity in poor neighborhoods, which we all know nobody goes into, nobody wants to.

Do you think there's going to be a big conflict with what the African-American community wants in terms of limiting the amount of licenses for liquor stores?

That is a controversy. We're working through it right now. I think that most businesses that are going to go back know what needs to be done in order to [minimize] those kinds of conflicts. In other words, they are going to be more vigilant about security. They are going to, where they can, hire locally. But in all honesty, most businesses cannot. Economically it is not feasible for them to do that. They will probably get more involved in the local community, and look for people who could be potential supporters in order to create good customer relations.

Recently there has been a proposal called "Neighbor to Neighbor," which seeks to involve community groups and leaders to maintain civic peace. Do you think it will be effective in quelling the tension and animosity that will probably be raised after the L.A. Four verdicts [expected from the Reginald Denny case] come out?

I don't know. To me the idea of that kind of grassroots outreach is a real positive one. My gut feeling is that I like that kind of effort, and I like the fact that the Mayor's Office is taking the initiative to conceive of and promote something like that. We'll have to see how it is implemented—that's always the hardest [part]. They have to have some very talented community organizers to make that happen. The other thing is that the trial of ... what are being called the L.A. Four is one that is going to create a very strong reaction no matter how much "Neighbor-to-Neighbor" talk is done. So I think that there needs to be some other level of planning for that verdict.

What do you see as the successes and failures from the work of Rebuild L.A.?

Well, the successes are reported every week in the paper. There are little projects that are going in. There are job training programs, there are announcements that millions of dollars are being committed. But these successes dovetail with what I would designate as the failures. They have not communicated to the public exactly what they thought was committed to rebuilding Los Angeles and who is making the decisions of how those resources are being divvied up. They seem to be reticent about sharing that information which causes me concern. I look at the staff and I think this is an overwhelming challenge even with their impressive credentials, like the MBAs and lawyers. They are not people that are in touch with the community and the reason why the community went up in flames to begin with—

no feeling of having a stake in what existed. I don't think that you can transplant people that have no sense of the community, and find workable solutions, so I'm still cautiously optimistic that Rebuild L.A. can do something. But I don't think that it will take the lead in revitalizing this city.

Do you think that public-private partnerships for job training is necessarily the answer, in terms of addressing some of the structural inequities that are going on?

No. I think that public-private partnerships will create some opportunities and jobs and may again open up channels of communication. There needs to be some fundamental changes in policy around finance, law enforcement, business development and entrepreneurial activity. We need some policy statements and direction in the area of a major industrial base or something to replace that in this region, and we don't have that yet.

It seems like the Rebuild L.A. effort has, as you mentioned, high publicity: we get this corporate sponsor to get you some amount of minimum wage jobs. Is that really going to make the community economically self-sufficient? I don't necessarily see these corporations being brought together to try to help create incentives for, for instance, a community development bank.

There is that kind of activity going on, there are discussions going on. I don't believe minimum wage jobs are going to make it here. I mean, nobody is interested in working for \$4.50 an hour. You can't

live in Los Angeles on \$4.50 an hour. What people want is an opportunity to gain access, and you can't do it on \$4.50 an hour. This means they want access to credit and capital. That's what I keep coming back to because entrepreneurs just need that start. They've got the idea and they've got the willingness to work the idea. Not all of them are going to succeed, but the first step is getting the initial door that will be opened for them so they can access credit and capital.

Community development banks are being discussed by many different people right now. Nobody has gotten their vision well enough together to get that thing going. I know that the federal government is supportive of this concept, they're committing to 100 community development banks in the first year, but it's not so easy to put a community development bank together. I happen to be a person interested in that concept—I've done research on it, I've met with Mary Houghton from South Shore Bank, I've gone to South Shore Bank, I've gone to that community. I'm sorry, but what they've done there may not necessarily transplant to a place like Los Angeles. I don't think it will, which means that we need people here who are willing to spend the time and effort to understand how it can be done in Los Angeles. There, the strategy was "rehabbing," that's how they did it. Well we don't have buildings here that are habitable. We've got to start from a different direction, so what does that mean? Maybe it's not about buildings, maybe it's about funding small businesses who then become successful and then can move on to something bigger and leave this one for the new person start-

ing in, who then can contribute to the business infrastructure in this town. I don't know, none of us has really sat down to think that through.

How can Los Angeles—which prides itself on its diversity—develop a sense of shared community?

That's the million-dollar question and if anybody had the answer, they probably wouldn't be doing what they do to pay their rent. I have to believe that there's a way to create a sense of community, partly because this is where I've chosen to make my home, and I want very much for us not to be a Detroit. I want Los Angeles very much to be a city that can shine. I still believe that it is a city that can shine.

Why do I believe that? It's because of the people that I'm meeting every day since April 29. Locally, we've cleaned house politically. We've got a new District Attorney. We've got a new police chief. We're going to have a new mayor. We're going to have new City Council blood. These are people that—from what I've seen so far—have been talking like they are committed to doing things differently, creating a whole different mentality than what we've had in the past.

Now it's going to be a matter of, at the grassroots level, giving power to the majority, who don't always follow the "leaders" in the paper but who, for instance, can look at the Denny case and say that it is wrong, can look at the beating of Rodney King and say that was wrong. But then you have a few of these people out there who are trying to make these two cases the same case. They're not.

You mentioned new City Council members, a new Mayor. Do you think a lot of the problems that have arisen are structural in terms of a weak mayor system and a strong City Council and all the strong parochial interests that reside in each council district?

Yes, I do. I do think that that is a problem. And I also think that at even the county level, at the city and county level, we do not have enough representation in terms of the size of the communities that we're trying to represent and also the Mayor's Office is really not a strong executive office.

But it could definitely agenda-set if it chose to.

It definitely could. But it takes a certain amount of courage. With the demise of the Black-Korean Alliance, what does agenda-setting mean? Well, on the one hand, it means nothing because the BKA wasn't doing anything to begin with. On

We need a person who can communicate, who understands the art of compromise, because that's what this is about. We need someone who is committed to coalition-building and diversity.

the other hand, symbolically, it means a lot. It means even the most hopeful have walked away. It makes you feel terrible, doesn't it? I've gotten more letters and phone calls concerning the demise of the

BKA. People are really upset about it: what are we going to do now that the BKA isn't there? It was like the BKA was a placebo that was in place and working pretty well. Maybe we should have left it there. I don't know, maybe not. I think it's sad that the BKA has dissolved. On the other hand, I know the people involved and you know what?—they are already devoting 110 percent of their energy and resources, so what are you going to do?

You mentioned the election of a new mayor for Los Angeles. What qualities do you see in the next mayor?

The most critical quality is that he's a person of inclusion, of coalition-building as a politician. That's going to be most important. I don't care how smart he or she is, I don't care how many degrees he or she has, I don't care how much of a maverick he thinks he's going to be, and I don't care how strong a spine he has. We need a person who can communicate, who understands the art of compromise, because that's what this is about. We need someone who is committed to coalition-building and diversity.

Can that type of person win in Los Angeles, given the backlash?

Yes, I think he can. I think that kind of person can win in Los Angeles.

On a personal level, how does it feel to be thrust as a spokesperson for the community, willingly or unwillingly?

It was unwillingly, believe me. At this

point it's more and more unwillingly. On the one hand, it's very exciting and exhilarating because for so many years, I've been working on issues of the environment, civil rights, human rights—issues about fundamental fairness in our institutions. And for now to have people actually listen to what I have to say is pretty exciting.

It's also extremely exhausting, on both a physical and on a very soulful level. It's a really exhausting thing because you realize that all these great people whom you've worked with on committees and who have committed so many of their years and talents to what I consider the correct direction have not been heard or seen. There should a lot of Angela Ohs out there.

You know, I wonder where Dolly Gee is, for instance. She's been out there for years as the president of the Southern California Chinese Lawyers. I look at where Abby Leibman, Forescee Hogan-Rowles, Beatriz Olvera-Stotzer are. These are incredible women who have been working on issues, policies, and projects that have affected hundreds of peoples' lives—why aren't they being asked to be spokespeople?

I also feel a little bit like a fraud. I have to say this, because I know I'm not representative of the majority of the Korean community in Los Angeles. I think I gave voice to their anguish, I gave voice to their point of view on what was happening to them in the time of crisis. But I'm not a merchant. I've never run a shop. Nobody in my family runs a shop. They're all factory workers. I can honestly say I've never been to Korea even once so I don't really know what it was that 85 per-

cent of our community left.

Is there a formal mechanism for leadership for Asian-Americans, in terms of networks? One network that comes to mind for the Latino community is [Councilman] Richard Alatorre, [State Senator] Art Torres, and [Supervisor] Gloria Molina. Are there similar mechanisms or programs to develop more leadership-building within the Asian-American community?

Absolutely there are. In the bar community we're doing it. In the Korean-American women's community, we're going to have a leadership conference. KASCON [Korean American Students Conference] tries to do it every year. KASCON VII will be out here at the end of this year. There's also a California version of KASCON: KAL, the Korean-American Leadership Conference. KAC, the Korean American Coalition, has a leadership conference. LEAP [Leadership for Asian Pacifics] has its leadership conference. It's almost like we've got too many leadership conferences.

We have talent in elected office already, in the likes of Warren Furutani and Michael Woo, who's making a bid for the mayor's race. Women, unfortunately... we don't have that many women, but I expect that women will come up at some point.

Lily Lee, former aide to Mayor Tom Bradley?

Lily Lee, that's right. She's going after Michael's seat. Jocelyn Yap has made a try for it. There have been people who

have thrown their hat into the ring, and you really have to give them a lot of credit for doing that at least.

What do you think about the successes or the potential for the success of broad-based coalitions like Asian Pacific Americans for a New L.A.?

The potential, I think, is tremendous, only because I see who comes to the meetings every month. These are the Dolly Gees, the Robin Tomas, the Angela Ohs, the Stewart Kwohs. I mean these are people who are going to be around way after Rebuild L.A. is gone.

Arguably, they are the political elites in the cities. How are we going to get other Asian American communities—the Monterey Parks, the Cerritoses, the Gardenas—to actually get involved in some of these concerns?

People in that area like Judy Chu have been trying to get more involvement on the part of Asians in those particular geographic areas, but this is hard because we're so big. Wherever we meet it's not going to be satisfactory to someone. And it's hard for working people to make the time to come out. But I think we have to make the effort. We have to always let people know that their input is welcome. Always. You can't say that often enough. And then you have to let them participate ... and then you have to encourage them to take on responsibilities and know that there will be support for them. Now we're going to come across our political differences, which I think is healthy for us. I

think it's a healthy thing.

We're definitely not a monolithic group, in terms of partisanship, generational, socioeconomic standing, immigrant status, etc.

Right.

My final question to you ... what can concerned Asian Americans do to get involved in public policy and community involvement, particularly in Los Angeles?

Well, the first thing an individual can do is understand what their level of commitment can be, given what they're doing right now. For example, students—your main job is to do well and to establish your base there. Beyond that, do what you want to do, what's important to you and what's possible. Look around. On campuses there are opportunities. Bring people onto campus who might not otherwise be heard. Question the curricula. Are there people who should be part of the study of American literature or history who are left out? Be involved, even if it's just raising a question in class. Then if you don't like the answer you get more organized than that. Students need to understand that they're at a distinct disadvantage when they're taking on an institution like a university and they need to work with alumni. For instance, I'm a big believer in working with alumni associations. For instance at UCLA, there's an Asian American alumni association, and we work with the Asian student groups. Why? Because students come and go after three, four years. And those institutions take more time to evolve.

In a community, it depends. What do you do for work? Look at your job. Given your sphere of knowledge and expertise, what can you do? And if you just do that, and plug in, that's enough. Or what's your interest going to draw you? If I'm a city planner, I can do work in city planning. But maybe I want to deal with women. So you look and you find something that you can commit to and learn.

Sometimes people don't get politicized until their store burns up and they've got two kids and a spouse. And so at that point they have to figure out well, what can I do given where I am right now?

And you've got to learn your organizing skills somewhere. I was fortunate in that I picked up my organizing skills when I was a student. My fundamental way of operating evolved when I became a working person in the world. That doesn't happen to everyone. Sometimes people don't get politicized until their store burns up and they've got two kids and a spouse. And so at that point they have to figure out well, what can I do given where I am right now? People need to evaluate where they're at, and then go from there.

Interview conducted by Aden Kun on January 5, 1993.

Grant Ujifusa

Grant Ujifusa is the founding editor of the Almanac of American Politics and was the Legislative Strategy Chair of the Japanese American Citizens League's Redress campaign.

Do you think that the qualities which make a politician successful are the same for Asian American politicians?

The qualities are the same because the environment is the same. What you have to have in the first instance is very substantial ambition. This can be characterized negatively as out-and-out ego, but ambition is the first requirement. Then you have to have a basic intelligence, not genius level, but hurdle rate intelligence. And you have to be willing to do all things that politicians are accused of doing—being away from home, talking to Rotary Club members when you need to be doing something else, splitting the difference between what's good principle and what's good politics.

The gratification in the business—because there's not all that much money to be made—is finally psychic and psychological. In general, this is one of the reasons the Democrats hold an advantage in the House of Representatives. There are many Republican executives willing to give up \$300,000 a year to be a U. S. Senator, but unwilling to give up the

money to be a Congressman. Many more Democrats are. There's also a philosophical matter. For many able Republicans, the government is the problem, not the solution. For Democrats, government is often the solution.

In any case, whatever the partisan stripe, Asian politician or otherwise, you need the ego, basic smarts and energy to make it. There's a lot of work that to me anyway is not pleasant. But the successful politician thrives on it.

With regard to African American and Latino politicians, there seems to be a strong identification with their ethnic background and their constituency in that regard. Do you find the same sort of identification with Asian American politicians?

Partly yes, but mostly no. Take a guy like Bob Matsui from Sacramento or Norm Mineta from San Jose and Santa Clara. An overwhelming majority of their constituents are non-Asian. So if you identify too closely with Asian and Asian issues, that's not especially smart politically. I think this was the reason, initially any-

way, that both Bob and Norm didn't know how to respond to Japanese American Redress. Then they, like other Japanese Americans, realized how important Redress was to them personally, which led them to take political risks. They really came forward. Both cried in open congressional testimony. They must have worried about how that was going to play on local TV, watched mostly by non-Asians. But there were no real problems.

A similar sort of black politician is Mike Espy from Mississippi. He's black, but most of his constituents are white. Others come from constituencies that are majority black congressional districts in New York, Chicago, Detroit. A political stance and the degree of ethnic identification mostly depends on who votes back home. It seems to me that Asian American politicians are going to be elected by majority white voters.

Why do you think that Japanese Americans are disproportionately represented in Congress as opposed to other Asian groups which may have larger populations?

I don't know how much longer this is going to last. In Hawaii, Japanese Americans hold a demographic hegemony at something like 27% of the population. They control the Democratic party through a machine Dan Inouye helped to put together in the early 1950s. Dan, Sparky [Matsunaga, Senator D-HI] and Patsy [Mink, Rep. D-HI] were beneficiaries, three from a state with a little over a million people.

In Norm Mineta's case, you had some Japanese Americans around San Jose in the 1960s who remembered the camps, got together and decided one way never to go to camp again was to have their own person on the inside. That person was going to be Norm. Bob Matsui was sort of off by himself in Sacramento, and I shouldn't put it this way because he's a friend of mine, but he's kind of a fluke. He was an underdog in a Democratic primary, and simply out-thought and out-worked a whole bunch of other candidates. He exhibits many of the characteristics I talked about earlier—he is smart and loves being a politician. I think there'll be many more Asian political flukes out there. Everything finally depends on how good you are and how much you want it.

So you think it's more on a case-by-case basis than cultural differences?

That's a good question. We now have a lot of Asians in the country, but many of them are relatively recent immigrants. They haven't had enough time. Japanese Americans have been here for maybe a hundred years. They are often sufficiently assimilated to think like this: Not only can I be an engineer or a doctor, but I can be a professional politician. If you're a recent immigrant, chances are that the latter choice doesn't occur to you. So it's a matter of time. I think the Chinese community has begun to produce some very attractive candidates. Ditto the Korean. So to a certain extent it's getting to know how the system—and not just the political system—works.

Another thing is our culture, and I define Asian culture broadly as Confucian based. It is a culture of deference. One defers to people higher up in the hierarchy, whether it be within the family or within the political structure. This is something very different from the free for all that goes on in American politics, which some Asians find frightening and others vulgar.

A related part of Confucian culture is the sense that we don't do politics, we let other people do politics. We do close-to-home values; we love our families, we work hard. The great and virtuous Samurai lord and the worthy Mandarin bureaucrat—these people legitimately worry about politics. The other people involved are crooks and airhead publicity mongers. The fact is that Asian American voter registration rates—even for groups here for a long time—are low. This seems to reflect apolitical cultural attitudes.

Now I will say something heretical. Take a look at the groups that have put a lot of faith in politics as a way to get on in our society. The Irish are very good at politics, I think better than anybody—Ronald Reagan, Tip O'Neill, the whole political culture in Boston. They love it. The other group, at least since the 1960s, have been the blacks. In general, both groups have done less well in society than the Asians. The truth is, you come to a certain point and most politicians will sell you out. That's the way it is. Your old man was right. So if you're a dentist or run a pharmacy, I see absolutely nothing wrong with that. Unlike me, many Asian dentists and pharmacists can satisfactorily

answer what I regard as the Great American Question: If you're so smart, why ain't you rich? Yet we have to remember that sometimes politics becomes real life with a vengeance. That's what internment was.

Anyway, one thing the newer Asian groups have been doing recently is putting up a lot of money, especially to candidates perceived to be sympathetic to Asian issues. So if the money shows, good Asian American candidates should also emerge sooner or later.

The recent election showed that the majority of Asians who voted voted Republican, while most of the Asian candidates are Democrats. Do you see that changing, especially as Asians get wealthier?

I don't think voting patterns are finally a function of wealth. Japanese Americans have been traditionally Democratic in Hawaii because the Burns machine was sympathetic to their aspirations. On the Mainland, one of the ironies about Japanese Americans is that they are mostly Democratic when perhaps the greatest Democratic president ever allied with labor unions threw them into camps. The answer is that before the war, Japanese Americans—most couldn't vote—were excluded from the FDR coalition of immigrants, Southerners, blacks and northern tier Scandinavians, and after the war we were invited in. Neither the small town nor the Wall Street Republican asked us.

Meanwhile, some of the younger Japanese Americans were heavily influenced by the 1960s and became part of the

Democrats' liberal wing. I have to say, though, on the basis of no data, that if you're that kind of presumed anti-establishment Democrat, you are among the most assimilated of Asians. Thirty years out of Berkeley, nice job, unaccented California English, all that seems to me a long way from the brutal oppression faced by our grandparents—despite ideological protestations, a long way from real ethnic roots.

Asians who arrived after the 1965 immigration reform have voted strongly Republican in the last 12 years. There are two reasons. One, like Cuban Americans, many of them are fiercely anti-Communist, thanks to direct experience with Communist regimes. Two, the Reagan-Bush-Quayle's message of family solidarity—

The evidence shows that anti-Asian violence came not from the Wall Street banker and the old-fashioned redneck, but from blacks and Latinos.

read Confucian family solidarity—tied to economic opportunity—read small business and higher education—was very appealing. Beyond this, unlike earlier Japanese and Chinese immigrants, they never had to contend the worst our country had to offer. So in some sense, the more recent immigrants are the beneficiaries of the internment camps and the heroism of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

What do you think are the big issues

for Asian Americans today?

To me, it's anti-Asian violence, which I find very disturbing. It's tied primarily to the success of the Japanese economy and its penetration of the visible American retail market. If the Japanese didn't produce cars and VCRs, and produced instead electrical generators and capital goods, there would be less TV advertising and maybe less violence. I don't know what's going to happen, but I do see around the trade issue some of the same political clustering that led to internment. Not that it will happen again, but the same types of politicians are saying similar kinds of things with the same under- and overtones of racism. This may help to account for the periodic outbreaks of violence.

Now I'll say something unfashionable. In South Central L.A., 15 years ago, there were Japanese American merchants; 25 years ago, Jewish merchants. Today, they are Korean. The evidence shows that anti-Asian violence came not from the Wall Street banker and the old-fashioned redneck, but from blacks and Latinos. Maybe there's some truth in the proposition that all minorities are oppressed by the white power structure, but the proliferation of signs reading "black Owned" during the riot doesn't do much for the theory. At least, for me. Like I say, it's very disturbing.

The other issue, the glass ceiling, is for me less important; not a matter of existential life and death. Asians are perceived as not very good at picking up on the cultural nuances of corporate life. As

they say in Hollywood, we don't give good meeting. I think we'll learn over time. Besides, the people who give good meeting are often the biggest bullshit artists and they have been washed out of corporate America by the thousands during the last recession. Non-producers. Wonks are very often producers. Maybe Bill Clinton will be a wonk producer.

How do you account for the large Republican votes if these are the big issues for Asian Americans?

Election returns over many years show that economic interest alone rarely determines how people vote. One of the nation's most Republican counties, next to Harlan in Kentucky, is also one of its poorest. It was pro-Union and anti-slavery in Lincoln's time, and to this day it casts one of the heaviest Republican margins anywhere. Then look at Scarsdale, NY, one of the country's richest towns, or Bel Air, CA. Both cast among the nation's heaviest Democratic margins. In fact, George McGovern in 1972 clobbered Nixon in Scarsdale.

It is also not clear to me that the Democrats better represent Asians on the issues. Take Clinton's cabinet appointments. No Asians. And this may also be heretical, but I don't see any natural alliance between Asians and upper-middle class women's groups. They know how to play, raise money, to use the media, to get what they want. Asians are not as good, and it's a zero-sum game.

One other thing here. On Japanese American redress, it fell to me to make

sure that people like Dick Cheney, Newt Gingrich, and Vin Weber were on board; also people in the White House, including Ronald Reagan himself. If you talked to these guys—guys I understand because I grew up in Wyoming—and said, "This bill is not about a handout or affirmative action, but about the federal government depriving individual rights guaranteed in the original intent of the Constitution," they said, "Sign me up. Besides, I'm for people who start businesses."

Then too for me the Republicans seemed less paternalistic. From some of the liberal Democrats, I sensed this: "Don't worry your pretty little head about this, Grant. We'll take care of it. Just sit quietly here at the table, but always remember who sits at the head of it." I told Dick Cheney that we Japanese Americans did redress by ourselves. No big white lobbying or PR firm, and on a budget just over \$1 million. Cheney respected that and was a little amazed. It was very important to me and I think to other Japanese Americans that we could say that we did this by ourselves.

It is also not clear to me that the Democrats better represent Asians on the issues. Take Clinton's cabinet appointments. No Asians. And this may also be heretical, but I don't see any natural alliance between Asians and upper-middle class women's groups.

If you had to generalize, where would you say the differences between Asian American groups lie? Are they regional, cultural, or generational?

Among Japanese Americans, I think the main differences are generational, the 40 year old Sansei [third-generation Japanese Americans] vs. the 65 year old Nisei [second-generation Japanese Americans]. Still, what did the Nisei want? Called Japs, they wanted to become part of the American mainstream. It's poignant, really. You watch films of Nisei teenagers in camps and they are wearing bobby socks and doing the jitterbug. And what today are the really articulate politically active Sansei doing? They are seemingly doing the opposite, saying "We have to be ethnically who we are. We can't get co-opted by that ticky-tack middle class crap that our parents went for."

Actually, what I think is going on is a similar kind of desire for assimilation, to be regarded by most as "cool." In 1992, if you're Asian, it's cool to be ethnic. In 1992, the Hollywood and New York media aren't going to say, "Because you're ethnic, we think you stink," which is what they said in 1942. No, the media are saying, "We think you ethnics are cool. Give us more of that."

Compared to other ethnic groups in America, Asians are more closely identified with their home countries. How do you think that affects Asian American policy issues?

I think it's unfortunate... I think there's

as much difference between Irish and Albanians as between Chinese and Cambodians. To fail to pick up on that is in some sense racist. I also think it's bad that someone like Sam Skinner invited some Asian Americans, I among them, to the White House to ask for trade policy help in Tokyo. We say, we can't. He says, you look like you can. Why can't you? We say, because we're Americans like Mickey Rooney and Michael Jordan.

Does Asian American identification ever help?

It can. We are beneficiaries of some positive stereotypes. But I don't like paternalism of any sort, liberal or conservative. If somebody else on the job can do

You watch films of Nisei teenagers in internment camps and they are wearing bobby socks and doing the jitterbug...The really articulate politically active Sansei are doing the seeming opposite, saying 'We have to be ethnically who we are. We can't get co-opted by that ticky-tack middle class crap that our parents went for.'

it better than I can, so be it. If I win, I like to know that other guy was busting his butt to beat me. I have to say too that while lobbying redress some politicians seemed to believe that if they voted wrong, all those Asian Americans out there were

ready to vote against them. I said nothing to disabuse them of that notion. To this extent and contradicting what I just said about Chinese and Cambodians, Japanese Americans benefited from the presence of the newer immigrants. In a democracy, bigger numbers matter.

Was the redress campaign a launching pad for increased activism or did Japanese Americans expend their final burst of political energy?

I don't know. I suppose a well-organized pan-Asian group could wield real power in must-carry California. But I got involved in redress not out of any hopes or worries about the future, but out of what I felt I owed to the past—owed to my parents and four grandparents. Their lives were hard. They sent me to Harvard. My life has been pretty easy and good—the kind of life awaiting most Asian American graduates of elite schools. I'm not worried about them. Maybe anti-Asian violence will call for renewed Asian political activity. I hope not. Put it this way. Asian American politicians will win office, if any, mostly on the basis of white votes. And Asian Americans will succeed or fail in the larger white economy. No other way.

For me, redress was a personal political swan song. I have to spend more time at home. But if it's Asian to believe that the past is not only the past, but it's also the present and the future, then mark me up Asian. This is hardly profound. It's why many Asians are utterly devoted to their parents and to their children.

In doing redress, I also believed that the present can change the past. How so? The signing of the redress bill forever changed the history of Japanese Americans in America. It has to be written differently now.

Interview by Eric Azumi, December 23, 1992.

Broad Outlines for Asian America in the 1990s

Don T. Nakanishi

The following remarks are excerpted from Don Nakanishi's keynote speech given at the Conference on Asian Pacific Islander Americans at the Kennedy School of Government on November 2, 1991.

I'd like to share with you what I think Asian American means politically. I found it interesting and in some ways a little humorous that with the passage of time and increased usage of the term "Asian American" or "Asian Pacific American" by the government, the media, by colleges and universities, corporations, and indeed by Asian Americans themselves, that those who are not familiar with the origins of the term are often suspicious that it has been imposed on us and represents some sort of bureaucratic or administrative ploy. However, the notion that this term is externally imposed leads to a strangely ironic twist in relation to its true historical origins.

The term "Asian American" was first proposed and used in late 1960s by groups of second- and third-generation Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino American students and community activists in both San Francisco and Berkeley as expressions of self-determination and self-definition. The first group to carry this name was the Asian American Political Alliance. Ironically, they coined the term "Asian American" in an effort to reject all of these negative stereotypes and demean-

ing myths that they'd felt had been imposed on them through the more prevalent term "Oriental." Coupled with this new term was a new vision of being Asian American that contained the following general elements.

First, although Asian Pacific Americans had distinct cultures and traditions, it was argued that they shared a common experience of being perceived by and treated by others in American society as being the same, and as a result had faced, both historically and in the contemporary period, similar forms of subtle, invidious, and oftentimes violent acts of racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

Second, despite individual group differences, Asian Americans have much more to gain by uniting and working collectively on common issues of access, representation, and acceptance in American society.

Finally, Asian Pacific Americans, despite the emergence during the mid-60s of the somewhat rival notion of Asian Americans as a model minority, share a common history of racial oppression with other people of color. The term "Asian Ameri-

can" had its origins in the late 60s, a period of substantial societal change and conflict, especially with the civil rights movement, antiwar movement, women's movement, and the rise of the activist student movement. It was a reflection of a collective efforts among American-born Asian Americans to seek self-determination and to define themselves in a rapidly changing America. The term was embraced and used by a wide array of individuals, groups, and institutions, both in and out of the Asian American community during the next two decades of the 70s and 80s. And although there have been questions raised about the strategic and philosophical dimensions of the term during this two-decade period, it seems that in these past few years of significant social change and conflict, the term, and the vision which it represents, has been challenged and questioned perhaps more than ever before. However, at the same time it has been asserted perhaps even more vigorously than ever as well.

... there are now over two million Asian Americans that live in the states that border the Atlantic Ocean. They may still come from a different shore, but they do not necessarily remain there.

I think one very useful vantage point from which to understand the evolution of the term "Asian American" and why it is now being so fully asserted on the one

hand and so fully challenged and almost rejected on the other hand is through a brief overview of the extraordinary demographic changes that have occurred among Asian Americans during this period.

Let's first consider growth. Twenty years ago, in 1971, when I began my doctoral studies, there were 1.5 million Asian Americans across the country according to the then-released 1970 census figures. The 1965 Immigration Act and the subsequent legislative acts in relation to Southeast Asian refugees subsequently served to dramatically increase the Asian American population.

Second, since 1970 the Asian American population has doubled each decade, from 1.5 million in 1970 to 3.5 million in 1980 and to 7.2 million in 1990. Most demographic projections expect nearly another doubling of the Asian American population in the year 2000 to twelve to fifteen million nationally. In 1970 there were 1.5 million Asian Americans nationally. Now in 1990, there are three urban areas with over one million Asian Americans each: the Los Angeles/Southern California area, the San Francisco area, and the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. In 1970, Hawaii had more Asian Americans than any other state. Now in 1990, not only does California have four times more Asian Americans than Hawaii, but areas like Los Angeles County, with one million Asian Americans, and the state of New York with nearly 700 thousand, now have more Asian Americans. And although the Asian American population is clearly

concentrated in California and the Western States, it is worth noting that there are now over two million Asian Americans that live in the states that border the Atlantic Ocean. They may still come from a different shore, but they do not necessarily remain there.

This phenomenal population growth has raised an assortment of questions and issues which Asian Americans in many cases never had the opportunity to propose when they were a smaller population group. In California, for example, where Asian Americans comprise 10% of the state's population with nearly three million, they've begun to ask, like other groups have asked, why their proportional share of the total population is not equitably reflected in the opportunity structure of the public and private institutions and sectors, such as the labor market and seats in the California legislature.

Although much is made about the academic achievement of Asian American students and their subsequent labeling as "whiz kids," the 1990 census data show that 20% of all Asian Americans 25 years or older have less than a high school degree.

This phenomenal growth has also made the vision of a collective and unified Asian Pacific American population and movement a highly compelling, attractive, and important mission. When one considers

the many issues which have served to unite large sectors of Asian Americans across the nation in recent years—the outrage over the killing of Vincent Chin and other acts of anti-Asian violence, concerns about possible admissions quotas against Asian American applicants to colleges and universities, difficulties which Asian American social service agencies and civil rights groups have faced in responding to the delegitimizing effects of the model minority thesis—there appears to be evidence that such a collective vision of the original concept of Asian American can be realized.

But at the same time, along with this tremendous demographic growth has come extraordinary diversity. In 1971, for example, Japanese Americans were the largest Asian Pacific American group; they were heavily concentrated in California, Hawaii, and the Western states, were predominantly American born, and largely spoke English. By 1980, both Chinese and Filipinos were moving ahead of Japanese Americans, and both groups greatly outpaced Japanese Americans by 1990. By the year 2000, it is projected that the Japanese American population—unless there is a tremendous and absolutely unprecedented rise in their immigration or their sexual behavior—will fall further down as Filipino, Chinese, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Asian Indians outnumber them.

Third, since the growth of the Asian Pacific population during the last few decades has been largely fueled by immigration, it is only logical that the total Asian Pacific American population in every group other than Japanese Americans now

has more foreign-born than native-born individuals. Indeed, by 1980, 59% of all Asian Americans in the United States were foreign-born.

However, one cannot treat this foreign-born majority in a monolithic manner. There are significant differences between immigrants and refugees. On other dimensions, too, the diversity of Asian Americans is striking. For example, although much is made about the academic achievement of Asian American students and their subsequent labeling as "whiz kids," the 1990 census data also show that 20% of all Asian Americans 25 years or over have less than a high school degree. When these data are further disaggregated by ethnic group, gender, and age, the differences are even more startling.

This diversity, however one may want to describe it with respect to different variables, often leads to a divergence rather than a convergence of social issues and concerns. In the past 18 months, I've co-chaired a task force by a group called Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics which is attempting to establish the first national Asian Pacific American public policy institute. In the course of our investigation we've interviewed many community leaders and spokespeople and found quite different issue agendas over a wide array of Asian Americans. Simply considering the differences between refugees and more established groups, we can see the difference in terms of their issue orientation.

For refugees, for example, we found the following policy priorities:

1. problems with acculturation and as-

similation

2. the need for job training programs and unemployment services
3. serious concerns about youth-related problems including youth gangs and delinquency
4. the need for the development of education and language skills
5. the need for counseling service centers
6. the need for programs for the elderly
7. a need to establish mental health centers; and,
8. a need for family resource centers.

In contrast, in the more established groups, we found this set of priorities:

1. discrimination issues, focusing on violence against Asian Americans and growing anti-Asian sentiments
2. economic issues, such as economic barriers imposed by the model minority myth and the glass ceiling syndrome
3. concerns about education, principally admissions policies and equal access to universities
4. empowerment issues, politically as well as economically and socially
5. services for the elderly
6. cultural conflict such as cultural identity and concerns about the rates of outmarriages; and,
7. the need for leadership development programs including those that address upward mobility and career development issues.

These, in general, are the broad outlines of Asian America in the 1990s. It is a large, continuously growing, continually assertive and yet significantly di-

verse population which is clearly headed somewhere and somehow, although it's difficult to predict where and how with any degree of certainty. The 1990s should be an important, compelling, and exciting period for Asian Pacific Americans.

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CAPAL is a group of young Asian Pacific Americans who work in Washington, D.C. We are legislative staffers, community advocates, executive branch civil servants, policy analysts, and D.C. government representatives.

Our goal is to encourage more Asian Pacific Americans to participate in the political process and to expose Asian Pacific American interns to the public and non-profit sectors in Washington, D.C.

This summer, we invite you to spend a few months in Washington as an intern and to participate in a series of educational activities designed to address issues and concerns that are unique to the Asian Pacific American community. For more information on available internships this summer, write or call for an internship packet.

In memory of one of its founders, CAPAL has established Asha Jaini stipends for students who have summer internships in public sector positions in Washington, DC. Interested students should write or call for an application.

CAPAL

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