

ASIAN AMERICAN POLICY REVIEW

Volume IX • 2000

APAs in the New Millennium



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Gary Locke

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Chinese Destinations: Sharon K. Hom, *Chinese Women
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ASIAN
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Volume IX • 2000

Asian Pacific Americans in the New Millennium



John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

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FROM THE EDITORS

We are pleased to present you with the ninth volume of the *Asian American Policy Review*. Pursuing a specialized mission of publishing on Asian Pacific American¹ politics and policy is not without its challenges. However, we believe that it remains vitally important to keep the gates open to one of the few forums for discussing the policies, politics, and issues that affect our community.

Our mission is growing increasingly critical. The public furor over recent events — such as the campaign finance scandals and the allegations of espionage against Dr. Wen Ho Lee — profoundly shapes the way our community participates in politics and policy-making. The *Asian American Policy Review* intends to be an influential player in shaping that dialogue in the months leading up to Elections 2000 and beyond.

To mark the turn-of-the-century, we dedicated this volume to discussion of the challenges and opportunities facing APAs in the new millenium. We sought submissions that grappled with the public policies and social issues likely to impact the APA community in the twenty-first century. Happily, we present in this volume an excellent collection of such articles, spanning perspectives from research, advocacy, and politics.

Governor Gary Locke starts us off with a compelling call-to-action for stronger Asian Pacific American leadership. The research pieces that follow analyze the specific challenges and opportunities inherent in responding to this call. **Min Zhou** and **James V. Gatewood** propose an innovative ‘re-mapping’ of the APA community based on tensions of diversity and contemporary politics in America. **Taeku Lee** examines the response of Chinese Americans’ to the controversy surrounding the campaign finance activities of Asians and Asian Americans during the 1996 elections. **Albert Hahn** presents an in-depth analysis of how the tabulation of responses to the multiple race categories in the 2000 Census might impact population counts, and the corresponding political power, of APAs. **Lisa Tsai** offers a framework for understanding and analyzing the successes and failures of APA political candidates in electoral politics.

William Julius Wilson’s commentary urges us to recognize the need and potential for building political coalitions that transcend racial divides. **Lane Ryo Hirabayashi** and **Lindsay Hull**’s interview with **Professor Glenn Omatsu** reveals how an unconventional approach to teaching contemporary APA issues can draw out the connection between education and empowerment, and between theory and practice. Finally, through his review of the two recent works by Sharon Hom and Lynn Pan, **Frank H. Wu** reflects on the significance of the diaspora concept and concludes that a multiracial and muticultural democracy could resolve the inherent dilemmas therein.

¹ We use the term “Asian Pacific American” without privileging it over other terms such as “Asian American” or “Asian Pacific Islander.” Throughout the remainder of this volume, we have left the usage of terms to the authors’ discretion.

FROM THE EDITORS

Together, the articles in this volume urge us to take action and to do so with a well-developed understanding of the emerging political realities that are likely to affect our endeavors. They provide insights which are particularly salient today and which promise to remain relevant well into the next millennium.

James Koshiba
Janice Yoojin Lee
Editors-in-Chief

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The Need for Asian American Leadership: A Call to Action

Gary Locke

At the cusp of the new millennium, civilizations, cultures, and individuals worldwide are pausing to reflect upon where we are going and where we have been. So it is especially appropriate for the Asian American Policy Review to focus the present volume on “Asian Pacific Americans in the New Millennium.” What is the current state of Asian America? What opportunities and challenges face our community? And what will we need to prepare for as we enter the uncharted waters of a new millennium?

In an era of rapid, far-reaching, and complex change, we cannot imagine all of the things the next century will require of us. We can, however, prepare for our journey, and the journeys of our children, by building upon our strengths and collective memories. This preparation will provide our community with a sturdy, seaworthy vessel that will prevail through the rough seas ahead.

First, we must remember our history, which is the raw material from which our present is constructed.

Second, we must take control of the present, which is the structure upon which we shall sail.

And third, we must develop leadership, which will be the wind that powers our sails. By leadership, I do not mean just elected leaders in government. We need a new generation of leaders in all sectors — public, private, and nonprofit — to create a more vibrant and healthy Asian American community.

Although the Asian population in the United States increased dramatically after the Immigration Act of 1965, Asian Americans have been in the United States for well over 150 years. My own family’s history in America began in the late 1800s when my grandfather came to this country and worked as a houseboy for a family that lived about a mile from where I now live in the Governor’s mansion.

Although the family my grandfather worked for was kind and helped him learn English in return for his work, those were not the best of times for Asian Americans or other minority Americans. In fact, non-white Americans were excluded from churches, barbershops, and restaurants. They were forced to sit in the balconies of movie theaters and the back seats of buses. Children were required to attend segre-

Gary Locke is Governor of Washington State.

gated schools and workers received lower wages than their white counterparts for doing the same job.

Furthermore, unlike European immigrants, Asians were also victimized by policies that institutionalized racial discrimination. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 made it unlawful for Chinese laborers to enter the United States. This prohibition was broadened in 1888 to include "all persons of the Chinese race."¹ Congress did not repeal this act until the 1940s. Other Asian groups also faced exclusionary policies. The Immigration Act of 1924, for example, stated that "no aliens ineligible to citizenship"² could be admitted to the United States. This law, of course, effectively blocked Asian immigration since the Naturalization Law of 1790 specified that naturalized citizenship was reserved for "whites" only. Unlike their European counterparts, Asian immigrants could not become citizens or exercise their rights through the ballot box. As "aliens ineligible to citizenship," they were also prohibited by the laws of many states from land ownership. The 1922 Cable Act even went a step further by stating that any American woman who married "an alien ineligible to citizenship" would cease to be a citizen of the United States.

Although we cannot undo the injustices of the past, it is critical that we understand that our history of racism and exclusion is *recent* history. Only two generations ago — during my grandfather's lifetime — slavery existed as an important part of our economy. Only two generations ago — again during my grandfather's lifetime — Congress, acting on anti-Chinese sentiment, passed the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Japanese Americans faced the internment camps in the forties. Constitutionally guaranteed civil rights were denied to over 120,000 men, women, and children of Japanese descent. Two-thirds of those interned were U.S. citizens by birth.³ The incarceration of our Japanese American brothers and sisters behind barbed wire fences in internment camps is now recognized as one of the worst civil rights violations in our country's history.

The vestiges of laws restricting Asian Americans' rights were not lifted until the latter half of this century. The Naturalization Law of 1790, for example, was not lifted until 1952. We are the first generation of Asian Americans to be free from the shackles of legal discrimination. It is, therefore, our generation's obligation and privilege to honor our ancestors' struggle for equality by embracing the opportunities before us.

The good news is that Asian Americans are one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the nation and are actively participating in our national economy and culture. However, Asian Americans have one of the lowest rates of voter participation among all ethnic groups. After having been denied basic rights for so long, Asian Americans should use the power that they are now free to enjoy as citizens.

We have made tremendous progress as a nation. As this country's first Chinese American governor on the U.S. mainland, I am honored to be an emblem of that progress.

I am also proud to be the governor of a pioneer state that has a long history of electing women and people of color, in spite of the fact that we are a small percent-

age of the population. For example, in the 1996 primary election, the top two vote-getters in the governor's race were myself and Norm Rice, the African American mayor of Seattle.

Between the two of us, we captured over 40 percent of the vote in a field of 15 Democrat and Republican candidates. I like to think that the state of Washington retains the spirit of openness, adventure, and community that were the hallmarks of its first people and its first immigrants.

My generation actively participated in the Civil Rights movement during the 1960s. We made tremendous progress in establishing laws and policies to ensure that all Americans, regardless of color, would be treated equally and fairly. Today, in both the public and the private sectors, Asian Americans are thriving as economists, scientists, managers, attorneys, health care practitioners, child development specialists, artists, actors, and in thousands of other professions. We can rightfully be proud of how much we're contributing to America and how far we have come in this century.

Yet, at the same time, there remain great challenges. Not all Asian Americans are benefiting from the new economy. Despite higher educational attainment and high median family income, the poverty rate for Asian American families is often higher than that for white families.⁴ And within some Asian American ethnic communities, especially the newer immigrant communities, there is low educational attainment and access.

Furthermore, we still see occurrences of anti-Asian violence. The 1999 murders of Korean student Won-Joon Yoon by white supremacist Benjamin Nathaniel Smith in Indiana and Filipino American postman Joseph Ito by another white supremacist, Buford Furrow, in Los Angeles are unfortunate reminders that racially motivated violence is still alive.

We are also seeing stronger assaults on affirmative action in this post-civil rights era. Recent litigation and ballot initiatives all over the country are eliminating valuable tools for increasing equal opportunity. The recent political scandals involving Asian Americans (e.g., campaign donations and the Wen Ho Lee case) perpetuate the stereotype that all Asians are foreigners and that ethnicity ultimately determines loyalty. I am as adamant as anyone else in the belief that we ought to fix what is wrong with our campaign finance system and that national security is critical. But it is just plain wrong to be suspicious of all Asian Americans based upon the actions of a few.

To address these growing challenges, we need to respond as a community. We need to register to vote and make sure the issues we care about are heard, represented, and addressed. More Asian Americans need to run for public office so that we are at the table when laws that affect all of us are influenced and made. And, as we move forward into the new millennium, we have to make sure that we are developing a new generation of leadership.

We need leaders who will oppose the national attack on affirmative action. For me, affirmative action has never been about quotas or hiring unqualified persons. Affirmative action is simply the opposite of *passive inaction*. It is about con-

sciously considering those who have been excluded in the past. We need leaders who will fight for education because it is society's great equalizer. We need leaders who will talk about why it is wrong to judge and punish an entire ethnic group for individual actions. We need leaders who will combat hate crimes and protect the rights of immigrants. We need leaders who will continue to speak out against prejudice, to participate in the political life of this country, and to promote a vision of equal treatment and equal opportunity for everyone.

We need leaders to push this period of backlash into a cycle of real progress in the new century. Leadership can take many forms but it requires each of us to take personal responsibility in educating ourselves about these issues and taking action to improve our communities. Each and every one of us can make a difference. Elected officials and the government cannot do it all or alone.

We bring into the new century a legacy of the blood, sweat, and tears of our parents and our grandparents who helped make this country all that it is today. We owe it to our ancestors to take action that will guarantee that the children of the twenty-first century do not have to live through the cycles of discrimination that have marred our own coming of age.

The future of our children depends upon our willingness to take action and get involved in strengthening our communities. I have absolute confidence that we are both willing and able. That is why as we stand ready to sail into the new millennium, I am filled with hope and optimism.

In a little town in Vermont, there is a think tank called the Center for Living Democracy. Their web page has the following saying: "Democracy is not what we *have*; it's what we *do*." I could not agree more. Will you "do" democracy with me?

Will you take the time to educate, to listen, to share, and take action to create a more healthy and vibrant Asian American community and to make sure *all* Americans have equal access to opportunity?

I hope so. Let us use our collective power to keep moving America forward.

Endnotes

¹ There were some exemptions for Chinese officials, teachers, students, tourists, and merchants.

² Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1989, 14.

³ Takaki, 15.

⁴ Larry Hajime Shinagawa, "The Impact of Immigration to the Demography of Asian Pacific Americans" in *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac*, UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1998-99, 72.

Mapping the Terrain: Asian American Diversity and the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century¹

Min Zhou and James V. Gatewood

Diversity is the hallmark of the contemporary Asian American community. The influx of Asian immigrants in response to the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act and broader economic, social, and geopolitical factors has brought new challenges for the adaptation of new immigrants and their children to American society. As the community continues to grow in number, so too will their representation in the broader cultural, economic, and political milieu that we typify as "mainstream American society." In this article, the authors attempt to provide readers with a description of the profound changes that have taken place in the last three decades and a survey of the terrain that makes up contemporary Asian America. Specifically, they explore a number of pertinent questions: How has contemporary immigration reshaped Asian America? How do diverse waves of Asian immigrant groups pose challenges to the Asian American community? How do members of the second generation cope with the exigencies of American life? What are some of the undue pressures placed upon them as they confront the model minority stereotype? To what extent and on what occasions are different Asian American groups redefining ethnicity and forging pan-ethnic coalitions? As they delve into these issues, the authors attempt to locate their analysis as a mapping of the contemporary community: how the steady influx of Asian immigrants will continue to impact the Asian American community and what challenges the community currently faces as it is claiming America.

The problem of the twentieth century, as the eminent scholar W.E.B. DuBois asserted, was the problem of the color line (DuBois 1989); this remains as true in the year 2000 as it did then. New challenges, however, have emerged from the rapidly changing landscape of contemporary Asian America to test the limits of tolerance. In the new millennium, meaningful dialogue will be predicated upon the recognition of diversity not only among different racial groups within the United States and globally, but also the diversity from within. The contemporary Asian American

Min Zhou is Professor of Sociology and Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. James V. Gatewood is a graduate student of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. This article is adapted from Contemporary Asian America: A Multi-Disciplinary Reader (New York University Press, 2000), of which they are co-editors. Reprint permission from New York University Press.

community is emblematic of this condition and, in its diversity, will provide a unique model with which to test the sophistication of policy makers in ascribing to them a particular agency.

In our re-mapping of the Asian American terrain, we do not simply aim at providing our readers with a formulaic pattern that explains *en toto* the course that the community will collectively chart in the next several decades. Rather, we seek multiple abstractions based upon the notion that it is the diversity of the contemporary Asian American community that will prove to be its greatest strength, or conversely, its ultimate undoing.

TRANS-PACIFIC MOVEMENT: THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRATION FROM ASIA

Between 1971 and 1995, approximately 17.1 million immigrants came to the United States, almost matching the total numbers of those who arrived during the first quarter of the century (17.2 million admissions between 1901 and 1925) when immigration was at its peak.² Unlike turn-of-the-century immigrants, however, today's newcomers have come predominantly from non-European countries. Since the 1980s, 88 percent of the immigrants admitted to the United States have come from the Americas (excluding Canada) and Asia, and only 10 percent from Europe, compared to more than 90 percent at the earlier peak. The share of immigrants from Asia as a proportion of total admissions grew from a tiny 5 percent in the 1950s, to 11 percent in the 1960s and 33 percent the 1970s, and has remained at 35 percent since 1980.³ The Philippines, China, Taiwan, Korea, India, and Vietnam have been on the list of top-ten countries sending immigrants since 1980 (USINS 1997). What is the main source of this massive immigration in recent years, particularly from Asia? We consider the relaxation of U.S. immigrant policy and a complex array of economic, geopolitical, and social factors as the key contributors to the current state of Asian America.

Immigration Policy

The development of the Asian American community has been intrinsically intertwined with U.S. immigration policy. Beginning with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, various laws were passed by Congress to restrict immigrants from the Asia-Pacific Triangle and to single out Asian immigrants for exclusion on the basis of race. Asian immigrants were not only barred from re-entering the country, but also were considered "aliens ineligible to citizenship," which precluded them from owning land, attaining professional occupations, sending for their family members, out-marrying, and becoming full and equal participants in American society.

It was only during World War II — a watershed in the history of the Asian American community — that changes were first introduced to immigration law. With the exception of Japan, the United States began to amend restrictive legislation by first repealing the Chinese Exclusion Act (in 1943) and subsequent mea-

asures barring Koreans and Asian Indians from citizenship. Later, the United States passed the War Brides Act (in 1945) that allowed American soldiers to reunite with their Asian brides in the United States. Meanwhile, the public's perception of Asian Americans began to shift from one of "yellow peril" to "model minority." Even Japanese Americans — more than 110,000 of whom were incarcerated in American concentration camps during World War II — underwent a public transformation in the postwar period from potential fifth-column participants to that of loyal Americans, thanks in no small part to the heroic efforts of the all-Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team and 100th Infantry Battalion (Duus 1987; Yoo 2000).⁴ In 1952, Congress passed the McCarran-Walter Act, making all national origin groups eligible for naturalization and eliminating race as a bar to immigration, but still keeping the national origins quota system. Despite legislative relaxation, the number of immigrants admitted legally from Asia to the United States, when measured as a proportion of the total admissions, was still extremely low: 3.6 percent in the 1940s and 6.1 percent in the 1950s (USINS 1997).

The United States entered the turbulent decade of the 1960s, when it became entangled in an unpopular war in Vietnam while also entering the height of the civil rights movement taking place at home. Both international and domestic crises forced Congress to address the remaining discriminatory immigration legislation. Meanwhile, labor market projections showed that an acute shortage of engineering and medical personnel would soon materialize unless the United States opened its door to foreign labor.

As a result, Congress passed the Hart-Cellar Act in 1965. This landmark piece of legislation abolished the national origins quota system and aimed at reuniting families as well as importing labor needed in the U.S. economy. Since the law went into effect in 1968, immigration from Asia and the Americas has accelerated rapidly, with little sign of slowing down. Between 1971 and 1996, a total of 5.8 million Asians were admitted into the United States as legal immigrants (not counting the thousands of refugees), the majority of whom were either family-sponsored migrants (more than two-thirds) or employer-sponsored skilled workers (about one-fifth).

Since World War II, immigration policy has reshaped the nature of the Asian American community, transforming it from bachelor societies into full-fledged family communities marked by drastic diversity in national origins, socioeconomic backgrounds, and settlement patterns. However, the driving forces behind Asian immigrant are beyond the scope of such formal immigration policies. The globalization of the U.S. economy since the 1960s has forged an extensive economic, cultural, and ideological link between the United States and developing countries in the Pacific Rim.

Globalization

Globalization perpetuates emigration in two significant ways. First, U.S. capital investments into Asian countries transform the economic and occupational structures in these countries by disproportionately targeting production for export, and

taking advantage of raw material and cheap labor. Such development, characterized by the robust growth of low-skilled jobs in export manufacturing, draws a large number of rural, and particularly female, workers into the urban labor markets. Increased rural-urban migration, in turn, causes underemployment and displacement of the urban work force, creating an enormous pool of potential emigrants (Sassen 1989). Second, economic development following the American model in many developing countries stimulates consumption and raises expectations regarding the standard of living. The widening gap between consumers' expectations and the available standards of living in developing countries, combined with easy access to information and migration networks, creates tremendous pressure for emigration (Portes and Rumbaut 1996).

On the U.S. side, unprecedented growth in capital-intensive, high-tech industries and in professional services has created a severe shortage of qualified workers to fill positions in the primary labor market. Seeking a more immediate solution to this shortage, American corporations and policy-makers have actively recruited skilled workers in foreign labor markets. Since the 1980s, about one-third of the engineers and medical personnel in the U.S. labor market have come from abroad — mostly from India, China, Taiwan, and the Philippines.

The shortage of skilled labor, however, is not a sufficient explanation for the trends in highly skilled migration, since skilled immigration disproportionately originates from selected countries in Asia (almost 60 percent of the total skilled immigration in 1995). In many Asian homelands that disproportionately send their highly skilled emigrants, changing opportunity structures in conjunction with the global integration of higher education and advanced training in the United States contribute to this particular pattern of migration (Liu and Cheng 1994). The emergence of American universities as the premier training ground for international students has also been instrumental in supplying the U.S. economy with skilled labor. (Ong et al. 1992). Many foreign students have found permanent employment in the United States after completing their studies or practical training. In the 1995 fiscal year alone, for example, close to 40 percent of the immigrants from mainland China were admitted under employment-based preferences, and almost all of them had received higher education or training in the United States (USINS 1997).

U.S. Military Involvement in Southeast Asia and Refugee Exodus

Refugee flight from Southeast Asia constitutes an important component of contemporary Asian immigration. The United States originally held little economic interest in the region, but was motivated by what it considered to be a pervasive communist threat to Asia during that period. The development of the communist bloc dominated by the former Soviet Union, the communist takeover in China in the late 1940s, and the direct confrontation with communist troops in the Korean War prompted a U.S. foreign policy aimed at "containing" communism, a response which ultimately prompted an American military presence in Indochina. The Vietnam War, its expansion into Southeast Asia, and political turmoil in the region left millions of people living in poverty, starvation, and constant fear, while forcing many others to

flee from their homelands. An ironic result is that sizable parts of the populations of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia are now in America (Rumbaut 1995): as of 1996, more than 700,000 refugees from Vietnam, 210,000 from Laos, and 135,000 from Cambodia had been admitted to the United States (USINS 1997; Zhou and Bankston 2000).

Southeast Asian refugees fled their countries in different waves. Although Saigon, Vientiane, and Phnom Penh all fell to Communist forces at roughly the same time in 1975, only the Vietnamese and a small number of the Hmong resistance force had the privilege of being "paroled" (being allowed under special provision of the law) into the United States immediately after the war. Approximately 130,000 Vietnamese refugees and only 3,500 Hmong refugees landed on U.S. soil in 1975 (Chan 1994), while the majority of Hmong resistance forces, Laotian loyalists, and Cambodians sought refuge in Thailand. A large refugee exodus occurred at the end of the 1970s, during "the second wave," when thousands of refugees fled Vietnam by boat and created the "boat people" crisis, while many others fled on land to China and Thailand. It was reported that almost half of the "boat people" perished at sea, and the remaining half ended up in refugee camps in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong. Thousands of refugees also fled Laos and Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia) on land to seek refuge in crowded camps along the Thai border. Despite harsh repatriation efforts by the Thai government, about 600,000 Cambodians (15 percent of the country's population) and some 100,000 Hmong and 200,000 lowland Laotians (10 percent of the country's population) fled on land to Thailand, awaiting resettlement in a third country (Chan 1991).

Migration Networks

Extensive and institutionalized migration networks perpetuate international migration once set in motion. Networks are formed and sustained by ties of the family, kin, and friendship. Built through the process of migration, these networks facilitate international migration because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to such movement (Massey et al. 1987). U.S. immigration policy has been instrumental in sustaining and expanding family migration networks. The Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 and its subsequent amendments give preference to family reunification, providing immediate relatives of U.S. citizens with unlimited visa numbers and other relatives with the majority of visa allocations subject to the numerical cap. More than two-thirds of legal immigrants admitted to the United States since the 1970s have been sponsored by family members. Even among employer-sponsored migrants and hardship-traumatized refugees, the role of networking is crucial. Family, kin, and friendship networks also tend to expand exponentially, serving as a conduit to additional and thus potentially self-perpetuating migration. In the next decade or so, immigration from Asia is expected to continue at its high volume because many recent immigrants and refugees will have established citizenship status and will become eligible sponsors able to reunite in the United States.

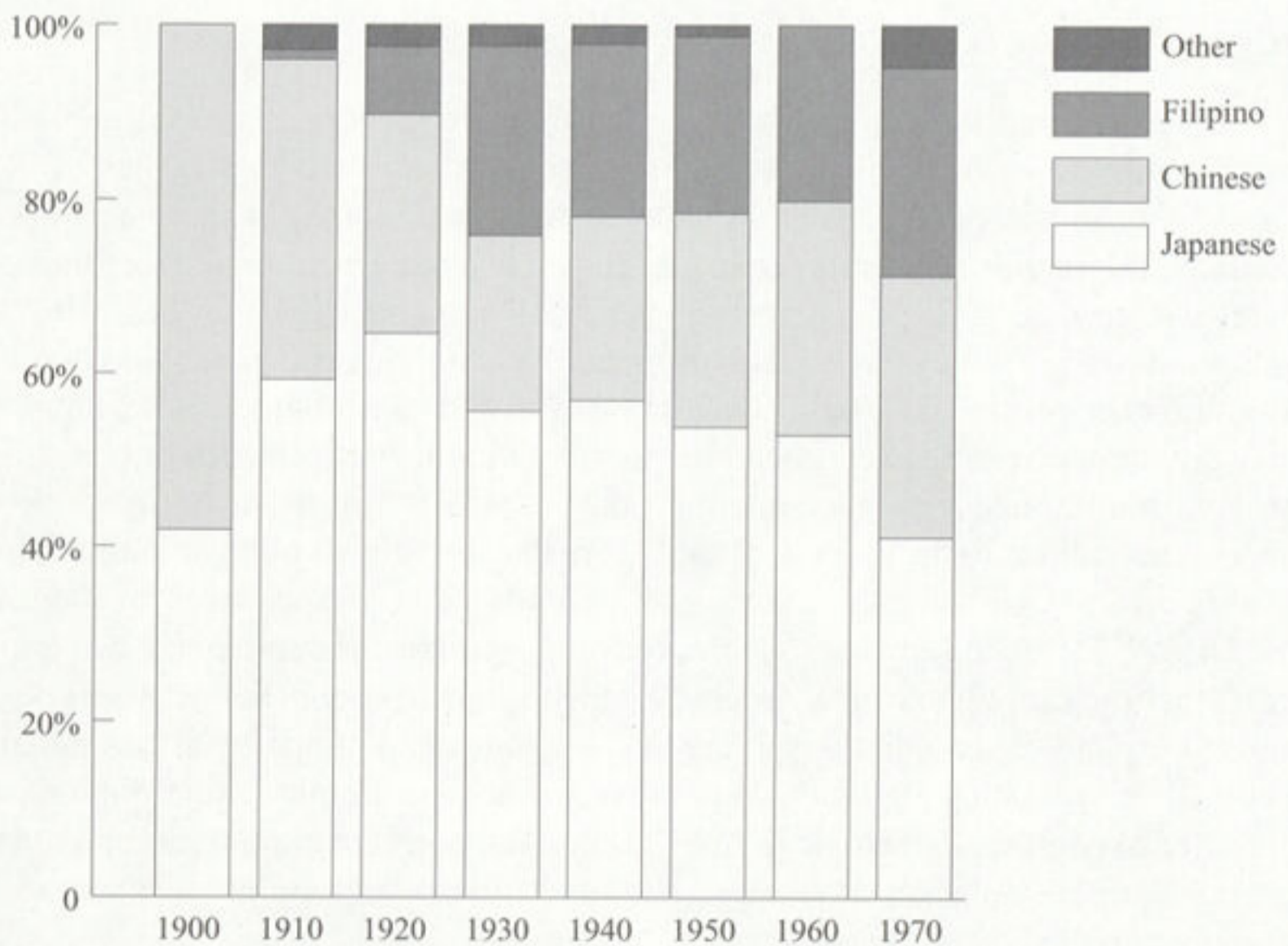
Overall, contemporary immigration has been influenced and perpetuated not simply by the Hart-Cellar Act but also by the interplay of the complex set of macro- and micro-structural forces that we have just discussed. Understanding its dynamics requires a reconceptualized framework — one that takes into account the effects of globalization, uneven political and economic developments in developing countries, and the role of the United States in world affairs, as well as the social processes of international migration. The result of these processes are the high levels of immigration that remain an inseparable part of Asian American life, and the extraordinary diversity within the Asian American community.

TRANSFORMATION: THE CURRENT STATE OF ASIAN AMERICA

Population Dynamics

Immigration is transforming Asian America in ways unanticipated by long-time Asian immigrants and their American-born children. Although Asian Americans as a collective entity are few in number, comprising less than 4 percent of the U. S. population, they have aggressively asserted their presence in the American milieu, fighting their way with varied success into mainstream economic, social, and political institutions. Before the immigration surge that occurred in the late 1960s,

FIGURE 1. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION: 1900-1970



Source: Barringer et al. 1993. *Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States*, p. 42.

the Asian American population was but a tiny fraction of the total U.S. population — about one-third of a percent in 1900 and 0.7 percent in 1970 — and was composed primarily of three national-origin groups — Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino. Figure 1 shows the percentage distribution of the Asian American population from 1900 to 1970 (Barringer et al. 1993). During the first three decades of the twentieth century, Asians in America were mainly either Chinese or Japanese adult immigrants. The next four decades saw a significant increase in the proportion of Filipinos, who were mostly brought into the United States to fill the labor shortage caused by anti-Asian legislation and the restrictive National Origins Act of 1924. By 1970, Japanese Americans were the largest national origin group, making up 41 percent of the Asian American population, followed by Chinese Americans (30 percent) and Filipino Americans (24 percent). Members of other national origin groups (mostly Koreans) represented less than 5 percent of the total.

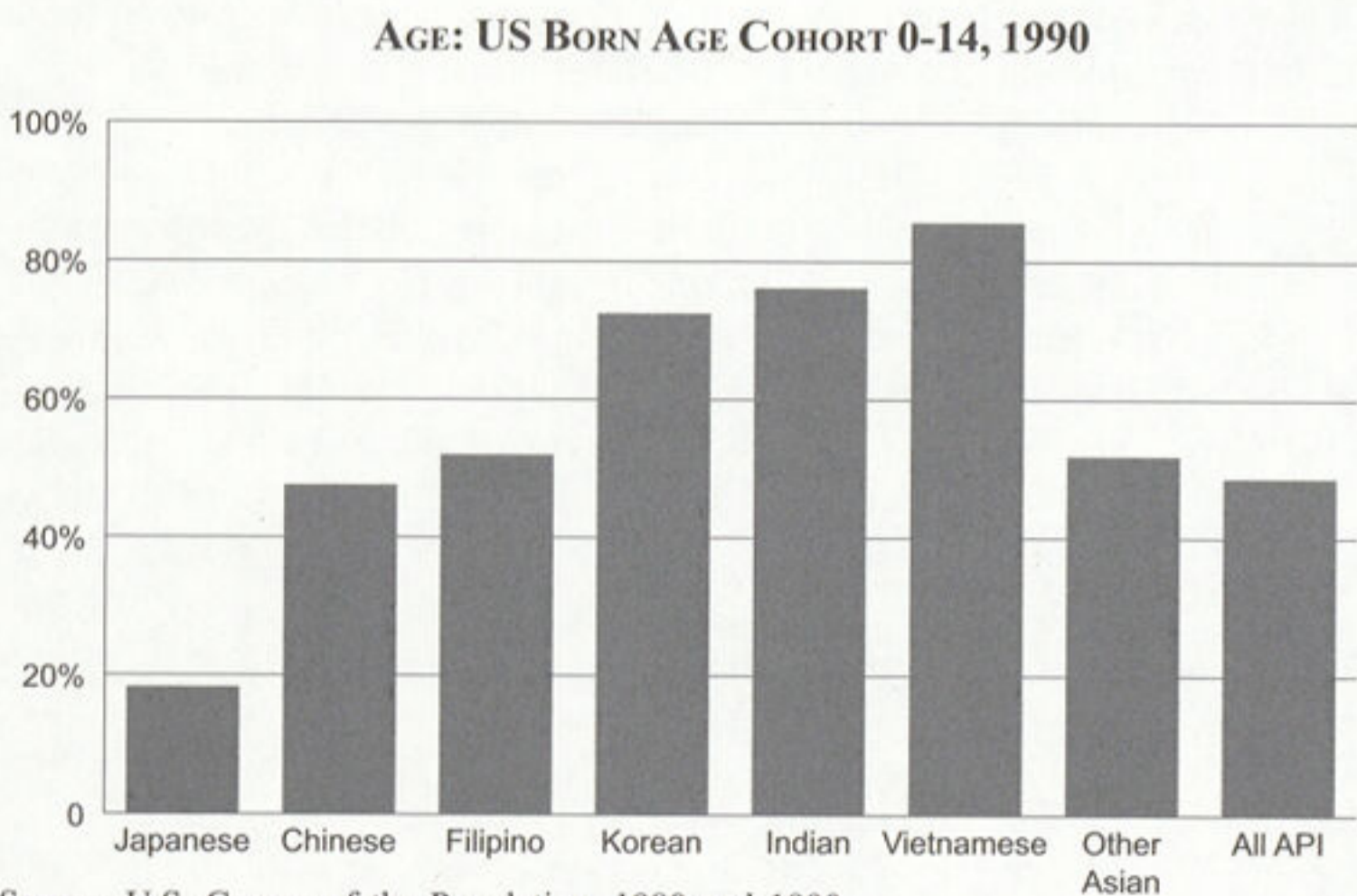
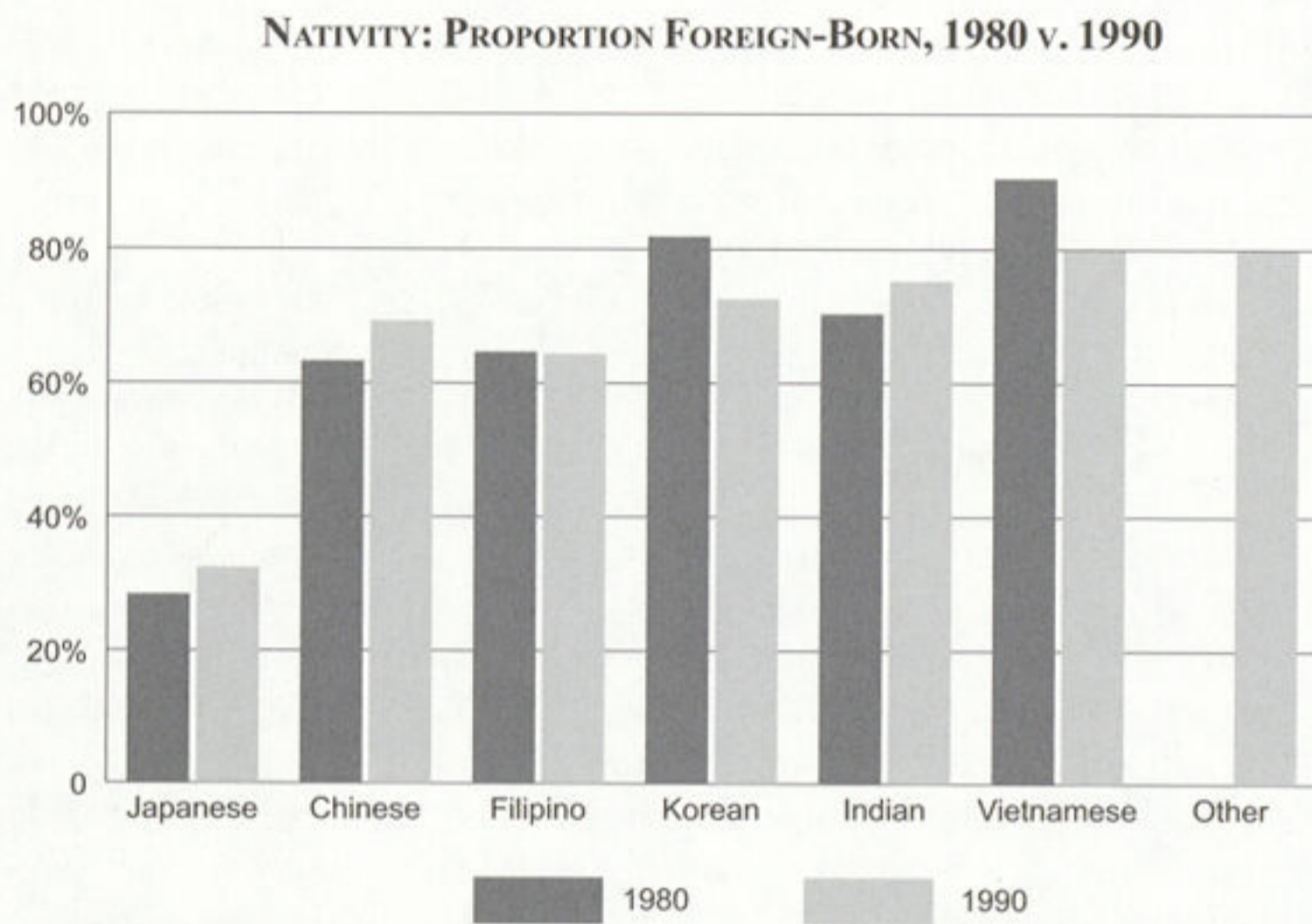
Pre-World War II immigrants from Asia represented less than 5 percent of the total new arrivals admitted to the United States, a direct result of anti-Asian prejudice and various restrictive immigration laws. Most of the earlier Asian immigrants came from China and Japan, with a much smaller number from the Philippines, India, and Korea. These earlier immigrants, like “the tired, huddled masses” from Europe, were typically poor and uneducated peasants, and many of them intended to make a quick fortune to bring back to their homelands. Because of the drastic differences in migration histories among the earlier Asian-origin groups, only Japanese immigrants were able to develop family-based communities with a significant U.S.-born population in the pre-WWII period. Chinatowns, the rather dispersed Filipino American enclaves, and other Asian immigrant communities were primarily bachelor societies, with single adult males overrepresented and with few women, children, and families (Chan 1991; Takaki 1989; Zhou 1992).

Contemporary Asian immigration has reshaped Asian America. Since the 1970s, the Asian American population has grown rapidly and has become increasingly diverse. In sheer numbers, the Asian and Pacific Islander population grew from a total of 1.4 million in 1970, to 7.3 million in 1990, and to almost 9 million in 1997 (in contrast to 205,000 in 1900). This growth was an impressive five-fold increase in just two decades, and more than two-thirds of the total population growth is attributed to immigration. The ethnic populations of most of the new national-origin groups — Indians, Koreans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, and the Hmong — grew at spectacular rates, almost entirely because of immigration. It is estimated that if the current levels of net immigration, intermarriage, and ethnic affiliation hold, the size of the Asian population will increase from 9 million in 1995 to 34 million in 2050, growing from 3 to 8 percent of the total U.S. population (Smith and Edmonston 1997). Such unprecedented growth suggests that the majority of Asian Americans today are either immigrants or children of immigrants. It also signifies a dramatic change in the nature of the Asian American community, whose most urgent issues will continue to be linked to immigration and immigrant adaptation.

Recent Asian immigration highlights two other distinct demographic characteristics of the Asian American population: a disproportionately large foreign-born

component and a disproportionately young native-born component. As indicated in the upper panel of Figure 2, the foreign-born component dominates all Asian American groups, except for Japanese Americans: 64 percent of Filipinos, and nearly 80 percent of Vietnamese and other Asians are foreign born. While many

FIGURE 2. ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION: NATIVITY AND AGE



Source: U.S. Census of the Population, 1980 and 1990.

immigrant children move with their parents, the great majority of the immigrant generation is of working age. By contrast, the native-born Asian American population — the new second generation — is an extremely young group. As shown in the lower panel of Figure 2, more than half of native-born Asian Americans are under 15 years of age; again, Japanese Americans are the one exception to this rule. Among the new groups, more than 75 percent are in this young age cohort. One implication of this emerging new second generation is that it will grow up in an era of continuously high immigration, joined by a sizeable foreign born cohort — the 1.5 generation (arriving in the U.S. prior to age 13) — whose members are far more diverse in ethnic backgrounds, timing of immigration, degree of acculturation, orientation, and outlook. This is a situation quite distinct from that which faced the second generation of immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s, because of restrictive immigration.

Diverse National Origins

The dramatic growth in absolute numbers of Asian immigrants has been accompanied by increasing ethnic diversity within the Asian American population itself. As of 1990, the U.S. Census recorded 17 national origin groups and eight Pacific Islander groups (see Table 1). Since 1980, no single group has accounted for more than one third of the Asian American population. While major national-origin groups were proportionally represented in 1990, other national-origin groups — among them, Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong — marked their presence in Asian America for the very first time. Because of the unique migration patterns in each of the originating countries, national origins are strongly associated with the type of legal admission (family-sponsored, employer-sponsored, or refugees) and with the skill level of immigrants. For example, many Filipino immigrants to the United States are college graduates with transferable job skills; many are physicians and nurses sponsored by U.S. employers in the health care industry. Indian immigrants are mostly employed as physicians and computer programmers, as well as small entrepreneurs. Koreans are predominantly middle-class professionals but tend to be disproportionately self-employed in small-scale retail trade. Chinese immigrants are more mixed, including fairly even proportions of rural peasants, urban workers, and the highly skilled. Southeast Asian refugees, in contrast, were pushed out of their homelands by force and suffer tremendous post-war trauma and social displacement, compounded by a lack of education and professional skills.

Diverse Socioeconomic Status

Another distinguishing characteristic of contemporary immigrants from Asia is their diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The 1990 U.S. Census attests to the vast differences in levels of education, occupation, and income by national origins. For example, more than 60 percent of immigrants (age 25 years or older) from India and Taiwan reported having attained college degrees, three times the proportion of average Americans, but fewer than 5 percent of those from Cambodia and Laos so reported. Among the employed workers (age 16 years or older), close to 45 percent

of immigrants from India and Taiwan held managerial or professional occupations, more than twice the proportion of average American workers, but fewer than 5 percent of those from Laos and only about 10 percent of those from Cambodia so reported. Further, immigrants from India, the Philippines, and Taiwan reported a median household income of about or above \$45,000, compared to \$30,000 for

TABLE 1. ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION: 1980–1990

	1980	% Total	1990	% Total
Chinese	812,178	21.6%	1,645,472	22.8%
Filipino	781,894	20.8%	1,406,770	19.5%
Japanese	716,331	19.0%	847,652	11.7%
Indian	387,223	10.3%	815,447	11.3%
Korean	357,393	9.5%	798,849	11.1%
Vietnamese	245,025	6.5%	614,547	8.5%
Cambodian	16,044	0.4%	149,047	2.1%
Laotian	5,204	0.1%	147,375	2.0%
Hmong	47,683	1.3%	94,439	1.3%
Thai	45,279	1.2%	91,360	1.3%
Other Asian	97,585	2.6%	265,436	3.7%
Hawaiian	172,346	4.6%	211,014	2.9%
Guamanian	39,520	1.1%	49,345	0.7%
Samoan	30,695	0.8%	62,964	0.9%
Other Pacific Islander	8,040	0.2%	27,269	0.4%
TOTAL	3,762,440	100.0%	7,226,986	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census of the Population, 1980 and 1990.

TABLE 2. ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER POPULATION BY U.S. METROPOLITAN AREA

	Population	Percent of Total
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	925,561	12.72%
New York, NY	553,443	7.61%
Honolulu, HI	413,349	5.68%
San Francisco, CA	316,751	4.35%
Oakland, CA	259,002	3.56%
San Jose, CA	254,782	3.50%
Anaheim-Santa Ana, CA	240,703	3.31%
Chicago, IL	227,742	3.13%
Washington, DC-MD-VA	200,113	2.75%
San Diego, CA	184,596	2.54%
Seattle, WA	128,656	1.77%
Houston, TX	125,529	1.73%
Top-12 Subtotal	3,830,227	52.66%
Total API Population in the U.S.	7,273,662	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census of the Population, 1990.

TABLE 3. TOP THREE METROPOLITAN AREAS OF CONCENTRATION BY NATIONAL ORIGIN

	Largest Concentration	2nd Largest Concentration	3rd Largest Concentration	All U.S.	Top 3 as a Percent of Total
Chinese	New York, NY 246,817	LA-Long Beach, CA 245,033	San Francisco, CA 162,636	1,645,472	39.77%
Filipino	LA-Long Beach, CA 219,653	Honolulu, HI 120,029	San Diego, CA 95,945	847,562	51.40%
Japanese	Honolulu, HI 195,149	LA-Long Beach, CA 129,736	Anaheim-Santa Ana, CA 29,704	1,460,770	24.27%
Indian	New York, NY 106,270	Chicago, IL 53,702	LA-Long Beach, CA 43,829	815,447	24.99%
Korean	LA-Long Beach, CA 145,431	New York, NY 74,632	Washington, DC-MD-VA 39,850	798,849	32.54%
Vietnamese	Anaheim-Santa Ana, CA 71,822	LA-Long Beach, CA 62,594	San Jose, CA 54,212	614,547	30.69%
Cambodian	LA-Long Beach, CA 27,819	Stockton, CA 10,350	Lowell, MA-NH 6,516	147,411	30.31%
Laotian	Fresno, CA 8,174	Sacramento, CA 7,861	San Diego, CA 7,025	149,014	15.48%
Hmong	Fresno, CA 18,321	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI 16,435	Merced, CA 6,458	90,082	45.75%

Source: U.S. Census of the Population, 1990.

average American households; those from Cambodia and highland Laos (the Hmong) reported a median household income below \$20,000. Poverty rates for Asian immigrants ranged from a low of 7 percent for Filipinos, Indians and Japanese to a high of more than 60 percent for the Hmongs and 42 percent for Cambodians, compared to about 10 percent for average American families (Zhou 1999).

Diverse Settlement Patterns

A third salient feature of contemporary immigration from Asia is the diverse geographic settlement patterns of immigrants. Historically, most Asian immigrants in the United States have been concentrated in Hawaii and in states along the Pacific coast, with a small number of Chinese moving east to settle in New York. Within each area of settlement, they have been highly segregated in ethnic enclaves, such as Chinatowns, Little Tokyos, and Little Manilas. Today, newcomers have followed the footsteps of their predecessors to settle on the West Coast in disproportionate numbers, exacerbating geographic concentration. California has become the preferred destination for immigrants from Asian countries, with 40 percent of the nation's Asian American population. Tables 2 and 3 show the geographic distribution of Asian Americans by metropolitan areas, further confirming historical and contemporary patterns of ethnic concentration.

Nonetheless, the Asian American population has begun to disperse throughout the Northeast, the Midwest, and the South. For example, sizeable ethnic communities are found in New Orleans (Vietnamese), Houston (Vietnamese and Chinese), and Minneapolis (the Hmong) — cities that have traditionally received few Asian immigrants. Although there is still evidence of clustering along national or ethnic lines at the local level, there are very few examples of the large and distinctly mono-ethnic enclaves that were common in the past (Zhou and Kim 1999). In San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, there are no new Chinatowns where more than half of the residents are co-ethnics; Koreatowns in New York and Los Angeles and Little Saigon in Orange County are also no exception. Filipino Americans and Indian Americans are comparatively more spread out across the urban landscape with few identifiable ethnic enclaves. In 1990, only 12 percent of the Chinese Americans in the City of Los Angeles lived in Chinatown, 22 percent of Korean Americans lived in Koreatown, and a tiny number of Japanese Americans (about 700) lived in Little Tokyo. Overall, trends of spatial integration (moving into white middle class neighborhoods) and suburbanization among Asian Americans have been particularly strong in recent years, resulting in decreasing levels of residential segregation even in areas of high concentration (Massey and Denton 1987).

NEW CHALLENGES FOR ASIAN AMERICANS

Insiders versus Outsiders: Identity and Social Acceptance

We ABC [American-born Chinese] were ridiculed by the old immigrants as “Bamboo Stick” for not being able to speak Chinese and not being accepted as “white people.” We are not here. We are not there . . . We are different. Most of us are proud of the Chinese cultural heritage, but due to the pressure to assimilate and the lack of opportunity, we don't know much about the Chinese way (Wong 1982: 33; cited in Wong 1995:86).

Changing demographics and residential mobility in contemporary Asian America make the issue of identity more salient in the minds of Asian Americans than ever before. The insider/outsider divide is a paradoxical experience, whereby individuals in America still do not feel they are fully a part of it. While both immigrants and their native-born children encounter this divide, native-born generations are particularly caught in this paradox. However diverse and initially disadvantaged, immigrants are expected to assimilate into mainstream society as quickly as possible, despite invisible forces of inclusion and exclusion underlying the assimilationist ideology. J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur described an American as “either an European or the descendant of an European” (1904 [1782]). More than a century later, Israel Zangwill characterized an American as an “immaculate, well-dressed, accent-free Anglo” (1914). This Eurocentric definition of “American,” widely if often unconsciously held, makes it hard, if not impossible, for people to feel fully American if they happen to be non-white. A second-generation Chinese American in her sixties explained her isolation from mainstream American society and her socially imposed “otherness” in these words:

The truth is, no matter how American you think you are or try to be, you do not look “American.” If you have almond-shaped eyes, straight black hair, and a yellow complexion, you are a foreigner by default. People will ask where you come from but won’t be satisfied until they hear you name a foreign country. And they will naturally compliment your perfect English.⁵

This sense of exclusion exists even for those whose ancestors settled on this land long before the first Europeans reached American shores. The 1790 National Origin Act prohibited immigrants of certain national origins from becoming U.S. citizens, ensuring that not all outsider groups were afforded the privilege of becoming American.

Immigrants are deemed “outsiders,” and they cope with their alienation from the immigrant perspective. As a reactive strategy to resist subjugation, discrimination, and legal exclusion, Asian immigrants retreat into their own ethnic communities, rebuilding ethnic institutions that resemble those found in the homeland, and relying on one another for moral and practical support. Extreme adversity drives them to develop a clear sense of their position in the host society as “foreigners” and to maintain tangible ties to their ethnic community and their homeland, which becomes internalized as part of their shared experience.

Choosing to come to the United States to seek better opportunities, either for themselves or for their children, the immigrants’ shared experience of marginalization also reinforces their determination to push their children into the mainstream by choosing the path of least resistance (Kitano 1969). For example, pre-war *Issei* (first generation Japanese) drew on extensive ethnic resources in developing trade and business associations to negotiate favorable arrangements with the larger mainstream economy and to support their children’s education (Matsumoto 1993; Nishi 1995; Yoo 2000). War-traumatized Japanese American parents or grandparents were

reluctant to share wartime memories with their children and grandchildren for fear of hurting their children's chances of social integration (Takezawa 1991). Many Asian parents pressure their children to work at least twice as hard as other American children because they see education as their only means of alleviating current disadvantaged status and moving up in society (Sue and Okazaki 1990). Post-1965 Korean immigrants pushed their children toward prestigious universities because they looked to their children to regain the social status the parents had lost in the host society (Kim 1999).

Offspring of this immigrant generation, moreover, fully embrace the principles of freedom, equality, and civil liberties, the ideological cornerstones upon which U.S. citizenship is based. This differs significantly from the tendency of the parent generation of immigrants, who avoid arousing antagonism by subscribing to the dominant society's mode of behavior — hard work, education, delayed gratification, and non-confrontational attitudes in the face of injustice. Second generation members are unlikely to think of their parents' home country as a place to which they might return, nor do they use it as a point of reference by which to assess their progress in the new land. Rather, their expectations are governed by the same standards to which other Americans aspire, and it is by those standards that native born Asian Americans assess themselves and are assessed by others (Zhou 1997a). Nonetheless, racial distinctions subject the second generation to the same types of discrimination and injustice faced by the first generation regardless of how long they have been in the United States. A third generation Japanese American from Monterey Park, California, expressed frustration at being characterized as a “foreigner:”

Asian Americans fought for decades against discrimination and racial prejudice. We want to be treated just like everybody else, like Americans. You see, I get real angry when people come up to me and tell me how good my English is. They say: “Oh, you have no accent. Where did you learn English?” Where did I learn English? Right here in America. I was born here like they were... People see me now and they automatically treat me as an immigrant. I really hate that. The worst thing is that these immigrants don't understand why I am angry” (Cheng and Yang 1996, 305).

Growing up in the context of an immigrant family, furthermore, is extremely difficult for Asian American children (Zhou 1999). Parents often place multiple pressures on their children to “do and say the right things” or to “act white” as a means of moving into the mainstream and accessing resources typically reserved for “insiders.” In the process of growing up, the children often find themselves vacillating between the outsider's world from where they came and an insider's world into which they were born; they are increasingly ambivalent about their conflicting identities. These conflicting feelings, due to the irony of being in the United States but not being fully a part of it, are not unlike those experienced by many second generation Asian Americans of the 1960s and 1970s. In the wake of

the Asian American Movement, young Asian Americans entering American higher education institutions forged a space in which they could confront these identity issues. The Movement created a means by which these young people not only shared their own personal experiences of racism and suffering in American society, but also began to articulate an Asian American consciousness and refashion their own identities in ways that were meaningful to their experiences — an Asian American identity.

Despite efforts by these Asian Americans to empower themselves across pan-ethnic lines and to raise ethnic consciousness to a new level for future generations, much of their shame and frustration has resurfaced among the children of contemporary immigrants from Asia. In particular, those children who live in suburban, white, middle-class neighborhoods internalize the negative stereotypes that society imposes upon their parents' generation. These children of immigrants have undergone traumatic, even suicidal, identity crises, in which they feel ashamed of who they are, try to become who they are not, and end up being neither. In one instance, a Chinese American college student, born in the early 1980s, recalled her confused feelings as a teenager:

As a child, I had a very difficult time coping with my ethnic identity. I was hesitant to call myself American because, as I perceived it, American meant all the beautiful Anglo children in my classes. Yet I was also hesitant to call myself Chinese for two reasons. First, I had no clear concept of what Chinese was besides the fact that my parents were from China. [Second,] I did not feel Chinese. I did not want to be Chinese. I wanted to be white... When I was confronted with questions concerning my racial background, I found myself unable to answer ... Unable to utter the simple words, "I am Chinese" ... The words seemed too dissonant and distasteful. So many times I simply shrugged and said: "I don't know."⁶

The pressure to assimilate and the conditional acceptance by mainstream society of racially distinctive groups like Asian Americans take a heavier toll on the second generation growing up in suburban, white, middle-class neighborhoods than on those who live in inner-city ethnic enclaves (Sung 1987). Within the enclave, the homeland is transplanted, ancestral culture and values are honored and practiced as a way of life, and ethnic pride is invigorated. Outside the enclave, ethnicity is subject to the rank order of the racial stratification system, operating under the assumption that ethnic traits should be abandoned in order to become "American." In the midst of an identity crisis, native-born children who are seemingly assimilated structurally may find that they lack a homeland on which they can fall back and an ethnic space in which they can express their fear and anxieties.

The Salience of Ethnicity

Since the genesis of the Movement, a vibrant and multi-faceted ethnic culture has emerged and been reconstructed among native-born Asian Americans in their attempt to reclaim their identity. This culture is neither mainstream American nor

clearly associated with the immigrant generation. It is a hybrid form that has come to assume tremendous significance among Asian Americans as a viable means of resistance and compromise within the existing power structure. This phenomenon indicates the fluid nature of ethnicity. Ultimately, ethnicity is “a manifestation of the way populations are organized in terms of interaction patterns, institutions, personal values, attitudes, life styles, and presumed consciousness of kind” — the result of a process that continues to unfold (Yancey et al. 1976: 400).

We see that Asian Americans develop different patterns of ethnic identification according to the length of time in the United States, internal group dynamics, and structural situations that the particular immigrant group and its descendants have encountered. Members of the first generation generally reaffirm ethnic identity on the basis of homeland cultures and bicultural experiences, both through ethnic practices and memories of their lived experiences in the homeland, and during the process of movement. For example, Southeast Asian refugees share the common experience of living through internal power struggles in their home countries, the horrors of war, and the ordeal of exile and death. These life-threatening experiences become the basis for ethnic solidarity. Disparate societal treatment or being disadvantaged because of one’s immigrant status can also reinforce ethnic identity. In such cases, ethnic enclaves serve as a source of collective effort to preserve transnational ties, kinship networks, and homeland culture.

Native-born Asian Americans, and infant or school age immigrants, in contrast, do not seize on traditional cultural symbols in order to define their ethnicity. Rather, they build their identities largely on the basis of mediating *interpretive memories* of homeland cultures in which they have never personally lived, and their own diverse life experiences in the United States. Families instill in them a sense of origin, and close proximity to kinship networks and ethnic enclaves provides an infrastructure that keeps alive the memories of homeland cultures. The collective memory of Chinese exclusion, the U.S. colonization of the Philippines, and the incarceration of Japanese Americans serve as pivotal organizational principles for ethnic identity among native-born Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans and Japanese Americans, respectively. The emergence and persistence of ethnicity, nonetheless, depends on the structural conditions of the host society and the position occupied by immigrant groups in the social structure, for example, the treatment of Asian Americans as foreigners, the glass-ceiling barrier, and racially motivated hate crimes.

For many of the second generation, then, ethnicity does not carry with it material consequences and does not serve to enhance group solidarity. Indeed, ethnic identity associated with a homeland has become blurred among the second or third generations, who have lost their ancestral languages, intermarried at rates far exceeding the national average, and no longer involved themselves with their ethnic communities on a daily basis, making their ethnicity “symbolic” (Gans 1979). Ethnicity is not an ‘either/or’ matter but rather a variable outcome that varies in its intensity. As we have noted earlier, Asian Americans, both foreign-born and native-born, experience high levels of educational attainment, occupational mobility,

and residential integration. They also have high rates of intermarriage, and rapidly lose facility in the native language. Hence, much of Asian ethnicity may be optional. As they climb up the socioeconomic ladder in American society, many established Asian Americans may have more choices as to whether they want to or should be Asian.

At the societal level, however, we argue that being non-ethnic American is still not an option for Asian Americans or for other racial minority groups, as it is for most European immigrants and their offspring (Waters 1990; Takezawa 1991). As such, pan-ethnicity will continue to remain instrumental for the excluded social groups unless the whole racial perception of Americans changes and includes other groups as Americans. As a form of ethnic aggregation oriented toward achieving certain material ends and empowerment, pan-ethnicity is reactive to shared cultural values and life experiences, imposed societal perception and treatment as one racial group, and the internal need for political mobilization to fight for minority rights and to protect group interests (Lopez and Espiritu 1990). Rapid language switches to English and increasing interethnic and interracial marriages also contribute to the formation of pan-ethnicity. More significant, the construction of Asian American pan-ethnicity is a process that goes beyond the political strategy of activism and collective action and Asian Americans' reaction to social categorization by the broader system of racial hierarchy. Pan-ethnicity involves a shared experience of "an Asian upbringing" and the internalization of "Asian values" in the second generation (Kibria 1997).

Pan-ethnicity, however, accounts neither for regional nor national differences nor for the historical legacies of inter-group conflicts. Lumping together all peoples of Asian ancestry, therefore, complicates the notion of ethnicity and its subsequent application to a particular ethnic group. At this juncture, the term "Asian American," in and of itself, assumes a political agenda for those who subscribe to it, and pan-ethnicity remains a political identity for instrumental purposes. The Asian American community today is, and continues to be, marked by tremendous diversity in the era of high immigration. Diverse languages and religions and differing historical legacies of domination and colonization in Asia make it unlikely that a pan-ethnic coalition will develop in the near future. Differences in class background among the immigrant generation and divergent modes of incorporation of that generation can also deter the formation of pan-ethnicity. The success of Asian Americans' integration into American society as individuals can both enhance and weaken their ability to act collectively. Also, while it is true that discrimination and violence against one Asian group serve to unite Asian Americans, it also creates intra-group conflict. During World War II, the United States government singled out Japanese Americans as enemies and targets for incarceration. Fearing similar treatment, some Chinese Americans found themselves constantly invoking their Chinese ethnicity and even wore buttons with derogative anti-Japanese words to distinguish themselves. The negative stereotypes about welfare dependency and

gang violence among Southeast Asians also cause some Asian American groups to distance themselves from them and even blame them for their plight.

The Assimilation Problem

Classical assimilation theories predict a linear trajectory toward structural integration into the mainstream of society, whereby the children and the grandchildren of the immigrants move beyond the status of the first generation and become progressively less distinct from other Americans (Alba 1985; Gans 1979; Gordon 1964; Warner and Srole 1945). Assimilation theories arose as an abstraction from the experience of earlier European immigration and developed largely while the process of immigrant adaptation was under way. Now that it is over, one can safely conclude that the descendants of the 1880–1920 wave have overcome earlier disadvantages, achieving parity with, if not outdistancing, “white” Americans of English ancestry, or what Milton Gordon calls the “core cultural group” (1964). Unfortunately, assimilation theories provide no account of why this outcome should have transpired — unless one subscribes to that variant of the modernization theory that most of the earlier writers embraced but many contemporary social scientists have now challenged. Most important, past success may be due to the specific circumstances encountered by earlier immigrants and their offspring. Between the 1920s and the 1950s, America experienced a long period of restricted immigration, which almost certainly weakened immigrants’ attachment to their culture and patterns of group affiliation. Should this be the case, the past is unlikely to prove a useful guide to the future, since we appear to be headed for more, not less, immigration in the years to come.

In fact, assimilation is highly exclusive. The “melting pot” does not wholeheartedly embrace non-European immigrants. We point out three of the most obvious examples of the ways in which racism and prejudice have affected Asian Americans. First, the perception of Asian Americans as “foreigners” has imposed and perpetuated the “otherness” on the group. As we have discussed in detail in the previous section, it is the socially imposed category based on race, rather than acculturation and social mobility, that governs how group members are received and treated in American society. Speaking perfect English, effortlessly practicing mainstream cultural values, and even inter-marrying members of the dominant group may help reduce this “otherness” at the individual level. However, this may have little effect on the group as a whole, given the relatively small size of the third or later generations of the Asian American population (only 12 percent of the total) and high levels of recent immigration.

Second, the image of “the yellow peril,” although largely repudiated in the post-World War II period, has repeatedly resurfaced throughout American history, especially in situations when the United States is at odds with immigrants’ ancestral homelands in Asia. The bombing of Pearl Harbor during World War II turned Japanese immigrants and Americans of Japanese ancestry into potential enemies who were forcibly exiled from their homes and put into internment camps. The

Communist takeover of China in the late 1940s and the subsequent Cold War made Chinese Americans of the 1950s prime suspects of treason and espionage. The perceived economic threat from Japan in the 1980s led to the murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American who was mistaken for a Japanese and beaten to death by disgruntled unemployed auto-workers in Detroit. The renewed spy stereotype is currently manifested in the case of a Taiwan-born scientist, Wen Ho Lee, who was convicted of stealing nuclear secrets for China in the court of public opinion before even appearing in a court of law. This litany of examples is endless.

Third, the “model minority” stereotype has reinforced the “otherness” of Asian Americans. It is important to note that this stereotype derives from a larger political agenda, serving the ideological function of delegitimizing African American (in particular) claims for equalization of outcomes as opposed to equalization of opportunities. Although Asian Americans as a group are above average on just about any socioeconomic indicator, the “model minority” stereotype obscures the very real problems that many highly “successful” Asians encounter. In particular, highly skilled professionals, who are most definitely part of the middle (if not the upper middle) class, are not doing quite as well as their non-Hispanic, white counterparts; they experience disproportionately underemployment because of over-qualification and over-work (Zhou 1993 and 1997b; Zhou and Kamo 1994). Furthermore, the stereotype paints a one-sided picture of the Asian American population, obscuring the plight of those who are not doing well and thus further absolving the broader society of any responsibility for redress. There are immigrant workers who are doing poorly, some subjected to severe exploitation. Some groups — Laotians, Hmong, and Cambodians — are still struggling at the very bottom of the social ladder, facing the risk of being trapped in the urban underclass, and others — perhaps the Filipinos — may be stuck in the lower middle class, showing trends of downward mobility (Oropesa and Landale 1997).

In sum, the notion of assimilation, whether it is manifested in a straight line or bumpy line, seems to clearly imply a *single* line — an idea that is very difficult to reconcile with the historical record of large and significant differences in the rate at which various groups move ahead in American society. Because of the multi-faceted and dynamic nature of reality, it is difficult to comprehend the experiences of today’s racial minorities, Asian Americans included, within the assimilationist framework that makes explicit or implicit Anglo-conformist assumptions. Assimilationism may still be a social or moral imperative imposed on immigrants by the dominant culture, but it may not necessarily be the imperative toward which all immigrant groups and their succeeding generations are striving.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Diversity is the hallmark of the contemporary Asian American community. The influx of Asian immigrants in response to the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act and broader economic, social, and geopolitical factors has brought new challenges for the adaptation of new immigrants and their children into American society. As the commu-

nity continues to grow in number, so too will their representation in the broader cultural, economic, and political milieu that we typify as "mainstream American society."

The implications of the dramatic changes in Asian America that we have just described are particularly relevant for the development of a coherent vision for a future Asian America. First and foremost, diversity in national origins will produce stark disparities within the Asian American community. National origins evoke drastic differences in homeland cultures, such as languages, religions, cuisines, and customs; histories of international relations; contexts of emigration; reception in the host society; and adaptation patterns. Such differences persist most significantly in the private domain, affecting not only the immigrant generation, but also native-born generations. For some national origin groups, such as the Chinese and Indians, internal differences in languages or dialects and religions are quite substantial. While ethnic diversity among the second and third generation may be blurred because of rapid switch to English and high rates of out-marriages (Kitano et al. 1998), it is extremely difficult to group everybody under a pan-Asian umbrella at the individual level. Increasing differences within an emerging Asian America will create obstacles for pan-ethnic coalitions.

Second, socioeconomic diversity gives rise to diverse mobility patterns. New immigrants may continue to follow the traditional bottom-up route to social mobility, starting their American life in isolated urban enclaves. Some segments of this urban population, however, may be permanently trapped in poverty with dim prospects for the future, while others with sufficient social and economic resources may simply bypass the bottom starting line, moving directly into mainstream labor markets and settling directly into suburban middle-class communities (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Kim 1999). These trajectories to social mobility not only affect life chances of the first generation but also have profound social implications for the second generation, since the current state and future prospects of immigrant offspring are related to the advantages or disadvantages that accrue through parental socioeconomic status.

Moreover, socioeconomic diversity leads to divergent destinies, creating a bifurcated distribution of the Asian American population along class lines. Some Asian immigrant groups have converged with middle-class America, but many others, especially the most recent refugee groups, are struggling in the most underprivileged segment of U.S. society. Consequently, class bifurcation toward both ends of society's class spectrum will likely lead to fragmentation of the larger Asian American community, creating new obstacles for political mobilization and pan-ethnic solidarity. Bifurcation also affects the new second generation. Unlike the second generation of the 1960 and 1970s, most of whom grew up in segregated urban enclaves, a visible proportion of today's second generation is growing up in affluent Euro-American neighborhoods in suburbia. Members of the suburban middle class maintain little contact with their working-class co-ethnics in urban enclaves and show limited interest in working-class issues.

Third, settlement patterns have long-term implications for the development of a cohesive Asian American community. Those who are currently segregated in the

inner city are confronted with a reality more daunting than the one faced by their earlier counterparts. Today, the United States has an emerging “hourglass” economy in which movement from bottom to top has gotten progressively more difficult. Those newcomers who are poorly educated and lack marketable skills may find themselves stalled or, even worse, stumbling beneath the ranks of the lower working class, either because they are unable to obtain employment or because the jobs they do obtain do not pay a decent family wage (Zhou 1997a). Consequently, they and their children may become trapped in permanent poverty and isolated from mainstream American society. While successful structural integration may not automatically lead to social acceptance, those who have achieved residential mobility are undoubtedly more privileged, enjoying comfortable homes, safe neighborhoods, quality schools, and more channels to mobility.

Last but not least, immigration complicates intergenerational relations and ethnic solidarity. Native-born Asian Americans, especially those assumed to be “assimilated,” have been rudely reawakened with renewed images of being “foreigners.” Stereotyped images of “American” create both psychological and practical problems for native-born Americans who phenotypically resemble these new arrivals. Comments about a fourth generation Japanese American’s “good English” are frequently heard. The children, U.S.-born and similar to other American children, suffer from persistent disadvantages merely because they look “foreign” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights 1989 and 1992). While they are infuriated by their unfair treatment as foreigners, native-born Asian Americans are also caught between including immigrants in their struggle for racial equality and excluding them. Similar to other Americans in speech, thought, and behavior, native-born Asian Americans often hold values about labor rights, individualism, civil liberty, and, ultimately, the ideology of assimilationism that are different from those of their foreign-born counterparts. These differences, intertwined with the acculturation gap between immigrant and native-born generations, have impeded ethnic coalition, ideological consensus, and collective action (Zhou 2000).

Negotiating differences and coalition building within this very heterogeneous ethnic community will continue to remain the foremost priority in the twenty-first century. Policies reflecting the interests and needs of Asian Americans must incorporate a flexible framework to incorporate the diversity that characterizes the contemporary community. This diversity, to be sure, must be reflective of each distinct Asian American ethnic group, but must also be informed by differences across lines of class, gender, generation, national origin, ethnicity, and race.

In sum, new generations of Americans of Asian ancestry will have to vie for their own place within their respective communities and challenge stereotypes that serve to denigrate their agency in mainstream American society. Although Asian Americans will continue to rally (as they have historically) around issues that unite them on the basis of a shared sense of racial identity — ethnic stereotyping, hate crimes, economic and political scapegoating, and the glass ceiling — specific national and cultural interests espoused by Asian American ethnic groups will demand innovative approaches to promote the continued development of pan-Asian

coalitions while reflecting the increasing differences among the Asian American communities.

Endnotes

- ¹ For a more detailed discussion, please see Zhou and Gatewood 2000.
 - ² The number includes 1.6 million formerly unauthorized aliens and 1.1 million Special Agricultural Workers who were granted permanent resident status under the provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (see also Zhou 2000).
 - ³ The number of Asian immigrants excludes those from Iran, Israel, and Turkey, except for 1991, when the Asian share dropped to 18 percent due to the sudden increase in the legalizes under IRCA, most of whom were Mexicans or Central Americans.
 - ⁴ For more information on the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans see David K. Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei*; and on the 442nd and 100th Infantry, Masayo Duus, *Unlikely Liberators*.
 - ⁵ Personal communication with a retired Chinatown activist in New York.
 - ⁶ Class discussion on ethnic identity, UCLA, March 1999.
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The Backdoor and the Backlash: Campaign Finance and the Politicization of Chinese Americans

Taeku Lee

This paper examines the controversy about the allegedly improper and illegal campaign finance activities of Asians and Asian Americans during the 1996 election year. Using data from a 1997 Los Angeles Times poll, the paper considers how one prominently implicated ethnic group, Chinese Americans, assesses the Republican-led congressional investigations and the media coverage on this issue. Assessments about whether congressional investigations on this matter are offensive and discriminatory and whether media coverage on this matter is unfair are shaped by the political and institutional attachments Chinese Americans hold and by their immigrant/racial experiences. In particular, how Chinese Americans view opportunities in the U.S., how they view their decision to immigrate, and whether or not they experience discrimination are critical factors. The paper closes with some general points about future theory and research on Asian Pacific American mass opinion.

Since the fall of 1996 the political activities of Asian Pacific Americans have been pulled unexpectedly and unceremoniously into the swirl of controversy encircling the Clinton Presidency.¹ In the brief history of this issue, a cast of obscure characters notable hitherto only as behind-the-scenes fund-raisers — John Huang, Charlie Yah-lin Trie, Johnny Chung, Maria Hsia, Yogesh Gandhi, Eugene and Nora Lum, among others — have been thrown onto the center stage of contemporary Asian American politics. In some respects, such limelight is relatively uncharted territory for Asian Americans, who have more often been distinguished for their relative political invisibility and their inclination for political influence through backchannels like campaign contributions. In other respects, such limelight is more

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familiar terrain for Asian Americans — yet another strain of the racial resentment and nativism that has marked the history of Asians in America and, more generally, the politics and policies affecting predominantly immigrant ethnic communities at the end of the twentieth century.

As Don Nakanishi (1998) points out, the spin on the political status of Asian Americans has been almost wholly beyond the control of Asian Americans themselves as a result of the campaign finance controversy. The issue of allegedly illegal fundraising and improper influence-peddling by select Asian and Asian American donors quickly overshadowed the significant inroads that Asian American elected and appointed officials forged in the 1996 elections. The critical response from leaders within the Asian Pacific American community has been swift, but often neither unequivocal nor univocal. While some decry the anti-Asian rhetoric and practices, others decry the moral bankruptcy of our nation's electoral system, and still others decry the personal avarice of individuals like Charlie Yah Lin Trie and Johnny Chung.²

In each case, however, the Asian American leadership have noted the searing political backlash that has resulted from the campaign finance controversy. Prominently, a coalition of Asian American leaders and organizations filed a formal complaint with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in September 1997 in response to the media's coverage on this issue, the Democratic National Committee's (DNC) in-house investigations, and the Republican-led congressional investigations. Among other things, this formal complaint condemns the dubious manner of the DNC's in-house investigation and the revivification of some of the worst stereotypes about Asian Americans by the mass media and members of the House of Representatives on this issue. Importantly, while the Asian American leadership has spoken, the voices of ordinary Asian Americans are largely unheard and unknown.

The impetus behind this paper in the first instance is to “move beyond a cataloging of the slights and insults” (Watanabe 1998, 2) and to discipline the welter of public speculation and media coverage on this issue with some hard-nosed analysis. The paper is comprised of two parts. First, I review existing studies of media coverage on this issue and consider the extent to which the media is implicated in perpetuating negative representations of Asians in America. I then focus on the ethnic group that has been most visibly implicated in this controversy — U.S. residents of Chinese descent — and examine what data from a 1997 *Los Angeles Times* poll tells us about the perspectives of rank-and-file Chinese Americans on this matter. Specifically, I examine the conditions under which Chinese Americans: (1) make an explicitly negative, racialized assessment of ongoing congressional investigations; and (2) view the media's coverage on this issue to be unfair.³

MEDIA COVERAGE ON THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE ISSUE

The first observation about media coverage on the allegedly illegal Asian campaign finance activities is its sheer volume and questionable content. As Ling-

chi Wang, one of the most outspoken critics of John Huang and other APAs implicated in the controversy writes, “[n]ot since the protracted national debate over whether the Chinese should be excluded from the U.S. in the 1870s and early 1880s have we seen more sustained media coverage and acrimonious debate on the so-called ‘Asian connection’” (1998b, 1). At least for the moment, stories about the heroic struggles of hard-working, “model minority” immigrants have receded in media representations of APAs, only to be replaced by unsubtle allusions to a “Yellow Peril” and “Red Peril” who are “perpetual foreigners” within U.S. borders. In an especially malignant instance of this, the *National Review* in March 1997 published a cover depicting President and Mrs. Clinton as “the Manchurian Candidates,” garbed in Chinese silk, coolie hat, and Mao cap and grinning ear-to-ear with buck teeth, slanted eyes, and other “Orientalized” characterizations.

As Helen Zia put it in *The Nation*, “[t]he images of yellow spooks at the White House, with ties to Indonesia and the post-*glasnost* Evil Empire, China, was too tempting for pundits and politicians not to exploit” (1997, 10). In a petition submitted to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, a coalition of Asian American leaders and organizations pointed an inculpatory finger at the mass media for their negative coverage on this issue. For those who have closely followed the history of Asian immigrants in the United States, media coverage on the campaign finance issue is a stark reminder of “the peculiarly American way in which the media portray [Asian Americans] as eternal foreigners, regardless of our pedigrees” (Zia 1997, 10).⁴

Perhaps the most systematic critique of media coverage on this matter to date has been Frank Wu and May Nicholson’s “Racial Aspects of Media Coverage on the John Huang Matter” (1997). Wu and Nicholson look at media coverage surrounding John Huang’s fund-raising activities between October 7th, 1996 (the date the story broke) and January 20th, 1997 (President Clinton’s inauguration) in six media outlets: the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *Newsweek*. Wu and Nicholson note the following themes in the newspapers they examine:

- (1) The media assumes that John Huang represents all APAs. Huang, Riady, Trie, and others never acquired an identity in news reports *as individuals*, but rather as the Chinese, the Indonesian, or the Asian American.⁵
- (2) The media consistently regards race as relevant to the issue. Where sources are identified by race, it is almost always APAs, and the interests and motives of APAs are always presumed to be *as Asian Pacific Americans*.⁶
- (3) The media applies double (and changing) standards to APAs because APAs are scrutinized for activities that other special interests have long been complicit to.
- (4) The media pursues this issue with an ease and swiftness that reflects overreaction and evokes a long history of marking APAs as perpetual foreigners and a “Yellow Peril.”⁷
- (5) The media fails to distinguish between Asians and Asian Pacific Americans.

- (6) The media assumes guilt by association. Notably, by linking John Huang to Jay Kim and Charlie Trie and Michael Kojima, they assume a linkage between each of these individual cases, given by their race.
- (7) The media uses racial/cultural explanations to interpret wrongful and illegal actions. John Huang's identity is not only racialized and presumed to be Chinese rather than Chinese-American, but his actions are culturally essentialized to Chinese practices and a pan-Asian predisposition to use special favors, bribery, and political corruption as a means to political power.
- (8) The media links the issue of campaign finance to Asian immigration. The insinuation here is that the allegedly illegal fund-raising activities were preconditioned on expectations of extra-legal influence on immigration policies.⁸
- (9) The media, despite placing APAs as the ostensible subject of the congressional hearings, confers little voice or agency to APAs on the issue.
- (10) The media's editorials suggest that any critical mention of race was a misappropriation of "the race card."⁹

Following the observations of Wu and Nicholson and others, Lee and Hahn (1998) conducted content analysis of print media coverage to systematically assess how prevalent negative representations of Asian Americans have been. Specifically, Lee and Hahn examine the content of print media coverage from seven newspapers: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, and the *Sacramento Bee*. The content analysis codes for six dimensions of media coverage on Asians/Asian Americans concerning the campaign finance issue: (1) "invisibility" (whether or not Asian Americans are given "voice" in articles); (2) "homogeneity" (whether or not articles distinguish between constituent Asian American ethnic groups); (3) "perpetual foreigner" (whether or not articles distinguish between Asians and Asian Americans); (4) "Yellow Peril" (whether or not articles treat the allegedly illegal activities of Asians/Asian Americans as an invasive threat to U.S. democracy and the U.S. political system); (5) "cultural essentialism" (whether or not articles attribute the campaign finance activities in question to Asian "culture"); and (6) "issue synecdoche" (whether or not media coverage fails to distinguish an isolated dimension of the issue of campaign finance reform — i.e., alleged Asian/Asian American improprieties — from the more systemic issue at hand).

The results from Lee and Hahn's analysis clearly show that critics of media coverage like Wu and Nicholson are close to the mark. In more than 60 percent of the articles, no Asian Americans are quoted; in more than three-quarters of the articles, no distinctions between Asian American sub-groups are visible; in almost 60 percent of the articles, there is some insinuation of an Asian American "Yellow Peril"; and in more than two-thirds of the items, APA campaign contribution activities are equated with the issue of campaign finance reform *in toto*. Lee and Hahn also find that the tenor of media coverage becomes more heated and more editorialized as the Senate begins their hearings on campaign finance reform, that negative stereotyping is evident in both news articles and op-eds, and that media coverage

differs (usually less negative) when newspapers that have a sizeable Asian American readership (i.e., the California papers in their dataset) and when news items are written by Asian Americans.¹⁰

At the same time, media coverage is not uniformly and unambiguously consistent with critics' assessments. For one thing, some negative representations are significantly less prevalent than others: references to APAs as "perpetual foreigners" is found in less than 40 percent of the news items, and the use of totalizing cultural explanations is evident in only about 10 percent of the news items. For another, although there is much historical and contemporaneous evidence that the media representations that Lee and Hahn examine *are* negative, such valenced readings of media coverage are difficult and contentious. This is especially so when imputing motive, either to individual journalists and commentators or to a singular, monolithic, hegemonic "mass media."¹¹ What's more, the consequences of such coverage depend crucially on the author and the audience.¹²

Even taking these necessary caveats about the reliability of content analysis into account, the account of how Asian Americans have been depicted in the mass media on the campaign finance issue is sobering indeed. This is especially so because such media coverage often presents a misleading (if not outright wrong) view of Asian Americans. For example, Lee (2000c) shows that it is Chinese American *Republicans* who are much more likely to engage in campaign contributions and that these contributors fundamentally view themselves as political and economic stakeholders within the United States (and not their countries of origin). Importantly, Lee (2000a) also shows that exposure to mass media, beliefs about the fairness of media coverage, and factual knowledge about Asian Americans play a critical role in the anti-Asian American sentiments and stereotypes that blacks, whites, and Latinos in the U.S. hold. Worse yet, these anti-Asian American sentiments and stereotypes are decisive influences on the preferences that blacks, whites, and Latinos express on policy matters that impact the Asian Pacific American community.

ASSESSING THE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS

In what remains, our analytic gaze is inverted from media representations of APAs to the actual experiences and beliefs of Asian Americans themselves. That is, we examine how Chinese Americans assess the nation's primary social and political institutions vis-à-vis the campaign finance controversy. If media coverage on this issue is inaccurate and evokes historically negative stereotypes about Asian Americans, do Chinese Americans take umbrage? Do they view the ongoing as discriminatory and offensive? Do they assess the nation's principal social (i.e., mass media) and political (i.e., Congress) institutions through a racialized lens?

The data come from a 1997 *Los Angeles Times* (LAT) poll of Chinese Americans in Southern California.¹³ Table 1 presents the frequency distributions for survey questions used in this paper. There are nuances to polling predominantly immigrant ethnic communities that limit what we can infer from these data. To mention just

two, the sampling of Chinese Americans in the 1997 *LAT* may not be fully representative and survey data on Asian Americans are susceptible to subtleties in the text and language of the interviews.

Such caveats warn us against accepting the results of poll data on Asian Americans too enthusiastically or uncritically (see Lee 1998 and Lee 2000a).

TABLE 1. FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF VARIABLES

Variable	Percent
<i>Demographics</i>	
Age: 18–29	25
Age: 30–44	36
Age: 45–64	21
Age: 65 or older	18
Female	52
Education: high school or less	37
Education: some college	15
Education: college graduate or higher	48
Income: < \$20,000/year	21
Income: \$20,000 to \$40,000/year	31
Income: \$40,000 to \$60,000/year	21
Income: more than \$60,000/year	28
<i>Generation</i>	
Immigrant	87
Second generation	10
Third generation	2
Fourth generation	1
<i>Political status¹</i>	
Citizen	72
Registered Democrat	21
Registered Republican	22
Registered Independent, other party	20
Not registered	31
<i>Political Contributions</i>	
Does contribute	15
Does not contribute	85
<i>Sincerity of congressional hearings on campaign finance</i>	
Sincere	13
Partisan politics	75
Both	13
<i>Congressional hearings offensive</i>	
Offensive	47
Neutral	18
Not offensive	35
<i>Congressional hearings discriminatory</i>	
Discriminatory	52
Not discriminatory	48
<i>Attentiveness to issue in media</i>	
Closely following	46
Not closely following	54
<i>Fairness of media coverage</i>	
Very unfair	7

Somewhat unfair	46
Somewhat fair	34
Very fair	13
<i>Ethnic community center</i>	
Importance of Chinatown	41
Importance of San Gabriel Valley	58
<i>Opportunity structure facing Chinese Americans in Southern California</i>	
Very good	13
Good	71
Bad	14
Very bad	1
<i>Personal experience with discrimination</i>	
Great deal	1
Fair amount	9
Not much	48
Not at all	42
<i>Experienced discrimination in institutional settings</i> (38)	
In jobs or promotion	33
In education	10
In housing	4
In dealing with government agencies	13
In dealing with a business or retail agency	30
<i>Experienced discrimination in informal settings</i> (28)	
From neighbors	8
From strangers	30
During language or cultural misunderstandings	24
<i>Language preference for interview</i>	
Cantonese or Mandarin	55
English	45

Data: 1997 LAT Survey #396. Cell entries are weighted frequencies. Percentages for questions with mutually exclusive categories may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding error. The margin of sampling error is ± 4 percentage points. Percentages in parentheses for experiences with discrimination in institutional/informal setting reflects the percentage of all respondents who report such an experience.

[†] Voter registration and party identification asked only of citizen respondents.

[‡] Asked only of respondents who were not born in the United States.

These caveats notwithstanding, survey data on Asian Americans remain singularly rare and the *LAT* survey is the *only* poll in the two year history of the campaign finance issue in which Asian Americans themselves have been interviewed.¹⁴ As Asian Americans rapidly emerge into the political limelight and as that limelight suspectingly glares back at Asian Americans, a clearer understanding of how the Asian American mass public negotiates such precarious racial currents is increasingly urgent. What's more, the *LAT* has a proven commitment to understanding Asian American mass opinion, having conducted surveys of other Asian American ethnic groups — Filipino Americans, Korean Americans, and Vietnamese Americans — as well as a multi-racial survey of attitudes about Asian Americans in Southern California.¹⁵

Turning to the data itself, Table 1 shows that Chinese Americans take a somewhat negative, but divided, view of the congressional proceedings. About 57 percent of respondents who are not undecided find the investigations offensive and

52 percent of respondents find the hearings discriminatory. This skepticism extends in respondents' evaluations of the institutions involved in this affair as well. Fully 75 percent of respondents view the investigations as insincere and purely partisan, while 52 percent of respondents decry the unfairness of media coverage on this issue.

Taken at face value, these marginal frequencies suggest a discernibly racialized response. Sociologists like Portes and Bach (1985) and Portes and Rumbaut (1996) have carefully detailed the multiple pathways toward the "reactive formation" of ethnic identity and solidarity. Such studies, notably suggest that a politicized ethnic identity often follows generational changes as predominantly immigrant ethnic groups face everyday insults and more coordinated nativist campaigns in a society that remains deeply divided by social markers like race, gender, class, and citizenship status. Portes and Rumbaut thus argue that such "ethnic resilience is a uniquely American product because it has seldom reflected linear continuity with the immigrants' culture, but rather has emerged in reaction to the situation, views, and discrimination they faced on arrival" (1996, 95). A focal public event like the campaign finance controversy that places a predominantly immigrant ethnic group under attack, then, might plausibly evoke a racialized response among in-group members.¹⁶

What we make of the campaign finance controversy and its long-term impact on racial politics in the United States, however, depends vitally on what form this racialized response takes. On this point, more recent works by Lopez and Espiritu (1992) and Kibria (1997) suggest that ethnic resilience and assimilationism present a false choice, and that "panethnic" racial formations, like the category of "Asian American," are increasingly a third option. That is, even if Asians in America do pull together in response to events like the campaign finance controversy, it matters whether they do so as Asian Americans or as members of particularistic ethnic sub-groups. Generally, evidence for an overarching Asian American "panethnicity" is modest and isolated. But as Espiritu (1992) shows, where pan-Asian formations do occur, they often do so as a manifestation of "reactive solidarity" in response to anti-Asian incidents.¹⁷

In contemporary politics, evidence that link such a panethnic formulation to political opinions and policy preferences is unremarkable (Conway and Lien 1997; Lien 1997a). In addition, unlike African Americans (or, to a lesser extent, Latinos), Asian Americans split their loyalties fairly evenly between the Democratic and Republican parties and between political liberalism and conservatism (Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner 1991; Ong and Nakanishi 1996). And on issues directly affecting the Asian Americans as a group, such as affirmative action, welfare reform, immigration policy, and California's referendum initiatives, there is often no distinguishable bloc voting among Asian Americans (Lee 2000a). Thus Asian Americans appear to many to be better situated to play a strategic role as a "swing vote" rather than an active role in a progressive, multiracial Democratic coalition (Nakanishi 1991).

A key insight to note in considering this welter of evidence is that most Asian ethnic sub-groups in the U.S. are predominantly immigrant. Fully 85 percent of

respondents to the 1997 *LAT* poll are foreign-born. The strength of Asian ethnic or pan-Asian ties, the degree of Asian American political mobilization, and the contours of Asian American political preferences are thus transient and rapidly evolving matters. As Lin and Jamal (1997) note, predominantly immigrant groups present an almost ideal "natural experiment" for the study of political socialization. We should not, then, either wishfully accept the idea of a fixed, unitary, homogeneous "Asian American" political identity or presume that the absence of such an identity at present implies the impossibility of such a conception in the future.¹⁸ Accordingly, research on Asian American mass opinion would do well to examine the conditions under which Asian Americans do view an issue or event through a racial/immigrant lens.

In this section, then, I examine whether or not the campaign finance controversy is just such an instance for Chinese Americans in Southern California.¹⁹ The 1997 *LAT* allows us to test the impact of factors such as one's immigrant status, one's evaluations of political institutions, the mass media, and indigenous community institutions, one's level of political awareness, one's personal experience with racism, and one's personal views about immigrating to the U.S. on assessments of the congressional investigations. The dependent variable is whether or not respondents, as Chinese Americans, view the congressional investigations as discriminatory. This measure simultaneously captures respondents' views on campaign finance, the nation's political institutions, and anti-Asian discrimination.

The explanatory variables begin with age, educational level, family income, and gender. Again these measures examine if sociodemographic and economic cleavages shape assessments of the congressional hearings. With a predominantly immigrant population such as Chinese Americans, however, there are more explicit generational and time-dependent sociodemographic differences to consider. As with the model of political contributions, second and third generation respondents are distinguished from immigrant Chinese, and I include a measure of the number of years lived in the U.S. as a permanent resident. As noted earlier, a plausible expectation from sociological accounts is that second and third generation Chinese Americans will exhibit a stronger sense of "ethnic resilience" and thus voice opposition to the congressional hearings (Portes and Rumbaut 1996).

The expectation that generation *per se* predicts one's attitudes leaves open the question of *how* it does so. As Wong (1999) compellingly demonstrates, properly understanding the effect of generational change on the political attitudes of Asian Americans is crucial. In this paper, I compare the effect of generation *per se* against several measures that might describe what happens over the course of generations. Specifically, I consider the immigrant experiences, racial predispositions, and institutional attachments that might capture the political socialization that Chinese Americans undergo across generations in the United States.

I first consider the respondents' political status and institutional ties. Citizenship and partisanship, again, measure one's chosen political identity. How citizenship is likely to affect one's view of congressional investigations is uncertain, but if that citizenship has an ethnic component (i.e., as a Chinese American, or Asian

L01

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D40

American), then it may predict a negative view. Given the ostensibly partisan nature of this issue (i.e., the Republican leadership has largely initiated aggressive investigations and pushed for the appointment of an independent counsel), Chinese Americans' views on the discriminatory nature of the investigations may split down party lines as well. Additionally, partisanship also gauges the extent to which attachments to mainstream political institutions in themselves yield distinct viewpoints on this issue (i.e., by comparing respondents who register with either party against respondents who do not register with a political party).²⁰

Along these lines, I also consider the impact of another mainstream institution, the mass media. Respondents are asked whether or not they follow the allegations of illegal Asian American fundraising in the media closely or not. At first blush, media attention ought to indicate the influence of the media's information or interpretations on respondents' opinions. Close attention to media coverage on this issue might simply reflect differences in respondent political awareness, however. Such respondents may be more generally knowledgeable about politics or be more invested in the outcome of political matters. Thus media attention may not reflect anything about media exposure *per se*, but rather, it may reflect respondent characteristics.²¹ A second media variable is the respondent's assessments of the media as an institution itself. Specifically, respondents are asked whether or not they consider the mass media's coverage of the Asian American campaign contributions issue as fair or unfair.²² The expectations here are fairly clear: if respondents view media coverage as unfair, they are more likely to take a dim view of ongoing investigations; if they view the coverage as essentially fair, then they might be more tolerant of ongoing investigations.²³

In addition to these measures of mainstream institutions, I consider the influence of indigenous institutions and social ties.²⁴ The particular measure here is whether or not respondents value ethnic centers like Chinatown or San Gabriel Valley (home to Monterey Park).²⁵ The importance of an ethnic center not only captures the influence of institutional and social ties to a physical Chinese American community, but also indirectly estimates the impact of ethnic group consciousness.²⁶

Thus far, our explanatory variables assess respondents' immigrant and racialized experiences only obliquely. The last set of variables take a more direct look at the immigrant-based and racialized worldviews of respondents. First, I consider whether personal experience with discrimination makes one more likely to view the congressional investigations as discriminatory. Here two distinct contexts of experience with discrimination are examined: discrimination in institutional settings and discrimination in informal, social interactions. Discrimination in institutional settings pools together respondents who report discriminatory experiences in employment decisions (getting a job or being promoted in existing jobs), in education, in housing, in interactions with government agencies, and in business or retail transactions. Discrimination in informal settings is comprised of respondents who report discrimination in their interactions with neighbors, strangers, or as a result of linguistic and cultural misunderstandings. Because these measures are self-reported,

the actual circumstances of a given incident might be reported by one individual as institutional racism and another as informal discrimination. This aside, what clearly differs across these individuals is the *ex post* interpretation.²⁷

Keeping this in mind, I expect respondents who report racism in institutional settings to perceive the ongoing investigations as discriminatory. There ought to be a connection between having personally experienced discrimination in events where civil rights protections are expected and one's interpretation of the congressional hearings. What about discrimination in informal settings? One possibility is that, even in these settings, there will be a positive relationship. Another is that there might be no relationship at all, since it is a much more situational, individualized, *apolitical* view about the context of ethnic discrimination. Perhaps the most intriguing possibility, however, is that there will be a negative, *opposite* relationship. If respondents willfully (perhaps even ideologically) choose to interpret discriminatory incidents as situational, individual, and apolitical, then they might *more* willingly view the congressional investigations as non-discriminatory and inoffensive.

In addition to experience with anti-Asian discrimination, I also test the effects of whether or not respondents view racism as a barrier to the well-being of Chinese Americans. In this question, racism is compared to language, culture, integration into mainstream society, and adequate job training as possible impediments to the success of Chinese Americans. Regardless of one's personal experience with discrimination, I expect that respondents who view discrimination as a general problem for Chinese Americans will be more likely to view the congressional hearings as discriminatory.

More generally, I include an attitudinal measure of one's immigrant experience. How a respondent evaluates her personal decision to immigrate may shape how she evaluates political events like the campaign finance controversy. The key hypothesis here is that respondents who report that "life here in the United States [has] turned out better than you expected" might interpret even contradictory events in the best possible light, and therefore take a more conciliatory, positive view of the ongoing investigations.

Lastly, two language-related measures are included to assess the role that language plays in shaping one's immigrant experience and political socialization. As I intimated earlier, the language in which interviews are conducted may significantly and systematically influence the answers that respondents give to questions. Here, we directly test whether a non-English interview makes a difference in one's assessments of the congressional hearings. To the extent that comfort with a Chinese dialect may imply a greater sense of ethnic resilience, we may expect respondents interviewed in Mandarin or Cantonese to be more likely to see the investigations as discriminatory. To rule out the possibility that respondents may choose to be interviewed in a Chinese dialect simply because of greater proficiency in a non-English language or greater everyday use of Chinese dialects, I control for respondents' degree of "language segregation" — an additive index of respon-

dents' use of a Chinese dialect in everyday encounters (at home, at work, and in commercial transactions).²⁸

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are shown in Table 2. For the most part, sociodemographic and socioeconomic factors appear not to influence whether Chinese Americans view the congressional hearings as discriminatory. The two salient exceptions are respondent age and length of permanent residence in the United States (among immigrant respondents). The fact that older Chinese Americans are less likely to see discrimination is generally consistent with Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan's

TABLE 2. ARE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS DISCRIMINATORY?

Dependent variable: "As you may know, Congress is investigating alleged illegal campaign contributions by Asian nationals to President Clinton's reelection campaign in 1996, as well as some congressional election campaigns. The congressional committees are looking primarily at contributions made by donors who have Asian sounding names for any illegal donations ... Do you think this is a form of discrimination against Asians in this country?"

Variable	Coefficients	(std. errors)	Mean of X _i
Age	-.017	(.005)**	40.34
Educational Level	0.092	(.064)	3.47
Family Income	-.016	(.042)	5.02
Female	0.119	(.143)	0.34
U.S. Citizen	0.111	(.201)	0.77
Democrat	0.063	(.195)	0.19
Republican	-.112	(.188)	0.22
Ideology	0.065	(.067)	2.99
Second Generation	-.379	(.258)	0.24
Years in U.S. as Permanent Resident	0.022	(.009)*	10.32
Issue-specific Media Attention	0.075	(.073)	2.49
Fairness of Media Coverage	0.268	(.065)**	3.07
Importance of Ethnic Center	0.083	(.048)^	3.96
Exp. Institutional Discrimination	0.325	(.098)**	0.56
Exp. Situational Discrimination	-.130	(.131)	0.36
Racism as Barrier to Chinese Americans	0.550	(.222)**	0.12
Satisfied with life in U.S. Immigrant	-.264	(.092)**	1.61
Language of Interviewer Effect	0.425	(.189)*	0.38
Language Segregation	0.051	(.103)	1.16
Constant	-1.24	(.523)	
Number of Observations	417		
Restricted log-likelihood	-289.01		
Goodness of fit (χ^2)	87.05		
McFadden's pseudo-R ²	.151		
Percent correctly predicted	68.1	(H ₀ =49.4)	

Data: 1997 LAT Survey #396. Cell entries are maximum likelihood probit parameter estimates and their corresponding standard errors in parentheses. ** = p<.01; * = p<.05; ^ = p<.10.

TABLE 3. PREDICTED PROBABILITIES: CONGRESS DISCRIMINATORY

Variables of interest	Probability Estimate	Probability Ratio	Probability Difference
<i>Years in U.S. as permanent resident</i> [†]			
$\mu - \sigma$ (=0 years)	.422		
μ (~10 years)	.512	1.21	.090
$\mu + \sigma$ (~24 years)	.637	1.51	.215
<i>Fairness of Media Coverage</i>			
Very fair	.299		
Somewhat fair	.398	1.33	.099
Not sure	.504	1.69	.205
Somewhat unfair	.610	2.04	.311
Very unfair	.708	2.37	.409
<i>Experiences w/ Institutional Discrimination</i>			
None	.439		
One context	.568	1.29	.129
Two contexts	.690	1.57	.251
Three or more contexts	.794	1.81	.355
<i>Racism as Barrier to Chinese Americans</i>			
Disagree	.485		
Agree	.696	1.44	.211
<i>Satisfied with Life in U.S. as Immigrant</i>			
Better than Expected	.368		
As Expected	.471	1.28	.103
Worse than Expected	.576	1.57	.208
Not immigrant	.676	1.84	.308
<i>Language of Interview</i>			
English	.447		
Cantonese or Mandarin	.618	1.38	.171

Data: 1997 LAT Survey #396. Predicted probabilities are calculated for each measure of interest by holding all other explanatory variables at their mean values. See Greene (1997).

[†] Partial effects of number of years in the U.S. as a permanent resident are calculated as standard deviations from the mean number of years (approximately 14 years in the U.S.). Since the distribution is skewed to the right, the lower bound is taken at zero.

(1998) findings on age and racial attitudes. Among Chinese immigrants to the U.S., however, this effect is offset by the number of years of permanent residence.

To infer magnitude of the statistically significant relationships in Table 2, Table 3 shows predicted probabilities calculated relative to a hypothetical "mean" respondent. By this calculus, Table 3 shows that immigrant Chinese who have lived in the U.S. for 24 years are about 22 percent more likely to view the congressional investigations as discriminatory than newly arrived Chinese immigrants to the U.S.

Importantly, generation *per se* appears to bear no effect on whether Chinese Americans view the congressional hearings as discriminatory. If anything, the effect is likely to be opposite, where second and third generation Chinese Americans are actually more likely to view the issue as not discriminatory. As the results in the model suggest, it is immigrant-specific, racialized experiences and beliefs that occur

across generations and over one's tenure in the United States that most forcefully condition how Chinese Americans assess this issue.

While attachments to dominant political institutions in itself may not predict assessments on the campaign finance controversy, this by no means implies that institutions play no role in shaping respondents' opinions. Respondents' who judge the media coverage on the campaign contributions issue as unfair are much more likely to view the congressional hearings as discriminatory. Table 3 shows this as the strongest effect on respondents' assessments. Chinese Americans who perceive the media coverage to be fundamentally unfair are fully 40 percent more likely to view the congressional hearings as discriminatory than their counterparts who see the media's coverage as very fair.²⁹

Furthermore, respondents who value ethnic centers like Chinatown and San Gabriel Valley are somewhat more likely to see the investigations as offensive and discriminatory. As suggested earlier, this result tips off the impact of indigenous institutions and social ties on the assessments of Chinese Americans. It also weakly and indirectly supports the general link between ethnic group consciousness and one's views on the campaign contributions issue.

The remaining measures of Chinese Americans' immigrant-based, racialized opinions all show striking results. To begin, experience with discrimination plays a significant role in shaping assessments of the congressional hearings, but not uniformly so. Rather, the context and personal interpretation of that experience may actually lead to opposite effects. Respondents who report personal experiences with discrimination in at least one institutional context are 13 percent more likely than those who report no such experiences to view the congressional investigations as discriminatory. Respondents who report such experiences in three or more institutional contexts are more than 35 percent more likely to view the congressional investigations as discriminatory. By contrast, reporting personal experiences with discrimination in informal settings may have no effect on their views about the campaign contributions issue. If anything, such experiences in informal settings appear to make respondents *less* likely to see any discrimination in the issue.³⁰

Moving from personal experience to attitudes, respondents' views about barriers facing Chinese Americans and their narratives about immigrating to the U.S. significantly shape their views on the congressional hearings. Respondents who view structural racism against Chinese Americans are about 21 percent more likely to find the hearings discriminatory than those who see no such structural barriers. Respondents who find life as an immigrant in the United States worse than expected are also about 21 percent more likely to see discrimination than those who find life in the U.S. better than expected.

Lastly, the results in Tables 2 and 3 bolster the potential import of the language in which surveys of predominantly immigrant ethnic communities are conducted. Respondents who are interviewed in Mandarin or Cantonese are fully 17 percent more likely to find the congressional hearing discriminatory than respondents interviewed in English. This finding intimates that language-of-interview is not simply a question of measurement error or a matter of language proficiency (note that

everyday language use is controlled for). Rather, language-of-interview may alter responses significantly and in a politically meaningful way.³¹ That is, interviews conducted in a Chinese dialect appear to result in different conversations than interviews conducted in English. Thus prior studies based on data from surveys that interview exclusively in English may miss important dimensions of Asian American opinion.³²

TABLE 4. ARE THE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS OFFENSIVE?

Dependent Variable: "As you may know, Congress is investigating alleged illegal campaign contributions by Asian nationals to President Clinton's reelection campaign in 1996, as well as some congressional election campaigns. The congressional committees are looking primarily at contributions made by donors who have Asian sounding names for any illegal donations ... Are you offended or not offended by these congressional committees investigating campaign contributions primarily from donors with Asian sounding names, even if that investigation might get at contributions made illegally?"

Variable	Coefficients	(std. errors)	Mean of X _i
Age	-.005	(.004)	41.52
Educational Level	0.046	(.048)	3.42
Family Income	-.006	(.032)	4.87
Female	0.201	(.106) [^]	0.36
U.S. Citizen	0.189	(.140)	0.76
Democrat	0.022	(.139)	0.19
Republican	-.184	(.139)	0.22
Ideology	0.051	(.052)	3.01
Second Generation	-.366	(.199) [^]	0.21
Years in U.S. as Permanent Resident	0.001	(.004)	10.97
Issue-specific Media Attention	0.245	(.057)**	2.42
Fairness of Media Coverage	0.189	(.049)**	3.07
Importance of Ethnic Center	0.90	(.037)*	3.98
Exp. Institutional Discrimination	0.253	(.075)**	0.57
Exp. Situational Discrimination	-.140	(.098)	0.34
Racism as Barrier to Chinese-Ams	-.117	(.171)	0.12
Satisfied with life in U.S. Immigrant	-.110	(.070)	1.67
Language of Interviewer Effect	0.179	(.143)	0.42
Language Segregation	-.099	(.078)	1.20
μ(0)	-.544	(.384)	
μ(1)	0.596	(.061)	
μ(2)	1.263	(.078)	
μ(3)	2.383	(.109)	
Number of Observations	476		
Restricted log-likelihood	-742.32		
McFadden's pseudo-R ²	.058		
Goodness of fit (χ ²)	85.95		

Data: 1997 LAT Survey #396. Cell entries are maximum likelihood ordered probit parameter estimates with corresponding standard errors in parentheses. ** = p<.01; * = p<.05; ^ =p< .10.

Taken together, the above results make a powerful case that one's particular immigrant experience — specifically, the racial/ethnic content of that experience — plays a vital role in how Chinese Americans evaluate Congress on the issue of Asian American campaign finance improprieties. The racial, immigrant cast on this issue is evident even when respondents are asked whether the congressional investigations are offensive (that is, absent the explicit mention of racial discrimination). Table 4 shows this question modeled with the same set of explanatory measures as in Table 2. Respondents' views on racism as a barrier to opportunity loses its statistical significance, and the effects of respondents' satisfaction with life in the U.S. and the language-of-interview fades to a faint suggestion. That said, personal experience with discrimination and the perceived importance of ethnic centers retain a significant, strong sway.

TABLE 5. IS MEDIA COVERAGE ON THIS ISSUE UNFAIR?

Dependent variable: "Do you think television and the press and magazine and radio are covering the news of alleged illegal contributions made by Asian nationals to the president's reelection campaign fairly or unfairly? (IF FAIRLY OR UNFAIRLY) Do you think it is very (fairly/unfairly) or only somewhat (fairly/unfairly)?"

Variable	Coefficients	(std. errors)	Mean of X_i
Age	0.008	(.003)*	42.13
Educational Level	0.007	(.047)	3.42
Family Income	0.018	(.031)	4.83
Female	-.559	(.107)	0.38
Democrat	0.064	(.145)	0.18
Republican	-.527	(.133)	0.21
U.S. Citizen	0.130	(.145)	0.76
Issue-specific Media Attention	0.126	(.056)*	2.43
Cynicism re Sincerity of Congress	0.237	(.069)**	1.48
Second Generation	0.127	(.148)	0.20
Years in U.S. as Permanent Resident	0.004	(.004)	11.16
Racism as Barrier to Chinese Ams	-.113	(.142)	0.12
Exp. Institutional Discrimination	0.158	(.067)**	0.53
Exp. Situational Discrimination	0.102	(.093)	0.32
Oppt'y Structure Facing Chinese Ams	-.167	(.101)^	3.01
Language of Interviewer Effect	0.393	(.122)**	0.45
$\mu(0)$	0.749	(.434)	
$\mu(1)$	1.347	(.101)	
$\mu(2)$	2.112	(.109)	
$\mu(3)$	3.220	(.124)	
Number of Observations	508		
Restricted log-likelihood	-730.07		
Goodness of fit (χ^2)	66.77		
McFadden's pseudo- R^2	.046		

Data: 1997 LAT Survey #396. Cell entries are maximum likelihood ordered probit parameter estimates with corresponding standard errors in parentheses. ** = $p < .01$; * = $p < .05$; ^ = $p < .10$.

This net can be cast even wider to consider whether a racial, immigrant account holds with assessments of a non-governmental institution on this issue. Specifically, I examine whether or not respondents view the media coverage (defined as “television and the press and magazine and radio”) on the campaign finance issue as fair or unfair. Table 5 specifies a model that basically replicates the explanatory variables in Tables 2 and 4, but differs in two important respects.

First, I examine whether respondents who take a cynical view toward the nation’s political institutions — measured by whether or not Congress on this issue has been insincere and purely partisan — also view the mass media as unfair. Second, I look at whether respondents who affirm the basic fairness of the opportunity structure in the U.S. towards Chinese Americans also affirm the basic fairness of the mass media on the campaign contributions issue. The rationale in the first instance is that respondents’ views about one kind of institution may extend to the mass media. The rationale in the second instance is that respondents’ views about fairness in one context may extend to their views about the fairness of the mass media.

The results, shown in Table 5, are mostly consistent with the story on respondent assessments of Congress. Respondents who follow the story more closely are also more likely to view the media coverage as unfair. Respondents who view the opportunity structure in the U.S. as unfair towards Chinese Americans are more likely to view the media coverage as unfair. Respondents who experience racism in institutional settings are more likely to view the media coverage as unfair. Finally, respondents interviewed in a non-English language are more likely to view the media coverage as unfair.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This paper has discussed the campaign finance controversy involving Asian/Asian American donors and the response of Chinese Americans to this issue. The findings support the critical denouncements of Asian American commentators against the media and Congress for racializing the issue of campaign contributions and diverting the public’s attention from more systemic problems with how elections are financed in the U.S. Among other things, media coverage on this issue appears to routinely represent Asian Americans as homogeneous, voiceless, perpetual foreigners, and as a “Yellow Peril.” Such media coverage surely feeds into the widespread myth and misconception about the political legitimacy and activism of Asian Americans. It is no surprise, then, that the swirl of suspicion surrounding the campaign finance issue is reflected in the expressly racialized assessments of Congress and the mass media by ordinary Chinese Americans.

For understandable reasons many leaders within the Asian American community have attempted to recast this issue in a more positive, empowering light. To wit, it would indeed be just irony if the campaign finance imbroglio served as a clarion call for Asian Americans mobilize *en masse*, rather than as a dirge for what little political influence Asian Americans have wielded to date. The anticipation that this

might be so is especially keen given the persistence of negative representations of Asian Americans by political elites and the mass media in more recent spectacles like the alleged espionage of nuclear physicist Wen Ho Lee.

The results of this paper offer some mixed insights on this matter. The fact that the mass media and Congress have implicitly and explicitly evoked a racialized response among the Chinese Americans in the 1997 *LAT* lends enticing support for the prospects of an activated Asian American political voice. Clearly, perceiving the political world from a discernibly racialized standpoint is a precondition to finding and expressing an empowered collective voice. Vitally, the findings in this paper describe the keys to developing such a voice: the opinions of Chinese Americans on the campaign finance issue stem from their immigrant experiences, their institutional ties, and their views about discrimination, immigration, and the opportunity structure in the United States. That said, expressing a shared political perspective on a survey is several steps removed from expectations of developing into a mature, organized, and panethnic political voice. Bridging these steps, as with any other social change movement, will require creative leadership, material and organizational resources, and enduring alliances.

As a parting comment, using data from Chinese Americans in Southern California on a single issue to make broadly generalizeable claims about the politics of Asian Americans or predominantly immigrant ethnic communities writ large is admittedly perilous. Yet even from so narrow a thread, we have seen a richly textured account. In fact, the beliefs and sentiments of Chinese Americans in this paper vividly makes the case for specificity and detail in examining Asian American politics. Put succinctly but broadly, researchers must take the heterogeneity, contingency, and fluidity of Asian American politics as a starting point. Each ethnic subgroup falling within the panethnic penumbra of "Asian American" is characterized by a distinct and evolving history of immigration, a distinct and evolving economic and political resource base, and a distinct and evolving set of ideological beliefs, cultural practices, social ties, and community institutions.

APPENDIX A: EVENT HISTORY OF THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE ISSUE

July 1994	John Huang enters Clinton administration as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce Department.
Dec. 1995	Huang leaves the Commerce Department to become a fund-raiser for Democratic National Committee (DNC).
June 1996	FBI agents warn 6 members of Congress that they may be targeted for illegal contributions from China.
Oct. 1996	Final month of 1996 Presidential campaign. Bob Dole alleges campaign improprieties, esp. with regard to foreign money infiltration into Democratic coffers, a central theme in his campaign.
Oct. 3, 1996	John Huang is "suspended" by DNC.
Oct. 15, 1996	Newt Gingrich makes statement about John Huang and the Lippo Group suggesting campaign improprieties.
Oct. 19, 1996	Huang fired by DNC.
Nov. 1996	Commerce Department's inspector general opens investigation into Huang.
Dec. 5, 1996	Commerce officials discover John Huang had top-secret security clearance even after he left Commerce Dept. post.
Jan. 1997	FBI director Louis Freeh assigns 25 agents to investigate Huang and the Lippo Group after a request by Congressman Gerald Solomon (R-NY).
Jan. 27, 1997	Yah Lin "Charlie" Trie indicted as a result of Justice Department investigation on illegal foreign contributions.
Feb. 1997	Washington Post reports that special Justice Department task force is investigating possible Chinese influence in U.S. elections.
Feb. 1997	Senate committee votes to issue subpoenas for Lippo Group records.
Mar. 11, 1997	Senate votes to expand investigation probe on improper/illegal activities in campaign fund-raising.
Apr. 1997	Documents relating to Huang's tenure at the DNC released to public.
July 8 1997	Public hearings on campaign finance improprieties of 1996 open in the Senate, led by Chair Sen. Fred D. Thompson (R-Tenn.)
Feb. 1998	Maria Hsia, DNC fundraiser, indicted on charges of using false cover to funnel illegal funds into election campaigns.
Feb. 1998	Democrats and Republicans from the Senate committee investigating allegations against Chinese government present drafts. Drafts are contradictory – Republicans are more accusatory.
July 13, 1998	Thai businesswoman, Pauline Kanchanalak, charged with conspiring to funnel illegal foreign money into President Clinton's 1996 reelection campaign.

Endnotes

¹ I use "Asian Pacific American" interchangeably with "Asian American," making no privileged claims for these designations over alternatives like "Asian Pacific Islanders" or "Asian Pacific American Islanders."

² See, e.g., within the same volume of the *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac*, commentaries by Akaka (1998), Nakanishi (1998), and Wang (1998a).

³ For expository ease, I use the term "Chinese American" to refer to U.S. residents of Chinese descent — citizen and non-citizen immigrants alike — holding in abeyance the necessary precau-

tions about the social/political construction of ethnic/racial/national identity markers and the legal construction of citizenship and immigrant status.

⁴ This is a history that dates, in legal/political terms, at least as far back as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Gentleman's Agreement of 1908, and the National Origins Act of 1924. Journalists like William Randolph Hearst and V.S. McClatchy in the 1920s took an active part in this history by stirring social hysteria around a "Yellow Peril" of Asian immigrants that threatened the integrity of the "American way of life." For general histories of Asian immigrants to the United States, see Chan (1991) and Takaki (1989).

⁵ Stewart Kwoh and Frank Wu write that "The Huang matter, however, has become much more than an issue of partisan politics. It has turned from a question of one person's dealings into scapegoating of a racial minority group" (1996).

⁶ Senator Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) writes that "hints of the kinds of anti-Asian treatment that have been practiced in the past" are found in "the inappropriate and misguided attention paid by the media, commentators, and public figures to the ethnic heritage of those involved in the fundraising controversy ... Clearly, in some quarters, 'Asian' and 'Asian Americans' are synonymous, unlike the case with Europeans and European Americans. In fact the term, 'European Americans' is rarely heard in public discourse, because the ethnic origin of European Americans is not presumed to have a bearing on their patriotism (1998, 25)."

⁷ The most notorious example of both the dimension of homogeneity and perpetual foreigner status is Ross Perot, who, while visiting the University of Pennsylvania not only mistakenly referred to John Huang as an "Indonesian businessman," but also asked his audience "Wouldn't you like to have someone out there named O'Reilly? Out there hard at work. You know, so far we haven't found an American name."

⁸ Specifically, John Huang organized a \$25,000 per couple fundraising Lunar New Year's event February 19, 1996. The alleged link here is that APAs at the time were concerned with the slashing of benefits to legal and illegal immigrants and tighter restrictions around immigration, and that Huang happened to have written President Clinton a memo urging the maintenance of "fourth preference" or family preference immigration.

⁹ Along these lines Zia (1997) also suggests that certain media outlets considered the protests of leaders within the Asian American community to be illegitimate, and points to the *Boston Globe's* editorial that such complaints of stereotyping was "a shabby maneuver to avoid scrutiny."

¹⁰ On regional effects, Lee and Hahn find that California papers are less likely to negatively stereotype APAs along every one of the six potentially negative dimensions examined. Moreover, Asian Americans are represented as agents of their own destiny on the campaign finance issue in 78 percent of news items in California papers, but only 28 percent of news items in national papers. This finding is consistent with Wu and Nicholson's observation that the *Los Angeles Times* is generally an exception to their findings.

¹¹ Certainly, there is no such monolithic mass media that can be shown using content analysis. In fact an author would have to exercise verbal contortionism to simultaneously represent all six dimensions Lee and Hahn examine, or worse yet, all ten themes that Wu and Nicholson discuss. That said, there is a now robust social scientific literature on the subtle and not-too-subtle ways in which race is represented in the media. For example, see Entman (1992), Gilens (1999), Gilliam et al. (1996), and Iyengar (1991).

¹² Resort to "cultural" explanations of Asian Americans' campaign finance activities, for example, might read differently if inked by William Safire in the *New York Times* than if inked by Connie Kang in the *Los Angeles Times*.

¹³ Between May 9th and May 27th, 1997, the *Los Angeles Times* conducted a poll of 773 telephone interviews of adult Chinese residents of six counties in Southern California—Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernadino, Orange, Riverside, and San Diego counties. Surveys were conducted by Interviewing Services of America, Inc. in Mandarin, Cantonese, and English. The sampling frame for this survey was individuals with Chinese surnames in telephone directories in the six counties examined.

¹⁴ Most of what we know in published academic research on Asian American mass opinion come from four surveys, the 1984 Institute of Governmental Studies poll, the 1992 Los Angeles County Social Survey, the 1993–94 Los Angeles Study of Urban Inequality, and the 1993 *Los Angeles Times* survey used in this paper.

¹⁵ And with each of these polls, the *LAT* takes pains to consult with several key leaders and academics within the Chinese American community in Southern California. The roster here includes Stewart Kwoh (of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California), Peter Woo (of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce), and Michael Woo (former LA City Council member). These ethnic-specific *Los Angeles Times* polls also avoid an important potential pitfall that mars most existing survey data on Asian Americans: allowing respondents the option to be interviewed in a non-English language. Given Census Bureau data that 73 percent of Asian Americans speak a language other than English at home, the language-of-interview when polling predominantly immigrant ethnic groups is potentially crucial. As Lee (2000b) shows, the language in which respondents are interviewed can significantly and systematically influence data on their political opinions.

¹⁶ Among other things, national origin thus presents itself as the primary basis for group identification, to the exclusion of alternative bases such as class.

¹⁷ The two other kinds of conditions in which Espiritu finds pan-Asian formations are in top-down political constructions of government agencies and in pragmatic, situational, and ultimately transitory electoral and campaign coalitions.

¹⁸ Rather, we recognize and take advantage of the fluid and shifting nature of Asian American political identity. An especially illuminating discussion of the ways in which Asian American identity is characterized by “heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity” and crosses legal, political, economic, social, and cultural boundaries can be found in Lowe (1996).

¹⁹ One important caveat is that the survey does not permit a test of a perhaps more interesting question, namely, whether or not this political spectacle will leave a lasting racial imprint on the minds of the *LA Times* respondents. That is, the details of how our elected officials, political institutions, and media actors respond to the campaign finance issue may serve as a focal, mobilizing events that contributes to the formation of a politicized ethnic identity. As Omi and Winant suggest along these lines, “far from *intervening* in racial conflicts, the state is itself increasingly the pre-eminent site of racial conflict” (1994, 82). Testing for the campaign finance controversy as an instance of racial *formation* requires longitudinal data, and the only available data are cross-sectional.

²⁰ There are, unfortunately, no measures of intensity of partisanship in this survey.

²¹ The expectations that ensue from these two possibilities diverge somewhat. As Zaller (1992) shows, receptivity to novel political messages is non-linear with respect to political awareness. Respondents who are most aware are not the most likely to absorb a stream of political information as new (because, put simply, they already know better); rather, respondents who are moderately aware are the most likely to take in new information.

²² Because we are controlling for the perceived fairness of the media coverage, I would argue that media exposure is a more direct measure of political awareness, rather than the substantive content transmitted through the media.

²³ Lee (2000a) shows that perceived bias in media coverage plays a significant part in shaping anti-Asian stereotypes, sentiments, and policy preferences.

²⁴ See Cohen (1999), Dawson (2000) and Lee (forthcoming) on the influence of indigenous institutions and social ties on the political attitudes of racial minorities.

²⁵ For research on the political significance of San Gabriel Valley, see Saito and Horton (1994) and Horton (1995).

²⁶ Given, that is, the relatively innocuous assumption that respondents with a stronger sense of Chinese American identity are more likely to value centers like Chinatown and San Gabriel Valley. It is, obviously, not a measure that can distinguish between an ethnic conception (i.e., as Chinese American) from a panethnic conception (as Asian Americans).

²⁷ This also begs the question of why identical incidents are not perceived by respondents as discrimination of any form.

²⁸ This language segregation index also allows us to test, albeit obliquely, Cho's (1999) contention that respondents' English proficiency tells us something important about their political socialization and, by implication, their political attitudes as well.

²⁹ The question wording does not specify or imply the object of the unfairness—i.e., unfair towards Asian Americans or President Clinton.

³⁰ In a modified specification, discrimination in informal settings achieves weakly significant effects ($p < .10$).

³¹ The allusion here is to the well-studied phenomenon of "race-of-interviewer effects" (see Schuman and Converse 1971; Sanders 1995; Hurtado 1994).

³² See, e.g., Uhlaner, Cain, and Kiewiet (1989), Bobo and Suh (1995), Bobo and Hutchings (1996), Conway and Lien (1997).

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Counting Multiracials in the 2000 Census: Implications for Asian Americans

Albert Sanghyup Hahn

The 2000 Census allows respondents to check multiple race categories for the first time. This article addresses the tabulation of these multiple race responses and how the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population (API) counts will be affected by varying tabulation schemes. Specifically, the article evaluates the seven tabulation schemes proposed by the Interagency Committee for the Review of Standards for Race and Ethnicity on three main criteria: Comparability, Congruence, and Impact on API Count. API organizations should advocate the use of either a variant of the National Health Interview Survey Fractional Scheme or the All-Inclusive Scheme. Advantages and disadvantages of each option are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

In its history of over 200 years, the U.S. Census has changed — in scope, in methodology, and in substance — to reflect changing racial attitudes and public policy objectives. The 2000 Census is no exception, as the Office of Management and Budget has announced the intent to account for mixed-race individuals for the first time in history. The 2000 Census will begin a practice of reporting multiracials, allowing individuals to check more than one racial category.

Initially, it was suggested that an entirely separate “multirace” category be added to existing racial categories. In October 1997, however, the idea of a separate multirace category was decisively rejected in favor of allowing multiracial respondents to check more than one racial category.¹ This new ruling creates a dilemma. The new data, with sixty-three possible racial categories,² will not be easily compared to past demographic data with only five racial categories.³ An Interagency Committee for the Review of Standards for Data on Race and Ethnicity (“The Interagency Committee”) was formed to present the Office of Management and Budget with recommendations on how to ensure that the new data is comparable to past Census data.

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On February 17, 1999, the Interagency Committee released proposed tabulation schemes for multiracials in the *Draft Provisional Guidance on the Implementation Standards for the Collection of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity* (The Draft Provisional Guidelines). The OMB invited the public to criticize, support, or otherwise comment on these various schemes. The OMB also announced that the process of refining the tabulation scheme would be an ongoing one that will continue even after the 2000 Census.⁴

The tabulation scheme ultimately chosen will substantially affect the counting of minorities, particularly Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (APIs).⁵ There are two reasons why APIs are especially vulnerable to impact by changes in the Census tabulation of multiracial responses. First, they comprise a small portion of the overall population (roughly 4 percent in the 1990 Census). The same change in absolute count will therefore have a greater proportional impact on the total API population than for other, larger racial groups. In addition, a larger proportion of Asians are multiracial compared to other racial groups. In 1980, 10.6 percent of API children under the age of 18 and living with both parents were multiracial compared to 1.2 percent of white children and 2.4 percent of black children.⁶ Therefore, the way multiple race responses are tabulated will particularly affect APIs.

A number of statistical studies bear this out. A Bureau of Labor Statistics study on the May 1995 Current Population Survey shows that the inclusion of a multiracial category reduces the percentage of Asians in the total population from 3.83 to 3.25 percent.⁷ The 1996 National Content Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census produced an even greater disparity: the API proportion dropped from 4 percent to 2.7 percent with the inclusion of a multiracial category.⁸ Another study conducted in 1997 by the Census Bureau, the Race and Ethnic Targeted Test (RAETT), yielded similar results.⁹

This article is divided into four main sections: (I) a brief review of the history of racial enumeration in the Census; (II) a summary of the seven proposed tabulation schemes and a consideration of the nine proposed criteria for judging them; (III) an analysis of tabulation schemes based upon the criteria of Congruence, Comparability, and projected Impact on API Count; and (IV) recommendations regarding the two tabulation schemes judged most desirable to API advocacy organizations and other similarly interested parties.

PART I: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

There has always been a strong interrelationship between Census racial categories, prevailing racial attitudes of the voting public, and public policy objectives. A brief examination of this historical relationship emphasizes the political and policy importance of multiracial tabulation. The history of race and the Census can be divided into four distinct periods: the Slavery Era, the Transitional Era, the One-Drop Era, and the Civil Rights Era.

The Slavery Era (1790–1850)

The very first Census in 1790 reflected the infamous Missouri Compromise, which counted a white as a whole person, and a slave as three-fifths of a person.¹⁰ The classification was intended to support the control and subjugation of slaves. Aside from a few cosmetic changes, these racial classifications remained fundamentally unchanged until 1850. Thus, racial classifications have reflected important policy objectives since the inception of the Census.

Transitional Era (1850–1890)

A short but important phase is the period spanning from just before the Civil War through Reconstruction. During this time, changes to the Census reflected an effort to deal with two policy problems. First, growing rates of black-white miscegenation (as well as widespread rape of slaves by white slave owners) presented a dilemma: how would children of blacks and whites be identified? There was an initial attempt to create separate classifications, such as mulatto (half black), quadroon (one-fourth black), and octoroon (one-eighth black); however, it became evident that such a system would not suffice. This issue remained unresolved until the turn of the century. This period also saw the inclusion of immigrant classifications, including Chinese and Japanese.¹¹ The data was used to inform immigration policy, aimed first at bringing in cheap Chinese laborers, and later at keeping them out during a xenophobic backlash. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was informed by Census data that reported Chinese as a large proportion of the population in many states. The 1908 Gentleman's Agreement, which restricted the flow of Japanese immigration, was similarly influenced by Census data.¹²

One-Drop Era (1900–1960)

Due to the difficulty of enumerating ethnic percentages, the “one-drop” rule was adopted in the 1900 Census. The rule declared that those with even minutiae of non-white racial heritage would be assigned to the non-white racial category. The “one-drop” rule became particularly important in the face of anti-miscegenation laws, Jim Crow, and later, segregation. The 1920 Census expanded the “one-drop” rule to include all non-whites.¹³ This method of classification was important in the internment of Japanese-Americans during WWII. All persons having any Japanese heritage were interned. The relationship between policy, racial categorization, and publicly held notions of race continued.

Civil Rights Era (1960–)

The '60s marked the beginning of the use of Census data to correct racist policies of the past through federally mandated plans such as affirmative action, minority entitlement programs, and integrative efforts. There was a shift in public thinking about race. Members of racial minority groups demanded self-description rather than enumeration by Census workers. Starting with the 1970 Census, the

major racial categories were changed to identify historically disadvantaged groups (blacks, APIs, and Native Americans); self-identification replaced discriminatory methods such as observer identification and the "one-drop rule";¹⁴ and respondents were allowed to fill in a line next to an "Other" category to describe their race.

It is important to recognize that the issue of multiracial tabulation is not simply a matter of accurate data collection. As with other changes to the Census, it reflects important shifts in social attitudes toward race and evolving public policy objectives. Racial thought is shifting toward a more nuanced understanding of American diversity that is not simply black and white. The current debate also reflects a trend toward allowing respondents to describe themselves. The increasingly complex diversity of the American public makes it more important than ever that a tabulation scheme preserve the integrity of respondent answers. Finally, we should recognize that this change to the Census will have a significant impact on the public policies that affect racial minorities.

TABLE 1. CENSUS CATEGORIES, PUBLIC POLICY OBJECTIVES, AND RACIAL ATTITUDES BY HISTORICAL PERIOD

Period	Dominant Census Categories	Public Policy Objectives	Racial Attitudes
Slavery (1790-1850)	Free Whites, slaves	Maintain slavery	Slaves are inferior
Transitional (1850-1890)	White, Black, Mulatto, Quadroon, Octoroon, Chinese, Japanese, Indian	Maintain slavery, control immigration	Confusion due to children of mixed-race unions, blacks are inferior, immigrant races are inferior
One-Drop (1900-1960)	White, Negro, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Hindu, American Indian, Hawaiian, other	Maintain racial hierarchy: anti-miscegenation laws, Jim Crow, segregation, control immigration	Blacks, immigrant races are inferior
Civil Rights (1960-)	White, Black, Asian or Pacific Islander (specify), American Indian (specify tribe), Other (specify)	Civil rights legislation, reversing past exclusionary policies	Reversal of deeply-held racist beliefs, self-identification

PART II: TABULATION SCHEMES & RANKING CRITERIA

Tabulation Schemes

The OMB's Draft Provisional Guidelines outline seven major tabulation schemes: All-Inclusive, Smallest Group, Largest Group Other Than White, Largest Group, Plurality, Equal Fractions, NHIS Fractions.¹⁶ With the exception of the All-Inclusive scheme (which will be categorized as the "baseline" method), the schemes can be classified into one of two broad methodological categories: Whole Assignment and Fractional Assignment.

The Baseline Method

In the "All-Inclusive" scheme, multirace responses are placed once in every racial category that is included in the answer. Therefore, the total distribution of the population adds up to more than 100 percent, because a multiracial person is counted more than once. For instance if multiracial "Mr. Joe Smith," checks the boxes for black, white, and Asian he will be counted once as a black, once as a white, and once as API.

The Whole Assignment Method

Under Whole Assignment, multirace responses are placed in only one racial category. Thus, Mr. Smith is placed in *either* the white *or* black *or* API category. There are four ways to do this: under the "Smallest Group" scheme, a multiracial person is included in the smallest (in terms of population proportion) racial group she or he checks off. Under the "Largest Group Other Than White" scheme the respondent is included in the largest group other than white. Under a "Largest Group" scheme, respondents are assigned to the largest racial group including whites. Under the "Plurality" scheme, multiracials are assigned according to the results of the surveys conducted by the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). The NHIS survey has permitted respondents to check more than one box for many years, with the first two responses being captured. Multirace respondents are asked a follow-up "main race" question asking which of the two races they identify with more closely. For those who answered black and white, the majority have identified with black more closely than white. Thus, a black/white respondent would be placed in the black category.

The Fractional Assignment Method

Under Fractional Assignment, multirace responses are placed in more than one racial category, but as fractions that add up to one. Thus, totals for each race will most likely not be a whole number. There are two ways to accomplish this. Under the "Equal Fractions" scheme, each of the races that a respondent selects is given equal weighting; that is, someone selecting two races will be considered half of one race and half of the other race. Someone selecting five races will be considered one-

fifth of each. Under the "NHIS Fractions" scheme, the fractions are determined by the results of the NHIS survey mentioned above. If 65 percent of black/white respondents identify closely with black, black/white respondents will be counted as 0.65 black and 0.35 white. For data that is unavailable (e.g., more than two races), equal fractions will be used.¹⁷

Ranking Criteria

The OMB, in the Draft Provisional Guidelines, proposed nine criteria by which to judge the efficacy of each of the tabulation schemes. A desirable scheme would:

- (1) *Measure change over time.* The scheme should not radically alter how respondents would be described under the old system (in terms of all demographic variables);
- (2) *Minimize disruptions to the single race distribution.* The scheme should not substantially depart from how respondents were categorized by *race* in previous Censuses;
- (3) *Maximize the range of applicability.* The scheme should be useable in a variety of contexts and circumstances including different geographic areas with different populations;
- (4) *Meet confidentiality and reliability standards.* Problems with confidentiality and reliability should not increase with the new tabulation scheme;
- (5) *Be statistically defensible.* The scheme should follow accepted statistical conventions;
- (6) *Be easy to use.* Raw data should be easily translated into outputs;
- (7) *Require minimal skill.* The amount of statistical and computer skills necessary to translate raw data into output should not be burdensome;
- (8) *Be understandable and communicable.* The scheme should be easily understood by users of the data; and
- (9) *Be congruent with a respondent's choice.* This scheme should accurately capture how an individual describes him or herself.

Several of these criteria are useless for differentiating one scheme from another. All schemes have the same problems with "confidentiality and reliability," are "statistically defensible," require similar "statistical and computer skills," and are "understandable and communicable." The "range of applicability" and "ease of use" criteria are not relevant because the schemes rank differently depending on the intended use of the data.

The remaining OMB criteria, however, are essential for ranking the tabulation schemes. Both the "measure change over time" and "minimize disruptions to single race distribution" criteria essentially measure the comparability of past and future data. Hereafter, these two criteria will be referred to as the single criterion of *Comparability*. The "congruence with respondent's choice" criterion is particularly important considering the historical trend of the Census toward self-delineation and the

political current this trend reflects. Hereafter, this criterion will be referred to as *Congruence*. Finally, the schemes affect the counting of APIs differently. Schemes that decrease the tally of API will not serve the interests of API's and their advocates. We therefore add a third criterion to those proposed by the OMB labeled *Impact on API Count*. Together the three criteria of Comparability, Congruence, and Impact on API Count provide a basis for evaluation of tabulation schemes.

PART III: ANALYSIS

Analysis of Tabulation Schemes by Comparability

There are three main sources that provide data on how the reporting of races in the 2000 Census will be affected by different multiracial tabulation schemes: (1) the May 1995 Current Population Survey (CPS) Supplement on Race and Ethnicity; (2) the 1998 Washington State Population Survey (WSPS), which closely reflects how the 2000 Census will be administered; and (3) the aforementioned National Health Interview Survey (NHIS).¹⁸ None of these studies are exactly like the 2000 Census and may differ in terms of sample size, question wording, and geographic specificity, among other things. Yet they are similar enough to provide information on how the different schemes may perform with regard to Comparability.

Tables 2 through 4 show projected percentages of each race as a portion of total population under each of the seven proposed tabulation schemes using the NHIS, CPS, and WSPS data sets. Their construction and content draw heavily from the Draft Provisional Guidelines. The "ref" columns provide reference percentages representing the closest approximation of what the percentages would have been without changes in counting or tabulation. The "proj" columns list projected percentages representing the percentages that result under different tabulation schemes. The percent change (% Δ) figures represent the *proportional* change between the reference and projected percentages. The "Avg. % Δ " figures at the bottom of each table display the average of the absolute value of percentage change under each tabulation scheme. Absolute values are used because Comparability is strictly a reflection of the magnitude of change, not its direction. Finally, Average % Δ values were rank ordered from smallest (greatest comparability) to highest (least comparability) and reported in Table 5.

Across all three data sets, the best performers with regard to Comparability were consistently: Plurality Whole, Largest Whole, Equal Fractional, and the NHIS Fractional. The worst performers were consistently: All-Inclusive,²² Largest Non-White Whole, and Smallest Whole schemes. With the NHIS data set Plurality Whole and Largest Whole had the least variation. For both schemes, there was an average change of approximately 5 percent between projected and reference percentages. The schemes exhibiting most variation were All-Inclusive and Smallest Whole methods, which reported average changes of 20 percent.

These rankings are based upon estimates that have certain limitations. The actual "Average % Δ " values can be misleading, for they treat the reporting of each race equally. This may be problematic, considering that smaller racial populations

TABLE 2. PROJECTED CHANGES IN RACIAL DISTRIBUTION UNDER PROPOSED TABULATION SCHEMES. NATIONAL HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY (NHIS), 1993-1995.¹⁹

		BASELINE		WHOLE						FRACTIONAL					
		All-Inclusive		Smallest	Largest NW		Largest	Plurality		Equal	NHIS				
	ref.*	proj.*	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ		
White	80.29	80.82	0.7	79.39	-1.1	79.39	-1.1	80.82	0.7	80.57	0.3	80.1	-0.2	80.29	0.0
Black	12.74	12.91	1.3	12.74	0.0	12.91	1.3	12.67	-0.5	12.90	1.3	12.70	-0.3	12.74	0.0
AIAN	0.93	1.78	91.4	1.77	90.3	1.63	75.3	0.81	-12.9	0.82	-11.8	1.29	38.7	0.93	0.0
API	3.54	3.76	6.2	3.73	5.4	3.72	5.1	3.44	-2.8	3.44	-2.8	3.58	1.1	3.54	0.0
Other	2.50	2.39	-4.4	2.38	4.8	2.35	-6.0	2.27	-9.2	2.27	-9.2	2.32	-7.2	2.5	0.0
Avg. %Δ		20.80		20.30		17.80		0.05		0.05		0.10		N/A	

TABLE 3. PROJECTED CHANGES IN RACIAL DISTRIBUTION UNDER PROPOSED TABULATION SCHEMES. CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY (CPS) SUPPLEMENT ON RACE AND ETHNICITY, MAY 1995.²⁰

		BASELINE		WHOLE						FRACTIONAL					
		All-Inclusive		Smallest	Largest NW		Largest	Plurality		Equal	NHIS				
	ref.*	proj.*	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ		
White	82.35	80.96	1.7	80.42	-2.3	80.42	-2.3	80.96	-1.7	80.74	-2	80.70	-2.0	80.72	-2.0
Black	11.11	11.14	0.3	11.02	-0.8	11.14	0.3	10.92	-1.7	11.13	0.2	11.00	-1.0	11.00	-1.0
AIAN	0.68	1.15	69.1	1.15	69.1	1.03	51.5	0.80	17.6	0.80	17.6	0.96	41.2	0.86	26.5
API	3.29	3.41	3.6	3.39	3.0	3.39	3.0	3.33	1.2	3.30	0.3	3.35	1.8	3.34	1.5
Other	2.58	4.11	59.3	4.02	55.8	4.02	55.8	4.02	55.8	4.03	56.2	4.02	55.8	4.09	58.5
Avg. %Δ		26.8		26.2		22.6		15.6		15.3		20.4		17.9	

TABLE 4. PROJECTED CHANGES IN RACIAL DISTRIBUTION UNDER PROPOSED TABULATION SCHEMES. WASHINGTON STATE POPULATION SURVEYS (WSPS), 1998.²¹

		BASELINE		WHOLE						FRACTIONAL					
		All-Inclusive		Smallest		Largest NW		Largest		Plurality		Equal		NHIS	
	ref.*	proj*	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ
White	88.97	90.06	1.2	86.19	-3.1	86.19	-3.1	90.06	1.2	89.99	1.1	88.1	-1.0	88.63	-0.4
Black	2.27	2.84	25.1	2.44	7.5	2.84	25.1	2.44	7.5	2.82	24.2	2.49	9.7	2.56	12.8
AIAN	1.29	3.21	148.8	3.21	148.8	2.84	120.2	0.88	-31.8	0.88	-31.8	2.02	56.6	1.19	-7.8
API	3.04	3.20	5.3	3.19	4.9	3.15	3.6	2.94	-3.3	2.94	-3.3	3.06	0.7	3.03	-0.3
Other	4.44	5.07	14.2	4.98	12.2	4.99	12.4	3.68	-17.1	3.71	-16.4	4.35	-2.0	4.59	3.4
Avg %Δ		26.8		26.2		22.6		15.6		15.3		20.4		17.9	

TABLE 5. COMPARABILITY OF TABULATION SCHEMES ACCORDING TO NHIS, CPS, AND WSPS DATA, (SEE TABLES 2, 3, 4).

COMPARABILITY (BEST TO WORST)	NHIS (NHIS Fractional N/A)	CPS	WSPS
1	Plurality Whole	Plurality Whole	NHIS Fractional
2	Largest Whole	Largest Whole	Largest Whole
3	Equal Fractional	NHIS Fractional	Equal Fractional
4	Largest NW Whole	Equal Fractional	Plurality Whole
5	Smallest Whole	Largest NW Whole	Largest NW Whole
6	All-Inclusive	Smallest Whole	Smallest Whole
7		All-Inclusive	All-Inclusive

such as American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) and Asian Pacific Islanders naturally show greater proportional change between projected and reference percentages than whites and blacks. Furthermore, the CPS and WSPS data sets are limited in their sampling methods. However, these drawbacks do not negate the general conclusion of the analysis.

Analysis of Tabulation Schemes by Congruence

We can break down Congruence into two sub-criteria: “full reporting” and “preservation of preference.” “Full reporting” refers to whether or not a scheme accounts for each of the respondent’s choices. For instance, if an individual marks the white, black, and API categories, will the final tabulations for white, black, and API reflect this? None of the Whole Assignment methods incorporate “full reporting,” as only one response is ultimately accounted for. The Fractional methods and the All-Inclusive method achieve “full reporting” as each element of a respondent’s answer is accounted for.

“Preservation of preference” refers to whether an individual’s propensity for self-identification is recorded (i.e., if an individual feels that he is more Asian than white or black, will the tabulation reflect this?). Only the Plurality Whole and NHIS Fractional schemes preserve preference. The other schemes depend on racial distributions or some other assigned factor (i.e., equal, historical under- or over-representation, etc.). Table 6 categorizes tabulation schemes according to these two sub-criteria.

The NHIS Fractional is the only method that fulfills both “Full Reporting” and “Preservation of Preference,” and thus, is most preferred in terms of Congruence.

TABLE 6. CONGRUENCE OF PROPOSED TABULATION SCHEMES BY “FULL REPORTING” AND “PRESERVATION OF PREFERENCE.”

TABULATION SCHEME	FULL REPORTING	PRESERVATION OF PREFERENCE
All-Inclusive	Yes	No
Largest Whole	No	No
Largest NW Whole	No	No
Smallest Whole	No	No
Plurality Whole	No	Yes
Equal Fractional	Yes	No
NHIS Fractional	Yes	Yes

The All-Inclusive, Equal Fractional, and Plurality Whole methods all fulfill one of the sub-criteria, so they constitute the next most desirable group of tabulation schemes. The Largest Whole, Largest Non-White Whole, and Smallest Whole plans are least preferred.

The simple yes/no classification leaves the degree to which each scheme preserves Congruence open to some debate. For instance, although the Equal Fractional scheme satisfies full reporting, the fact that a multirace response under this tabulation is fractionalized might make it less desirable than the All-Inclusive scheme, which treats each choice as a full "one person" response.

Nevertheless, the above analysis does provide some sense of how each scheme measures up to the Congruence standard. The results suggest that one of the Fractional schemes, the All-Inclusive scheme, or the Plurality Whole scheme are preferred to other schemes.

Analysis of Tabulation Schemes by Impact on API Count

The various tabulation schemes also affect the counting of APIs differently. As noted previously, API counts are particularly sensitive to differences in tabulation. To assess how counts will be affected, I refer again to the given NHIS, CPS, and WSPS data. Furthermore, I conducted a sensitivity analysis of how the API totals will be affected if the entire multiracial population grows by factors of 2, 4, 6, and 8.

Table 7 illustrates the impact of various schemes upon the proportion of APIs in the population. It is constructed like Tables 2, 3, and 4 with reference percentage, projected percentage, and percent change fields. Percent change is also calculated assuming growth of the multiracial population by factors of 2, 4, 6, and 8. Note that unlike the Comparability tables, the "Avg. % Δ " field at the bottom of each section of Table 7 shows both the magnitude *and* the direction of the change, since we are interested in whether a scheme reduces the proportion of APIs in the population and by how much.

The predicted impact upon the proportion of APIs is consistent across all three data sets. As the multiracial population grows, the reference percentage of APIs also grows. However, different tabulation schemes impact the count of APIs in different directions and in different magnitudes. The schemes that *increase* the reported proportion of APIs are: All-inclusive, Smallest Whole, Largest Non-White Whole, Equal Fractional, and NHIS Fractional (inconclusive). Schemes that *decrease* the percentage of API reported are: Largest Whole, Plurality Whole. Table 8 ranks the schemes in terms of Impact on API Count.

The sensitivity analysis shows that if the multiracial population grows rapidly, the change in reported population is intensified. Taking NHIS data, we see that Smallest Whole Assignment, for example, increases the reported proportion of APIs by around 5 percent if the multiracial population *does not* change over time. However, if the population doubles, the percentage of APIs increases by 10 percent. If population grows eight-fold, the increase over the old reporting method

TABLE 7. PROJECTED CHANGES IN THE PROPORTION OF APIs UNDER PROPOSED TABULATION SCHEMES: NHIS; CPS; AND WSPS. SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS W/ FACTOR GROWTH OF MULTIRACIAL POPULATION.²³

		BASELINE		WHOLE						FRACTIONAL					
		All Inclusive		Smallest		Largest NW		Largest		Plurality		Equal		NHIS	
	ref.*	proj.*	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ	proj.	%Δ
NHIS															
1	3.54	3.76	6.2	3.73	5.4	3.72	5.1	3.44	-2.8	3.44	-2.8	3.58	1.1	3.54	0.0
2	3.6	4.15	15.3	3.98	10.6	3.97	10.3	3.40	-5.6	3.41	-5.3	3.69	2.5	3.60	0.0
4	3.71	4.78	28.8	4.45	19.9	4.43	19.4	3.21	-13.5	3.34	-10.0	3.9	5.1	3.72	0.3
6	3.81	5.46	43.3	4.89	28.3	4.87	27.8	3.28	-13.9	3.81	0.0	4.09	7.3	3.83	0.5
8	3.91	6.14	57.0	5.30	35.5	5.27	34.8	3.22	-17.6	3.23	-17.4	4.27	9.2	3.93	0.5
Avg-%Δ		Inc.*	30.1	Inc.	20.0	Inc.	19.5	Dec.*	-10.7	Dec.	-7.1	Inc.	5.1	Inc.	0.3
CPS															
1	3.29	3.41	3.6	3.39	3.0	3.39	3.0	3.33	1.2	3.30	0.3	3.35	1.8	3.34	1.5
2	3.31	3.52	6.3	3.48	5.1	3.47	4.8	3.3	-0.3	3.29	-0.6	3.40	2.7	3.38	2.1
4	3.36	3.73	11.0	3.64	8.3	3.62	7.7	3.3	-1.8	3.27	-2.7	3.49	3.9	3.44	2.4
6	3.41	3.93	15.2	3.81	11.7	3.78	10.9	3.29	-3.5	3.25	-4.7	3.57	4.7	3.51	2.9
8	3.46	4.13	19.4	3.96	14.5	3.92	13.3	3.29	-4.9	3.23	-6.6	3.66	5.8	3.57	3.2
Avg-%Δ		Inc.	11.1	Inc.	8.5	Inc.	8.0	Dec.	-1.9	Dec.	-2.9	Inc.	3.8	Inc.	2.4
WSPS															
1	3.04	3.20	5.3	3.19	4.9	3.15	3.6	2.94	-3.3	2.94	-3.3	3.06	0.7	3.03	-0.3
2	3.03	3.33	9.9	3.30	8.9	3.22	6.3	2.83	-6.6	2.83	-6.6	3.06	1.0	3.00	-1.0
4	3.03	3.56	17.5	3.50	15.5	3.35	10.6	2.63	-13.2	2.63	-13.2	3.05	0.7	2.95	-2.6
6	3.02	3.76	24.5	3.67	21.5	3.47	14.9	2.45	-18.9	2.46	-18.5	3.05	1.0	2.9	-4.0
8	3.02	3.93	30.1	3.82	26.5	3.57	18.2	2.3	-23.8	2.31	-23.5	3.04	0.7	2.86	-5.3
Avg-%Δ		Inc.	17.5	Inc.	15.5	Inc.	10.7	Dec.	-13.2	Dec.	-13.0	Inc.	0.1	Dec.	-2.6

TABLE 8. IMPACT OF TABULATION SCHEMES ON API COUNT.²⁴

RANKING	NHIS	CPS	WSPS
1	All-Inclusive	All-Inclusive	All-Inclusive
2	Smallest Whole	Smallest Whole	Smallest Whole
3	Largest NW Whole	Largest NW Whole	Largest NW Whole
4	Equal Fractional	Equal Fractional	Equal Fractional
5	NHIS Fractional	NHIS Fractional	<i>NHIS Fractional</i>
6	<i>Plurality Whole</i>	<i>Largest Whole</i>	<i>Plurality Whole</i>
7	<i>Largest Whole</i>	<i>Plurality Whole</i>	<i>Largest Whole</i>

rises to 35 percent. In contrast, the Largest Whole Assignment scheme reduces the percentage of APIs in the population relative to the current reporting scheme. The decrease grows in magnitude as the population grows — from 2.8 (no multiracial population growth) to 17.4 percent (eight fold growth).

The data reveal two other important points. First, the NHIS Fractional scheme yields different results depending upon the data set used. According to the NHIS and CPS data, it increases the API count. With the WSPS data, however, it decreases the count. This may be explained in part by the nature of the data sets (national vs. regional data), but it is difficult to determine exactly how the NHIS Fractional scheme affects the API count. Second, for the CPS data set, Largest Whole and Plurality Whole schemes do not decrease the count of APIs until it is assumed that the multiracial population grows by some factor. This highlights the importance of accurately projecting multiracial population growth. It also highlights the importance of doing additional studies with more nationally comparable data than is currently available.

SUMMARY

This analysis demonstrates that tabulation schemes perform very differently when measured by the criteria of Comparability, Congruence, and Impact on API Count. As Table 9 illustrates, there is a trade off to be considered in each scheme. For example, Largest Whole ranks very high on the Comparability scale, but is not very promising in terms of Congruence and Impact on API Count. On the other hand, the All-Inclusive scheme, which consistently ranks last in terms of Comparability, is more likely to increase the reported count of APIs than any other scheme and fulfills full reporting under the Congruence criterion.

TABLE 9. COMPOSITE COMPARISON OF PROPOSED SCHEMES ACCORDING TO COMPARABILITY, CONGRUENCE, AND IMPACT ON API COUNT.

PROPOSED SCHEME	Comparability (refer to Table 5)			Congruency (refer to Table 6)		Counting of APIs (refer to Table 7)		
	NHIS Ranking	CPS Ranking	WSPS Ranking	Full Report- ing	Preserv- ation/Pr- eference	NHIS Ranking	CPS Ranking	WSPS Ranking
	<i>(out of 6)</i>	<i>(out of 7)</i>	<i>(out of 7)</i>					
All-Inclusive	6	7	7	X		1	1	1
Largest Whole	2	2	2			7	6	7
Largest NW Whole	4	5	5			3	3	3
Smallest Whole	5	6	6			2	2	2
Plurality Whole	1	1	4		X	6	7	6
Equal Fractional	3	4	3	X		4	4	4
NHIS Fractional	N/A	3	1	X	X	5	5	5

Given the shortcomings of the data sets, the lack of supporting or complementary data, and other qualitative and subjective considerations, the results are not absolutely definitive. Still, they do provide a basis for judging the relative merits of the different schemes. The next section draws implications from these findings for API advocacy organizations.

PART IV: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR API ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

The relative trade-offs, strengths, and weaknesses of different tabulation schemes discussed above make it difficult to identify a single “best” scheme. While considering broad Census goals such as Congruence and Comparability is critical, the impact upon the count of APIs is obviously of paramount importance to advo-

cates. Bearing Census goals, API interests, and political feasibility in mind, it is recommended that advocates focus on one of the following two options.

Option 1: Promote a Variation on the NHIS Fractional Scheme

As the analysis above indicates, the NHIS Fractional Assignment scheme is attractive in certain key respects. First, it promotes the two central Census goals of Comparability and Congruence. It ranks first and third on Comparability according to WSPS and CPS data respectively. It performs especially well with regard to Congruence. Indeed, it is the only scheme that satisfies both “full reporting” and “preservation of preferences” aspects of Congruence. Finally, NHIS Fractional does not decrease the count of API. The other two methods that rank high in Comparability (Plurality Whole and Largest Whole) are both projected to decrease the reported percentage of APIs in the population.

The practical advantages offered by NHIS Fractional translate into political advantages as well. Key government agencies, including the OMB and other primary users of Census data, place a high priority on Comparability. Consequently, it will be easier to convince government agencies to endorse a scheme that performs well on this criterion. Comparability is also important to other minority groups, and makes it possible to build coalitions across racial lines in support of this scheme. In an era of rising awareness of diversity and sensitivity to issues of identity, Congruence will also be critical in determining which scheme is adopted. It is therefore an important advantage that NHIS Fractional performs well on this front. Citizens and other advocacy organizations are likely to support a scheme that preserves the complexity of individual responses to questions of racial identity.

However, NHIS Fractional also presents some disadvantages that require mitigating action on the part of advocates. One is that the preferences that determine how fractions are assigned may change over time. The 2000 Census is also administered differently from the NHIS in certain key respects including different question ordering and wording, varying data collection methods, and increased education of the multiracial public. There are also sampling bias issues with the NHIS: respondents may not represent an accurate reflection of the nation as a whole, particularly APIs.

It is possible to ameliorate some of these practical problems and their attendant political liabilities. Advocates could propose that a follow-up question like the one used in the NHIS be used in subsequent Censuses. The resulting “Census Fractions” could be used in place of the NHIS Fractions to determine how responses are allocated among racial categories. This will be a more accurate recording of preferences adjusted for time as well as for sampling bias. Having this data for every observation will also help ameliorate some of the application issues mentioned above.

Fractional methods also present a political problem, for they invite comparisons to past Census categorization methods that were discriminatory in nature, like the three-fifths rule or the “one-drop rule.” The public may object to the scheme

because of such perceptions. As longtime API activist Henry Der stated, “I’m against the fractional assignment... it harks back to the one-drop approach, and there’s a lot of racial baggage with that.”²⁵

In order to help the public understand the advantages of the NHIS Fractional scheme, its strengths should be made clear — particularly the fact that it is the only scheme preserving full Congruence. This may help dispel perceptions of the scheme as a throwback to racist tabulations of the past. Support of the scheme can also be increased with the implementation of outreach and education programs to mixed-race individuals of API heritage. Such efforts could increase the benefits associated with NHIS Fractional tabulation by making mixed-raced individuals feel more comfortable with identifying themselves as API. Grassroots initiatives may offer a progressive and proactive strategy for producing long-term increases in the reported portion of APIs.

Option 2: Narrowly Focused Support of the All-Inclusive Scheme

The greatest strength of the All-Inclusive scheme is that it is likely to increase the number of reported APIs. This scheme guards against underreporting which has serious implications for Civil Rights policy. As Deepa Iyer, staff attorney for the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC) states, “our main concern is that the tabulation methods effectively enforce civil rights legislation, not aggravate it.”²⁶

The All-Inclusive scheme also performs well on Congruence, but with no preservation of preference. The scheme at least refrains from asking respondents to “choose” the race they most identify with — a practice that seems to contradict a central reason for allowing multiple race responses in the first place. Indeed, this scheme takes account of all the racial information provided by a respondent; that is, every reported racial experience is recognized, not ignored (as in the Whole Assignment approaches) or fractionalized (as in the Fractional Assignment approaches). This carries the important ethical implication that every racial experience reported by an individual is important enough to be considered a “full human experience.” Such full counting is also related to civil rights and distributive policy objectives as the following quote demonstrates.

McDougall (an analyst with the NAACP) gives the example of a man who is Japanese American, American Indian and black, and who “looks black.”

This is one person, but he may have three experiences. If he is living on the reservation, we need to know he is Native American for the purposes of his tribal allotments. If he goes for a job and is denied it because he looks black, then we need to know that, too. If his mother was interned, we need to know about his Japanese heritage to see if there is some entitlement to reparations.²⁷

The key weakness of the All-Inclusive scheme is that it performs poorly on Comparability. It would substantially increase counts for all races. The scheme also

yields results that add up to more than a 100 percent distribution, and statistical independence among the categories is lost because some observations will appear in more than one category. This makes it difficult to compare the reported tabulations with past numbers. The over 100 percent distribution also affects range of applicability.

Politically, the scheme offers many of the same advantages as the NHIS Fractional tabulation. Because it increases counts across the board, it would allow for collaborative support by racial minority groups. Furthermore, such support would be fueled by direct connections between the scheme and civil rights policy. In addition, the All-Inclusive scheme avoids comparison to the three-fifths rule, which fractional schemes do not. The greatest political liability of the All-Inclusive scheme stems from its poor performance on Comparability. Key government agencies are likely to oppose a scheme that does not allow easy comparison with past data.

One way to ameliorate Comparability problems somewhat is to “rake” or “repercentage” the distribution to exactly 100 percent whenever necessary in which case the tabulation would look more or less like the one produced by an Equal Fractional scheme. In cases where a 100 percent distribution is not necessary, most notably in descriptive senses, the tabulations created by this scheme can be prioritized above all others. Even with such measures, strong opposition from the producers and users of Census data should be anticipated.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis highlights three key points relevant to the work of API advocacy organizations. First, the inclusion of multiracial responses and the choice of a tabulation scheme reflect broad shifts in public attitude and public policy objectives.

Second, the selection of a tabulation scheme for multirace responses will have a significant impact upon the counting of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Island populations. Therefore it is imperative that API advocacy organizations recognize tabulation as an important issue and begin to consider alternatives for action.

Third, the choice of a preferred tabulation scheme and an appropriate political strategy should be made by considering the tradeoffs between Congruence, Comparability and Impact on API Count. Choosing a course of action requires recognizing the tradeoffs between these criteria. Considered in this light, the NHIS Fractional Allocation scheme and the All-Inclusive scheme appear to be the most desirable alternatives.

History indicates that changes to the Census are more than just apolitical statistical adjustments. Rather, such changes are important statements of social values that carry significant implications for public policy. The tabulation of multirace responses is no exception to this historical rule. Like all Census issues, it will remain politically and socially relevant well into the new millennium.

Endnotes

¹ Office of Management and Budget, "Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity," *Federal Register*, Vol. 62, No. 210, pp. 59782–58790.

² The 63 possible categories are the six main categories (black, white, Asian, American Indian and Alaskan Eskimo, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, other) along with all of the various multirace combinations (e.g. black, white, and Alaskan Eskimo).

³ The 5 categories are black, white, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and other. Note that the "Asian and Pacific Islander" category has been split into two categories — "Asian American" and "Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander" — for the 2000 Census.

⁴ Wallman, Katherine, Chief Statistician, Office of Management and Budget, in *Draft Provisional Guidance on the Implementation of the 1997 Standards for the Collection of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*, Note for Readers.

⁵ The abbreviation API is used throughout this article because it is the abbreviation used by the Census Bureau to refer to the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population.

⁶ Tamayo Lott, Juanita, *Asian Americans: From Racial Category to Multiple Identities*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1998, p. 98.

⁷ U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, *A CPS Supplement for Testing Methods of Collecting Racial and Ethnic Information*, Table 2.

⁸ U.S. Department of the Census, *Findings on Questions on Race and Hispanic Origin Tested in the 1996 National Content Survey*. Unpublished staff working paper.

⁹ U.S. Department of the Census, *Results of the 1996 Race and Ethnic Targeted Test*. Population Division Working Paper No. 18.

¹⁰ United States Constitution, Article 1, Section 2.

¹¹ It is instructive, however, that the Census has never included white immigrants, such as Irish and Germans, in the classification system, even during high immigration periods.

¹² Takaki, Ronald, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, New York: Penguin Books, p. 40.

¹³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twenty Census: Population and Housing Questions, 1790–1980*, Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979, p. 52.

¹⁴ National Research Council, *Modernizing the U.S. Census*, Washington D.C.: National Academy Press, 1995, p. 141.

¹⁵ There is some variation within the periods; however, the categories are generally consistent as expressed in the table.

¹⁶ For a different account of these schemes, see del Pinal, Jorge, Population Division of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Approaches for Developing Tabulations of Race Data from the 2000 Census*, presented at the Joint Meeting of the Commerce Secretary's 2000 Census Advisory Committee, the Census Advisory Committee of Professional Associations, and the Census Advisory Committees on the African American Population, on the American Indian and Alaska

Native Populations, on the Asian and Pacific Islander Populations, and on the Hispanic Population; June 3, 1998, Alexandria, Virginia.

¹⁷ It is possible for fractional assignment schemes to be statistically manipulated into a Whole Assignment scheme. That is, the respondent would be placed into only one racial category; this is done by using the fractions in question as probabilities for assignment. For instance, under probabilistic Whole Assignment with equal fractions, a black/white respondent would have a 50/50 chance of being put into the "black" or "white" category.

¹⁸ *Draft Provisional Guidance on the Implementation of the 1997 Standards for the Collection of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*, Appendix D.

¹⁹ * ref. = reference percentage, proj. = projected percentage

All percents weighted to be nationally representative

Sample Size: 323,080

Reference percentage ("ref") calculated by "main race" — refer to footnote 10.

Change Calculation: (ref. - proj.)/ref.

Average Change Calculation: Absolute Values of Change for each race were averaged.

²⁰ * ref. = reference percentage, proj. = projected percentage

All percents weighted for sample design/nonresponse, but not nationally representative

Sample Size: 30,678

Reference percentage ("ref") from original CPS race question.

Change Calculation: (ref. - proj.)/ref.

Average Change Calculation: Absolute Values of Change for each race were averaged.

²¹ * ref. = reference percentage, proj. = projected percentage

All percents weighted for sample design/nonresponse, but not nationally representative

Sample Size: 6,940

Reference percentage ("ref") from original CPS race question.

Change Calculation: (ref. - proj.)/ref.

Average Change Calculation: Absolute Values of Change for each race were averaged.

²² This is to be expected, as the All-Inclusive scheme increases the number of every racial category, so that the total distribution is greater than 100 percent.

²³ Inc. = Increase, Dec. = Decrease

Change Calculation: (ref. - proj.)/ref. Thus, a negative sign (-) means increase in reported population.

Average Change Calculation: Arithmetic mean, including signs.

²⁴ Boldface: increase API count, italics: decrease API count

²⁵ Der, Henry, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, California Department of Education, telephone interview, Apr. 5, 1999.

²⁶ Iyer, Deepa, Staff Attorney, National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, telephone interview, Apr. 5, 1999.

²⁷ McLeod, Ramon G., "New Rules for Marking Racial Identity: Multiple Checkoff Boxes Available in 2000 Census," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, Dec. 26, 1997, News; pg. A1.

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Emerging Power: A Study on Asian American Political Candidates

Lisa S. Tsai

Asian Americans have often been associated with low political participation, but the recent electoral successes of Asian American political candidates suggest that Asian Americans may be emerging as a viable political power in the United States. Although some social science literature has addressed the electoral participation of Asian Americans, none have treated in-depth the subject of Asian American political candidates. In response to this paucity of literature, this study seeks to characterize the "successful Asian American political candidate" and evaluate the factors affecting the viability of such candidates. Based on twenty interviews conducted with former and current Asian American elected officials across the nation, this study develops four common typologies of Asian political candidates: the accidental candidate, the experiential candidate, the socialized/legacy candidate, and the career candidate. This study also identifies the common characteristics of these candidates, as discussed in four categories: personal background, party affiliation, constituency, and group consciousness.

The political participation of Asian Americans presents an interesting paradox. Despite their rich history in the United States, rapidly growing population, and high levels of socioeconomic achievement, Asian Americans have long been invisible in mainstream politics. Studies have consistently shown that Asian American electoral participation rates are substantially lower than those of non-Hispanic whites and blacks, and that factors generally motivating participation among other ethnic minority groups, such as income and education level, do not comparably apply to Asian Americans. Similarly, barring a few key areas, Asian Americans have been traditionally underrepresented in national, statewide, and (to a lesser extent) local elected capacities — a phenomenon largely attributable to a lack of qualified candidates, low voting percentages, and racial prejudice. Even in cities where Asian

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Americans comprise a substantial, if not majority population, Asian American candidates are not ensured of electoral success. As a result of an apolitical group culture, socio-psychological factors, as well as legal restraints that have excluded their participation, Asian Americans have shunned the polls and evaded the political profession, essentially allowing politicians (of every ethnicity) to neglect their needs and interests.

However, in spite of these dismal trends, more recent events suggest that Asian Americans may be transforming from a "sleeping giant" to an emerging power. While not reflective of national percentages, in two recent elections (November 1996 and June 1997), Asian Americans in San Francisco voted at a rate roughly equal to that of all San Francisco voters, thus playing an important role in electing two Asian Americans to the Board of Supervisors in 1996.¹ Furthermore, a record number of Asian Americans have been running for political office. In addition to their established presence in Hawaii, Asian American candidates have displayed unprecedented vigor in small mainland cities like Monterey Park, Fullerton, Gardena, Torrance, Westminster, and Carson (all in California), as well as larger cities like Seattle, San Francisco, Houston, and New York. In 1997, four Asian American candidates challenged an incumbent New York City Councilwoman who had served in that position for thirty years. Also, in 1996, 11 of 15 Asian American candidates were elected to the New York City School Board.² In San Francisco, where Asian Americans comprise close to 30 percent of the population, three Asian Americans currently sit on the Board of Supervisors. In Seattle, two of three Asian American city council members ran for mayor in November 1997. Although both were unsuccessful (one losing in the general election and the other in the primary), their candidacies marked the substantial progress of Asian Americans in that region. Among all of these achievements, however, the election of Chinese American Gary Locke to the Office of Governor in Washington was undoubtedly the pinnacle. The first Asian American to be elected Governor outside of Hawaii, Locke's success is thought to represent the electoral possibilities for Asian American candidates nationwide.

These recent accomplishments, considered in the historical context of Asian American political participation, raise several important questions. Are Asian Americans emerging as a serious political power? If so, what are the implications of their increased political participation? Are Asian Americans viable candidates for elected offices nationwide? What factors are propagating or hindering their success? Although a multitude of social science studies have addressed the political participation of ethnic minority groups (particularly blacks), only a handful have treated the subject of Asian American political participation (Jo 1980; Din 1984; Nakanishi 1985–86; Cain and Kiewiet 1986; Uhlaner, Cain and Kiewiet 1989; Lien 1994; Tam 1995; Lien 1997). Of the scarce literature that has addressed this topic, almost all have concentrated on voting turnout and other forms of electoral participation, while none have focused extensively on Asian American political candidates. In particular, the following two questions remain unanswered: What types of people are emerging as political candidates in the Asian American community? What

factors are determining their electoral success or failure? Based on historical analysis and in-depth interviews, this article will explore possible answers to these questions.

In 1973, a sample of the nation's electorate was asked the following question: "If you had a son, would you like to see him go into politics as a life's work when he gets out of school?" A resounding 68 percent of the respondents answered, "no," while 21 percent answered, "yes," and the remaining 11 percent "had no opinion." Those who opposed a political career did so "on the grounds that politics was crooked, unethical" and that "there were better opportunities in other lines of endeavor."³ Twenty years later, if the same survey were administered again, it is unlikely the results would alter much (at least not in the direction of favoring politics as a profession): politics today is no less "dirty," no less fraught with scandals, and no less frequently perceived as a dishonorable profession by many Americans.

For Asian Americans, the disincentives to become involved in politics are compounded by the additional barrier of an apolitical group culture.⁴ Due to a great variety of cultural, socio-psychological and historical reasons, many Asian immigrants do not engage in the electoral process — a value system that has been transmitted to later generations. As a result, not only have Asian Americans been scarce at the polls, they have, until very recently, been nearly invisible in elected office. For some immigrants, politics represents dishonesty and corruption. One Chinatown activist remarks, "You would never hear that a child could grow up to be president of this country in a Chinese family. You have to buy influence, and the typical immigrant still believes that — they would never be proud of their children if they went for office."⁵ March Fong Eu, former Secretary of State for California, similarly suggests that members of her ethnic group are "rather gun-shy of the rough and tumble of elective politics because historically we have been victims rather than beneficiaries of elected politicians...we regard elective politics as distasteful and we simply prefer to devote our energy and attention to the pursuit of other professions."⁶ Even those individuals who emerge as political candidates must grapple with deep-seated apolitical cultural values. Robert Yee, South San Francisco City Council Member, describes his initial aversion to politics: "Most Asians do not like public life as a career or have any inkling of doing it. I'm no different... I didn't want to do it because I'm not very comfortable with that role."⁷ Kip Tokuda, Washington State Representative, supports the notion that "there are certain values that have made it somewhat difficult to be in this position — the value of privacy, and of not being out there to be scrutinized by the public."⁸ Given these barriers, the current low levels of Asian American political representation stem not from waves of electoral defeat, but rather from a limited pool of viable electoral candidates. Eu's observation made in 1980 is equally relevant today: "We do not fare terribly well because we do not run for public office in any great numbers."⁹

However, in the past few decades, the number of Asian American political candidates has risen dramatically. Both the media and the academic community

have noted that “increasing numbers of Asian Americans are running for office, and it is no longer a surprise to see Asian American names on the ballot.”¹⁰ There are approximately 300 Asian American elected officials nationwide, ranging from two U.S. senators to 41 state representatives; 83 city council members to 26 city mayors; 210 judges to over 180 federal appointed officials; and over 800 major appointees at state and local levels.¹¹ In states like California, Washington, Nevada, and Oregon, Asian Americans have not only won local school board and citywide positions, but also high-profile statewide offices — the most significant of which is undoubtedly Chinese American Gary Locke’s successful bid for the Governor’s seat in Washington. Other significant statewide achievements have been made by Cheryl Lau, who served as Secretary of State for Nevada; S.B. Woo, former Lieutenant Governor of Delaware; and most recently, Matthew Fong, who is currently serving as California State Treasurer.

While these elections signify substantial achievements for Asian American representation, they do not compare with the recent successes of other minorities. Asian American political leaders are heavily concentrated in local school boards and city councils, and are visible in only a few key states, as well as in the U.S. Congress. Compared to the 40 African American and 21 Hispanic members of the 105th Congress, the Asian American congressional contingent, totaling five representatives and two senators of whom only five are voting members, is nominal.¹² A Cain & Kiewiet study also found that whereas Asian Americans (as well as blacks) fare better than Latinos for local and statewide offices, Latinos and blacks are more successful than Asian Americans in congressional and statewide legislative offices.¹³ Even at the local level, Asian Americans comprised only 0.13 percent of all elected officials nationwide in 1992, a minuscule amount when compared to the 0.42 percent for American Indians, 1.4 percent for Latinos, 2.7 percent for blacks, and 95.4 percent for non-Hispanic whites.¹⁴ These figures illustrate that although Asian Americans have made significant electoral advancements in the past few decades, overall progress has been slow, especially at the higher levels. However, as Daphne Kwok, Executive Director of the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), explains, “We need to start at the lower levels of electoral office... Asian Americans can’t expect that their first elected office will be a member of Congress. It just doesn’t work that way. People have to put time into the system.”¹⁵

Within the scarce literature that has addressed the subject of Asian American political leadership, nothing has been written on the influencing factors or general characteristics of former and current elected officials. Professor Don Nakanishi, Director of the Asian American Studies Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, explains that on the individual level, many fundamental questions remain unanswered: “What factors — be they social class, level of educational attainment, ethnicity, generation, sex, occupation, or religion — have the greatest influence on an individual’s likelihood to register, affiliate with a specific party, or become involved in other activities, such as contributing campaign funds, or seeking public office?”¹⁶ In this Article, I shall analyze the motivating factors and common charac-

teristics of those Asian Americans who seek and serve in elected office. Based on twenty interviews I conducted with former and current Asian American elected officials across the nation, I will provide one model by which to analyze successful Asian American political candidates. Throughout this Article, it may be useful to refer to Appendix A, which briefly describes each candidate and Appendix B, which lists the questions asked during each interview.¹⁷

TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF ASIAN AMERICAN POLITICAL CANDIDATES

Based on my research, I have developed four distinct “types” of Asian American elected officials, which I have listed in order from most to least common typology: the accidental candidate, the experiential candidate, the socialized/legacy candidate, and the career candidate. In this section, I will define each of these categories, and profile a few individuals who best embody each typology.

The Accidental Candidate. The grouping I have termed the “accidental candidate” encompasses those individuals whose political candidacies were fortuitous or uncalculated. Although these bids for elective office were not premeditated, in many cases, they were predictable. All of these candidates were highly active in the community, and as a consequence of their dedicated involvement in organizations such as the PTA, the Rotary Club, the Women’s League, the Red Cross, the local church, and the OCA, these individuals were likely candidates for political office. Of the twenty former and current elected officials I interviewed, an overwhelming fourteen fit into this category.¹⁸ These individuals ranged from prominent national officials, like U.S. Representatives Jay Kim and Norman Mineta, to mayors and council members of small to medium-sized cities like Monterey Park and the City of Carson. However, regardless of the position to which these individuals eventually rose, many of them began their political careers as members of local school boards or city planning commissions. Two individuals aptly reflect the patterns of the accidental candidate: Cheryl Lau, former Nevada Secretary of State, and the Honorable Norman Mineta, former U.S. Representative.

Cheryl Lau. Cheryl Lau, former Secretary of State to Nevada and General Counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives, has thrown her hat into a variety of political races. In some respects, Lau represents the ideal accidental candidate. A fourth generation Chinese American Republican born in Hilo, Hawaii, Lau became involved in politics after exploring a range of careers, ranging from broadcast journalism to music education to law. Prior to attaining her first elected position, Lau played in the symphony; taught music in Hawaii, California and Taipei; hosted a television news program; and practiced law in the Nevada Attorney General’s Office. As with her other career moves, Lau’s induction into politics was a result of chance, circumstance, and timing. J.D. in hand, Lau chose a legal career in the public sector because, as she explains, “In the private sector, I feared I might be relegated to doing briefs for many years.”¹⁹ Her decision to work for the Attorney General introduced Lau, albeit inadvertently, to the realm of Nevada state politics.

In 1991, when a vacancy appeared for the position of Secretary of State, Lau decided to run, after receiving encouragement from the Republican Party. Although Lau was a political dilettante, she believes many years of lecturing students made her “a natural candidate.” Lau outperformed her white male opponent in a televised debate, received positive exposure from the press, and eventually won the election. As Secretary of State, Lau became actively involved in the Republican party — serving as Secretary to the 1992 Republican National Convention, and later being appointed General Counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives by Newt Gingrich. Characteristic of other accidental candidates, Lau’s political ascendancy was incidental, but her continuing devotion to the field sets her apart from others in this category.²⁰ Lau says she is enamored with politics as a result of holding office: “Politics is the way the world revolves. There is always politics around — whether in the home, the school, or the workplace. You can never get away from it.” Following two unsuccessful bids for office — one for U.S. Representative (in which she placed second), and the other for Governor of Nevada — it is uncertain whether Lau will enter the ring again. Although the Republican Party has urged her to run for a congressional seat again, Lau confesses, “I love [politics] and it is a part of me, but it doesn’t mean I always have to run.”²¹

The Honorable Norman Mineta. When asked why he ran for public office, Norman Mineta earnestly replies, “I’m not sure there was any design to it.”²² While this response may at first seem to reflect Mineta’s modest nature, the startling truth is that this former U.S. Representative and Chair of the powerful Public Works and Transportation Committee perfectly models the accidental candidate. Norman Mineta became involved in the community as a result of his parents’ teachings. Following their three-year internment experience during World War II, Mineta’s parents, like many other Japanese Americans, reacted by becoming model American citizens. Mineta followed suit by serving in the army, and, upon his return, becoming active in organizations like the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the Greater San Jose Chamber of Commerce, and the Rotary Club. As a result of his involvement, Mineta was asked to serve on the San Jose Human Relations Commission (1962), and later on the San Jose Housing Authority. In 1967, when a vacancy opened on the city council, Mineta was appointed by the mayor to fill the position. Two years later, Mineta was appointed Vice-Mayor, and by 1971, Norman Mineta had become the first Japanese American mayor of a major city. Mineta’s path to Congress was as fortuitous as his previous political history. As he vividly describes, “If at that time someone had asked me when I was running for Congress, I would’ve thought, ‘what are you smoking or drinking?’ because I had no ideas or designs of that nature.”²³ Despite his own ambivalence towards seeking higher office, Mineta won his first congressional seat in 1974, and during the nearly 21 years he served in that capacity, he was arguably the most influential Asian American elected official in the nation. Although his district had only a five to six percent Asian American population,²⁴ Norman Mineta became the ultimate congressional spokesperson for many Americans of Asian ancestry. He was the principle initiator and the most fervent supporter of the Civil Liberties Act (H.R. 422), which legislated

redress for Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II. The bill was eventually passed and signed into law, and Mineta recalls his sentiments that day: "There has never been a moment when I loved this country more, and I have never been more conscious of the debt of gratitude that I owe to the people of this community for allowing me to be there."²⁵

The Experiential Candidate. This typology is similar to the accidental candidate model, but differs in one significant way: these individuals possessed an intense interest in politics, and as a result, either worked for or actively engaged in political organizations and campaigns. While the experiential candidates (like the accidental candidates) may not have conceived of running for elective office, their political activism and involvement made them likely candidates in two ways: first, by placing them in an environment where they would be encouraged to seek public office; and second, by providing them the necessary political experience to conduct a successful campaign. Only three of my twenty interviewees fall into this category: Seattle City Council Member Martha Choe, and Washington State Representatives Velma Veloria and Kip Tokuda. I will use the examples of Martha Choe and Velma Veloria to illustrate the attributes of the experiential candidate.

Martha Choe. Daphne Kwok named this city councilwoman one of the most promising Asian American politicians today,²⁶ and if Martha Choe's articulate and professional demeanor is any indication of her political potential, Kwok's assessment is correct. Choe was elected to a four-year term on the Seattle City Council in 1992, and although not a seasoned politician, Choe appears to possess the political acumen of her most senior colleagues — a trait that can only be attributed to her many years of involvement in public service and political campaigns. Raised in the 1960s, Choe explains that her interest in public service and politics was catalyzed by the civil rights movement. Upon graduating from college, she served four years as a high school teacher, and then entered the private sector to pursue a career in commercial banking. During this time, Choe became actively involved in community politics, and in 1982, worked closely on Gary Locke's campaign for the Washington State Legislature. While Choe says that she had no interest in running for office at that time, only a decade later, she would find herself holding her own "kitchen cabinet" to discuss the pros and cons of running for Seattle City Council. Since assuming a seat on the council, Choe has established a solid reputation. Although she explains that she entered politics "not necessarily thinking it would be a career," others regard her as a promising potential candidate for higher offices. In 1996, when then-Mayor Norm Rice announced his decision not to seek re-election, Choe was encouraged to run for the position. She toyed with the idea, but eventually declined to run because "the timing wasn't right."²⁷

Velma Veloria. The story of Velma Veloria's rise to the Washington State Legislature poignantly illustrates the political viability of experiential candidates. A modest Filipina immigrant who came to the United States in 1961, Velma Veloria is, by all standard measures, an unusual candidate for statewide political office. However, while Veloria's immigrant background and unassuming nature made her an

unlikely candidate, her involvement in local political campaigns and national Democratic Party politics mitigated these factors and primed her for public office. Initially involved in the movement to depose the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines, Veloria soon became involved with the Democratic Party and the Jesse Jackson presidential campaign in 1988. That year, she served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, and one year later, she was hired to work on the Seattle mayoral campaign of Filipina Dolores Obonga. Although Obonga lost the election, that job led Veloria to work for Washington State Representative Art Wong in 1991 — an experience that she says “basically trained me.”²⁸ Despite all of these political experiences, Veloria explains, “It was never my intention to run for office. It wasn’t something that was in my plans. If it had been, I probably would’ve started a little earlier and it wouldn’t have been such an accident. For me, my political involvement in everything besides the electoral arena led me to the electoral arena to run for office myself.” During a meeting with Asian American elected officials in 1992, Veloria was encouraged to run for office: “They were talking about [how] they wanted to get more Asians to run for office, and I was the only one there that was not elected. They were all elected, and they kind of turned around and all looked at me, and they said, ‘So, Velma, why don’t you consider running?’” Alluding to her immigrant roots, Veloria recalls that, “On January 18, 1992, I wrote in my diary, ‘I’m going to run for office to declare this country my home.’ And so when I made this decision, I just went for it.”²⁹

The Socialized/Legacy Candidate. This category represents a very new breed of Asian American office seekers. Quite unlike the accidental candidate, but in some ways similar to the experiential candidate, the socialized/legacy candidate is socialized into political life at a very young age, and is usually the son, daughter or other close relative of a politician. My pool of Asian American elected officials includes two socialized/legacy candidates: Cheryl Chow, former Seattle City Council Member; and Matthew Fong, California State Treasurer.

Cheryl Chow. The Chow family name conjures up several images for the citizens of Seattle. The older generation likely remembers the famous Chinese restaurant “Ruby Chow’s,” owned and operated by Ruby and Ping Chow (1948–1979); the middle generation probably recalls Ruby Chow’s successful transition from restaurateur to King County Council Member (1974–1985); while the youngest generation may only recognize the name and face of Cheryl Chow, who is not only known as Ruby Chow’s daughter, but as a former Seattle City Councilwoman (1990–1997). Whichever image the Chow family name elicits, most Seattle residents are familiar with the public service contributions of this family. Father Ping Chow, mother Ruby Chow, and daughter Cheryl Chow (the third of five children) all boast lengthy resumes that detail their involvement in a wide array of community organizations, including the Chong Hwa Benevolent Association, the Seattle Chinese Community Girls Drill Team, the American Legion, and numerous city planning commissions and boards. In 1970, Cheryl began her career as a physical education teacher at a junior high school. Over the course of the next twenty years, she would serve as a teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, and District Supervisor at various

Seattle public schools. Her decision to run for office was greatly influenced by her early childhood socialization in public service: "I think a lot has to do with early exposure — being in the restaurant, doing community work, being around people." Cheryl explains that working on her mother's campaigns for King County Council introduced her to the art of politicking. Although for many years she resisted her friends' exhortations to seek public office herself, she eventually succumbed in 1985.

I had helped my mom on her three campaigns. I realized I was good at organizing. I enjoyed campaigning and competition. I didn't think I wanted to run, but I thought maybe down the line. On the third campaign — it was a fairly nasty campaign — I thought no way. People said I should run, but I said 'no way.' In 1985, six guys were running. All my friends kept saying 'You should run, you should run. There's no women, no Asians.' I just kind of looked at who was running, scratched my head and thought, 'Gee, if they can run, I can run.' That's how I did it.³⁰

Cheryl lost her first election for King County Council by 300 votes, a fact she attributes to the media: "I got beat up by the press for the dynasty issue. In half of my ink space, they kept talking about my mother and the dynasty issue." However, while her legacy status caused her to lose that election, Cheryl walked away with a personal appreciation for politics: "What I found out during that process is that I enjoyed doing it. I enjoyed the challenge, I enjoyed it."³¹ Having learned how "to work the whole room" on her first campaign, Cheryl was a much more confident candidate in her second bid for office — this time for Seattle City Council. After winning her first council seat in 1990, Cheryl was re-elected in 1994. Three years later, Cheryl quit her council position to run for Seattle City Mayor. The legacy issue resurfaced, as illustrated by a recent interview with a local newspaper:

The reporter asked me, 'Well, Cheryl, you come from a very political family. Is it true that your family pressured you into running for mayor?' I was just really insulted. Here I am 51 years old, and he's asking me this. I was a little bit sarcastic and I said, 'No... does it look like I have an umbilical cord connected to my mom? Does it look like I have an umbilical cord connected to my dad? I don't have any cords connected to anybody in my family. I ran because I wanted to, and I don't see our family as a political family. I see us as a public service family. We've done community service all our lives.'³²

Cheryl's defeat in the general mayoral election, however, was probably not a direct result of the legacy issue, but rather of Seattle City politics.

Matthew Fong. Like his mother, March Fong Eu, Matthew Fong has assumed one of the highest statewide offices in California. Elected in 1994 to the office of California State Treasurer, Fong (like Cheryl Chow) attributes his interest in public service to his parents. Like his mother, a former California Secretary of State, and his father, an Air Force Reserves Colonel, Fong seemed destined for the public sector.

However, after graduating from the Air Force Academy and then law school, Fong explored more lucrative opportunities in corporate law. His mother had discouraged him from seeking office, but Fong's early political socialization eventually beckoned him to enter public life. In 1991, Fong abandoned his successful legal career and accepted an appointment to the Board of Equalization. Three years later, Fong was elected State Treasurer, and today, he is campaigning for a seat in the U.S. Senate. Despite all of the drawbacks to political life, Fong says he encourages his own children to run for office:

I have exposed my children to politics, just as my mother involved me in her campaigns. My mother discouraged me from running for office because political life is sometimes quite demeaning and unfair and a lousy lifestyle. You get criticized everyday and beat up in the newspaper. I was making a great living with a prestigious law firm and had a good future with my family. So, why put up with the baloney? Why put up with the stress?... But the reason I'm involved with it is because I learned something very valuable from my mother in public service. I campaigned for her, I watched her, I learned from her. I felt there were not enough of us who had this knowledge.³³

Given Asian Americans' very recent emergence in electoral politics, Fong is one of only a handful of socialized/legacy candidates. If Fong's children one day opt to follow the career path of their father and grandmother, their early socialization in politics, as well as their legacy status, will make them viable candidates for office.

The Career Candidate. This final typology is self-descriptive. In contrast to the previous three categories, the career candidate does not seek elective office as an accidental course, but pursues politics as a lifelong profession. The career candidate hopes to become the career politician — a goal that incites some controversy among other elected officials. As San Francisco Supervisor Leland Yee (an accidental candidate) posits, "If you want to be a politician, then don't be a politician because I don't think those are the kinds of people that I want in the State Houses or in Congress. The people that I want are individuals who are there because they care about the community and system that we all live in. If in the course of doing all that good work, you get tapped for office, those are the quality individuals I look at."³⁴ While Yee's sentiments provide a valuable perspective, it is unclear that seeking politics as a career necessarily conflicts with genuinely caring about the community. Only one of the twenty officials exhibits the qualities of the career candidate — ironically, Yee's colleague, San Francisco Supervisor Michael Yaki.

Michael Yaki. The Yale Law School diploma hanging in Michael Yaki's office is the first clue that this newly-elected San Francisco Supervisor views politics not as a hobby or chance venture, but a lifetime career. Five minutes into our interview, Yaki provides the second clue, "I've known since I was eight years old that I

wanted to be a politician.”³⁵ He eagerly expounds on his early political ambitions, “Let me give you an idea of how wacked out I am about my career path. When I was in high school, I decided I wanted to go to Yale Law School. When I was in college, I decided I wanted to go to Yale Law School, and then go to work for a member of Congress. When I was in law school, I decided I wanted to go work for a member in Congress, become Chief of Staff, and then run for office.” He pauses and laughs heartily, “I won’t tell you what I’m thinking now.”³⁶ If Yaki’s prior record is indicative of his political potential, he may be one of the more promising Asian American candidates for national office. Upon graduation from Yale Law School, Yaki served as the District Chief of Staff for San Francisco Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi. After being appointed by Mayor Willie Brown to serve on the Board of Supervisors in February 1996, Yaki then ran for his own four-year term, to which he was elected in November of that year. While Yaki is distinguished as a career candidate, he also displays characteristics of the experiential and socialized/legacy candidate. Like the experiential candidate, Yaki placed himself in the political realm by working for a congresswoman. And similar to the socialized/legacy candidate, Yaki is the son of a career United States foreign service officer — a lifestyle that placed Yaki at the table with diplomats and politicians at a very young age. Although Yaki (like any wise politician) will not frankly disclose his plans for the future, one can make an educated guess. Yaki describes an influential gift he received in the second grade: “I got a book on the U.S. presidents, and I read it, and I was fascinated by it. I started reading all the political biographies I could... I’ve been addicted ever since.”³⁷ Although some officials may object to Yaki’s “type,” of all the candidates we have discussed, the career candidate may be the most likely to reach the top.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ASIAN AMERICAN POLITICAL CANDIDATES

What common characteristics, if any, do successful Asian American political candidates exhibit? Among the four types of candidates that have been presented in this article, generalizations can be made in four main areas: personal background, party affiliation, constituency, and group consciousness. In this section, I will summarize the findings of my research with regard to each category, as well as introduce possible explanations for these findings.

Personal Background. In beginning my research on personal background, I sought to answer three questions: (1) Do Asian American elected officials tend to be immigrants, or second and later generation Americans?; (2) Are these officials predominantly of Japanese, Chinese, or other Asian descent?; and (3) Do these candidates engage in common professions prior to running for office?

Generation. With regard to the first question, my research suggests that successful Asian American candidates are predominantly second, third and later generation Americans. Among the twenty interviewees, a total of 14 were second or more generation Asian Americans — broken down further, nine were second generation, and five were third or fourth generation Americans³⁸ — while the remaining

six subjects were immigrants or first-generation Americans. That three-fourths of these candidates were second or more generation Asian Americans seems to confirm the long-held belief that immigrants are not viable candidates for office, in large part due to their "foreign" accents. Esther Yao, a Chinese immigrant who unsuccessfully ran for the U.S. Congress in 1992, contends that "you need three things to win — money, family support, and an American accent. I lacked all three."³⁹ While this explanation makes intuitive sense, and may have been true in the case of Yao's campaign, how can we account for those immigrant candidates who are successful in attaining elected positions? In my sample, these individuals constituted a substantial portion of my interviewees, including Peter Fajardo, Mayor of Carson; Jay Kim, U.S. Representative; Velma Veloria, Washington State Representative; Leland Yee, San Francisco Supervisor; Robert Yee, South San Francisco City Council Member; and Mae Yih, Oregon State Senator. In at least a few cases, these individuals exhibited little or no foreign accent. Leland Yee, for example, immigrated when he was between three and four years old, and as a result, his spoken English resembles that of a native speaker. While the other five candidates did possess Asian accents (the heaviest ironically belonging to the highest officeholder in this group, Jay Kim), their English was still very comprehensible. However, Oregon State Senator Mae Yih admits that her biggest political weakness is language: "First generation Chinese are handicapped by language. We don't speak as fluently and we don't hear as well." As a result, Yih confesses that she still struggles to comprehend her fellow legislators, especially when they use words with negative prefixes.⁴⁰ In the case of immigrant candidates like Yih and Kim (whose accents are more than slight), other factors such as the absence of anti-immigrant sentiment in their respective communities, an increasing acceptance of Asian Americans among whites and other groups, as well as sheer luck make their success much more conceivable. As U.S. Representative Jay Kim simply explains, "it could only happen in America."⁴¹ Whatever the reasons for their success, Asian immigrant candidates may forge an alternative pathway to mainstream political inclusion for Asian Americans.

Ethnicity. My sample includes the following self-ascribed ethnic groups: ten Chinese Americans, four Japanese Americans, three Filipino Americans, two Korean Americans, and one individual of mixed Asian descent. Although half of my interviewees are Chinese, this breakdown may not be representative. For instance, in California, one study indicates that among Asian American elected officials, 49 percent are Japanese, 32 percent are Chinese, 11 percent are Korean, and 4 percent are other.⁴² However, Don Nakanishi suggests that as the Japanese American population declines in proportion to other Asian American groups, the domination of Japanese Americans in electoral politics may also diminish.⁴³ Based on this prediction and recent immigration numbers, the emerging breed of Asian American politicians will be of Chinese and Filipino descent.

Previous Profession. Although my subjects had engaged in a great variety of professions prior to running for office, one career field that was particularly common was education. Six of those interviewed had previously worked as educators, either at the secondary or post-secondary level, and four had served on their local

school boards. For many of these candidates, their involvement with children and education facilitated their transition into politics. The success of Asian American educators in the electoral arena may be a consequence of the popular stereotype that associates Asian Americans with education. Monterey Park City Councilwoman Judy Chu, for instance, partially credits this stereotype for her successful election to the local school board.⁴⁴ Other common fields included business (5), law (4), health (4), and engineering (3).

Party Affiliation. Another important aspect of this study is to determine party affiliation. Party affiliation is difficult to assess for Asian Americans: while some studies indicate that Asian Americans affiliate more with the Democrats than the Republicans, other research suggests the opposite.⁴⁵ Based on my sample, it appears that successful Asian American candidates tend to be Democrats: 15 of my subjects are Democrats, while only five are Republicans. It should be noted, however, that three of these candidates labeled themselves “conservative Democrats.” Democrat Mae Yih, for example, describes herself as fiscally conservative: “They always say Mae Yih is very tight with her budget for the state... I don’t believe in waste... I make good decisions based on the issues, not the party line.”⁴⁶

Regardless of their conservative, moderate, or liberal propensities, the fact that three-fourths of the candidates align with the Democratic Party can be interpreted in at least one significant way: even if more Asian American voters have Republican leanings, those Asian Americans who are seeking and winning elected office are primarily Democrats. One explanation involves the Democratic Party’s historical inclusion of ethnic minority groups. In her study on black members of Congress, Carol Swain observes that for the most part, belonging to the Democratic Party “seemed to be a requisite for winning” office.⁴⁷ Reflecting a similar sentiment, Republican candidate Esther Yao believes that, had she run as a Democrat, she might have won her congressional primary. Yao attributes her defeat to anti-immigrant sentiment and racism, both of which she suggests are more prevalent among Republicans.⁴⁸ However, other Republican candidates strongly disagree with this conclusion. Cheryl Lau, for example, believes that Asian Americans are equally viable candidates within either party. Matt Fong, who became a Republican despite his mother’s Democratic affiliation, says that he has always felt comfortable in the Republican Party, explaining that “if it was truly that racist, none of us would have been elected.”⁴⁹

Constituency. The purpose of this category is to determine the racial/ethnic composition of the various constituencies from which Asian American officials are being elected. In assessing these compositions, I will utilize the following four categories: majority white, heterogeneous, significant Asian, and majority Asian.⁵⁰ Majority white districts are those in which Caucasians make up more than fifty percent of the electorate; heterogeneous districts are areas where no one racial/ethnic group makes up the majority of the constituency; significant Asian districts

contain at least ten percent Asian Americans; and majority Asian districts are those in which Asian Americans compose more than half of the constituency.

Consistent with other studies on this subject, my research indicates that the large majority of Asian American candidates are being elected from majority white districts. Fourteen of my interviewees were elected by majority white constituencies, while five were elected from heterogeneous areas, and only one hailed from a district that was majority Asian.⁵¹ While these statistics may illustrate the relative acceptance of Asian Americans by white voters, they also reflect a basic fact of geography: Asian Americans are not heavily concentrated in particular areas, or at least not to the same extent as blacks and Latinos. As a result, those Asian American candidates who have successfully emerged tend to represent majority white districts.

However, that Asian Americans are being elected from majority white districts shrouds the importance of other constituent groups, especially in areas where whites comprise only a bare majority. For example, the city of San Francisco is classified as majority white, even though whites make up only 53.5 percent of the city's population, and Asians and blacks account for 29.1 and 10.9 percent, respectively.⁵² Furthermore, ten of the fourteen majority white districts had a significant Asian population, as did all five heterogeneous districts. Thus, while appealing to the broader white constituency was integral to the success of the majority of these candidates, in most cases, eliciting the support of Asian Americans and other minority groups was also important. Those candidates elected from heterogeneous areas, for example, must appeal to several ethnic groups. In the city of Carson — where whites, blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans each comprise approximately 25 percent of the population — elected officials must balance the interests of four substantial constituencies. Filipina Councilwoman Lorelie Olaes explains that while her political base is the Filipino community, reaching out to other ethnic communities has been essential to her electoral success.⁵³ Confronted by what Olaes states are “strong political forces from all different ethnic groups who consider this their center,” Asian American candidates in Carson must embrace a multicultural outlook.⁵⁴

These findings are identical to those of the Cain and Kiewiet (1986) study of Asian American politicians in California. They concluded that “as a general impression, blacks and Latinos tend to run as representatives of their racial/ethnic group more than Asians do.”⁵⁵ They report that whereas two-thirds of Asian American officials represent districts with less than ten percent Asian American population, 19 percent of blacks and 16 percent of Latinos are elected from districts with more than 50 percent black and Latino populations respectively.⁵⁶ However, while Asian Americans may not directly represent their ethnic group, they do represent minority districts. Cain and Kiewiet found that in more than half of all cases, Asian American officials represent areas where minorities comprise at least 40 percent of the population.⁵⁷

Group Consciousness. It is unclear whether Asian Americans as a whole identify with their panethnic grouping. In the case of Asian American political leaders, however, there seems to exist a much stronger sense of group solidarity, or what we might call group consciousness, as demonstrated by their responses to two questions: (1) What does "Asian American politician" signify to you, and does it or should it make a difference in the role of a given legislator?; and (2) What are your feelings on the recent campaign finance scandal and the subsequent treatment of Asian Americans? Sixteen of my subjects stated that Asian American politicians have a special obligation to the Asian American community, and all unanimously expressed some degree of disapproval regarding the treatment of Asian Americans during the recent campaign finance debacle.⁵⁸ However, while Asian American elected officials may identify with their panethnic label, this does not necessarily translate into real representation for Asian Americans. Although 16 of my interviewees believe they have a special obligation towards Asian Americans, many of them concomitantly agree that these interests are secondary to the needs of their constituents. Since most of these officials represent majority white districts (as established in the previous section), this bifurcated loyalty may relegate the interests of Asian Americans below those of other groups.

While activists are quick to rebuke the Asian American official who does not address ethnic issues, there are marked differences between those individuals who disavow their Asian roots and those who are politically obligated to other groups. The first category describes a diminishing breed of older generation Asian American officials. Former U.S. Senator S.I. Hayakawa exemplifies this once prevalent attitude among Asian Americans. Hayakawa states, "One very important thing is that I do not like to play ethnic politics. It is fundamental that I regard myself first of all as an American and not as an Asian American or Japanese American... I don't take [Japanese American] causes all that seriously. I think my first duty is to be an American."⁵⁹ Reacting to experiences of anti-Asian discrimination and racism (most notably the Japanese internment), individuals like Hayakawa believed that Asian Americans would only be accepted as Americans by assimilating and de-emphasizing their ethnicity. He urged other Asian Americans to "forget the hyphen, forget that you are Asian Americans. You are Americans now."⁶⁰ While Hayakawa's remarks are startling in the contemporary age of identity-based politics,⁶¹ his ideology is generally limited to older Asian Americans. Among my interviewees, for example, 77-year-old Eunice Sato, former mayor of Long Beach, was puzzled by my question regarding the special obligations of Asian American politicians. She responded earnestly, "What kind of special obligations? I've never been able to figure it out."⁶²

In the majority of cases, however, Asian American politicians are presented with a precarious situation: cater to Asian American interests at the risk of losing voter support, or service their own constituents at the cost of neglecting important ethnic issues. Jay Kim explains, "When Asian issues come up, sometimes I have a dilemma. I only have two percent registered Asians, but yet I'm an Asian American, so when an Asian American issue comes up, it puts me in a very difficult posi-

tion.”⁶³ However, Kim’s loyalty to Asian Americans is generally overshadowed by other interests: “I’m not elected by Asians. I’ve got an obligation to the people in my district. That’s my first priority. Asians are always a second priority for me. A lot of black congressmen are representing black districts, so they can go out there and talk about blacks freely, but I can’t do that. I don’t represent Asians. I represent whites.”⁶⁴ In a similar vein, Lorelie Olaes explains that although she is responsible to Asian Americans, “my first loyalty is as a public official for Carsonites, while my second loyalty is to ethnicity.”⁶⁵ Leland Yee remarks, “I have a general attitude that I am going to look at the needs of Chinese Americans and Asian Americans,” although he cautiously adds, “but not at the expense of other communities.”⁶⁶ For fear of being “pigeonholed” as ethnic politicians by the media, the great majority of these officials neglect Asian American issues as a matter of political survival. University of California at Berkeley Professor Ling-chi Wang explains that this tendency is partially due to the fact that Asian Americans lack numerical power. According to Wang, the American electoral process allows Asian Americans “only surface representation in politics and strips them of any substantive representation, even if they come from areas of high Asian concentration.”⁶⁷ He continues to state:

In fact, for Asian Americans to be successful in electoral politics, they must win the confidence and support of white voters by presenting themselves as non-threatening, nonethnic candidates, the antithesis of ethnic solidarity. While white ethnic candidates routinely present themselves as candidates representing citywide interests and while all racial groups and African American candidates openly and forcefully speak of representing black interests, Asian American candidates must go out of their way to prove to the voters, especially the white ethnics, that, aside from their skin color, they represent no Asian American interest.⁶⁸

While Wang’s analysis is compelling, officials like Kip Tokuda and Velma Veloria defy this model. Although Tokuda represents a heterogeneous district, he refers to Asian Americans as his “natural constituency,” stating, “that’s who I represent to a large degree. It’s an underserved population who politically has very little clout, and so I feel very strongly I’m here to represent their concerns.”⁶⁹ His colleague, Velma Veloria, espouses a similar notion: “For me, it’s a recognition, and I make people recognize it too. I don’t let them forget that I’m Filipino. I don’t let them forget that I’m an Asian American woman. I’m the first Asian American woman to be elected to the State of Washington Legislature.”⁷⁰ The examples of Tokuda and Veloria illustrate the potential for substantive Asian American representation on a mass scale. These group-conscious Asian American candidates are principally emerging in progressive cities like Seattle.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I have established the types and characteristics of successful Asian American political candidates. Based on twenty interviews with former and

current elected officials, I developed four typologies by which to categorize these individuals: the accidental candidate, the experiential candidate, the socialized/legacy candidate, and the career candidate. While the accidental candidate comprises the majority of my interviewees, the recent emergence of the other three types of candidates may be the best indicator of significant Asian American political progress. These typologies can be characterized as follows: the accidental candidate stumbles upon politics fortuitously and without premeditation; the experiential candidate may also seek public office by chance, but in addition possesses the political acumen necessary to wage a successful campaign as a result of having worked in the political arena; the socialized/legacy candidate may display all of the above characteristics, with the added advantage of having a parent or other close relative who has served in elected office; and finally, the career candidate is similar to the experiential and socialized/legacy candidate, but is distinguished by his deliberate and systematic decision to seek a lifetime career in politics.

Next, I identified common characteristics among these officials, discussed under four main headings: personal background, party affiliation, constituency and group consciousness. While these results are only applicable to the officials interviewed in this particular study, they generally reflect statewide and national trends that have been documented in previous research. In the case of personal background, I found that Asian American elected officials tend to be second or later generation Americans of Japanese or Chinese ancestry, and many of them have prior professional backgrounds in education. Second, with regard to party affiliation, the majority of these officials are Democrats, while only a handful are Republicans. As found in the Cain and Kiewiet study, the majority of candidates were elected by majority white constituencies, while only one official was elected from a majority Asian district. Lastly, this article concludes that while Asian American elected officials demonstrate strong group consciousness, political and institutional barriers impede them from providing "substantive representation" for Asian Americans.

These findings highlight some common attributes of the successful Asian American candidate. While "successful" in this work implies nothing more than "winning office," as Asian Americans continue to advance in the political arena, the definition of "successful" ought to be re-evaluated. Those who are capable of winning elected office are not necessarily the same individuals who ought to be in office. While building sheer numbers is important, as Daphne Kwok points out, "You have to have the good Asian Americans. You can have Asian Americans in office, but if they're not in tune to the Asian American community and they're not sensitive to our issues, it doesn't matter if they're in there or not. If they are Asian Americans who have come up from the grass roots, worked with the community, and believe in doing good for the Asian American community, those are the critical people we need."⁷¹

APPENDIX A: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CANDIDATES

Martha Choe was elected to the Seattle City Council in 1992. A second generation Korean American born in New York City, Choe says she feels responsible to the Asian American community. Although a first-time office holder, Choe is considered a strong contender for higher offices. In 1997, supporters urged Choe to run for Seattle City Mayor; she declined, stating, "The timing wasn't right."

Cheryl Chow served two four-year terms on the Seattle City Council (1990–1997). A former physical education teacher, Assistant Principal, Principle, and District Administrative Supervisor for area middle schools, Chow has been a devoted advocate of children and Asian Americans during her thirty years in the public service sector. Following an unsuccessful bid for mayor in 1997, Chow has returned to her first love: teaching.

Judy Chu is the only Asian American city council member in Monterey Park, where Asian Americans comprise 57 percent of the population. A former professor of Psychology and Asian American Studies, Chu says her background in education led her to run for the Garvey School Board in 1985. Three years later, Chu was elected to the Monterey Park City Council, where she served as a crucial and lone spokesperson for the Asian American community during a period of anti-Asian activities and "white flight." Chu is currently running for the California State Assembly from the 49th District (located in Monterey Park).

Matthew Fong, California State Treasurer, is the nation's highest-ranking Asian American Republican. Son of Democrat March Fong Eu, former California Secretary of State, Fong is a well-known figure in the Asian American community. Fong recently made an unsuccessful bid for the U.S. Senate.

Jay Kim is the first Korean American to ever serve in the U.S. Congress. An immigrant businessman and engineer, Kim was elected from the 41st District in California, after serving as a City Councilman and Mayor of Diamond Bar. Kim says he wants to serve as a model for other Asian Americans: "They can look at me and say, "He made it as an immigrant with a strong accent, why can't I?" In July of this year, Kim and his wife pleaded guilty to accepting \$230,000 in illegal campaign contributions.

Cheryl Lau has served as Secretary of State to Nevada (1992–1995), and General Counsel to the U.S. House of Representatives (1995–1996). A fourth generation Chinese Hawaiian, Lau engaged in a variety of professions before entering politics, including music professor and attorney. Although Lau was recently defeated in both a congressional and gubernatorial race, she confidently quips, "It's always nice to win, but you can learn from the failures as well as the successes." Lau is currently serving as a consultant for Boeing.

Norman Mineta served nearly 21 years as a Representative to the U.S. Congress. Representing California's most populous district, the Fifteenth, Mineta assumed a powerful role as the Chair of the Committee on Public Works and Transportation. Mineta played a pivotal role in passing the Civil Liberties Act in 1987, which legislated an official apology from the federal government and \$1.2 billion in redress to the 120,000 Japanese Americans who were interned (which included Mineta) during World War II. Mineta is now a lobbyist for Lockheed Martin, and continues to be an active spokesperson for the Asian American community.

Lorelie Olaes was elected to the Carson City Council in 1993. A second generation Filipina American with a background in education, 35-year-old Olaes believes she was elected because "Carsonites" wanted a young person's voice. Olaes calls Carson a "potentially multicultural city that can really work," and has worked to initiate dialogue and coalitions among all ethnic groups.

Eunice Sato served on the Long Beach City Council for one year (1985-86), and in 1980, was elected as the city's first minority and female Mayor. Born and raised in Livingston, California (1921), Sato was sheltered from racism: "We were very Americanized and we did not experience

any prejudice." In 1942, Sato's family narrowly escaped the Japanese American Internment by voluntarily evacuating during the one-week amnesty period.

Kip Tokuda, Washington State Representative, says "politics was a natural outgrowth from everything I've done." Although his district is equally divided amongst whites, blacks, and Asians, Tokuda calls Asian Americans his "natural constituency." Tokuda says that although his parents (who were interned during World War II) are politically reticent, all of their children have pursued "atypical" career paths — one in theater, one in broadcast journalism, and one in politics. When he does retire from politics, Tokuda plans to return to his previous work as a social worker and children's advocate.

Velma Veloria served three terms as a Washington State Representative. A Filipino American immigrant and ardent supporter of Asian American interests, Veloria says, "I never forget where I came from. I never forget."

Michael Yaki was appointed to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors by Mayor Willie Brown in February 1996. In November of that year, he was elected to his own four-year term, which will expire in 2000. Yaki says that having three Asian Americans on the Board affords him the luxury of representing both mainstream and Asian American issues. The only career candidate in my sample, Yaki hints at aspirations for higher political office.

Leland Yee was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1996. A Chinese American immigrant who grew up in San Francisco's Chinatown, Yee is committed (albeit cautiously) to the Asian American community. While receiving his college education at the University of California, Berkeley, Yee developed his sense of political activism, but it was not until many years later (after receiving a Ph.D. in Child Psychology) that he would run for the San Francisco Board of Education. Although he was defeated on his first try in 1986, Yee was elected and re-elected to the School Board in 1988 and 1992, respectively. Yee, who says his political career is "just something that evolved," opposes the emergence of career candidates.

Robert Yee has served on the South San Francisco City Council since 1992, including once as Mayor (1994-95). Yee immigrated to America at the age of 13, and later studied engineering at the University of California, Berkeley. Having worked for many years as the City Engineer for South San Francisco, Yee was familiar with city government before his election to the council.

Mae Yih is serving her fourth term as an Oregon State Senator. Prior to holding this office, Yih served as a State Representative (1976-1982), as well as a member of her local school board. Despite her status as a Chinese American immigrant, Yih says ethnicity plays a minuscule role in her legislative life. Asian Americans comprise a small percentage of Yih's district, and they rarely approach her for help. If they do, Yih says, "I usually go by the merit of the issue."

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS ASKED DURING CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

Personal Background

Q: Please list all elected and appointed offices you have held.

Q: What was your profession prior to entering politics?

Q: What inspired you to run for public office? What were the major influences?

Q: Describe your ethnic/cultural background. How has ethnicity influenced your success and/or failure as a political candidate and elected official?

Party Affiliation

Q: Which political party do you affiliate with?

Q: What are the partisan tendencies of Asian Americans, if any?

Constituency

Q: What is/was the racial/ethnic composition of your district?

Q: How important was the Asian American community to your electoral success?

Group Consciousness

Q: What does "Asian-American politician" signify to you, and does it or should it make a difference in the role of a given legislator?

Q: What are your feelings on the recent campaign finance scandal and the subsequent treatment of Asian Americans?

Q: Have you experienced racism from the public or peers? How do you cope with this type of sentiment?

Other

Q: What are most important issues on which Asian Americans should focus?

Q: What do you think accounts for the political complacency of Asian Americans?

Q: What can we do to encourage political participation among Asian American?

Endnotes

¹ Ramon G. McLeod, "More Asians Turning Out, Voting in San Francisco, Record Levels Contrast with Past Uninvolvement," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 11, 1997, A19.

² Jonathan P. Hicks, "Asian Americans Emerge as a Political Presence," *New York Times*, September 2, 1997, B3.

³ Donald R. Matthews, *U.S. Senators and Their World*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), p. 47.

⁴ Floyd Mori, "Political Cooperation and the Asian American," in *Political Participation of Asian Americans*, ed. Yung-hwan Jo (Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center, 1980), p. 25.

⁵ Rob Gurwitt, "Have Asian Americans Arrived Politically? Not Quite," *Governing* 4, no. 2 (November 1990): p. 35, quoting Rose Pak.

⁶ March Fong Eu, "Remarks From an Asian American in Politics," in *Political Participation of Asian Americans*, ed. Yung-hwan Jo (Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center, 1980), p. 151.

⁷ Robert Yee, South San Francisco City Council Member, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (South San Francisco, California, August 19, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

⁸ Kip Tokuda, Washington State Representative, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (Seattle, Washington, August 14, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

⁹ Eu, "Remarks From an Asian American in Politics," p. 150.

¹⁰ Harry H.L. Kitano and Roger Daniels, *Asian Americans: Emerging Minorities* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1988), p. 171.

¹¹ Don Nakanishi, "The Growing Impact of Asian Pacific Americans in American Politics," in *The National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac* (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1996), p. 7.

¹² Office of Congresswoman Patsy T. Mink, Packet prepared for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (Princeton University, 1997).

¹³ Bruce E. Cain and D. Roderick Kiewiet, "Minorities in California," California Institute of Technology Public Symposium on Minorities in California (Pasadena, California, March 5, 1986), I-26/27.

¹⁴ Pei-te Lien, *The Political Participation of Asian Americans: Voting Behavior in Southern California* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), pp. 6–7.

¹⁵ Daphne Kwok, Executive Director of Organization of Chinese Americans, Telephone interview by Lisa Tsai (February 5, 1998). Interview on file with the author.

¹⁶ Don T. Nakanishi, "Asian American Politics: An Agenda for Research," *Amerasia Journal* 12, no. 2 (1985–1986): p. 6. Emphasis added.

¹⁷ I use the term "successful political candidate" rather than "elected official" for two reasons. First, I am interested in identifying those characteristics that have motivated these individuals to run or become candidates, as well as those attributes that have made them viable candidates; as opposed to the characteristics that have made them successful elected officials. Secondly, although most of these individuals currently hold public office, they are certainly potential candidates for other offices in the future. Thus, for the purposes of this work, we should consider these individuals first as candidates, and second, as persons holding elected office.

¹⁸ The accidental candidates include Charlie Chong, Ruby Chow, Judy Chu, Pete Fajardo, Carol Kawanami, Jay Kim, Cheryl Lau, Lorelie Olaes, Norman Mineta, Eunice Sato, Jimmy Yee, Leland Yee, Robert Yee, and Mae Yih.

¹⁹ Cheryl Lau, Former Nevada Secretary of State, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (Carson City, Nevada, August 21, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

²⁰ For example, Carson City Councilwoman Lorelie Olaes views her accidental candidacy as an ephemeral experience. During our interview, she stated, "If I could get out of politics, I would get out. My temperament, my value system doesn't resonate with the way politics works."

²¹ Lau, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai.

²² Honorable Norman Mineta, Former U.S. Representative, Telephone interview by Lisa Tsai (February 9, 1998). Interview on file with the author.

²³ Mineta, Telephone interview by Lisa Tsai.

²⁴ Due to redistricting measures, Mineta's original district from 1974 (13th District, CA) is now classified as the 15th District. While Asian Americans previously comprised a very small percentage of Mineta's district, these percentages have increased over the years. According to the *Almanac of American Politics (1998)*, Asian Americans constitute 11 percent of the 15th District.

²⁵ Honorable Norman Mineta, "From Heart Mountain to Capitol Hill," in *The National Asian Pacific American Almanac* (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1996), p. 5.

²⁶ Kwok, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai.

²⁷ Martha Choe, Seattle City Council Member, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (Seattle, Washington, August 14, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

²⁸ Velma Veloria, Washington State Representative, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (Seattle, Washington, August 13, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

²⁹ Veloria, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai.

³⁰ Cheryl Chow, Former Seattle City Council Member, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (Seattle, Washington, August 15, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Matthew Fong, California State Treasurer, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (Sacramento, California, August 22, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

³⁴ Leland Yee, San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (San Francisco, California, August 19, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

³⁵ Michael Yaki, San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (San Francisco, California, August 19, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Two cases merit explanation. (1) Monterey Park City Council Member Judy Chu is the daughter to a Chinese immigrant mother and a second generation Chinese American father. I categorized her as second generation because her mother's strong Chinese culture seemed to influence her greatly. (2) Michael Yaki is the son to a third generation Japanese American father and a Chinese immigrant mother. I considered Yaki to be the average of these two lines, making him a third generation Asian American.

³⁹ Esther Yao, Unsuccessful Candidate for U.S. Representative, Telephone interview by Lisa Tsai (December 27, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

⁴⁰ Mae Yih, Oregon State Senator, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (Albany, Oregon, August 15, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

⁴¹ Honorable Jay Kim, U.S. Representative, Telephone interview by Lisa Tsai (February 5, 1998). Interview on file with the author.

⁴² Pan S. Kim, "A Status Report on Asian Americans in Government," *Asian American Policy Review* 4 (1994): p. 98.

⁴³ Don Nakanishi, Director of UCLA Asian American Studies Center, Telephone Interview by Lisa Tsai (February 21, 1998). Interview on file with the author.

⁴⁴ Judy Chu, Monterey Park City Council Member, Personal Interview by Lisa Tsai (August 25, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

⁴⁵ While several studies have concluded that the majority of Asian Americans are Democrats (Tachibana 1986; Nakanishi 1986; Wei 1993; Tam 1995; UCLA Asian Pacific American Political Almanac 1996), other studies indicate that Asian Americans lean more toward the Republican Party (Cain & Kiewiet 1986; Gall & Gall 1993).

⁴⁶ Yih, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai.

⁴⁷ Carol M. Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 141.

⁴⁸ Yao, Telephone interview by Lisa Tsai.

⁴⁹ Fong, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai.

⁵⁰ The first two categories are modeled after those found in Swain's study on black congressional representation. See Swain (1995), p. 4.

⁵¹ I use the ethnic composition percentages that correlate with the candidate's most recent election. Thus, I consider Norman Mineta's district to have a significant Asian population, since

Asian Americans comprised 11 percent of his constituency during his most recent election. (Twenty years ago, when Mineta was first elected, this was not the case.) Conversely, I do not categorize Ruby Chow's electorate as significantly Asian, since Asians did not make up ten percent of her district when she was last elected in 1982.

⁵² Office of Michael Yaki, San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Percentages taken from the 1990 U.S. Census Report (1998). Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors are currently elected at large, but in 2000, these elections will be determined by district.

⁵³ Lorelie Olaes, City of Carson Council Member, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (Carson, California, August 26, 1997). Interview on file with the author.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Cain and Kiewiet, "The Political Impact of California's Minorities," I-27/28.

⁵⁶ Ibid, I-28.

⁵⁷ Ibid., I-28/29.

⁵⁸ The four officials who did not feel a special obligation towards Asian Americans include the three individuals who said they have never personally experienced racism. The correlation between personal experiences of racism and political involvement has been suggested by many authors. See Lien (1997), Chapter 4.

⁵⁹ S.I. Hayakawa, "Discussion with S.I. Hayakawa," in *Political Participation of Asian American: Problems and Strategies*, ed. Yung-hwan Jo (Pacific/Asian American Mental Health Research Center, 1980), p. 160.

⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 161-63.

⁶¹ Identity-based politics refers to the use of social characteristics such as ethnicity or gender to determine representation. See Phillips, *The Politics of Presence* (1995).

⁶² Eunice Sato, Former Mayor of Long Beach, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai (Long Beach, California, August 25, 1997).

⁶³ Kim, Telephone interview by Lisa Tsai.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Olaes, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai.

⁶⁷ L. Ling-chi Wang, "Exclusion and Fragmentation in Ethnic Politics: Chinese Americans in Urban Politics," in *The Politics of Minority Coalitions: Race, Ethnicity, and Shared Uncertainties*, ed. Wilbur C. Rich (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1996), p. 130. In this article, "substantive representation" refers to the correspondence between the goals of Asian American officials and the Asian American community. In contrast, "surface representation" alludes to those officials who do not represent pan-ethnic interests.

⁶⁸ Ibid. The performance of Asian American politicians in majority white districts contrasts that of their black peers. Swain concludes that black representatives in majority white districts have "increased black representation throughout America," and "represented the interests of both blacks and whites." See Swain (1995), p. 141.

⁶⁹ Tokuda, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai.

⁷⁰ Velma Veloria, Personal interview by Lisa Tsai.

⁷¹ Kwok, Telephone interview by Lisa Tsai.

The Bridge Over the Racial Divide

William Julius Wilson

Inequality is rising in America and we need a progressive, multiracial political coalition to combat it. A large, strong, and organized political constituency is essential for the development and implementation of policies that will reverse the trends of the rising inequality and ease the burdens of ordinary families.

Political power is disproportionately concentrated among the elite, the most advantaged segments of society. The monetary, trade, and tax policies of recent years have arisen from and, in turn, deepened this power imbalance. And, although elite members of society have benefited, ordinary families have fallen further behind. However, as long as middle- and lower-class groups are fragmented along racial lines, they will fail to see how their combined efforts could change the political imbalance and thus promote policies that reflect their interests. Put another way, a vision of American society that highlights racial differences rather than commonalities makes it difficult for us to see the need and appreciate the potential of mutual political support across racial lines.

Sadly, in the absence of such a broad-based coalition, America could develop what the Harvard economist Richard B. Freeman calls a two-tiered society. He argues that American ideals of political "classlessness" and shared citizenship are threatened by falling or stagnating real incomes and rising inequality. This could eventually create a society in which "the successful upper and upper-middle classes live lives fundamentally different from the working classes and the poor."

Whereas Americans experienced broadly and rapidly rising real income from the end of World War II through 1973, after 1973 average wages adjusted for inflation either declined or stagnated for most workers through 1996. Moreover, income inequality which had stabilized through the mid-1970s began to grow rapidly. Indeed, whereas each of the bottom four quintiles' share of aggregate income declined from 1975 to 1997, the share of the highest quintile increased significantly, and the share of the top 5 percent rose considerably above that of the bottom three-

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fifths. And, what is particularly striking is that the top 5 percent's *increase* in income exceeded the entire income of the bottom 20 percent of families.

Many families were unwilling to accept the lower living standard that their real income implied. Women therefore flooded the labor market, many out of choice, but a sizable percentage out of necessity. And household debt increased from 59 percent of disposable income in 1973 to a whopping 95 percent in 1997.

There are now signs that this rising inequality has slowed in the last two years due to the continued strong economic recovery in the U. S. and may enter a period of remission as long as the economy remains strong. However, except for a recent increase in productivity growth, there is little evidence to suggest that the basic shifts in the economy that have been associated with the rise in inequality are changing.

Thus the downward trend in wages during the past two decades has lowered the incomes of the least well-off citizens. Working-class Americans felt economically pinched, barely able to maintain current standards of living even on two incomes. Seven and a half million workers held two or more jobs in 1996, an increase of 65 percent since 1980. National data on the explanations respondents give for holding more than one job reveal that "economic hardship," the need to meet regular expenses or pay off debts," was the primary reason. Indeed, three-fourths of the additional multiple job holders between 1979 and 1989 said that they were working at more than one job because of economic hardship.

Concerns about economic matters were especially evident during the first half of the 1990s. Many workers were insecure about keeping their jobs. For example, a 1994 nationwide poll disclosed that 40 percent of the workers in America worried that that they might be laid off or have their wages reduced. Many feared that they would never be able to afford to send their children to college. Many believed that for all their hard work, their children's lives would be worse than theirs. For example, a 1995 Harris poll, conducted for *Business Week*, revealed that only half of all parents expected their children to have a better life than theirs; nearly seven out of ten believed that the American dream has been more difficult to achieve during the past ten years; and three-quarters felt that the dream would be even harder to achieve during the next ten years.

The economic anxiety evident during the first half of the 1990s lingers on through the more robust economic period in the second half of the 1990s, albeit in a reduced form. Perhaps this explains why there has been so much worker restraint during the mid- to late-1990s in the face of a prolonged economic recovery. Workers' confidence has been shaken by downsizing and the specter — real or imagined — that many of their jobs can be done for a fraction of their salaries by workers in Third World countries.

In a recent survey of a random sample of the American public, 68 percent of the respondents overall and 72 percent of the noncollege graduates surveyed, expressed concern about the sending of jobs overseas by American companies. Workers in the United States feel that they cannot rely on weak unions to bargain effectively for higher wages, and if they lose their jobs they feel compelled to take

other employment soon on whatever terms they can get. "With such a nervous and timid workforce," states the M.I.T. economist Paul Krugman, "the economy can gallop along for a while without setting in motion a wage/price spiral. And so we are left with a paradox: we have more or less full employment only because individual workers do not feel secure in their jobs...The secret of our success is not productivity, but anxiety."

Unfortunately, during periods when people are beset with economic anxiety, they become more receptive to simplistic ideological messages that deflect attention away from the real and complex sources of their problems. These messages increase resentment and often result in public support for mean-spirited initiatives. Candidates for public office and elected officials advance arguments that hinge on the apprehensions of families, including arguments that associate the drop in their living standards with programs for minorities, immigrants, and the welfare poor. During periods of economic duress it is vitally important therefore that leaders channel citizens' frustrations in more positive or constructive directions.

In the first half of the 1990s, a period of heightened economic anxiety as the country was staggering from the effects of the 1990-92 recession, just the opposite frequently occurred. The poisonous rhetoric of certain highly visible spokespersons (such as Pat Buchanan, Louis Farrakhan, Al Sharpton, David Duke, Rush Limbaugh, Governor Pete Wilson, as well as former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and several other House members who framed the 1994 Personal Responsibility Act in the House Republican "Contract with America") increased racial tensions and channeled frustrations in ways that divided groups in America. Instead of associating citizens' problems with economic and political changes, these divisive messages encouraged them to turn on each other — race against race and citizens against immigrants.

We must understand that racial antagonisms are products of situations — economic situations, political situations, and social situations. Average citizens do not fully understand the complex forces that have increased their economic woes — the slowing of economic growth and the declines in annual real family income, changes in the global economy and the rise in wage dispersion. They are looking for answers as they cope with their own anxieties.

The answers that most recently proved to be the most powerful and persuasive to the general public have come not from progressives, who are more likely to associate economic and social problems with the complex changes of the late twentieth century. Rather they have come from conservative spokespersons who utter effective, often mean-spirited sound bites that deflect attention from the real sources of our problems.

Sadly these sound bites include messages directed against minorities and affirmative action, immigrants, and welfare recipients. The effectiveness of these messages was demonstrated in the months leading up to and following the congressional election of 1994, when conservative Republicans gained control of the U. S. Congress. However, since 1996 the frequency and intensity of these messages have noticeably decreased. I think that we can thank continued improvement in the

economy for that. Ordinary Americans are still economically anxious and continue to be worried about their future, but public opinion polls reveal they are more satisfied today than they were in 1994, when the Republicans took over Congress and in 1995, when conservative political leaders perceived that their pronouncements about the adverse effects of affirmative action, welfare, and immigration would resonate with the general population. I believe that now is the time for proponents of multiracial coalitions to build on this shift in the public's mood.

The results of national opinion polls suggest the possibility of a new alignment in support of a comprehensive social rights initiative that would include such programs. If such an alignment is attempted, it should feature a new public rhetoric focused on problems that plague broad segments of the American public — from the jobless poor to the struggling working and middle classes — and should emphasize integrative programs that would promote the social and economic well being of all groups. But these groups will have to be effectively mobilized in order to change the current course taken by policy makers. I believe that the best way to accomplish this is through coalition politics.

Given the racial friction that has marred intergroup interaction in urban America, the formation of a multiracial reform coalition presents a challenge. Indeed, the contemporary emphasis on racial division and racial ideology makes it difficult to promote the idea of a multiracial political coalition to develop and pursue a mass-based economic agenda. Beginning with the riots in Los Angeles in 1992, and especially after the 1995 O. J. Simpson murder trial, media attention to racial matters has highlighted those factors that divide us.

Although it is important to acknowledge the racial divisions in America so that they can be meaningfully addressed, the incessant attention given to these gaps has obscured the following fact: black, white, Latino, Asian, and Native Americans share many concerns, are besieged by many similar problems, and have important norms, values, aspirations, and hopes in common.

Take the issue of values. An analysis of the responses to questions that were variously asked in the national surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey since 1982 reveals only marginal racial differences in core values pertaining to work, education, the family, religion, law enforcement, and civic duty. For example, in a 1982 survey 90 percent of whites and 89 percent of blacks felt that one's own family and children are very important; in a 1984 survey 88 percent of whites and 95 percent of blacks felt that the obligation of American citizens to do community service is very or somewhat important; and in a 1993 survey 95 percent of whites and 92 percent of blacks felt that hard work in life outcomes is either important or very important, and 97 percent of blacks and 88 percent of whites supported the view that being self-sufficient was either very important or one of the most important things in life.

Also consider the perception of problems. Questions about whether problems pertaining to public schools, jobs, affordable housing, families, and health care were getting worse or harder for the people with whom the respondents identify

(“people like you or families like yours”) elicited considerable agreement across racial and ethnic groups.

Furthermore, consider views on major policy issues. Except for affirmative action and abortion, there are no notable differences across racial and ethnic groups on reported strong preferences for congressional action — with overwhelming support for balancing the budget and changing the welfare system, less enthusiasm for cutting personal income taxes and reforming Medicare, and even less for business tax breaks. Finally, as the political scientists Jennifer Hochschild and Reuel Rogers point out, there is considerable convergence in views across racial and ethnic groups with regard to policy preferences for solving particular problems, including education, crime, gang violence, and drugs.

The development and articulation of an ideological vision that captures and highlights commonalities in basic core values and attitudes is paramount in establishing the case for a progressive multiracial political coalition and defusing the opposition of pessimists who promote the more limited advantages of group-specific political mobilization.

Social psychological research on interdependence reveals that when people believe that they need each other they relinquish their initial prejudices and stereotypes and are able to join in programs that foster mutual interaction and cooperation. Moreover, when people from different groups do get along, their perceptions about and behavior toward each undergo change. Under such circumstances, not only are efforts made by the participants in the research experiment to behave in ways that do not disrupt the interaction, but they also make an effort to express consistent and similar attitudes and opinions about an issue that confronts and concerns them.

This research suggests the need for effective leadership to develop and articulate an ideological vision that not only highlights common interests, norms, values, aspirations, and goals, but also helps individuals and groups appreciate the importance of interracial cooperation to achieve and sustain them. This does not mean that group differences are not acknowledged in this vision. As the Harvard sociologist Marshall Ganz has pointed out, “acknowledging differences is essential to collaborating around common interest... It is important not to pretend that we are all the same.” He notes that racial and ethnic groups have important differences, “but these become resources rather than liabilities if we come up with ways to [build] on our commonalities.”

When I speak of a multiracial coalition, I am not calling for the formation of a third political party, nor am I referring to a coalition that would be officially aligned with either of the major political parties. Indeed, my idea is that the coalition would be officially bipartisan. The purpose of the coalition would be to put pressure, including voting pressure, on both Democratic and Republican leaders to pursue and adopt policies that reflect the interests of ordinary families. It is true that there are different tensions and currents at work in the Democratic and Republican parties, and many of the progressive issues raised to fight inequality would likely draw more support from Democrats than from Republicans. But if the coalition is per-

ceived to be in a position both to reward and to punish political leaders, members of both parties are likely to take special notice of the coalition's activities.

Specifically, the foundation of the coalition that I envision would be organizations committed to fighting social inequality. I have in mind various grass-roots community organizations, civil rights groups, women rights groups, labor unions, and religious organizations, broadly representative of the various racial and ethnic groups and all organized in interconnected local, regional and national networks. Leaders would be chosen from the national networks and would constitute a coordinating or executive group empowered to represent the interests of the coalition and act on its behalf. Given the potential number and type of groups involved, this coalition could represent a very large constituency. But whatever the main features and structure of the coalition, a case has to be made for why the idea of a national multiracial coalition should be seriously considered. This, therefore, is the real purpose of my book, *The Bridge Over the Racial Divide*.

I end with this point. Discussions that emphasize common solutions to commonly shared problems promote a sense of unity, regardless of the different degrees of severity in the problems afflicting different groups. Such messages bring races together, not apart, and are especially important during periods of racial tension. Because the problems of the new social inequality (the gap between the expanding have-nots and the haves) are growing more severe, a vision, which acknowledges racially distinct problems and the need for remedies like affirmative action, but at the same time emphasizes the importance of transracial solutions to shared problems, is very important. Progressive leaders, especially those in the political arena, should develop, share, and promote this vision.

A sustained upward trend in the American economy has improved conditions in the late 1990s. The lessening of the social tensions that come with such an economic improvement allows us room to discuss our country's future. I feel that the needs of ordinary, working Americans can best be met by multiracial, broad-based coalitions. Although elites invariably have a say in the leadership of the nation, the voice of the people can be lessened by fragmenting the masses into competing, divisive race-based groups. I call upon the American people and especially the leaders of the poor, the working classes, the displaced and the marginalized, the downsized and the deskilled to discuss, in vocabularies that reject the unuseful particularisms of race, the true task before us.

Pedagogy and Practice: An Interview with Professor Glenn Omatsu

Lane Ryo Hirabayashi and Lindsay Hull

INTRODUCTION¹

At UCLA, Professor Glenn Omatsu teaches courses that often include controversial topics. We highlight how he takes an explicit stand on an issue such as affirmative action, yet at the same time encourages students to study the situation, engage it, and then make up their own minds about it.

This interview presents Professor Omatsu's innovative, field-based approach to teaching undergraduates about contemporary Asian American social issues. As in any class where theory is united with practice, and learning combined with "doing," the approach to teaching taken by Omatsu demands skill and sensitivity. We asked Omatsu to explain how he deals with the philosophical and practical problems that arise because his pedagogy does not follow the conventional format typical of university curricula.

Glenn Omatsu

Professor Omatsu is widely known among Asian-Pacific American leaders for his work as a long-time, community-based, advocate and organizer. His efforts have benefited organizations such as C.A.N.E. (Committee Against Nihonmachi Eviction) in the San Francisco Japantown area, a group who resisted the demolition of family housing and small businesses alike.² He has also worked on behalf of a broad spectrum of labor organizations.³

Omatsu is also a skilled journalist and writer. As a reporter for the *Hokubei Mainichi* newspaper during the 1970s, Omatsu published some of the earliest pieces on out-marriage rates in the San Francisco Japanese American community.⁴

For the past thirteen years, Omatsu has served as the associate editor of *Amerasia Journal*. In 1996, Omatsu published one of the most comprehensive

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bibliographies on affirmative action and the debate surrounding this area of public policy, with special attention to Asian American perspectives on this issue.⁵ Not as widely known is the dynamic and innovative curriculum in Asian American studies that Omatsu implemented at all three levels of California's system of higher education.⁶ His hallmark is an action-oriented pedagogy that is based on his organizing work vis-à-vis contemporary social issues and community-based social movements.⁷ In this regard, Omatsu's pedagogy is a fascinating synthesis of his previous experiences as an organizer, a labor advocate, a journalist and an editor.

TEACHING / LEARNING / ENGAGING

To contrast how his approach differs from that of many university professors, we highlight four points derived from the interview that exemplify how Omatsu approaches his classes and students.

First, he encourages students to take responsibility for studying how things are, as well as considering what might be done, especially in response to injustices or inequities.

Second, he provides students with the opportunities to develop new skills that strengthen their confidence and abilities to engage social issues in the context of the larger society.

Third, from Omatsu's point of view, educational processes aren't finished until students try to apply their knowledge. In the syllabus of his *Asian American Movements* course, for example, he emphasizes: "In the late 1960s, the movements that created Ethnic Studies began with a vision of education that linked classroom learning to issues in the community. This vision continues today. Students have a special responsibility to share their knowledge and resources with others in their communities."⁸

Fourth, in contrast to many professors in the academy, Omatsu has not shied away from teaching students how to carry out the work of social change. In the same syllabus, he writes: "This course provides students with hands-on activist training in terms of formulating an organizing strategy, carrying out community education, building interethnic coalitions, promoting grassroots empowerment, [and] using research for social change."⁹

One of the most important accomplishments of Omatsu's contributions to Asian American Studies, then, is that his applied, student-centered, field-based, orientation not only fits nicely with current approaches to education within the contemporary American university, but also exemplifies the politically-committed style of Asian American Studies that dates back to the founding of the field.¹⁰

As Omatsu puts it himself: "...our struggle speaks to the very heart of the mission of education: to provide all people with the tools to fight for justice and expand democracy... Today, we need to reassert these basic demands [i.e., the right to education, and a relevant education]. We need to re-establish the connection between pedagogy and justice."¹¹

By attending to the movement's ideals as a "work-in-progress," as Glenn Omatsu has done, we can work to expand the possibilities for empowerment, as we prepare to face the challenges that will surely present themselves in the next millennium.

INTERVIEW WITH GLENN OMATSU

HIRABAYASHI: When did you start teaching? I know you came to Los Angeles to work as an editor for the UCLA Asian American Studies Center's publication, *Amerasia Journal*. Were you teaching before that?

OMATSU: Actually, the first class I ever taught was at San Francisco State. Back in 1975. It was right at the time of the C.A.N.E. (Committee Against Nihonmachi Eviction) struggle [which was a grassroots campaign to block a massive redevelopment project at the heart of the Japanese American section of the Western Addition district].¹² At that time, Carol Hayashino, who you know, was a talented undergraduate student working at the Asian American Studies office. Carol came up with the idea about having a Japanese American Studies class as a community-oriented class, dealing with the redevelopment struggle. She wanted to get somebody who was involved in C.A.N.E. to teach the class, as well as somebody who had a background in Asian American Studies. And so that was the first class that I taught. As a teacher, you try, at least, to expand their consciousness and also their thinking in terms of getting out of the classroom and doing something that would be different than what they've done in classrooms before.

HIRABAYASHI: That reminds me a bit of the "Experimental College" set-up that they had at San Francisco State College in the 1960s, before the strike. Students could find a faculty sponsor and then create their own courses. One year, I think that they even decided to spend "student government" money to hire controversial professors like Paul Goodman to come to State for a semester and give public lectures.

OMATSU: Yes, it's the same kind of idea. We wanted to create a space where students could have a say in their own education. Back to UCLA, some of the things that came out of this initial period of experimentation were a number of small oral history projects; there was a range of different internship programs, some of which the staff of S/CP still run today. The whole leadership development class, the two-quarter class that Eric [Wat, former S/CP staff member] has been teaching at UCLA, is a product of these early efforts. Also, we've done more specialized projects... Some courses were developed in order to facilitate student groups that wanted to focus on specific topics. Like John Delloro [a graduate student in Asian

American Studies] worked with us to organize a class focusing on new Asian immigrant garment workers.

HIRABAYASHI: Do you have any other examples of how you implemented this kind of priority?

OMATSU: For example, the first official class I did was a journalism class. This would be about 1987. I guess it developed in response to what I saw happening with *Pacific Ties* [also known as “*Pac Ties*” for short; i.e., UCLA’s Asian American student newspaper, founded in the early 1970s]. As I got to know most of the editors and staff people who worked on that publication, I noted a pattern that was actually very similar to what was going on with the student activists involved with APC [or the “Asian/Pacific Coalition,” the pan-A/PA alliance, or umbrella group, made up of all of the Asian/Pacific student organizations on the UCLA campus]. Students would get very active but their efforts were always extra-curricular. So they would have all their regular undergraduate course work, and then they would try to do all these other things on the side. As a result — and this was especially the case with some of the editors at *Pac Ties* — people were flunking out. If not, their grade point average was very seriously affected. So I would talk to them and say, “Why can’t you create something to help you get credit for all this work, either an independent study set-up or a course? Since you’re sinking so much time into this project, and learning so much from your involvement anyhow, this would be a more efficient way to do things.” We tried to do similar things with the APC activists. That’s why Eric’s class, the way he does it now, was originally geared as an APC leadership-development class. The idea behind it was to provide training, resources, and support to APC staff and others who were in leadership positions with any of the constituent student organizations, as well as the students who were involved in the AAS Center’s academic service or advisory functions — all of these students would have the option to take this two-quarter sequence class. At least that way, they would be able to do their thing on campus, but at the same time get some systematic training, and get credit for doing it.

HIRABAYASHI: That’s a great idea!

OMATSU: So the journalism class was based on the same approach. It started off as an Asian American journalism class. We also worked very hard to get them to avoid the “last-minute deadline” mentality that pretty much evolved; you know, how students stay up all night for literally three or four days in order to publish these newspapers. I worked on this problem with Aruli Ward, who is now in charge of student publications. We tried to figure out how to teach about the writing process so we could enable the students on staff to write their pieces throughout the term, rather than at the last possible moment. So in my course, I require people to write two articles and submit them for publication. Mostly, these are the articles for the student newspapers or magazines. This would end up helping everyone

involved, actually. If the articles are only turned in the night before, then the production staff have to stay up late in order to lay the articles out, and so on. If you have the articles beforehand, then layout becomes an easier task. Based on my work in journalism and with the *Amerasia Journal*, I also worked with each of the editors of these student publications. Actually, editing involves skills that you can't really learn or teach over the course of a quarter, but at least I can give them some techniques, pointers, and resources. That way, they have a better idea of how to do their job effectively. That was the whole approach to this class. But, again, it's a part of the same educational philosophy I started out with: finding what people are directly interested in, and then trying to create a class to meet their needs. Also, in the process of carrying this out, you build a base, you build a foundation that, in turn, can support other work. In the journalism course, for example, I was always trying to build an understanding so that students would start to think of doing *Pacific Ties* from the standpoint of Asian American issues. I wanted them to be able to place their work in a larger context, and to see *Pac Ties* as belonging to the long tradition of community journalism. So, anyway, all my classes have been similar, in a way, because they've all been based on the same philosophy, and I have tried to do similar kinds of things, educationally, in each.

HIRABAYASHI: What other courses, specifically, beside leadership, and journalism?

OMATSU: The other class I teach, on social movements, that evolved, too... Enrique [de la Cruz; the assistant director of the AAS Center] was the first one to teach that. They have him doing so many things, though, because he's the graduate advisor; he's [also the] undergraduate advisor for the major. His background is in philosophy; he likes to delve into the more philosophical aspects of topics. So when he did the social movements course, his syllabus was more on the theory of social movements. In the end, he thought it would be better to have something on social movements that would be more practical in nature. When they asked me to teach that course, I said that I'd rather teach it from the standpoint of actually getting students involved in something. That way, students could combine their classroom learning with actual experience and activity. For that particular class I picked one case study to focus on throughout the quarter — something that's a current event. So, the two times I've taught the course, the first time it revolved around the New Otani campaign involving efforts of mainly Latino immigrant workers to unionize the biggest hotel in Little Tokyo. This past year, I focused on affirmative action. Basically, what I try to do is to get students to understand the issue by taking a case study and also putting it into a larger framework. So, both the New Otani situation and the debate over affirmative action can be seen as single issues, right? But what we try to do in both cases is to expand those issues. So, like, the New Otani campaign is not simply a specific labor struggle but also a topic that resonates with the whole history of Little Tokyo, as well as interethnic relations between Japanese Americans and other people of color who live in and around

downtown L.A., including the Latino community. There's also the whole dimension of corporate power; of corporations' complicity in the whole attack on immigrants' rights. In other words, I try to combine all those different aspects and so start with a case study but then try to bring in these larger issues. In terms of the affirmative action debate, we did the same thing: we took a case study and then set it into a broader context. But also, for both topics, I worked up a second dimension, which made the "social movements" course quite challenging for the students who took it. From the beginning I reminded students that it's not enough to simply understand the debates. Knowledge is too important to stay in the classroom, so I asked them to consider the question: once you understand the issues, how do you share that information with other people? So the two assignments I've given, both times I've taught this class, is for students to do an on-campus forum as well as an off-campus forum. When I ask students to develop these forums, I ask them to try doing it in different ways, not simply to write articles or speeches that they read to their audience. Everybody knows that the lecture format isn't the best way to get a message across, so I want them to try skits or plays or other methods. In fact, this connects with the third aspect of teaching Asian American studies, which is more what I call the "activist development" or "leadership development" of each person. In the social movements course, early on, I have each student make an assessment of one leadership skill that they already have, and one that they want to develop. They target one skill, whether that be public speaking, or writing, or planning and then coordinating activities, or whatever. And that's what we do in the ten weeks: we work specifically on that one skill.

HIRABAYASHI: Ten weeks?

OMATSU: So that's where the UCLA set-up comes in. Since we're on that quarter [and not semester, or sixteen week] schedule, things go by really fast. But still there are things that you can do in ten weeks in terms of one particular skill. Also, as an integral part of the course, we make sure that the person develops that one skill through different assignments and activities. The emphasis is on trying to get students to see "education" taking place outside of, and well beyond, the university classroom. This is not the traditional kind of educational process where you come to a class, do the assignments, and assimilate the information. You know: study for and take a test, get it back; conceptualize and write a paper, get it back. What I'm as interested in is how well they know a given topic, and how well do they understand critical thinking and communication skills, such that they are able to transmit that information effectively to other people. As their instructor, these are the main things I want them to try and learn. It takes a lot of effort, and a lot of work, but the students who are willing to make the effort are the ones who are most pleased with the tangible outcomes.

HIRABAYASHI: One of the things I noticed running as a thread throughout the course syllabi that you shared with me was also the philosophy that highlights

practice, or engaged activity, as a central medium of learning that must accompany what we do in the classroom. That somehow, when one is actually engaged in doing things, the learning process is qualitatively different than what occurs in a purely “cognitively-oriented” classroom. Are you still finding that that’s something students are responding to in the 1990s, though — especially in terms of what motivates them to learn, and motivates them to want to be responsible for the state of affairs in our society today, and beyond?

OMATSU: One advantage I have in implementing this approach is that I’ve been fairly active in a wide range of different community groups. Usually what I’ll do is to pick a campaign that I’m involved in or have enough understanding of, so that I can plug students in for ten weeks then take them out, and it’s not going to drastically damage the campaign. This takes some experience and some work, because many grass roots campaigns are set up in ways such that they can’t accommodate short term kinds of effort or involvement. Still, it can be done. I’ll give you some examples. One involves Jim Gatewood [then a graduate student at UCLA]. He took my social movements class the semester it revolved around the New Otani Hotel struggle. During that particular period, a major part of the New Otani campaign was to try to raise people’s consciousness of what the issues were about. This was during the early stages of the union campaign, so basically we decided to send out community delegations to attempt to meet with New Otani officials. Now, at that point, the union wanted the visits to be “unplanned.” You don’t make an appointment; you just go there and you just try to get a meeting with whomever is around and in charge of the hotel on any given day. So, with this in mind, I asked if any of the students in the class wanted to check this procedure out. On this particular occasion, actually, getting down there to try and meet with hotel administrators was kind of crucial because New Otani had just fired a few people. In fact, the union had asked as many community delegations to go as possible. So I was planning to go anyhow, and I asked if any students wanted to go with me.

HIRABAYASHI: Did you get any response?

OMATSU: Three students immediately volunteered. These three had been very moved when one of the hotel workers came to the class and made a presentation about what was at stake, as a worker, and from a personal point of view. So these three students were deeply concerned about the issue, and said they would like to go with me. On the way out to the hotel, we talked: none of them had ever done anything like this before; most of them had never been to Little Tokyo. So under those circumstances, I realized that I’m the most experienced person, and I told them that I would take the lead. I told the students that they really didn’t have to do anything. We’d just go there and ask for a meeting. I warned them that we might get kicked out but that we were not going to press it to arrest. Beyond this, they should just follow what I do. So we went down to the New Otani Hotel and, sure enough, they brought security immediately. They threatened to throw us out,

and we were just persistent. Among the three students who were there, one of them got visibly upset when we were being hassled like this. You know, he started to back me up when I was arguing with the security guards, and things like that. And it turned out that the four of us actually got a meeting with Otani officials! That was actually the first time that had happened with any of the community delegations. So we went in there and gave our little pitch because this sales representative was basically going to listen to us. It ended up that the three students whom I brought started to say things. One of the student's mothers had been a waitress, and he saw similarities with the situation of the New Otani workers, so he wanted to express his views about employees' right to their own union. Another of the other students was a Filipina-American and she wanted to emphasize the responsibilities she felt corporations had to their employees. I really hadn't planned on getting into these topics in depth, and hadn't planned on the students talking, but they were so impressed by everything that happened, they were inspired to speak their minds. The way Jim Gatewood fits into all this is that, originally, he was going to come down with us but needed to come in his own car. He came but he got there late — in fact, just as we were leaving — so he missed the whole thing. Jim felt kind of cheated because he said he really wanted to have been able to have this experience. So subsequently, Jim decided to go back to the New Otani with two other students, on his own, and he basically did the same thing that we had done earlier. By this time, though — (later we had heard the inside story) — the higher echelons of the Otani hotel management had been very upset by the fact that the sales representative had met with us. Upper management had been so upset by our demands, and by the fact that the lower management (who were, after all, there "on the spot") decided to meet with us, they censured the sales representative and basically decided that the New Otani was not going to allow this to happen again. Because of this development, when Jim went down there with two other students, as soon as he went to the office with his request, management refused to meet with him. Then Jim got mad, very upset, and said that he grew up in this part of Los Angeles, and he's been down to Little Tokyo many times. This was the very first time that anyone told him to leave an establishment, etc., etc. And Jim refused to leave. The other two students who were with Jim were equally upset, and they backed him up as well. All this happened in the hotel lobby area; Jim was in the lobby, talking with one of the New Otani Hotel's assistant vice presidents. So this Japanese woman was telling Jim, "No, no, no; nobody is going to meet with you!" One of the security people came and put his hands on Jim. But Jim did really well; he kept his cool. Because I told him before he went: "Don't get arrested if they're going to throw you out. In fact, don't let them throw you out, either. Just tell them, 'Take your hands off me,' and if it gets to the point when they're going to call the police, then just leave." So Jim basically told the guy, "Take your hands off me," and I guess this security guard, you know, was so amazed that anybody would tell him to do that. He just didn't know what to do. So Jim said by that time he was very upset. Jim told the woman — in Japanese, because Jim can speak Japanese — that he had a prepared statement that he was going to give to company officials. But, if they're not going

to allow him to meet with anybody, then he was going to read this statement in the lobby in Japanese. And the woman freaked out at that point because there are all kinds of customers roaming around. So, Jim said, in Japanese, "If you're not going to give me an answer, then I'm going to read this right now." So he started to turn around and was preparing to read this statement and the assistant vice president goes, "No, no, no; we'll find some place for a meeting." So Jim met with... actually it was one of the highest officials. Nobody else has ever been with that guy. It was one of the highest officials of the New Otani Hotel, and so Jim Gatewood wound up having a pretty good discussion with the hotel management in order to get across his concerns.

HIRABAYASHI: No wonder New Otani personnel came over to UCLA on the sly to complain about you and your course!

OMATSU: Right. Anyway, I use this as an example to illustrate that, in a single instant, Jim probably learned more about what we're trying to teach in the class about, say, management's attitudes; or why it's difficult for workers to get a fair hearing within the hierarchy of hotel operations. Also at the same time, I think this illustrates how, if you're prepared with the facts, and you can avoid all those little attempts at intimidation, you know, you really can make your voice heard. So Jim came out of this experience feeling very empowered. He said that he felt like he had really accomplished something on that particular day. The two students who went with him felt the same way, because one of them said, "Yeah, when they put their hands on Jim, and said they were going to throw him out, we were scared." But this student said, in any case, that they both stood up for Jim and were saying, like, "Don't touch him, or you're going to have to deal with us." Everybody, including New Otani personnel, learned something from this. I think that, for a variety of reasons, students of Asian descent can really learn important kinds of skills in a course where they engage in the issues and really do things.

HIRABAYASHI: That's a great story! I had a follow-up question to that. I know you've written some excellent pieces on these neo-conservative Asian American students and some of their activities on the UCLA campus in particular.¹⁴ So maybe I'll just follow up on that. I know you ask people to look at your syllabus — that is, that potential students need to examine all of the course requirements on the syllabus carefully. One paragraph of the syllabus even advises students: be sure that this is the kind of course you want to take before you sign up for it. But I sense more reserve on the part of many Asian American students in the 1990s, of whatever background or generation, to get involved at this kind of level, and in this kind of way. And for other students, what you do in your social movements course may be interesting, but it may also be kind of a shock. I guess what I'm trying to get at is: have there been any difficulties in terms of encouraging an action-oriented approach, you know, in terms of this more confrontational style of politics, in terms

of the orientation of many of today's Asian American undergraduates? How do you mediate, or handle, that?

OMATSU: In both the New Otani and affirmative action case studies, I did face that problem. In fact, I actually thought a lot about it in advance. The way I resolved it in each of the two classes is a little bit different, though. In the class that revolved around the New Otani Hotel, I realized that very few students who were taking the class would know what the New Otani situation was from the beginning. Rather, it was a situation where people would come into the class and start learning about it, but by the time they understood the issues and what was at stake, it's almost too late. The approach I took in that particular class was basically to tell people right from the beginning: this is what's happening. I'm involved in this particular issue; we're going to be dealing with this issue in this course; if people feel uncomfortable about this, then they should let me know; or, they should take a different class. But I also made it clear to students from the beginning that this doesn't mean that, by the end of the course, they have to be thoroughly convinced that the workers are right and the management is wrong. Or that they have to feel like they must be involved in full-time activism or something of that sort. They do have to have a command of the facts, and be able to put the specific case into the larger context. I said that the latter would evolve in a step-by-step process, and we'll go through all those steps together as a class. But, also, that, in terms of the New Otani Hotel issue especially, I told people that we'd develop assignments and we'd present the results together in a community forum. I knew that many students had never done a community forum before, so if people were uncomfortable with that as a final project, then they should talk to me or think about taking another class. If people are uncomfortable with developing leadership skills as a part of the class, then they should talk to me or take a different kind of class. In other words, my approach is also to put as much as I can right on the table, up front, from the very beginning so students know what's on the agenda and can choose whether to sign up or not.¹⁵

HIRABAYASHI: I'd like to ask if objections ever came up. Did people ever say, 'Well, I can't go down to Little Tokyo and participate in a forum'?

OMATSU: Yeah. Actually what comes up... presents itself in different ways. I'll use the example of the affirmative action class... One thing that happened, just as a background point, was that in 1995 the affirmative action class was first taught by Jeff Chang, who was one of our graduate students then. The way that Jeff taught it, the course was more of a research-oriented one: they used different books and articles, they wrote research papers, and things like that. This next year, when my class was listed, it was titled "Affirmative Action and Social Movements." So during the first session when I passed out the syllabus I said right up front that many people were probably in the class because they want a "pro versus con" approach to affirmative action, which they could then read about, think over, and write a research paper about. I said please look the syllabus over carefully because

my version of the course would be different. I said it's not so much that I want people to be pro-affirmative action, and I know a lot of people wouldn't understand this until a little later on in the course, but it wasn't necessary to be pro-affirmative action to do the course work required. I also told students that I had designed an action component to the class, and that it's important for them to try something different during the course of their university education. In that particular class there were a lot of people who came and went in the first week. The class was capped at twenty-five, and I remember out of those who were originally signed up maybe thirteen left, but then thirteen new students came in... Of this group, I think that about half of them pretty much understood that this was going to be more of a "doing" class, and I tried to stress that repeatedly during the first two weeks of the quarter, to make sure that everybody was comfortable.¹⁶ For the other half of the students, there was a question that came up, all the way to midterm. They didn't understand what I meant by "you don't have to be pro-affirmative action and yet you can still sign up for and succeed in the class." Lane, you probably know that if you take your average Asian American studies class, and you ask a question about affirmative action — who favors it and who's against it — it pretty much divides up fifty-fifty. Or, maybe a third of the students say they're for it, and a few people would say they are against it, and all the rest would say they didn't know; that's why they were taking the class. Even up to midterm, maybe the fourth week or so, there would be maybe four or five students in the class that still feel uncomfortable because they felt they had to be pro-affirmative action in order to carry out the course work effectively. That's because there were a few people who were really vocal in the class in support of affirmative action. So I kept on saying, no, that isn't the intent of the course. From my perspective, it's more important to understand the larger issues that are intimately connected to the whole debate. But I don't think it was until the end of the class that everybody understood what I meant by that. It was not so much that I was trying to convince everyone to be pro-affirmative action, but instead I wanted each student to understand the larger picture and what is at stake. There were also students who were really uncomfortable due to different kinds of problems such that they weren't able to put much time into the forums, especially the community education component. See, I learned this from teaching the New Otani Hotel issue. What I try to do is to structure and situate the assignment so that everyone can do something even if they worked huge amounts of hours. Some students do work thirty to forty hours a week, and so they're on campus only certain hours a day. Naturally, they have a hard time doing any off-campus activities unless it happens to fall right into their schedule. I also know that, for other people, if you schedule a weekend forum for them, they can't necessarily do it. So I made it fairly clear to students that, in regard to something like the final forum, it's not necessary for people to be there but they have to work in preparation for it. In the different assignments leading up to the forum, I had enough different kinds of things that people could participate in, so even if they weren't able to attend the actual event, they still had enough of an idea of the process of educational outreach.

HIRABAYASHI: That sounds pretty even-handed.

OMATSU: Another nice thing about doing the affirmative action class at UCLA happened by accident. At the same time, I was teaching Asian American Studies courses at California State University, Northridge, as well as at the Pasadena City College [or, PCC]. I was actually able to coordinate the syllabi so that both my PCC class and a Northridge class were also focused on the issue of affirmative action. For both my Northridge class and my UCLA class, I set up a mock debate. Well, I was the one who took the anti-affirmative action standpoint. Speaking from an Asian American perspective, I had three students in the class who were in favor of affirmative action, you know, and who were willing to take me on. This provided a way to test their knowledge, and basically show them that it's not good enough to command the facts that support your thesis. You also need to know what the opponents' arguments are going to be, and how to counter them most effectively. So, I told my Northridge class, this is what is going to happen: that the UCLA students are going to come up here, and they're going to debate me about the merits of affirmative action. The Northridge students then got to see the debate, but basically from the standpoint of an audience. I opened it up to questions in the end, but I also saw it as a learning experience in itself for the CSU students, primarily because the composition in my Northridge class is very different from that found at the University of California. Half of the students in my class at Northridge were Euro-Americans; there were a lot of teachers; the students were, in fact, mostly older people. I wanted the UCLA students to get that experience of being able to debate these kinds of issues in a different kind of setting — i.e., a potentially less supportive kind of environment. I also wanted my UCLA students to deal with the different kinds of questions the Northridge audience would be likely to ask. Afterward, I took the three UCLA students who came up to debate me off to the side and I went over what I thought they did well and what they didn't do so well. It really made a difference because when they went to do other presentations, they really learned from the mistakes that they had made with that Northridge audience. For the PCC class, it's like when I talked about the affirmative action issue, most of them didn't know what it was. So I thought a debate was not the best educational vehicle for this group. So I had four other students from my UCLA class come over to PCC and do a presentation. I told these students that a traditional lecture format was not going to work very well at PCC, and so I wanted them to think of other ways they could get the information across. These four UCLA students actually did very well, primarily because they varied the presentations. They really thought about how this issue would affect people at the community college level, and how to present the information in an accessible way. In general, the PCC students felt that they really learned something from the four UCLA students who spoke to their class. With the debate at Northridge, in retrospect, the UCLA students let themselves be intimidated because, when they saw the class that was half white, they felt that everyone was going to be against them. The reason I could tell was that they let me

get away with many points that, under normal circumstances, I don't think they would have missed. The intimidation factor definitely hurt them, (except in the case of one of the UCLA students — he's the student body president, so I guess he's kind of used to this kind of thing).

HIRABAYASHI: The three campus settings make for a very interesting comparison, especially because probably so few of us cross the institutional levels as you have in the overall educational system of California. If we do, then it's usually ten years at one level, and then, if you're lucky, you spin out the rest of your career at the next higher level. To do classes at the university, state college, community college, simultaneously, must give you quite a cross-sectional view of what's going on with today's undergraduates.

OMATSU: Plus, I think the experience really shows me why Asian American Studies is so important, even considering the different strengths found each of these levels. There's certain things that I see that I probably don't have the power to change but, at the community college and the state college levels, especially, there's just a huge amount of potential. There are educational processes and experiences that you can foster, you can inculcate, at the state and community college levels that you couldn't really carry out at UCLA.

HIRABAYASHI: You know, Glenn, I had a number of discussions with Susie Ling [a UCLA graduate, a former S/CP co-coordinator, and Pasadena City College professor] about this because my suspicion was that what worked for her, say, in her UCLA classes or Cal State Long Beach classes, was not something that she could transpose directly to PCC.¹⁷ I didn't get a clear answer on this because, on one hand, she acknowledged that there were some differences between the three institutions. On the other hand, Susie feels that "Asian American Studies is Asian American Studies," so to speak, and there is a line of continuity in terms of process and content that holds no matter where one is working. Now, admittedly, I've never taught at a community college, but your experiences make sense to me, intuitively. In different institutions, and in different settings, the composition of students is different. So you can have the same kinds of objectives but I think it makes sense to tailor what you're doing to fit those students and the institutional setting. You know, at city college where students are working, it's different from teaching the UCLA crowd. It's different to come from a working class background, and we shouldn't ignore what that entails.

OMATSU: It is different. I'd say in my PCC class, well, first of all, it's not all Asian Americans. That's a weird thing about UCLA, by the way. At UCLA, an Asian American class would be maybe 90–95 percent Asian. Whereas, my Northridge class, and also my PCC class, are not necessarily that way. A lot has to do with the way those classes have been set-up in terms of requirements. The

Northridge class that I teach is a “contemporary issues” class which satisfies the graduation requirement and also the teaching credentials requirement.

HIRABAYASHI: It’s like Boulder, in that almost all of our Asian American Studies courses fulfill core requirements, so they draw a pretty good mix of students.

OMATSU: Right. The PCC class, it’s the same thing. The course satisfies the graduation requirement for social sciences. So the PCC class is maybe 60 percent Asian; the next biggest group is probably Latino; and usually there are maybe one or two whites. Last time, I also had one African American student, and that really added something to the class. Of all the students in the PCC class, maybe 70 percent would be first generation. I usually get one or two students who are foreign students. Some students have been in the U.S. for five years or less; other students are also new immigrants but they’ve been here from a young age. It’s clearly an immigrant class. So students have very different levels of understanding of English, which I almost always have to take into account. When I talked to Susie, she said she has to repeat important things twice. In the PCC class that’s what I always do. I repeat important things, and, simultaneously, I really watch the expressions on the students’ faces. If I say something and see lots of blank faces or puzzled looks, I usually stop and try to explain the same thing in a different way. I handle even the basic concepts in this fashion. This past semester, for example, when I talk about racism, I usually go over basic terms like prejudice and discrimination as well. So I put the term “racism” up on the board, and there’s like three things that I want people to understand. So the first thing I put up is “unequal power relations,” and I looked at the class, and no one was really responding. Finally, one of the braver students asked, “What’s meant by power relations?” I never get that kind of question at UCLA, but it made me realize, again, certain things that we take for granted. In my PCC class, these are things that I have to make sure they understand.¹⁸

HIRABAYASHI: I was invited a number of times to give presentations in a “psychology of Asian Americans” course at San Francisco’s City College in the 1980s. It was always scheduled in the evening, so I can’t really comment as to whether this is really representative of classes given during the day. I really felt like the mix of students was very interesting, encompassing students from your 18-year old undergraduate, to your parent and grandparent types! I think maybe because of their heavily immigrant and working-class backgrounds they’re coming at their course work with more life experiences. What I remember most about giving visiting lectures in these classes is the really great discussions. I’d lecture and then throw it open and, boy, there would be some good questions and debate. I was really surprised because I hadn’t expected this, I guess, having been brainwashed about city colleges...

OMATSU: I, myself, went to community college, so maybe that's why it is such a meaningful part of my own experience, personally speaking. I can kind of relate to what you're saying in terms of what I see in the classroom. If somebody's having problems, I can usually understand why they're having problems. Whether it's the language thing, or whether they worked an eight hour day and they're just tired, or they're having personal problems or something like that. I can usually understand those things. In terms of my experience teaching at the state college, what was interesting to me this time was that it took me until my second semester to get things figured out. The first semester threw me because when Kenyon [Chan, then professor and chair of the Asian American Studies program at California State University, Northridge] asked me to teach the class, he didn't tell me what the student composition would be. So I prepared, expecting the usual 90-percent-plus Asian American make up. Well, when I walked in, on the first day, I thought it was the wrong class. I asked if I had the right classroom; everybody's kind of nodding their heads, yes. So I didn't know what to do that first day. Because I had prepared the syllabus for a class of Asian Americans and, you know, about half of the students were white. So I needed to adapt things. The second semester I taught this same class, I knew in advance what kind of audience I needed to address. And another fact: there are so many teachers in the Northridge class. It's somewhat intimidating because, you know, in this last class, I had one teacher who had taught for twenty years — twice as long than I've ever taught — and other teachers who are very creative with their approaches. You feel very self-conscious, because you're thinking they're probably evaluating what I'm doing, and they probably know more than I do about some of these things. Some of the questions they ask me, I can't answer. I'm not trained as a secondary or high school teacher, so I can't respond. I've learned, however, to use that class as a resource, and to think creatively about different ways of using the diverse talents that are represented in the class, and this has helped a great deal. It's also a challenge in other ways to teach this course at Northridge. Because half the class is white, and because it's half teachers, the Asian Americans in the class tend to get intimidated. Because the Asian American students are younger, for the most part they do not have all these life experiences to draw from, or even the same level of confidence to speak up. So the dynamics of that class and our discussions are very strange, because it's very similar to those you see in the larger society. I'll ask a question, and the first hands that you see go up are from the whites, and usually white males. After that it's usually white females and Asian women; Asian men often don't say anything. It's kind of a challenge to make sure that all of the voices and thoughts represented in the class have a chance to be heard.

HIRABAYASHI: I've also found that when you have students from a range of backgrounds and educational levels all in the same class, it can present a challenge in terms of developing assignments that will, in effect, meet everyone's different needs.

OMATSU: That's true. The last time that I taught at Northridge, I developed a special option, specifically for all of the teachers: if they chose, they could develop curriculum and organize their own classroom in support of issues like immigrant rights, new immigrant garment workers, or the New Otani Hotel. I broke it down so that they could do it at their own particular educational level. Like I had preschool teachers, I had kindergarten teachers, elementary school teachers, all the way up to high school. I also had some teachers who were very experienced, and some who were not. This one teacher from Sylmer turned in a great final. So I asked my friend, Julie Ha [a *Rafu Shimpo* newspaper reporter] to write it up. It was such a great project that I just wanted Julie to share it with the public at large. Also, if she writes the article, then I can xerox it and use it for part of my course reader for next year.

HIRABAYASHI: This, in turn will indicate the possibilities of creative, innovative, course work to future students who enroll in the class... What did this guy do, exactly?

OMATSU: This teacher from Sylmer is a former artist. So, in the social studies class he teaches at a 6th grade level, he incorporates art into how he teaches the class — has students do drawings and things. He was very moved by all the subject matter in my class, but he was most moved by the plight of the Thai garment workers, who were held for several years in virtual slavery in southern California, and who were finally freed in August 1995.¹⁹ He decided that he wanted to do something, but he wasn't exactly sure what. Through e-mail, we traded different ideas. I brought John Delloro in as a guest lecturer; he developed a course at UCLA on new Asian immigrant garment workers that had many interesting and innovative teaching techniques. So then this teacher came up with the idea that he was going to develop this eight-unit lesson plan for his sixth grade students, most of whom are Latino immigrants. Most of them come from a low-income economic background. He decided to teach them a little bit of immigration history and then bring it up to present day garment workers. Then, he planned to raise a series of provocative questions for them to discuss in class. One of the questions was whether slavery is good or bad and whether slavery should be brought back to the U.S.A. So he turned this eight unit lesson plan into this great thing. It was very creative because, for example, he had the students do drawings and go back and interview their parents who were immigrants. Also he asked them to imagine that they were the Thai garment workers. What would they do if they were forced to labor for almost nothing, literally imprisoned in their place of work? For the social movement part, we continued to trade ideas. The thing that he felt his students would most get out of it would be to write letters, especially if each of them could write individually to Thai immigrant workers. This actually helped the Thai workers campaign, because right now [i.e., 1996] the women are learning English. Having sixth grade students write to them is good lesson material for them because, in the process of learning English, they actually have something to study that is real and meaningful — to study what these sixth grade students are trying to ask, or to say to them. Also, he

had them do individual drawings which he sent to the garment workers. Finally, students purchased a T-shirt and sewed hearts on it to send their love to the Thai workers. So after I got these items I delivered them to Chancee Matorell over at Thai Community Development Center, which is one of the groups that works with the women. She went to a general meeting the following week and then presented it to the group. The women were so moved that they decided en masse, all seventy-two of them, that they wanted to visit the classroom to personally thank everyone. They also wanted to cook a Thai meal for the class. In fact, the Thai women did visit the students during the final week of the school term in Sylmer. So, in developing courses that revolve around aspects of community and current social issues, one of the things I teach students is that it is precisely in the process of participating in a social movement that people — not only the people who are at the forefront, in this case, the Thai workers — are empowered. This includes those who support the cause, in many different kinds of ways. Together they build community.

HIRABAYASHI: Thank you, very much, Glenn, for taking the time to share your philosophy and experiences with me. Your teaching and organizing work have been a real inspiration to so many of us in Asian American Studies. Your courses exemplify some of the reasons why this is the case.

Endnotes

¹ Lane would like to acknowledge UCLA's Asian American Studies Center for inviting him to be a fellow of "The Endowed Chair in Japanese and Asian American Studies," in 1996, when he first began to interview Glenn Omatsu about his approach to teaching. He would also like to thank Marilyn C. Alquizola for her comments and help with the manuscript. Lindsay would like to acknowledge a generous grant from the "Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program" [UROP] at the University of Colorado Boulder, which enabled her to transcribe the interview, help to edit it, as well as to identify and check citations. This interview was conducted in 1996.

² Redevelopment processes in the Western Addition, and resistance to them, have resulted in protracted struggles throughout the 1970s and 1980s. For an example of an early critique of redevelopment, see Sheridan Tatsuno, "The Political and Economic Effects of Urban Renewal on Ethnic Communities: A Case Study of San Francisco's Japantown," *Amerasia Journal* [1](1971):33-51.

³ Indications of Omatsu's interests in this regard are reflected in the special issue of *Amerasia Journal* Vol. 18, No. 1(1992), "Asian Pacific American Workers: Contemporary Issues in the Labor Movement," which he edited along with University of California professor and labor activist, Edna Bonacich. Also see his recent article, "Filling the Hole in the Soul: The New Otani Campaign and Ethnic Studies," *Race File*, January-March, 1998, 33-37.

⁴ See, for example, Glenn Omatsu, "'Mixed' Marriages on Upswing," *Hokubei Mainichi* [San Francisco], January 28, 1976, which was preceded by similar articles in 1974 and 1975.

⁵ See Omatsu's piece, "Behind the Affirmative Action Debate: Two Visions of America, (1996 Annual Selected Bibliography)," *Amerasia Journal* 21:3 (Winter, 1995/1996):251-304. Also

see, 1971–1997 Cumulative Article Index, *Amerasia Journal*, 1998, 51, for a listing of Omatsu's bibliographic contributions over the past thirteen years.

⁶ See the article by K. Connie Kang, about one of Glenn Omatsu's courses, in the Los Angeles Times, "UCLA Class Puts Theory to the Test in the Real World," March 11, 1995.

⁷ Perhaps one of the most extended pieces where Omatsu discusses the roots of Asian American activism, and the philosophy and commitments of the "Asian American movement," is in his essay, "The Four Prisons and the Movements of Liberation: Asian American Activism From the 1960s to the 1990s," in *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*, Karin Aguilar-San Juan, ed. (Boston: South End Press, 1994), 19–69. There is clearly an organic linkage between the movement orientation Omatsu describes in the above chapter, and the way that he chooses to set up and teach his classes. Also see, Glenn Omatsu, "Teaching for Social Change: Learning how to Afflict the Comfortable and Comfort the Afflicted," *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review* 32 (April, 1999), 791–797.

⁸ This quote is taken from Glenn's syllabus, "Asian American Social Movements," UCLA, Winter quarter, 1995. In terms of the importance of activism, in building student leadership capacity, see the article by Tony Chambers and Christine E. Phelps, "Student Activism as a Form of Leadership and Student Development," *NASPA Journal* 31, no. 1 (1993), 19–29. Also see Eric Wat, "Beyond the Missionary Position: Reflections on Teaching Student Activism from the Bottom Up," in Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, ed., *Teaching Asian America: Diversity and the Problem of Community* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 161–174.

⁹ "Asian American Social Movements," UCLA, 1995.

¹⁰ In recent years, politicians from President William Clinton, to California's governor Gray Davis, have advocated field-based service and learning courses should be a college graduation requirement. Among Glenn's newest articles is a piece, "Defying a Thousand Pointing Fingers and Serving the Children: Re-envisioning the Mission of Asian American Studies in Our Communities" [forthcoming, *Amerasia Journal*, 2000]. There, Glenn argues that we need to be much more creative about taking education to community people at large, especially those who are not able to attend the university.

¹¹ It is worth noting here that Omatsu is one of a small group of professors across the country who strive to link the campus and community in this fashion. It has been noted of late that, as they become institutionalized in the academy, counterhegemonic fields like Asian American and Ethnic Studies run the risk of being coopted; this certainly holds true for the teaching dimension. See Mitchell J. Chang, "Expansion and its Discontents: The Formation of Asian American Studies Programs in the 1990s," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 2 [June, 1999]:181–206. A range of chapters in a recent anthology, Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, ed., *Teaching Asian America: Diversity and the Problem of Community* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), illustrate this point. Also see the oft cited article by Glenn Omatsu, "The 'Four Prisons' and the Movements of Liberation: Asian American Activism from the 1960s to the 1990s," in Karin Aguilar-San Juan, ed., *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s* (Boston: South End Press, 1995), 19–69.

¹² This definition of community is presented in a variety of sources including Irwin T. Sanders, *The Community: An Introduction to a Social System* (New York: Ronald Press, 1966), 25–53.

¹³ Marcia P. Effrat, "Approaches to Community: Conflicts and Complementarities," in Marcia P. Effrat, ed., *The Community: Approaches and Applications* (New York: Free Press, 1974).

¹⁴ See Omatsu's, "The 'Four Prisons'." Also, James A. Hirabayashi, "Research and Studies," in George Kagiwada, et al., eds., *Tool of Control? Tool of Change?* Proceedings of the National Asian American Studies Conference, II (Davis, CA: Asian American Studies, 1973), 25–28.

¹⁵ In terms of the importance of activism, in building student leadership capacity, see the article by Tony Chambers and Christine E. Phelps, "Student Activism as a Form of Leadership and Student Development," *NASPA Journal* 31, no. 1 (1993), 19–29. Also see Eric Wat, "Beyond the Missionary Position: Reflections on Teaching Student Activism from the Bottom Up," in Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, ed., *Teaching Asian America: Diversity and the Problem of Community* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 161–174.

¹⁶ The grass roots perspective on redevelopment is captured in the news magazine, *CANE*, Committee Against Nihonmachi Eviction, April, 1975. This edition is a full twenty-three pages in length, and presents a host of thought-provoking articles such as: "Nihonmachi or Kintetsu-Town [Kintetsu being the Japanese corporation underwriting redevelopment at the heart of Japan Town], 1; "Redevelopment Myths About Nihonmachi," 8; "We Have a Right to Remain and Return," 12; "It is the People That Define a Community," 14–15; "Bay Area Masterplan Exposed," 17; "The People Speak," 22; among other pieces.

¹⁷ See Glenn Omatsu, "New and Strange Political Animals: Asian Pacific American Neo-Conservatives," in *Forward Motion* 2[3](1992), 52–57.

¹⁸ Glenn Omatsu's course syllabus for "Asian American Social Movements: Grassroots Community and Labor Struggles in Los Angeles," Winter quarter, 1995, University of California, Los Angeles, to get a sense of the care and details that Glenn puts into his teaching.

¹⁹ After reviewing the reading required for his course, my own sense is that Glenn understates the reading and intellectual requirements for his classes.

²⁰ A subsequent manifestation of our conversation can be found in Susie Ling, "Teaching Asian American Studies in Community Colleges," in Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, ed., *Teaching Asian America: Diversity and the Problem of Community* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 233–242.

²¹ For the record, Glenn commented, "On the other hand, the thing I like about the community college scene is that PCC people are very attentive; they're always taking notes. Even if they don't understand something, they're copying down whatever I put down on the board; whatever I say. They come to class on time; if they're going to miss class they let me know; if they come in late they're usually really apologetic and they come up to me afterward and they apologize for coming in late. You don't see that in UCLA. In my class at UCLA, people are coming in at all different times. Maybe other instructors do something that's effective, but I haven't figured out any way of forcing people to come to class and come on time. So at PCC there's a real different attitude toward education."

²² For more details on this case, as well as its larger context, see the article by Julie Su, "El Monte Thai Garment Workers: Slave Sweatshops," in Andrew Ross, ed., *No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade, and the Rights of Garment Workers* (New York: Verso, 1997), 143–149.

Book Reviews: Chinese Destinations

Sharon K. Hom, *Chinese Women Traversing Diaspora: Memoirs, Essays, and Poetry* (1999)

Lynn Pan, *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas* (1999)

Frank H. Wu

Diaspora is a dangerous concept. Two new books, *Chinese Women Traversing Diaspora*, edited by Sharon K. Hom, and *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas*, edited by Lynn Pan, offer useful perspectives on the double-edged declaration that “you are always Chinese no matter where you are.”

Diaspora identity has acquired renewed power in this dramatic era of human mobility. The status is most aptly invoked by and applied to Jews who were dispersed throughout Europe and elsewhere but whose own faith and culture influenced and was influenced by the societies within which they lived. Some African Americans, self-consciously transforming themselves into black diaspora, have sought to reclaim a heritage that was denied to them, with mixed success. Even Irish Americans, whose mass arrival in the nineteenth century coincides roughly with that of Chinese Americans but whose assimilation has been more effective, are being characterized as an Irish diaspora whose ancestral homeland may encourage their return as triumphant agents of economic renewal.

At a descriptive level, diaspora identity offers opportunities to individuals who are immigrants and who wish to sustain distinct communities within a pluralist democracy. It better reflects the realities of transnationalism in a social sense, in which first-generation Asian immigrants refer to whites as Americans, implicitly accepting or possibly asserting that they will never be Americans — a statement that ironically might well be offensive to their second-generation progeny if it were repeated by white Americans.

In a prescriptive mode, however, diaspora identity must ascribe character on a group basis. Its opposition to conventional nationalism — that is, to the patriotism

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of the adopted country — is rooted in ethnic nationalism or racialism. It trades one form of involuntary group membership for another of the same. It may as easily turn out to be culturally conservative and politically reactionary as the contrary.

In the *Hom* collection of a dozen essays and poems and an excerpted transcript from the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, none of the authors is representative, but their narratives share a family resemblance. They are all women academics specializing in humanistic and social science fields. Ma Yuanxi describes experiences that are both familiar and strange:

“My life as a graduate student in the United States, especially during the writing of my dissertation, was so different from the life I had lived in China both as a student and as a teacher. I came alone, and it was the first time I had ever lived alone, by myself without any family. I know few people in this country, and practically no one in the city where I studied at first. People. . . were afraid I must have been terribly lonely. I did not really know and never gave a thought as to whether I was lonely at the time since the studies overwhelmed me and occupied virtually all my time; besides, I was so used to casting thoughts aside.”

Chinese Women also is a part of a project of furthering “crosscultural, multiracial feminist solidarity,” according to the series editor. That goal may be more challenging than the sentiment suggests. Even writers who hope for “crosscultural, multiracial feminist solidarity” can be defeated by the tensions contained within the phrase. Historian Vivian Ng recalls reactions against her work on gay men in China. As a result of her “notorious reputation for forcing Western sexual constructs on Chinese culture,” she recounts, “I would find myself excluded from a number of conferences that addressed the topic of Chinese sexuality, even though my articles and papers would be brought up and discussed by the participants. In time, I became increasingly alienated from the field of Chinese studies and began to identify myself primarily as a scholar in lesbian and gay studies.”

The *Pan* volume has much to recommend it; it is a reference work that creates its paradigm and is unlikely to be rivaled within its domain. It is ambitious in conception, with 50 writers, and lavish in execution, boasting 375 images and 125 maps and charts. It recognizes that immigrants are the human link between societies. It is global in scope, comparative, multidisciplinary, historical, contextual, and complex. It is bounded neither by the present nor by the United States. It looks at internal migration as well as external migration, though it concentrates on the latter. It acknowledges return migration, and addresses the effects of remittances and the concrete connections of the overseas Chinese with their home-bound cousins. It considers the push and pull factors of immigration, situating overseas Chinese within their respective domestic circumstances. *Pan* has gathered fascinating documents: Painter Paul Gauguin, for example, tried to organize opposition to a “Chinese invasion” in the South Pacific.

The introduction by Wang Gungwu rejects “a tendency among many Chinese to attribute every success they have to the uniqueness and superiority of

Chinese culture,” but accepts that “it is not possible to avoid the question of Chinese culture.” The historic role of diaspora in Chinese politics is described in detail, and some of the writers vaguely allude to a future role for overseas Chinese in leading China. A symbolic representation of the varieties of Chinese shows a center consisting of China, surrounded by a ring representing aspiring migrants, students, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, in turn placed inside a larger concentric circle of overseas Chinese, all within the broadest circle of the assimilated Chinese (though even that outermost portion is represented as belonging to the diagram).

The book is divided into five sections: origins in China, migration patterns, cultural institutions, relationships with China, and then stand-alone pieces on communities everywhere from Brunei to South Africa. It is thorough. For example, the Post-World War II migration sub-section includes entries on: trade diaspora, labor migration, coolie trade, sojourning and chain migration, student migration, return migration and re-migration, clandestine migration, and even a lengthy sidebar on recruitment of workers to Britain and France. Coupled to a diversity in viewpoints among its many authors, it also seeks at least nominal balance with respect to Taiwan: the coverage of Chinese pan-European organizations devotes a page each to groups with “a Taiwan affiliation” and those “inclined towards mainland China.”

Perhaps the most remarkable feature common to all the pieces in both the Hom anthology and the Pan encyclopedia is invisible in its obviousness: they are all written originally in English. Despite the uneasiness of the thinkers toward such integration toward an Anglo-American norm, they nonetheless have conformed.

Hom and her writers raise their own objections to the diaspora role and anticipate others. Hom concludes that “the challenge is also how to resist engaging in false constructions of each other” and to “form multiple alliances and strategic coalitions, based not on exclusionary or territorialized differences but upon multiple loyalties to communities that choose us and that we chose.”

Journalist Ying Chan, whose reporting on New York City’s Chinatown did not appeal to community bosses, balances the factors of race and ethnicity against “basic justice and fairness” to conclude, “I would rather have friends who walk on my side of the picket line.”

Pan and her colleagues, almost none of whom are Asian Americanists other than Evelyn Hu-Dehart, are more concerned with setting forth Chinese conceptions of race and culture as blending together in lineage and location. It would be wrong to chastise Pan for being Sinocentric. After all, China and Chinese are the very subject of the study. But depicting Chinese as agents of their own destinies also inevitably leads to chauvinism, as in accounts of relationships between overseas Chinese and “non-Chinese.”

The book allows Chinese identity to overwhelm. “If regional origin was not the first or second piece of personal information to be asked of a Chinese by another Chinese at their first encounter, it would certainly be the third,” Pan writes. “‘Home’ was where one’s father came from, but it was also where one returned for burial,” she continues. Even her title, referring to “Chinese Overseas” rather than “Overseas Chinese,” signals priorities.

Chinese American activists are taken to task by Edgar Wickberg for an “entirely positive view of the ideals of North American culture” a “seemingly alienated stance in relation to Chinese culture.” The writers are cautious in their predictions, but they are sanguine about prospects for transnationalism. They omit discussion of the 1996 campaign finance scandal, and the Wen Ho Lee espionage/racial profiling controversy arose after publication.

As Asian diaspora identity begins to encompass economic interests, as in trade networks whose practices may violate everything from anti-discrimination to antitrust norms of the United States, Asians living here would do well to anticipate the reactions of white Americans. Indeed, Asians with relatively privileged backgrounds (or who are perceived as enjoying such advantages) who embrace the most robust forms of diaspora status will have difficulties articulating principled rather than self-interested motivations. The claim of a “Greater China” would be alarming, and understandably so, to people who were outside its aegis.

Moreover, the diaspora status unifies them along lines of heritage but inhibits coalition movements with other Asian Americans or anyone else for that matter. Between the demands of political assimilation to America and cultural loyalty to Asia, there has always been another notion, namely that Asian Americans can form a bridge between cultures. Although only a few Asian Americans have the ability to pass back and forth as if they truly belonged on both sides of the Pacific, the idea of serving as the medium of exchange is facile. (It is similar to the claim, rarely made by Asian Americans themselves, that Asian Americans can be a neutral party in domestic black-white race relations — the impossible implication is that Asian Americans somehow lack an interest of their own). Increasingly, the purpose of the exchange is purely commercial. The Chinese American offers himself as the currency between American capital and Chinese markets.

There are many simple dichotomies that can be used to characterize the dilemmas of diaspora: among them, the choice between being an overseas Chinese and an Asian American; emphasizing foreign policy or domestic civil rights; and accepting race as biological or constructed. To be part of the diaspora may be more attractive than to be a racial minority or an involuntary exile, but the complexities presented by the alternatives may be alleviated by a re-configuring the paramount distinction as not between West and East but between the individual and the group.

A truly multiracial and multicultural democracy would allow everyone to choose from among a range of possibilities.

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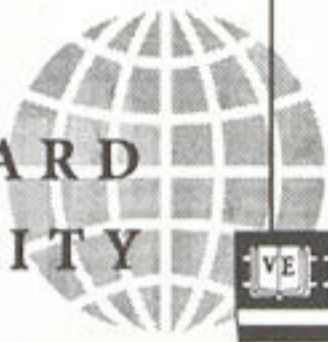
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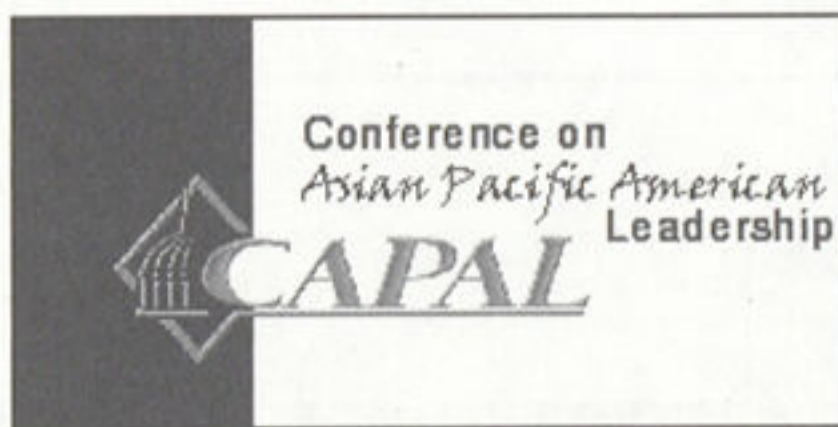
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“A New Generation of Leaders”

Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership (CAPAL), founded in 1989, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational and professional organization whose mission is to promote APA interests and success in public sector careers, to provide information and education on policy issues affecting the APA community, and to serve the APA community at large.

During its first decade, CAPAL has remained an all-volunteer organization which has created both student-focused and professional development programs aimed at building leadership and public policy knowledge in the Asian Pacific American community.

Among CAPAL's accomplishments in its first decade are:

- Built a membership of over 300 professionals interested in public policy within the metropolitan Washington, DC area
- Graduated 1,000 students from its Washington Leadership Program
- Awarded over \$25,000 in Asha Jaini and Senator Paul Simon scholarships

CAPAL currently offers three summer scholarship stipends for undergraduates who are interning in Washington D.C. Beginning in 2000, CAPAL has begun offering a graduate fellowship stipend for a graduate student interested in public policies affecting Asian Pacific Americans. For more info. or an application, visit our website: www.capal.org.

The year 2000 will mark the 10th year of the Washington Leadership Summer Educational Workshop Series and Leadership Training Program which is free and open to anyone interning in Washington D.C during the summer.

CAPAL Contact Information:
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www.capal.org



Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute

THE STATE OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICA Series:

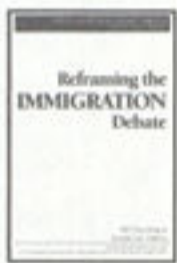


Transforming Race Relations

This project examines racial attitudes and opinions, the historical and political construction of racial categories, hate crimes, affirmative action, residential segregation and integration, and the responsiveness of human rights agencies. The authors document how racial identity is created and embodied in

individual attitudes and institutional practices, and argue for policies that go beyond the black-white paradigm.

507 pp/2000 \$20
Executive Summary only \$5



Reframing the Immigration Debate

This study examines the socioeconomic impact of Asian immigrants and formulates new ways of viewing immigration in a constantly-evolving global environment. Specific emphasis is placed on the participation of immigrants in the nation's education system, entrepreneurial sector, and politics.

322 pp/1996 \$17
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Economic Diversity, Issues & Policies

A report that documents the labor, immigration and education patterns that shaped the diverse Asian Pacific American population. The study also examines key sectors of the economy heavily impacted by Asian Pacific Americans and shows how APAs can transform major public policy debates over

economic restructuring.

305 pp/1994 \$15
Executive Summary only \$5



Policy Issues to the Year 2020

This report forecasts a near tripling of the Asian Pacific American population by the year 2020 and examines the profound implications of these demographic changes for national public policy. APA experts offer policy analysis and recommendations in a range of areas, including race relations and civil rights, education, health, labor, media, and the arts.

318 pp/1993 \$15
Executive Summary only \$5

OTHER TITLES:

Beyond Asian American Poverty: Community Economic Development Policies & Strategies

This study examines the needs of low-income Asian Pacific communities in Los Angeles and offers community economic development strategies and recommendations in the areas of housing, job training, workers' rights, and small business development

171 pp/1993 (reprinted 1999) \$12

In Support of Civil Rights: Taking on the Initiative

This special report on Proposition 209, "The California Civil Rights Initiative," examines the affirmative action debate and its effects on Asian Pacific Americans in the areas of education, employment and public contracting.

8 pp/1996 \$5

Common Ground: Perspectives on Affirmative Action... and its Impact on Asian Pacific Americans

A compilation of essays written by prominent Asian Pacific American business, government, and community leaders that examines the issues and far-reaching implications of affirmative action.

40 pp/1995 \$8

Reapportionment & Redistricting in Los Angeles: Implications for Asian Pacific Americans

A series of short pamphlets introducing the issues of reapportionment and redistricting. Data from the 1990 Census and a survey of Asian Pacific Americans illuminates the effects of redistricting on political empowerment in the APA community.

6 pamphlets/1991 \$10

Coming soon in 2000...

Policy Issues to the Year 2020, 2nd edition

Based on new demographic data, this report contains updates of the original policy monographs, as well as new chapters addressing current policy issues impacting APAs, such as the campaign finance reform debate, high technology business development, and racial stereotyping in the media.

The Lessons of Parcel C: Reflections on Community Lawyering

The first volume of a new series exploring the intersections between legal research and public policy, this report documents Boston Chinatown's organizing experience in its battle to wrangle Parcel C from institutional expansion and preserve it for community use.

To order books or for more information, contact Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc. (LEAP)
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ASIAN AMERICAN POLICY REVIEW

The *Asian American Policy Review* is currently accepting submissions for its Tenth Volume, which will be published in March 2001. The *Review* is a non-partisan academic journal, published annually by graduate students at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The *Review* fills a crucial gap by providing a national forum for addressing issues that concern Asian Pacific Americans and their respective communities. As the only publication of its kind, the *Review* is an important resource for practitioners, policy-makers, and academicians.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The *Review* is committed to the following principles in selecting papers for publication:

- Timeliness of topic to current policy discussions
- Originality and thoroughness of research and ideas
- Cohesiveness, sophistication, and consistency of arguments
- Contribution to scholarship and policy-making
- Style, tone, and coherency of language
- Overall effectiveness

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

- Articles must be original and unpublished.
- Commentaries should be between 2,000–3,000 words; research articles should be between 4,000–7,000 words in length.
- A disk copy (Microsoft Word) and five hard copies of the manuscript, an abstract, a brief biography, and the author's address and telephone number must be submitted by the deadline.
- Citations must be formatted using the guidelines outlined in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

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