

aapi nexus

Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders
Policy, Practice and Community

Volume 9, Numbers 1 & 2 Fall 2011

Forging the Future:

The Role of New Research, Data, & Policies
for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians,
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Message from the Editors

Closing the Research and Data Gap in Order to Serve Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Better

Shirley Hune and Marjorie Kagawa-Singer

One of the greatest assets of the United States as a world leader is the diversity of the American people in their perspectives, cultures, knowledge, skills, and innovations. Significant segments of the nation's diverse population, however, remain marginalized in their everyday lives and civil rights, have less access to fundamentals (e.g., economic opportunities, education, and health care), and are underserved in a wide range of organizations and programs, including those publicly funded by federal, state, and local authorities. For a democratic society with enormous resources, this is far from an ideal situation for any individual or group. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are among those who continue to be left out of full inclusion and participation in many sectors and levels of U.S. society. This special issue of *AAPI Nexus* provides research and policy briefs to address inequities in vital areas of AAPI community life through examples of innovative research methods, data collection, and policies and seeks to guide public and private entities, including federal agencies, toward increasing AAPI participation and access to opportunities to meet their needs.

AAPIs are comprised of diverse, complex, and growing populations. Not only are they part of the historical development of the United States, but also they are a growing and vibrant part of U.S. society. According to the U.S. Census, single-race Asian Americans grew faster than any other race group in the nation from 2000 to 2010—a 43.3 percent gain. In numerical terms, Asians alone increased from 10.2 million to more than 14.7 million during that period. Asians in combination with other racial/ethnic groups comprised another 2.6 million, for a total of 17.3 million single-race and multiple-race Asian Americans in 2010. Single-race Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (NHPIs) grew 35.4 percent from 2000 to 2010, but more than half of them report being of multiple

ances. NHPIs totaled 1.2 million, or 540,018 NHPI alone and 685,182 of multiple races, in 2010.¹ By the year 2050, it is projected that Asian Americans (alone and in combination) will be 9 percent (40.6 million) of the total population, up from 5.6 percent in 2010. It is estimated that NHPIs (alone and in combination) will grow from 0.4 percent in 2010 to 0.6 percent (2.6 million) by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). These significant and continuing demographic changes create an urgent need to understand the everyday problems that face the growing AAPI population better.

On October 14, 2009, President Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13515: "Increasing the Participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Federal Programs." The order reestablished the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, housing it within the Department of Education, and created the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and the Federal Interagency Working Group (IWG). Working in conjunction, the commission and the IWG are comprised of individuals, executive branch departments, agencies, and offices representing a broad spectrum of fields and programs impacting AAPI communities. The initiative collaborates with the White House Office of Public Engagement, designated federal agencies, organizations, and community advocates to promote underutilized resources and opportunities in education, commerce, business, health, human services, housing, environment, arts, agriculture, labor and employment, transportation, justice, veterans affairs, and economic and community development.

The initiative has structured its efforts into five "pods," or areas of focus, that encompass a diverse range of community interests and issues, these include civil and immigrant rights, economic growth, educational opportunities, healthy communities, and sustainable neighborhoods. The pod structure allows the initiative to concentrate its efforts with an issue-based approach while acknowledging the importance of interagency cooperation in devising strategies for outreach and community-government partnerships.

The initiative hosted a Research and Data Convening on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Washington, D.C., from December 10 to 11, 2010. Bringing together individual researchers, large "think-tank" research organizations, leading university Asian American studies programs, and representatives from federal agencies, this conference focused on addressing gaps in research and

data needs for AAPIs and providing input to federal agencies in order to improve the quality of life for AAPIs. The insights and practices shared during this event underscored the need for ongoing comprehensive, relevant, and actionable research on AAPIs. As a result, two proposed courses of action by *AAPI Nexus* journal founding senior editor and UCLA/CUNY Professor Paul M. Ong were to formalize working relationships among university-based AAPI research institutions—four institutions formed the Asian American and Pacific Islander Policy Research Consortium to support, promote, and conduct applied social science and policy research on AAPIs²—and to publish the proceedings of the convening and other issue-related briefs to inform federal policy making. For more information on the initiative, please see the appendix on page 257.

AAPI Nexus is proud to publish this special double issue to coincide with the second anniversary of the initiative. Drawing upon the convening's theme, we sought out briefs that offered new research and data approaches to address AAPI everyday inequalities and policy gaps and that would provide findings and recommendations to improve AAPI access to services and programs. In February 2011, we invited presenters at the December conference and other experts of the five pods to submit briefs. The primary goals for this special issue are to (1) demonstrate how researchers and practitioners are innovatively overcoming the barriers to identify the needs and disparities in AAPI communities, (2) provide information to address AAPI issues, (3) support data-driven policy changes and advocacy on behalf of AAPIs, and (4) promote solution-oriented and replicable approaches.

In adopting the title *Forging the Future* for the issue, we envision the publication will play a significant role in fulfilling the initiative's goals as articulated in its "Winning the Future: President Obama's Agenda and the Asian American and Pacific Islander Community" paper of May 2011.³ The dual goal is to provide the information and evidence-based strategies to identify and close AAPI inequity gaps. In the briefs that follow, a diverse group of scholars and community advocates explore important AAPI issues in detail, providing better research and data, along with their own analyses and recommendations for improving the lives of AAPIs. The volume is also designed to highlight opportunities for intervention and collaboration, initiate dialogue, and be a catalyst for the collective and coordinated efforts of academics, com-

munity organizations, and government agencies (local, state, and federal).

Overall the briefs identify the multiple ways in which AAPIs are made invisible, absent from and thus silenced, or inadequately represented or distorted in research, data, programming, and policies. Most importantly, they provide new methods, data, and recommendations for closing the research and data gap in order to serve AAPIs better. The briefs are organized into five sections presented in alphabetical order: civil rights, economic development (including sustainable neighborhoods), education, health, and NHPIs. The first four sections reflect the focus areas of the initiative's pods. The NHPI section ensures that due attention is given to this overlooked group. Each section is preceded by an overview in order to set the context for the topic and introduce the briefs, their findings, and recommendations. The volume concludes with an appendix describing key activities of the initiative to date.

This special issue is truly a collective effort and was completed on a strict timeline. *AAPI Nexus* stepped away from its usual practice of publishing research and policy articles to present new findings through shorter briefs. This alternative mode also enabled the journal to publish a larger and wider range of research and data findings. Nonetheless, journal space is limited and choices had to be made in regard to submissions. The editors wish to thank the contributors for their innovative work and timely responses, the reviewers (who remain anonymous) for their valuable input in the challenging process of peer review of the submissions, and the section editors for their expertise and help in contextualizing and shaping AAPI issues.

We are most grateful to the initiative, especially Kiran Ahuja, Executive Director, Christina Lagdameo, Deputy Director, Albert J. Lee and AAPI Nexus Managing Editors Melany De La Cruz-Viesca and Christina Aujean Lee for their leading roles in moving this issue forward, former Associate Editor Don T. Nakanishi for his valuable insight, Publications Coordinator Mary Kao for her always amazing cover and overall design for this substantial double issue and Copyeditor Christine A.T. Dunn for turning drafts into polished publications. Finally, we especially thank the following organizational sponsors and individual donors: Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF), Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO),

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD), Asian American/Asian Research Institute at the City University of New York, Asian American Studies Center, at the University of California Los Angeles, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF), Okura Mental Health Leadership Foundation, Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL), University of California, Asian American Pacific Islander Policy Multi-Campus Research Program (UC AAPI Policy MRP), Ford Foundation Building Economic Security Over a Lifetime Initiative, Institute for Asian American Studies at University of Massachusetts Boston, National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), Ford Kura-moto, and Lois M. Takahashi, for their financial support. Through their financial generosity and commitment to AAPI communities, this issue is being made available to you at no cost. In addition copies will be available at <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aascpress/nexuscollection.asp>.

We hope that the readership is as excited as we are about the new research and data approaches in this special issue. The findings and recommendations in the briefs open up new opportunities to address unequal access by and participation of AAPIs in the larger U.S. society better. We encourage federal agencies and other public and private entities to use them and to work closely with AAPI scholars and community advocates in order to close the knowledge and service gaps for AAPI communities so that they might improve their lives and have full and equal opportunity to participate in all facets of American society and policy making.

Notes

1. The *race-alone population* is defined as "individuals who responded to the question on race by indicating only one race or the group that reported only one race category." See Humes, Jones, and Ramirez, 2011 for more information.
2. The four founding institutions are the CUNY Asian American Asian Research Institute, the University of Massachusetts–Boston Institute for Asian American Studies, the University of California AAPI Policy Multi-Campus Research Program, and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center.
3. Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/aapi_winningthefuture_20110506.pdf.

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CIVIL RIGHTS

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Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Data and Policy Needs in Civil Rights

Taeku Lee and Janelle Wong

In this section, researchers examine the policy priorities and data needs regarding civil rights issues affecting Asian Americans (and, where relevant and possible, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders [NHPIs]). To the uninitiated, the policy relevance of civil rights issues confronting AANHPI members may seem unusual, exotic, or misplaced. Each of the following articles underscores the fact that, for AANHPI communities, the contemporary challenges resulting from discrimination and exclusion remain serious, varied, and evolving. A key theme across all of the pieces featured here is that in order for AANHPIs to achieve full inclusion and fair treatment in the United States, their voices and experiences must be lifted up in the public sphere. Too often, invisibility (or visibility only through a selective and distorted lens) is the hallmark of AANHPI policy issues.

Invisibility and lack of information are particularly acute for those AANHPIs whose identities are multiply marginalized. Ben de Guzman and Alice Y. Hom suggest in their policy brief that institutional data, such as federally sponsored health surveys, are inadequate to assess the policy needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) AANHPIs. They argue that an intersectional approach that recognizes the fact that the experience of being AANHPI is shaped by one's sexual orientation/gender identity and that the experience of being LGBT also depends a great deal on national origin is necessary to meet the specific needs of LGBT AANHPI youth. Guzman and Hom encourage federal and state agencies to be much more proactive in terms of taking into account national origin, sexual orientation, and gender identity in their data-collection efforts.

This call for more and better data to inform policies that affect Asian Americans is echoed in several of the other articles

presented here. With our colleagues Karthick Ramakrishnan and Jane Junn, we present data from the 2008 National Asian American Survey. We detail the data-collection process and how this unique data set, which is based on six national origin groups interviewed in eight different languages, provides new insights about Asian American policy preferences. Yet this data collection effort also serves as a reminder that without consistent and institutionalized funding and data collection, comprehensive national-level information on Asian American policy preferences will inform critical policy debates only sporadically. Similar to Guzman and Hom, we suggest that lack of comprehensive and sufficiently detailed data only contributes to the invisibility of Asian Americans in public policy making.

In the absence of more comprehensive data and a more accurate portrayal of the actually lived conditions of AANHPIs, misperceptions and stereotyped views often prevail. Sangay Mishra's brief on South Asians in the post-9/11 era and Kohei Ishihara's research on Southeast Asian Youth in Providence, Rhode Island, show the vulnerability of Asian Americans to profiling, police brutality, and other forms of institutionalized disparate treatment. In particular, both briefs argue that the legitimate efforts of law enforcement agencies to deter gang activity and prevent terrorist threats often rely on questionable practices as a result of insufficient data and an inadequate knowledge base regarding Asian American communities. Ironically, this kind of intimidating attention by public agencies serves only to further silence the voices of Asian Americans in developing a strong civil rights agenda.

The policy challenges that arise from insufficient and incomplete data about AANHPIs are further exacerbated by the under-supply of descriptively representative and culturally competent human capital in the public sector. As Carson Eoyang's examination of the "bamboo ceiling" in federal service powerfully argues, the underrepresentation of AANHPIs at the senior levels of public management results in a yawning gap in accountability. The commitments to be more fully and deliberately inclusive of African Americans in the federal civil service and military service during the early to mid-twentieth century played a critical role leading up to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and similar commitments are needed today vis-à-vis the advancement of AANHPIs within government.

A final key ingredient is the continuing and coordinated advocacy from within AANHPI communities. Julia Liou, Catherine Porter, and Thu Quach's case study of nail salon workers in California, for instance, demonstrates that achieving the basic responsibilities of government—such as ensuring safe working conditions—required the sustained and coordinated efforts of a coalition of public health, reproductive health, and environmental justice organizations, along with nail salon workers and champions in government agencies. Ishihara's brief describes local Southeast Asian youth leaders as catalysts in taking an active role in surveying their own communities and developing policy recommendations based upon youth-led research efforts. Ultimately, whether it is civil rights or any other issue domain affecting AANHPI communities, the policy briefs in this section remind us that good governance and policy innovation depend vitally on adequate and accurate information and on advocacy and accountability across all levels of the public policy making.

TAEKU LEE is Professor and Chair of Political Science and Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *Mobilizing Public Opinion* (2002); co-author of *Why Americans Don't Join the Party* (2011) and *Asian American Political Participation* (2011); co-editor of *Transforming Politics, Transforming America* (2006) and *Accountability through Public Opinion* (2011); and is co-editing the *Oxford Handbook of Racial and Ethnic Politics in the United States* (forthcoming). Lee was born in South Korea, grew up in rural Malaysia, Manhattan, and suburban Detroit; is a proud graduate of K–12 public schools; and has a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Michigan, a master's degree from Harvard University, and a doctorate from the University of Chicago.

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Crossing Intersections: Challenges Facing Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander *and* Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Youth: Exploring Issues and Recommendations

Ben de Guzman and Alice Y. Hom

Summary

The experiences and the everyday life stories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth who are also Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) are not well-known or documented in the literature about LGBT or AANHPI communities. To help address this lack of information and knowledge, this article highlights some of the issues that these youth face and offers recommendations regarding data collection, cultural competency, and utilization of an intersectional lens of race/ethnicity and sexual orientation to ensure changes will be considered to policies that affect these populations. The policy recommendations focus on issues such as bullying and sexual and reproductive health.¹

Introduction

With nearly three million Asian American adolescents between the ages of ten and twenty-four alone (U. S. Census Bureau, 2009), AANHPI youth are becoming an increasingly large and visible population in both the mainstream and AANHPI communities. For these youth, a number of factors including ethnic heritage, minority racial status, class, age, and immigration timeline impact the construction of their self-identities and, in turn, their everyday lives. But the intersecting dimensions of these identities also present unique challenges for these youth who often find themselves mediating between the realities of their ethnic/racial backgrounds and the shared difficulties of going through adolescence and the processes of self-discovery and growth that it accompanies. For

AANHPI youth, identities are shaped, modified, and contested by the social and the cultural contexts of their upbringing as well as larger structural realities of being a part of a minority community in the United States, including experiences with racism, sexism, and homophobia.

For LGBT AANHPI youth, sexual-orientation and gender-identity issues further complicate the youth experience by forcing them to confront their minority racial status and their minority gender identity/sexual orientation. For community organizations and other public institutions, addressing these challenges requires targeted solutions that take into account the manifold linkages among and across race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This policy brief examines the issues and challenges that face LGBT AANHPI youth and presents community-based recommendations for tackling them.

Getting a Clear Picture: Ensuring that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Youth Are Counted

Hahm and colleagues estimate that of the AANHPI youth population, approximately 8.7 percent are sexual minorities based on a review of data from the National Longitudinal Studies of Adolescent Health (Hahm et al., 2008, 277). This suggests that there are at least 250,000 LGBT AANHPI youth in the United States.² Despite these figures, there is a dearth of research or data on this population or on LGBT youth of color, in general. One study found that between 1970 and 2000, only sixteen studies had been published on LGBT youth of color (Gipson, 2002, 1). For LGBT AANHPI youth, such paucity of information on the experiences and behaviors of these youth is further aggravated by data-collection techniques that are not designed to account for the incredible diversity of the AANHPI youth community.

It is important for researchers and public institutions to acknowledge that the diversity of LGBT AANHPI youth reflects the diversity of the larger AANHPI community, with more than thirty ethnic groups speaking more than one hundred languages (Hwahng and Lin, 2009, 227). Each of the many ethnic subgroups within these communities has a unique culture and history. Ethnicity-specific data is critical to monitoring disparities in health status and access to health care for AANHPI communities. At the same

time, the experiences of LGBT individuals are distinct and complex, with unique implications for analyzing their needs and concerns. For racial and ethnic groups with a relatively small number of members, such as AANHPIs and American Indians/Alaskan Natives, there is often inadequate data to identify important health issues and appropriate interventions and solutions to those issues. Such data is often not collected, collected but not analyzed, or not reported due to inadequate sampling.

Historically, federal data-collection efforts have not included LGBT populations or gathered information regarding the specific needs of LGBT people. Data on LGBT health and health disparities is a prime example of how the lack of data collection impacts the LGBT community. Questions about sexual orientation or gender identity are not routinely included in any of the federally funded health surveys (Krehely, 2009, 2). As a result, the limited nature of health research about LGBT populations makes it difficult to document and prioritize health needs and frustrates efforts to get a true sense of the magnitude of health disparities affecting LGBT people.

Although numerous studies have been conducted with certain health conditions, notably for HIV in gay men and breast cancer in lesbians, in most other areas, data are seriously lacking. For example, few studies have attempted to distinguish the diversity of transgender and gender-variant individuals; fewer studies have been attempted in regard to transgender and gender-variant individuals of Asian background (Hwahng and Lin, 2009, 228). Both the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Institute of Medicine have recently called for increased data collection related to LGBT health issues, and fully implementing their recommendations is an important step in addressing the health needs of LGBT people. In tandem with policies to disaggregate and collect ethnic-specific health data, ensuring that questions about sexual orientation and gender identity appear on national health and other surveys conducted by DHHS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other federal agencies will help determine the specific health needs of LGBT AANHPI youth.

On May 23, 2011, the White House Office of Public Engagement and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders hosted an historic briefing on the issues that face

AANHPI LGBT youth. A collaboration of organizations, including the Queer Justice Fund of Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP), the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA), and the Asian and Pacific Islander Wellness Center brought nineteen LGBT AANHPI youth and additional advocates from the community from around the country to share both policy recommendations and to put a human face to the issues being discussed. These recommendations were broken down in three major areas:

1. Revise current data-collection policies to ensure LGBT AANHPI youth are counted in federal surveys, reports, and statistics:
 - Revise current federal data-collection policies to ensure that surveys, reports, and statistics are disaggregated by AANHPI subpopulations, including ethnicity.
 - Collect data on sexual orientation and gender identity in federally funded surveys including, but not limited, to those administered by the DHHS and the CDC.
 - Include sexual orientation and behavior and gender-identity questions in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey administered by the CDC. All states and school districts should include these questions in order to track trends and implement programs tailored to LGBT AANHPI youth.
 - Publish a report outlining general data-collection policy across federal agencies for racial/ethnic minorities and for sexual orientation and gender identity.
 - Standardize collection of data on race, ethnicity, and primary language in hospitals and healthcare organizations (DHHS).
 - Increase data collection and reporting by federal agencies regarding current youth initiatives, disaggregated by ethnic group.
 - Increase funding for efforts to collect AANHPI health data.
2. Ensure that current anti-bullying initiatives include culturally competent programming that takes into account the unique cultural and social circumstances of LGBT AANHPI youth:
 - Incorporate LGBT issues in planned fact sheets, tips, or other materials federal agencies are producing for

StopBullying.gov and other programs that address youth bullying.

- Increase the accessibility of anti-bullying resources for parents and communities. Programs that provide culturally competent services to families of LGBT AANHPI youth are critical. Government and other institutional resources should be made available in multiple languages while the Asian-language counseling capacity of those institutions that serve LGBT AANHPI youth should be supported through funding.
 - In collaboration with the Department of Education, create a toolkit for school administrators that highlights the unique experiences of LGBT AANHPI youth and the challenges of addressing this population; this might also include the identification of “safe spaces,” such as counselors’ offices, designated classrooms, or student organizations, in which LGBT AANHPI youth can receive support from administrators, teachers, or other school staff.
3. Expand comprehensive sex education and culturally competent HIV-prevention programs that account for sexual orientation and racial/ethnic identity:

Representation and Inclusion

- Evaluate comprehensive sex education programs that target AANHPI young people in order to increase the body of evidence-based initiatives for our communities.
- Ensure that all recommended sex education programs are inclusive of LGBT youth.
- Ensure that HIV prevention intervention programs, such as the CDC’s Diffusion of Behavioral Intervention Program, specifically address LGBT AANHPI communities.
- Include LGBT AANHPI youth as priority/target populations for pregnancy prevention and comprehensive sex education.
- Incorporate sexually transmitted disease, including HIV, prevention in the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI).

Funding and Training

- Increase funding for the handful of organizations that specifically serve the health and sexual and reproductive health needs of LGBT AANHPI youth.

- Continue to prevent discretionary funding from going to abstinence-only-until-marriage programs like Community-Based Abstinence Education because of their inefficacy and inapplicability toward LGBT youth.
- Increase funding for comprehensive sex education programs such as the Personal Responsibility and Education Program (PREP).
- Require cultural competency training that addresses LGBT AANHPI youth in grants and request for proposals (e.g., TPPI, PREP) addressing the health needs of youth.

Notes

1. Several of the recommendations discussed in this policy brief were presented by community organizations including the NQAPIA, Queer Justice Fund of AAPIP, Advocates for Youth, and others to federal agencies during a LGBT AANHPI Youth Roundtable hosted by the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders on May 23, 2011. For more information about the White House event, please see Hom, Alice Y. 2011. "A Historic First: AAPI LGBT Youth at the White House." <http://aapip.org/news/2011/06/a-historic-first-aapi-lgbt-youth-at-the-white-house-may-2011> (accessed August 16, 2011).
2. A conservative estimate based on Asian American population figures cited in the introduction and the Hahm et al. estimate.

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Bringing Asian American Voices to Policy Debates:

Findings from the 2008
National Asian American Survey

S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, Jane Junn,
Taeku Lee, and Janelle Wong

Summary

Where do Asian Americans stand when it comes to public policy? In what ways are they most likely to participate in politics in order to exert their influence in public policy making? More often than not, the answer to these questions is mired in assumptions, anecdotes, and selective evidence because until only very recently, little systematic, nationally representative data on this emerging group has been available to the public. In this brief, we introduce the 2008 National Asian American Survey (NAAS), the first multilingual, multiethnic national survey of Asian American political attitudes and behavior, and suggest that these data shed light on: (1) critical questions about Asian Americans' public policy attitudes and (2) the types of political action Asian Americans are most likely to take to pursue their policy interests.

The 2008 National Asian American Survey

What are the policy needs and priorities of the Asian American community? Most attempts to answer this question focus on objective circumstances ranging from individual-level outcomes, such as English-language proficiency, or the incidence of mental depression and household-level outcomes, such as family size and welfare participation rates, to outcomes that are produced by interactions between these factors and larger socioeconomic and political contexts, such as residential segregation, incidence of hate crimes, and access to affordable health care. As important as these studies are, objective metrics are sometimes at odds with the beliefs and the subjective needs, goals, and aspirations of Asian

Americans. A fuller picture thus needs to take into account the voices of community members and to ascertain how Asian Americans define their priorities and preferences.

A standard way to accomplish this goal is to conduct surveys. Although such surveys are common for the general population (e.g., CBS News/*New York Times*, Gallup, and CNN) and are increasing in frequency for Latinos (e.g., Pew Hispanic and Latino Decisions), it is extremely rare to find a reliable, nationally representative sample of Asian American public opinion. More often than not, surveys of Asian Americans are either restricted to exit polls (which are very limited in content regarding public policy issues), targeted to specific communities (either by ethnic group or geographic place), or poorly implemented (e.g., inadequately trained interviewers or interviewing only in English). Even large federal data-collection efforts like the Current Population Survey (which interviews its Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander [AANHPI] population only in English or Spanish and interviews insufficient numbers of respondents in most states in order to disaggregate results by ethnic/national origin group) suffer from many of these deficits.

One recent exception is the 2008 NAAS, which was conducted over roughly ten weeks prior to the 2008 election. We view the NAAS as a landmark effort to collect data about the policy views of Asian Americans correctly for several reasons. First, it includes sufficiently large numbers of respondents from each of the six largest Asian national-origin groups (Asian Indians, Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, and Vietnamese) to enable analysis of these constituent groups as well as Asian Americans as a whole.¹ More specifically, the NAAS completed 5,159 interviews with a final breakdown of 1,350 Chinese, 1,150 Asian Indian, 719 Vietnamese, 614 Korean, 603 Filipino, and 541 Japanese origin respondents, with 182 additional respondents who are either from other countries in Asia or who identify as multiracial or multiethnic.² Second, survey interviews were conducted in eight languages (English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Japanese, and Hindi), more fully capturing the linguistic diversity of the Asian American community. Third, the sampling design allows end users to draw valid statistical inferences about Asian Americans that are nationally representative (using sampling weights) and are representative of Asian Americans in high-density geographic ar-

eas (e.g., states like California, New Jersey, and New York or metropolitan areas like Los Angeles, New York, the San Francisco/Bay Area, and Washington, D.C.).

Finally, the content NAAS survey instrument is remarkably rich and explicitly constructed to assess the political behaviors and policy beliefs of Asian Americans. The interview length was roughly half an hour, covering a range of modules: (1) national origin(s) and experiences with migration; (2) media use and political priorities; (3) political participation and candidate evaluations; (4) issue orientations, party identification, and political ideology; (5) racial/ethnic identification and inter-/intragroup relations; and (6) civic engagement. The questionnaire ends with standard demographic measures of individual-level characteristics on education, income, home ownership, length of residence, and other items known to influence political engagement. A more comprehensive description and analysis of the data can be found in our book (Wong et al., 2011), and starting in the fall of 2011, the micro-data will be available through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (Ramakrishnan et al., 2011) and the web site for the NAAS.³

Asian American Views on Public Policy

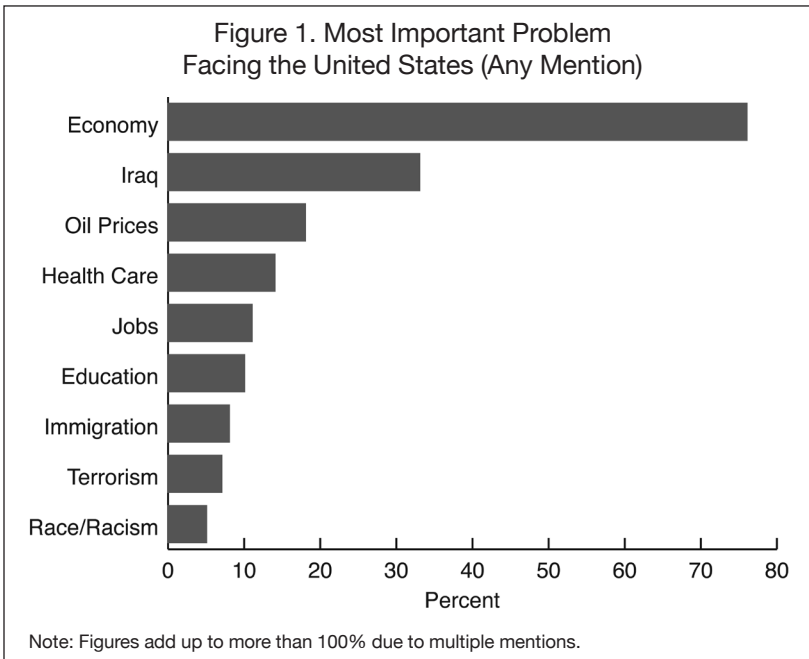
What do the 2008 NAAS results reveal about Asian American policy views? Here we present data on policy priorities and then focus on three issues: high-skill visas, health care reform, and abortion.

Policy Priorities

A common approach to measuring the public's sense of priorities is by asking the question: "What do you think is the most important problem facing the United States today?" The NAAS allowed respondents to mention up to three "most important" problems. During the late summer months of 2008, when the NAAS was in the field, the most salient national issue among Asian Americans was the economy (76% mentioned the economy), followed by the Iraq War (33%), oil prices (18%), health care (14%), employment (11%), education (10%), and immigration (8%).⁴ Although perceptions of the public's priorities are notoriously changeable in response to changes in media coverage, political spin, and other external circumstances, it is important to note that we can only

gauge this public agenda by directly asking a representative sample of Asian Americans.

When we do so, the attitudes of Asian Americans are quite distinctive. It is remarkable, for instance, that the economy is so salient in the minds of Asian Americans even before the failure of Lehman Brothers in September 2008 and the subsequent financial crisis. For instance, although 53 percent of Asian Americans ranked the economy as the top issue among those interviewed in August 2008, only 36 percent of the general population did so according to other polls (Roper Center, 2008).



Issue Preferences

In addition to using surveys like the NAAS to help define the policy priorities for Asian Americans, the NAAS is also useful to monitor the substantive positions Asian Americans hold on key policy issues. Here too the results can be illuminating and even unexpected. To illustrate, we highlight our findings on three issue areas: health care, immigration, and abortion. Regarding health care, Asian Americans exhibited strong levels of support for universal health care: more than 80 percent approved of “the government guaran-

teeing health care for everyone.” These numbers were much higher than the national average of 60 percent to 64 percent in 2007 and 2008 (Quinnipiac University Polling Institute, 2008; Toner and Elder, 2007). Moreover, this strong support held across all national origin groups. Even among Vietnamese-American respondents, who were most likely to identify with the Republican Party, 89 percent supported universal health care (Wong et al., 2011).

In regard to immigration, given the U.S. Senate’s prior consideration of legislation that would give greater weight to professional skills and reduce the number of family reunification visas, NAAS respondents were asked whether they agreed with this potential policy change. Roughly one in two respondents supported such a move, with 22 percent opposing and 29 percent unsure. This moderately high support is striking given that many Asian American advocacy groups actively oppose such a policy shift (Asian American Justice Center 2009; Narasaki 2007). Indian-, Chinese-, and Filipino-Americans (groups with generally more high-skilled professionals) were particular likely to support this policy shift.

Finally, when it came to abortion, Asian Americans tended to be relatively liberal, with 35 percent of NAAS respondents supporting the legalization of abortion “in all cases,” compared to 17 percent of the general American public in other polls (Smith and Pond, 2008). This is perhaps not surprising given the relatively higher proportion of secular Asian Americans. We further find that those who self-identify as Evangelical or born-again Christians are less likely to support legal abortions in all cases than their non-Evangelical or born-again counterparts (28% vs. 40%). Between national origin groups, Vietnamese are the least pro-choice, a finding that is in line with their high numbers of conservatives, Republicans, and religious Catholics.

Moving the Asian American Policy Agenda Forward

These policy items clearly show a distinctive and internally diverse Asian American policy profile that is often missing from debates and decisions regarding issues that affect Asian Americans. Representative and accurate survey data is also critical to a fuller picture of the extent to which Asian Americans are able to voice their political views and act on behalf of their political interests. Given the disproportionate underrepresentation of Asian Americans in elected and appointed offices of government, de-

mands for greater representation and accountability also depend vitally on the political engagement and empowerment of Asian Americans. Here exit polls and data from the Current Population Survey consistently show that Asian Americans “underparticipate” relative to whites, but we have little systematic and reliable data about why some vote while others do not, or about how engaged Asian Americans are in a variety of other modes of participation beyond voting.

Analysis of the NAAS shows that voting is by far the most common form of political participation (outside of talking with one’s friends and family about politics). Importantly, beyond voting, Asian Americans are engaged in a variety of other modes of political action, from other aspects of institutionalized electoral politics like contributing to a candidate, party, or other campaign organization (13%) and contacting a public official (9%) to politics through working with others in their communities to solve a problem (21%), engaging online (12%), and protesting (4%).

Some individuals participate in more than one activity. In the NAAS, we can identify nearly one in ten adults as “superparticipants”: those who engaged in at least five of the following ten political activities surveyed in the NAAS: registering to vote, voting in the last presidential election, voting in the 2008 primaries and caucuses, campaigning, donating money, contacting one’s elected official, working with others in the community, engaging in online politics, protesting, and taking part in the 2006 immigration protests. These superparticipants are more likely to be male, native-born, highly resourced (in terms of education, income, and homeownership), and members of civic organizations. More pointedly, superparticipants are more likely than others to hold liberal views on abortion rights and to oppose changing immigration policy in order to give greater priority to professional visas over family visas.⁶

Conclusion and Future Directions

This significant gap between the policy preferences of those who are political activists versus those who remain on the sidelines of politics is also a telling reminder that the political identity and voice of Asian Americans are invisible except through data-collection projects like the 2008 NAAS. Moreover, the findings from the 2008 NAAS presented in the preceding text represent just the tip of the iceberg. Among the many areas we have not touched on in this

Table 1. Frequency of Participatory Acts, by National Origin Group (in %)

	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Total
Registered to vote	43	52	61	63	49	60	54
Voted in 2004	33	39	48	55	37	51	42
Voted in 2008 primaries	42	45	53	53	35	39	45
Vote intention in 2008 ^a	76	67	69	82	84	80	74
Political talk with family/friends	71	71	63	72	73	58	68
Worked for campaign	3	3	5	4	3	3	3
Contributed money	12	11	17	18	11	7	13
Contacted politician	11	9	13	10	5	5	9
Community work	27	19	23	17	18	21	21
Online participation	13	14	11	5	17	7	12
Protest activity	4	4	4	3	3	8	4
2006 immigration marches	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.4	1.5	1.6	0.8
Home country politics	5	5	4	1	1	2	4

Note: ^a Percent of registered voters who reported being “absolutely” certain they would vote in the November elections.

brief include data on the prevalence and contexts of discrimination and hate crimes; in-language election materials; support for Asian American candidates; and common political ground with whites, African Americans, and Latinos. It is clear from our experience with the NAAS that the political opinions of Asian Americans are dynamic, diverse, and understudied. Whether through academic researchers, community advocates, or government agencies, it is

imperative to build on this effort and continue to work toward more complete and systematic data on Asian Americans' attitudes and behaviors. In particular, we believe future efforts, starting with 2012, should continue to refine survey methodology tailored to the AANHPI community, expand and update the range of policy areas examined, drill down and dig deeper into high-priority policy areas, and redouble efforts to survey groups that are often underrepresented within the AANHPI community (e.g., Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders; non-Vietnamese Southeast Asians; Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian communities; and multiracial Asians).

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. The NAAS includes adults in the United States who identify any family background from countries in Asia, exclusive of countries classified as the Middle East. Note that this distinction includes any family background from countries in East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and South Asia. This sampling frame does not, however, explicitly target Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders.
2. The registered voters in our sample include 784 of Indian origin, 748 Chinese, 521 Vietnamese, 406 Filipinos, 388 Korean, and 340 Japanese. A total of 120 registered voters are categorized as "Other Asian American," which includes multiracial respondents as well as those outside the six largest ethnic origin groups.
3. For more information, please visit <http://www.naasurvey.com>.
4. For the analyses that follow, we weight our sample, using a poststratification raking procedure to reflect the balance of gender, nativity, citizenship status, length of stay in the United States, and educational attainment of the six largest national-origin groups in the United States as well as the proportion of these national-origin groups within each state. Some of the results presented here vary from the results presented in earlier reports we made in October 2008 as a result of final data collection and revised sampling weights.
5. Percentages exceed 100% because up to three answers were accepted.
6. Interestingly, there is no significant relationship between political activism and opinion on universal health care.

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Rights at Risk:

South Asians in the Post-9/11 United States

Sangay Mishra

Summary

South Asian Americans, one of the fastest-growing and most diverse immigrant communities, have experienced increased discrimination and hate crime during the post-9/11 period. South Asians bore the brunt of racial hostility triggered in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, with Muslims and Sikhs bearing the greatest burden. The domestic security policies inaugurated after 2001 further impacted both South Asian and Arab communities adversely. These official policies ranging from surveillance of mosques and communities to delayed naturalization and restricted immigration have severely encroached upon the civil liberties of the groups. The ten-year anniversary of the 9/11 attacks should be an occasion to review some of these policies in order to ensure that South Asian and Arab communities are not being profiled and targeted in the name of domestic security.

Introduction

South Asians¹ are one of the most diverse and fastest-growing groups in the United States.² They not only trace their origin to different nation states but also belong to different religious faiths such as Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity. Although the history of South Asians in the United States can be traced to the migration of peasants from Punjab during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the immigration reform in 1965 has led to the creation of a community of highly educated and skilled members, which include Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, software professionals, academics, doctors, engineers, and scientists.³ The affluent segment of the community, however, exists alongside a significant population of cab drivers, gas station attendants, and other low-income service workers.

South Asians and 9/11: Racialized Identity

South Asians have faced a long history of discrimination in the United States but September 11, 2001, was a turning point for the community.⁴ The terrorist attacks on September 11 were followed by virulent racial targeting of South Asians and Arabs. Within hours of the attack on the twin towers, a Brooklyn-based Sikh was chased down the streets of Manhattan (Sengupta, 2001). The first death due to the racial hate crimes following the attacks was of a Sikh South Asian who was shot in Mesa, Arizona. Another killing followed on October 4, 2001, when a Hindu immigrant from India was shot dead at his convenience store in Mesquite, Texas (Singh, 2002). The killings and attacks on Sikhs and Hindus alongside Muslims in the initial days pointed to the targeting of all South Asian communities irrespective of their religion, nation of origin, and other distinctions. The all-encompassing racial lumping of South Asians was also accompanied by a selective targeting of Muslims by the public as well as by the law enforcement agencies (Mishra, forthcoming).

The government threw a wide net on the Muslim community and a large number of people who were not connected with any kind of militancy or terrorism were detained (Prashad, 2005). The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) reported the harrowing details of indiscriminate arrests, police abuse, lack of legal support, and family separations resulting from a large number of deportations in that period (ACLU, 2004). Even the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) report conceded that the arrests were "indiscriminate" and "haphazard" (OIG, 2003). The national security policies introduced after the 9/11 attacks, mostly contained under the broad rubric of the PATRIOT Act, seriously eroded the civil liberties of South Asian and Arab communities. The recurrent renewals of the PATRIOT Act and subsequent executive orders to prevent possible terror attacks have impacted the community in a disproportionate manner. Thus it is important to briefly discuss the most important policy measures that continue to impact the civil liberties of South Asians.

One of the most infamous policies, which exclusively targeted Muslims, was the program introduced in August 2002, known as the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), which mandated all male nonimmigrant aliens from twenty-five

countries (all of them Muslim majority countries except North Korea) to physically report and register with their local Immigration and Naturalization Service office. The policy, presented as neutral and benign, unfolded in a way that created an environment of unprecedented fear among Muslim communities across the United States (Aizenmann and Walsh, 2003).

When the process of special registration was completed, thirteen thousand men out of the total eighty-three thousand who complied with the special registration were facing deportation charges (Swarns, 2003). In particular, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities were hit hard by this law. The selective targeting of Muslims in NSEERS made it comparable to the historical parallels such as Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Japanese internment during the World War II. The program was modified in 2003 and finally suspended in April 2011. However, the law still remains on the books and could be potentially brought back (Dickinson School of Law, 2009).

Even as we approach the ten-year anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, South Asian and Arab communities continue to face the consequences of a number of policy measures announced as a part of the “war on terror.” South Asian communities – particularly Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Indian Muslims – have been under the dragnet of constant surveillance. Recent policies include the infiltration of ethnic and religious communities through the use of informants and agent provocateurs and they have expanded the ability of law enforcement agencies to initiate national security investigations with virtually no preliminary evidence required (ACLU, 2009).

As a part of the new policy approach, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) often infiltrates mosques through informants in order to track activities in Muslim communities. The policy even allows the informants to encourage terror plots that ultimately lead to the entrapment of Muslim youth who may be sympathetic to Jihadist Islamic ideology but are not involved with terrorist organizations or terror plots. One of the most well-known examples of this approach is Lodi, a small California town with a significant Pakistani Muslim population, where agents of FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Customs and Borders Protection (CBP) paid a Pakistani immigrant nearly \$230,000 to infiltrate a mosque (South Asian American Leading Together, 2010). The paid informant not only engaged in routine surveillance but also ag-

gressively encouraged a community member, Hamid Hayat, to attend a terrorist training camp in Pakistan. Hayat was subsequently cleared of any charges by the court but only after a long ordeal (*Frontline*, 2006).

The heightened surveillance of ethnic and immigrant communities has been made even easier by the revised FBI guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2008. The guidelines relaxed restrictions on federal law enforcement to conduct threat assessment, collect data, and monitor activities using factors based on race and ethnicity (Berman, 2011). The guidelines also lowered the threshold to initiate threat assessments without requiring an adequate factual basis or supervisory approval for national security cases. These policy changes opened the doors for practices, which are dangerously close to racial and religious profiling.

Another important area in which the civil liberties of South Asian, Arab, and Muslim Americans have seriously eroded during the post-9/11 period is the freedom to travel nationally and internationally. After September 11, 2001, the screening procedures at airports were changed and the government initiated a set of policies, which resulted in disproportionate targeting of South Asians: Sikhs, Muslims, and those appearing to be Muslims. They were subjected to increased pat downs and questioning, and people were often asked to remove articles of religious faith such as turbans and headscarves. A revised 2007 “bulky clothing” screening guideline left it to the individual officer’s discretion to determine whether a head covering was bulky or not (Transportation Security Administration [TSA], 2007). Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians continue to be frequently pulled aside by CBP and questioned about their family, origins, faith, and community. In addition, the guidelines of CBP released in 2008 also lowered the standards for questioning and searching documents of those who are entering or reentering the United States (ACLU, 2009). The continued reliance of the law enforcement agencies on religious and ethnic profiling was reflected in the TSA’s policy change after the attempted Christmas Day attack in 2009. The TSA required passengers, including U.S. citizens, traveling from Pakistan and thirteen other primarily Muslim-majority countries to receive a full body pat down and to allow a search of all carry-on items. The policy was eventually scrapped because of its ineffectiveness, implicit profiling, and diplomatic concerns (Arab American Institute, 2010).

Finally, the process of naturalization for South Asians and Arabs has been impacted by excessive scrutiny and surveillance during the post-9/11 period. A study by Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at New York University found that both Arab and South Asian Muslims face long delays in naturalization even after fulfilling all the requirements (Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, 2007). The Department of Homeland Security routinely matches the names of naturalization applicants to their existing security database. However, in the case of applicants with Muslim or Muslim-sounding names there are long delays due to the screening process. Many of Muslim applicants' names are similar to those who are already on different bulky security lists being maintained by various agencies. As a result, many of these applicants are being sent for follow-up security checks, which delay the process of naturalization.

Policy Recommendations

The South Asian community continues to face the negative impact of the post-9/11 security policies initiated by the PATRIOT Act and subsequently enhanced by other governmental measures. Based on the analysis presented here, the following broad policy changes are recommended to address some of the major civil-rights concerns of South Asian, Arab, and Muslim communities:

- As the ten-year anniversary of the 9/11 attacks draws closer, it is imperative that the government orders a systematic evaluation of the impact of its post-9/11 security policy on the lives of South Asian, Arab, and Muslim communities.
- Even though the infamous NSEERS was suspended in 2011, the community advocacy and civil-rights organizations have rightly demanded an inquiry into the cases in which people were unjustly detained and deported, often resulting in family separations. Formal restitution and compensation are very important because these measures will not only ensure due process and justice but also go a long way in preventing the recurrence of policy measures that target groups on the basis of religion, race, and nation of origin.
- The heightened surveillance of ethnic and immigrant communities, particularly Muslim communities, and aggressive use of informants and agent provocateurs

by the FBI and other law enforcement agencies have adversely impacted South Asians, Arabs, and Muslims. These policies border on racial and religious profiling of South Asian and Arab communities for the purposes of law enforcement and should be carefully evaluated to ensure that there is no profiling and unethical use of informants to frame false cases.

- The delay in processing naturalization applications of Muslims applicants and those with Muslim-sounding names has placed undue burden on South Asian and Arab communities. The Citizenship and Immigration Services should ensure that decisions regarding citizenship applications be made within 120 days of the naturalization examination, as required by the law. A broader congressional oversight of the delays caused by profiling on the basis of religion and nation of origin will go a long way in addressing the issue.

If history is any guide, our propensity to target particular racial and ethnic groups during or in response to national crises, be it the Chinese Exclusion Act or Japanese internment during the World War II, has always ended up putting question marks on the nation's commitment to racial equality. As the ten-year anniversary of the 9/11 attacks draws closer, it is important for the federal government to evaluate the impact of its security policy changes on the lives of South Asian and Arab communities.

Endnotes

1. The term *South Asian* in the United States is defined as people tracing their origin to seven countries, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (Dave et al., 2000).
2. Based on the ACS 2007 data, there are approximately three million South Asians in the United States.
3. The socio-economic profile of the community is reflected in the fact that Indian immigrants have the highest average household income among all ethnoracial groups in the United States (ACS, 2007).
4. Historically, South Asians, along with other Asian immigrants, were not only seen as inferior races but also were barred from naturalization. The 1790 naturalization law had stipulated that whiteness was a prerequisite for naturalization, and the Supreme Court ruled in 1923 (*Bhagat Singh Thind v. United States*) that Asian Indians could not become U.S. citizens because they were not white (Lopez, 1997).

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An Agenda for Policy Change: Participatory Research and Data Collection by Southeast Asian Youth

Kohei Ishihara

Summary

In a policy-making world that is influenced by “model minority” ideology and racial aggregate data, Southeast Asian Americans have become one of the most underrepresented and misunderstood Asian American communities. Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong youth leaders in Providence, Rhode Island, protested this lack of representation by surveying 16 percent of the city’s Southeast Asian youth population. This data became the first of its kind to provide a quantitative and qualitative portrait of the lives and issues experienced by the city’s Southeast Asian residents. Youth leaders were trained in survey administration and data analysis in order to design and execute the survey. Survey results revealed the very intricate and oppressive realities faced by Southeast Asian youth, including lack of education, gang violence, racial profiling, inter-generational conflict, as well cultural conflict over ideas of gender and sexuality. Youth leaders used the data and a process of consensus decision making to develop a list of policy-change recommendations targeting Rhode Island decision makers and power brokers.

Introduction

In March 2002, the U.S. and Cambodian governments signed a repatriation agreement, allowing for the forced removal, or deportation, of Cambodian American refugees. This struck a central nerve within the Southeast Asian community in Providence, Rhode Island, setting off a wave of heightened civic engagement and political involvement. Those known as the “0.5 Generation” were affected the most by the new change in immigration law—they are the generation who were born in war-torn Southeast Asia, grew up in refugee camps, and became the first Cambodian teen-

agers in the United States. Many formed protective street gangs as teenagers and found themselves arrested, incarcerated, and later, placed into immigration detention facilities.

In Providence, an unlikely coalition formed among the “0.5 Generation,” high school teenagers, and gay and lesbian college students—all interested in protesting the repatriation agreement. The coalition evolved into the Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM), which coordinated street protests, direct actions, and education drives in the community. All over the nation, informal Southeast Asian youth groups as well as formal nonprofit organizations saw a surge in Southeast Asian youth leadership and activism protesting immigration law. Coined the “largest Cambodian American youth movement in U.S. history” by PrYSM cofounder Sarath Suong, Southeast Asian young people—many aided by nonprofit organizations—arranged protests and organizing campaigns in Philadelphia, PA; Seattle, WA; Lowell, MA; Providence, RI; Long Beach, Oakland, and San Francisco, CA; New York City, NY; and Madison, WI (Suong, 2011).

PrYSM evolved into a nonprofit organization in 2004 with programs designed to cultivate youth leadership and community organizing campaigns. However, campaigns, such as the one to increase translation and interpretation services within the Providence Public School District, came to a standstill as policy and decision makers asked youth leaders to present data. Data did not exist. Not one single Rhode Island institution—from the police department to the Department of Human Services—had ever made an attempt to collect data by ethnicity. To the campaign for translation and interpretation services, this meant that the public school district was not only unaware of the need for translation services but even lacked baseline data such as the number of Cambodian, Laotian, or Hmong students enrolled within schools or the district as a whole.

Providence is only a microcosm of the nation. The lack of data and knowledge about Southeast Asian communities has long obscured and thwarted attempts to address issues in education, civil rights, and racial justice. Hidden within racially aggregated data sets and also misunderstood because of popular ideology such as the model minority myth, Southeast Asian Americans remain one of the most misunderstood ethnic-racial groups in the United States.

PrYSM’s youth and young adult leaders quickly viewed the acquisition of data as one of the most important issues they could

work on in order to advance the overall interests of the Southeast Asian community. In 2006, the organization embarked on a major project: the 2006 Southeast Asian Youth Survey. The term *Southeast Asian* is used in its local Rhode Island context, specifically referring to the Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong refugee communities that resettled in the city after the Vietnam War.

Survey Methodology

PrYISM youth leaders received technical assistance and training from the Data Center¹ and took three months to design, edit, and produce the survey. The target population was defined as Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong youth between the ages of fourteen and twenty-eight living within the boundaries of the city of Providence. Youth leaders oversaw nine separate drafts before the survey was finalized. Questions were crafted to be unbiased and neutral in tone and language, so as to obtain sound and reliable results. A pilot was conducted among twenty youth before coming up with the final draft of the survey.

Another three-month period was used to collect survey data. PrYISM opted to use the “snowball” method of data collection and collected surveys from a wide variety of contexts—schools, door to door, public parks, and community events. All survey participants identified as Cambodian, Laotian, or Hmong; lived in the city of Providence; and were between the ages of fourteen and twenty-eight. The survey included more than sixty questions (see Table 1).

Each week PrYISM youth leaders met to calculate, track, and organize completed surveys, as well as to undergo additional trainings, such as role plays, in order to increase effectiveness and minimize bias. After three months of surveying, 365 individual surveys were collected—comprising more than 16 percent of all Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong youth living in Providence.

Table 1: Population of Southeast Asian Youth Surveyed in 2006

	Population Size in RI	Surveys Collected	Percentage of Total
Cambodian	1,479	239	16.2%
Laotian	442	77	17.4%
Hmong	318	59	18.6%
Total	2,239	375	16.7%

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 4, Detailed Tables PCT003011–PCT003025 and PCT003115–PCT003129

The survey was split into two parts—a confidential section and an anonymous section. The confidential section was administered first. Identifiable information, such as a person’s name or address, was not solicited. Next, respondents were instructed to fill out the anonymous section, which solicited more sensitive information such as experience with gangs, sexual health and identity, and domestic violence. The survey administrator would stand away from the survey taker, so that the survey taker had privacy when completing this section. Once it was completed, the survey respondent was instructed to seal his or her answers within a blank white envelope, provided to the respondent, and deposit it into a bag.

Information in the confidential and anonymous sections of the survey was linked only through randomly generated unique codes preprinted at the bottom of the survey. The confidential section of the survey was assigned a unique numeric code, and the anonymous section of the survey was assigned a unique letter code. These unique randomized codes were then linked through a database, allowing PrYSM to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of the survey respondents while maintaining the ability to cross-reference data from both sections.

Findings

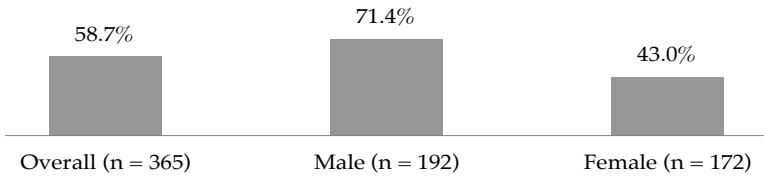
With answers to more than sixty questions that could be cross-tabulated, hundreds of data sets became available. After careful analysis, data revealed trends—from the expected to the alarming—around issues specific to gender, sexuality, and education, as well as experience with violence, gangs, and law enforcement. For example, data on education underscored the reasons why “Asian Pacific” males in Providence had the lowest graduation rate (54%) compared to all other racial-gender groupings (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2008).²

The survey revealed two important correlations associated with the problem of dropping out of high school. First, dropping out of school was closely linked with skipping or “bunking” from school. Of the respondents who dropped out of school, 64.5 percent reported that they skipped school at least a few times a week.³ Three out of every four Southeast Asian youth reported skipping school, and more than 66 percent of those who reported skipping school, did so more than once a week.

Data revealed that disengagement from the school system started early on and was linked to the issue of repeating grades or staying back a grade. Of those who skipped school, 40.8 percent also stayed back a grade, and 72.1 percent of dropouts were once held back in school.⁴ Among those who had not dropped out of school, only 25.8 percent had been held back a grade.

Another important discovery was qualitative and quantitative data on youth experience with law enforcement. The survey revealed distrust between law enforcement and youth. As seen in Figure 1, one out of every two Southeast Asian youth reported being wrongly accused of belonging to a gang. When broken down by gender, seven out of every ten Southeast Asian males reported being wrongly accused of being in a gang. These frequent accusations have led many Southeast Asian youth to feel that they are targets of racial profiling, as 32.1 percent of respondents said they were targeted by law enforcement because they are Asian.⁵

Figure 1. Percentages of Southeast Asian Youth Who Have Been Accused of Being in a Gang Even Though They Were Not

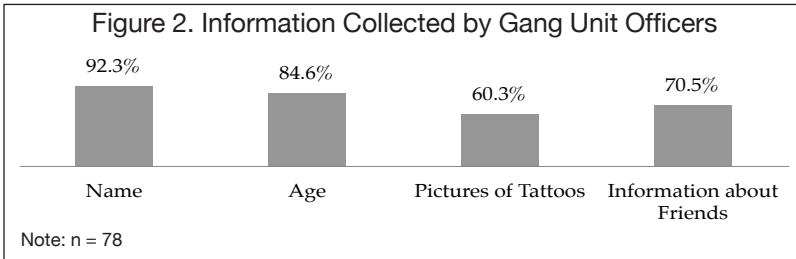


Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 4, Detailed Tables PCT003011–PCT003025 and PCT003115–PCT003129.

Another factor of distrust was the resentment caused by being detained by Gang Unit police officers for questions and information. Out of the 365 youth surveyed, 115, or 31.5 percent, had interacted with the Gang Unit. Specifically, almost one in two Southeast Asian males (or 45.8%) had interacted with Gang Unit officers.⁶ As a practice, Gang Unit officers conduct “field interviews” with youth and record information into a Gang Database. Figure 2 shows the most common types of information solicited during these interviews.

Anecdotal answers to questions on the survey revealed a disturbing presence of police misconduct—from the use of illegal detainment and unwarranted searches to using intimidation tactics in order to encourage youth to reveal an association with a gang.

The severity of the problem required further probing and investigation. Focus groups with gang-involved youth as well as interviews with Southeast Asian community leaders were conducted. Their perspectives consistently zeroed in on one important strategy often left out of discourse on violence prevention: the lack of trust between police and Southeast Asian youth is closely linked with the violation of youths' civil and political rights.



Although the survey presents the most comprehensive and intensive study of Southeast Asian youth in Rhode Island, it is important to note a few of its limitations. The “snowball” method of data collection ensured that PrYSM could gain access to a population that has been traditionally under the radar, with soaring rates of linguistic and cultural isolation.⁷ However, because PrYSM used individual connections to friends, family members, and popular places for young adults, the findings of the survey may not as accurately represent the attitudes of Southeast Asian youth as much as a more random and representative sample might.

Recommendations

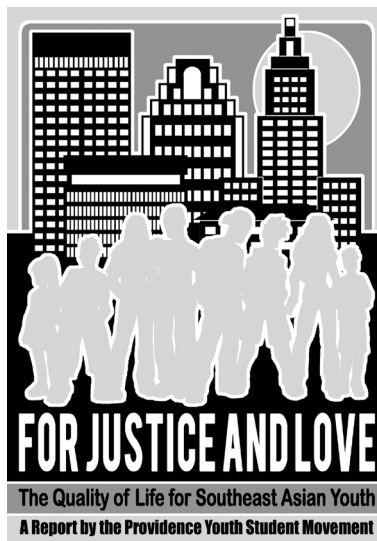
During early 2010, a new cadre of PrYSM youth leaders were trained in data analysis and asked to work in groups in order to develop specific policy recommendations to address community issues that appeared in the survey data. Youth used consensus decision making to prioritize and narrow down the list to twenty-seven separate policy recommendations. After a four-month process, the language of each recommendation was finalized and the document was titled “The Southeast Asian Youth Agenda for Policy Change.” What follows is a selection of policy-change recommendations:

1. State and municipal agencies and all publicly licensed health care institutions should responsibly collect and report data by ethnicity, not just race.

2. Establish a clear, fair definition and list of criteria for gang membership and involvement to inform the practices of the Providence Police Department and the Gang Unit.
3. If, according to the established definition of gang involvement, a youth has been “inactive” for a reasonable period of time, his or her information should be permanently removed from the database.
4. The city of Providence and state of Rhode Island should support and invest in a translation and interpretation infrastructure in order to provide equal access for the Southeast Asian community and other linguistically isolated communities.
5. Private philanthropy and foundations should start a funding stream and scholarship program for Southeast Asian students.
6. Offer Southeast Asian-language courses in public high schools and support the study of a student’s own language.

The end result of the 2006 Southeast Asian Youth Survey is the publication of a report called *For Justice and Love: the Quality of Life for Southeast Asian Youth*, which was published in-house by PrYSM (see Figure 3). The report incorporates several other elements of research, including results from four focus groups, in-

Figure 3.



formation from twenty-two interviews, and the use of secondary sources and research. *For Justice and Love* includes a copy of the actual survey and is available by contacting the organization.

Notes

1. The Data Center, based in Oakland CA, is a 30+-year-old organization providing research training and technical assistance to social justice groups seeking to conduct participatory research. For more information, see www.datacenter.org (accessed August 8, 2011).
2. According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, “Asian Pacific” males had a 54% graduation rate during school year 2005-6, the lowest graduation rate compared to all other racial categories.
3. The 2006 Southeast Asian Youth Survey: sec. A, ques. 8A, broken down by “Did you drop out of high school?” (sec. A, ques. 9).
4. The 2006 Southeast Asian Youth Survey: sec. A, ques. 6, broken down by “Did you drop of out high school?” (sec. A, ques. 9).
5. The 2006 Southeast Asian Youth Survey: sec. C, ques. 4 (and same broken down by gender (sec. B, ques. 3)
6. The 2006 Southeast Asian Youth Survey: sec. C, ques. 4
7. According to the 2000 U.S. Census (Sample File 4), 35 percent of Laotian households, 40 percent of Cambodian households, and 47 percent of Hmong households were linguistically isolated.

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Bamboo Ceilings in the Federal Service

Carson K. Eoyang

Summary

This article is an update to the 2006 *AAPI Nexus Journal* article about Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) senior executives in the federal government. Despite notable progress in recent years, AAPIs remain underrepresented in the Senior Executive Service (SES). Although recent administration initiatives have been beneficial for increasing diversity in the civil service, budget pressures and workforce constraints still hinder further advancements in executive diversity.

Introduction

In the 2006 publication of *AAPI Nexus Journal*, the Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) reported on the paucity of AAPIs in the federal government's SES (Wu and Eoyang, 2006). The article noted how, until the release of two major reports by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in 2001 and 2003, historical records on the presence of AAPIs in SES had been sporadic and not very well understood. The GAO is the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of the U.S. Congress. Responding to congressional concerns over the lack of diversity of the SES, the first GAO report examined gender and racial/ethnic diversity in the SES in both government-wide and select agency-specific studies during the ten-year period from 1990 to 1999 (GAO, 2001). Recognizing that more than half of the career SES members employed on October 1, 2000, would leave service by October 1, 2007, the second GAO report used computer simulations and the appointment and departure trends at the time to study how the SES profile might change by 2007 (GAO, 2003).

These two GAO reports provided a grim assessment of the past, present, and future state of AAPIs in the SES. In 1990, only fifty-one AAPIs, representing 0.8 percent of the total SES corps

were members. Among the twenty-four chief financial officer (CFO) agencies, eight agencies had no AAPIs in the career SES, including five cabinet-level departments. During the period from 1990 to 1999, there were almost 5,300 career SES vacancies, yet AAPIs filled only eighty-nine (1.7 percent) such positions. During this ten-year period, seven CFO agencies had 376 career SES opportunities, none of which were filled by AAPIs. As the article observed, “The GAO reports confirm that Asian Pacific Americans are severely under-represented at the SES and other senior levels of the Federal Government and that there are serious concerns about the lack of inclusion of Asian Pacific Americans at the pipeline levels and in succession planning” (Wu and Eoyang, 2006, 46). Although significant progress has been made during the last five years, career limitations for AAPIs—popularly referred to as bamboo ceilings—remain pervasive throughout federal service. As of June 2010, AAPIs comprised 3 percent of the SES, although they constituted 5.6 percent of the total career civil service and 3.6 percent of middle-management ranks grades GS13 through GS15 (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2010a, 2010b). As this is the government-wide average, some agencies do have a greater representation of AAPIs in SES positions, but a larger number of agencies fare worse. This compares with African Americans filling

Table 1: Senior Executive Service by Race, Executive Branch, Fiscal Years 1999–2010

	FISCAL YEAR											
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Native American	77	85	83	88	82	91	94	96	95	95	98	108
Asian or Pacific Islander	127	125	119	130	147	152	156	165	181	187	220	243
Black	602	632	577	592	604	575	587	589	598	632	694	762
Hispanic	203	218	188	218	227	235	249	270	278	283	292	301
White	6,067	6,050	5,901	5,991	5,999	6,014	6,019	6,094	6,310	6,530	6,386	6,477
Unspecified		—	—	—	—	—	—	3	11	9	22	14
All	7,082	7,114	6,874	7,027	7,070	7,067	7,107	7,217	7,473	7,736	7,712	7,905

Source: U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Fiscal Years 1999–2010. FY2010 and later pulled from the OPM Enterprise Human Resources Integration Statistical Data Mart, and FY2009 and earlier pulled from the OPM Central Personnel Data File.

9.4 percent of the SES while comprising 17.7 percent of the federal workforce and Hispanic Americans filling 3.8 percent of the SES while comprising 8 percent of the federal workforce. AAPIs equaled or exceeded their relevant civilian labor-force representation in twelve of eighteen executive departments (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2010b). Moreover, AAPIs equaled or exceeded their relevant civilian labor-force representation in thirteen of twenty-four independent agencies (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2010b). In 2010, 243 AAPIs were members of the career SES (see Table 1).

Congressional Testimony

Subsequently, on April 3, 2008, AAGEN testified before a joint hearing in Congress in support of the SES Diversity Assurance Act. At that time, AAGEN stated:

There is a wide disparity in the degree of workforce diversity across the Federal Government with little concrete evidence on why some agencies have consistently been unrepresentative of the nation as a whole, while others have made measured, if only partial progress, during the same time frame. It is important that the executive branch and the Congress understand the various factors that promote and inhibit federal workforce diversity, such as minority recruitment, building talent pipelines, succession planning, management development and most importantly, sustained commitment of agency senior leaders to diversity.

In dynamic, complex, and sometimes turbulent global markets, diversity in the executive ranks of Corporate America is an imperative for economic and financial success. This imperative is even more critical for our government, if we are to serve effectively our increasingly pluralistic society, as well as to compete and collaborate in multiple international environments. For example, our diplomatic and intelligence communities have experienced significant shortfalls in the numbers of their professionals with the necessary linguistic and cultural literacy. These skills are essential to communicating with and influencing our allies, as well as enhancing our understanding of the intentions and actions of our adversaries. Similarly our various law enforcement agencies at all levels and across the country must begin to mirror our nation's diversity, if they are to maintain domestic peace and to equitably enforce our laws within and across our social strata. Unfortunately our diplomatic corps,

the intelligence and the law enforcement communities are far from reaching the diversity levels that their missions require, especially in their senior executive ranks (Eoyang, 2008).

Diversity Recommendations

As proposed in the 2006 *AAPI Nexus Journal* article, the recommendations made by the GAO in 2003 are even more imperative during these turbulent times (GAO, 2003). Namely, the administration must ensure:

1. Recruitment directed at all underrepresented groups;
2. Inclusion of diversity as a priority in workforce and executive succession plans;
3. Monitoring of existing workforce and selection processes for hiring and promotions; and
4. Holding senior officials and executives accountable for workforce diversity in their respective agencies.

Even more recently, the White House issued a presidential Executive Order establishing a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote diversity and inclusion in the federal workforce. The Executive Order recognizes that,

To realize more fully the goal of utilizing the talents of all segments of society, the Federal Government must continue to challenge itself to enhance its ability to recruit, hire, promote and retain a more diverse workforce. Further, the Federal Government must create a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility and fairness to enable individuals to participate to their full potential.

Wherever possible, the Federal Government must also seek to consolidate compliance efforts established through related mandates or overlapping statutory mandates, directions from Executive Orders, and regulatory requirements. By this order, I am directing Executive departments and agencies to develop and implement a more comprehensive, strategic focus on diversity and inclusion as a key component of their human resource strategies. This approach should include a continuing effort to identify and adopt best practices, implemented in an integrated manner, to promote diversity and remove barriers to equal employment opportunity, consistent with merit system principles and applicable law (White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2011).

Challenges to Diversity

Notwithstanding the notable improvements in AAPI diversity at senior levels of government, especially the historic concurrent appointments of Secretary Eric Shinseki at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Secretary Gary Locke at the Department of Commerce, and Secretary Steven Chu at the Department of Energy, now is not the time for complacency. It is imperative that we promote a civil service that accurately reflects the diversity of American society during the twenty-first century. In the face of our nation's economic fragility, the contentious political climate at federal and state levels, and a general public dissatisfaction with the government, it will be particularly challenging to maintain, let alone increase, the commitment to workforce diversity that we have struggled so long to develop. With inevitable cuts in the federal budget and concomitant workforce downsizing, hiring and promotion opportunities will be greatly diminished, which will only reinforce the continuation of remaining bamboo ceilings and hinder efforts to foster greater diversity in the SES.

If we succumb to the exigencies of immediate economic and budgetary pressures and sacrifice the development of growing a diverse workforce necessary for success in our increasingly global environment and growing pluralistic society, we will fail to attract future generations of talented leaders and executives. Future generations with the skill, talent, and passion to lead others will be discouraged from pursuing careers in public agencies that appear exclusive and discriminatory. Without sufficient numbers of diverse SES role models in all agencies, the best and brightest from all sectors of our society will migrate to those employers who place no artificial limitations on how far they may advance. Our nation has finally broken the color barrier on the highest public office in the land; we must not fall short in creating a government that reflects all of America.

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Policy Recommendations to Reduce Toxic Exposures for Nail Salon Workers

Julia Liou, Catherine A. Porter, and Thu Quach

Summary

The nail salon sector is growing rapidly. Nail salon workers are predominantly Vietnamese immigrant women who are exposed to numerous harmful chemicals in nail care products. The situation is exacerbated by limited safety information, language barriers to information, and lack of government oversight. This brief discusses the health and safety issues faced by workers at the nexus of environmental and worker justice and the policy recommendations by which to address these issues from a public health and regulatory perspective. Although these policy recommendations pertain to California where the sector is largest, they also have far-reaching implications at the national level.

Background

About the Nail Salon Worker Community

In recent decades, the nail salon industry has experienced significant growth across the United States in response to high consumer demand for fashionable nails. Currently, more than fifty-seven thousand beauty salons employ nearly 376,000 nail technicians in the United States (*Nails Magazine*, 2010). In California alone, there are 114,000 licensed nail technicians (California Senate Office of Research, 2008). Many workers are young women of child-bearing age with Vietnamese immigrants composing an estimated two-thirds of the workforce (Federman, Harrington, and Krynski, 2006; *Nails Magazine*, 2010). Although many are not fluent in English, health and safety information often contains highly technical language that commonly appears only in English.

Workplace Hazards and Health Effects: An Intersection of Environmental and Worker Justice

Nail care products contain, in varying amounts, many toxic and potentially hazardous ingredients (Brown, 1987). In contrast to retail products, manufacturers of professional nail products are not required to list ingredients on the product label. Recent studies show that workers are exposed to concerning levels of chemicals in nail salons (Hines et al., 2009; Kwapniewski et al., 2008; Quach et al., 2011). Studies have shown that these workers experience significant health problems including acute health symptoms (e.g., skin irritations, headaches, and respiratory problems) (Quach et al., 2008, 2011; Roelofs et al., 2008), neurocognitive conditions (LoSasso, Rapport, and Axelrod, 2001; LoSasso et al., 2002), and reproductive problems (John, Savitz, and Shy, 1994).

The health and safety issues that nail salon workers face daily lay at the unique intersection of environmental and worker justice. Disproportionately exposed to toxic chemicals compared to the general population, nail salon workers put their health and safety at risk. Due to economic reasons, including limited choices in the job market, along with their immigrant status, many Vietnamese workers feel they must accept these workplace conditions. Given regulatory inadequacies, institutional power inequalities, and socioeconomic barriers to health care access and utilization, this limited English-speaking immigrant population is not protected from workplace hazards and lacks the social, economic, and political power and resources to effectively advocate for safer workplace conditions and a healthy life.

A Multifaceted Approach to Policy Change

The California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative was formed in 2005 out of concern for the health, safety, and rights of nail salon and cosmetology workers and owners. Composed of public health, reproductive, and environmental justice advocates; salon workers and owners; and allies in government agencies, the collaborative employs a multifaceted approach utilizing outreach and community capacity-building, research, and policy strategies.

Salon workers and owners are at the center of the collaborative's work. The collaborative convenes statewide quarterly worker and owner meetings to not only provide a forum by which community concerns and needs can be voiced but also to obtain guidance

and input from this community. During these meetings and community forums, nail salon community members help to identify policy focus areas, vet policy goals and recommendations, and receive leadership skills development and policy advocacy opportunities to exercise their civil rights to safer work conditions.

Partnering with local policy makers to develop legislation and implement programs is a critical component of the collaborative's work. In addition, the collaborative engages regulatory and other governmental agencies; for instance, the collaborative is working with the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), which enforces California's workplace health and safety laws and regulations, to develop the first-ever nail salon best-practices guide by Cal/OSHA with an emphasis on avoiding chemical exposures.

Analysis

The California Safe Cosmetics Act

In 2005, California passed the California Safe Cosmetics Act, which requires manufacturers to disclose to the California Department of Public Health (DPH) any ingredient known to cause cancer or reproductive harm, including ingredients that are in fragrances, an ingredient category that is exempted from federal labeling law. The law also authorizes (but does not require) the DPH to investigate any of the products reported by cosmetic manufacturers that contain chemicals known to cause cancer or adverse reproductive health. To date, the act has been implemented. However, due to recalcitrant companies that fail to comply and due to limited funding, along with lack of coordination across departments and partnering agencies to enforce the law, data on ingredients have not yet been made public.

Legal Prohibitions and Regulatory Gaps Contributing to Environmental and Worker Injustices

Chemicals in cosmetic products are largely unregulated in the United States. Although the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates cosmetic manufacturers, they have no authority to require manufacturers to conduct premarket testing, provide data for safety testing, or even disclose product ingredients. Of the ten thousand chemicals used in personal care products, including nail products, nearly 90 percent have not been assessed for safety

(Environmental Working Group, 2005). The FDA has some authority to eliminate “deleterious” or harmful substances from cosmetic products but has rarely exercised that authority. Even though the link to chronic and severe acute harm of many chemicals in nail salon products is widely recognized, product manufacturers are slow to conduct research to find and utilize safer alternatives. Some product manufacturers are transitioning away from some of the most harmful chemicals; for example, nail products without dibutyl phthalate, formaldehyde, and toluene (known as the “Toxic Trio”) are available. However, some of those companies that are voluntarily developing safer alternative products tend to be at a competitive disadvantage due to the monetary outlay for research and development, which can make their products more expensive for the consumer.

In 2008, the California legislature passed a law calling for the development of a systematic approach to controlling chemicals and accelerating the quest for safer products, one leg of the California Environmental Protection Agency’s (Cal/EPA’s) “Green Chemistry Initiative” (California Health and Safety Code, 2008; California Environmental Protection Agency, 2007). The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) within Cal/EPA is charged with developing regulations to implement this law. Unfortunately, the process has been slow moving, and it is unclear when meaningful regulations will finally be adopted and implemented.

Programs that Encourage Nail Salons to Use Less Toxic Products

In 2010, San Francisco, California, passed the Healthy Nail Salon Recognition Ordinance to establish a voluntary program to recognize salons that do not use nail polish containing any of the “Toxic Trio,” among others. This ordinance applies a “carrot” approach to incentivize change instead of a “stick” approach that penalizes for wrongdoing. Lessons learned from this ordinance will inform future efforts to replicate similar programs in other localities in the state.

Currently, the California legislature is considering Assembly Bill 913, which would improve DTSC’s capacity to provide technical and other support to local Green Business Programs in California (Feuer, 2011). The legislation also calls for the development and implementation of stringent and consistent standards that are

specific to certain industries such as nail salons, which is significant given that there are no statewide or national green standards for the nail salon industry. Some nail salon owners have voiced a desire to become a “green” salon, which generally denotes a business, practice, or product that has greatly reduced its negative impact on energy use and the environment. However, they are concerned about the cost, and they expressed the need for more information on safer and greener products and practices, as well as technical assistance. In response, the collaborative has been working with DTSC to draft a healthy / green nail salon standard.

Findings

Nail salon workers face a complexity of issues, including toxic compounds in products they use. Policy interventions that would strengthen and support governmental oversight and establish laws and programs calling for safer nail products and salons to address the environmental and worker injustices faced by the nail salon community are long overdue. Keeping in mind the truism “where California goes, so goes the nation,” the collaborative believes that lessons learned from California policy making and movements such as that of the nail salon community can be instructive to federal efforts and establish the foundation by which nail salon workers’ rights to safer and healthier workplaces can be realized.

Three findings, based on the collaborative’s work with the nail salon sector in California given the context of existing laws and governmental agency oversight, are:

Finding 1: Government agencies often are stymied in accomplishing their legislative mandates by insufficient funding or limited authority;

Finding 2: Laws that prohibit harmful chemicals and support safer alternative products are key to healthier nail salons but may be slow in coming; and

Finding 3: Programs relying on recognition (i.e., the carrot approach) can lead to healthier nail salons in the near term and may be better received by nail salon workers and owners.

Recommendations

Based on these three findings, the collaborative recommends the following policy interventions and programs:

- Ensure proper (timely) implementation and expansion of California's Safe Cosmetics Act through more sustained funding (Finding 1).
- Require that DPH investigate whether reported products containing chemicals that cause cancer or reproductive harm pose hazards to workers (Finding 1).
- Ban the most harmful chemicals in nail products, including toluene, dibutyl phthalate, and formaldehyde (the "Toxic Trio") (Finding 2).
- Pass federal legislation such as the federal Safe Cosmetics Act that would give the FDA authority to require premarket safety assessments and full product ingredients lists on labels and Web sites (including professional products) and to prohibit chemicals that cause chronic, serious, and negative health outcomes (Finding 2).
- Replicate legislation and programs in other localities in California and elsewhere similar to the San Francisco Healthy Nail Salon Recognition Program Ordinance (Finding 3).
- Establish statewide green business standards and programs for the nail salon industry with sufficient funding to provide technical support and consumer education by passing California Assembly Bill 913 (Feuer, 2011) (Finding 3).

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

aapi nexus

Challenges in Analyzing and Tracking Asian American Pacific Islander Economic Conditions

Paul Ong

“It’s the economy, stupid,” a political battle cry that gained currency during William Jefferson Clinton’s presidential 1992 campaign against George H. W. Bush, has even greater value today. During good times, the nation takes the economy for granted, allowing advocates, pundits, and scholars to focus on other societal issues. But as the United States enters the fifth year of sustained high unemployment, public discourse has turned to job creation and a heated debate about the government’s role. Some conflicts center around class and race—class in terms of whether to impose higher taxes on the wealthy and whether to maintain the safety net for the poor, and race in terms of the disproportionate burden on blacks and Latinos. The rhetoric is also tinged by nativism driven by fears of immigrant competition for scarce opportunities.

In this critical national dialogue, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) have been conspicuously absent, lacking attention from many of those in power and an effective cohesive grassroots voice. This is due to four factors: relatively small population size, overall economic status, within-group disparities, and paucity of timely data. Yes, as mentioned earlier in the message from the editors, the AAPI population has grown dramatically throughout the last few decades, going from about 7.3 million and 2.9 percent of the total population in 1990 to 18.2 million (including those who are part Asian or part Pacific Islander) and 5.9 percent in 2010. This phenomenal growth has potentially made them the next political “sleeping giant,” but this population nonetheless is still relatively small compared with other racial groups (Ong, De La Cruz-Viesca, and Nakanishi, 2008). AAPI influence in the political arena is additionally hampered by their significant number of noncitizens and nonvoters (Ong and Scott, 2009). Moreover, their economic problems have received scant attention because of the perceived relative success,

as indicated by such indicators as family income. For example, in 2009, when income was still depressed, the national Asian American median was \$78,529, more than 28 percent higher than that for non-Hispanic whites.¹ Regardless of the fact that AAPIs face a higher cost of living because of their disproportionate overconcentration in large metropolitan areas and their lower per capita income because of large families, public perception is dominated by the simplistic statistics of economic success, and perceptions shape public policy to the detriment of AAPIs. What activists and scholars have long argued is that averages hide a more complex and troubling reality anchored in the enormous ethnic diversity that creates an economic heterogeneity unmatched by any other racial group. AAPI ethnic subgroups are arrayed from the bottom to top end of the economic ladder, with some experiencing poverty at rates unrivaled by others (Mar, 2005). The public and elected officials, however, are blind to this underlying truth, leading to a “benign neglect” based on an ignorance of the extreme financial hardships faced by many AAPIs. Finally, the lack of timely and detailed data makes analyzing and tracking the economic status exceedingly difficult. In most governmental data systems, AAPIs are too small of a subsample to allow for accurate and immediate reporting, particularly by ethnicity and class (see, e.g., Ong and Patraporn, 2006). Taken together, these four factors have contributed to the glaring invisibility of AAPIs in today’s policy arena.

The consequence of the lack of attention is that governmental programs often miss the mark in addressing the economic challenges that face AAPIs, problems shaped by unique social, cultural, and linguistic structures and forces. One example is grounded in the labor market. The odds of being unemployed has historically been lower for Asian Americans than others because of the former’s higher educational achievements and the ethnic economy for those with less skills. Findings from existing analytical studies show that not all is rosy. College-educated Asian Americans experience higher unemployment rates than their non-Hispanic white counterparts, and those employed in the enclave experience extremely low wages (Austin, 2010; Miller and Houston, 2003). In the current labor-market downturn, another troubling phenomenon has materialized. Among those out of work, Asian Americans have the highest rate of long-term unemployment (Semuels, 2010). During the first half of 2011, 51 percent of unemployed Asians were without work for at least twenty-seven weeks, a rate higher than those for whites, blacks, and

Latinos. The Department of Labor is aware of this problem but is struggling to understand the causes, and limited knowledge hinders the formulation of an effective intervention.²

The five briefs in this section provide more detailed discussions of the economic status of AAPIs, along with policy and data-related recommendations. Collectively, they examine five important topics: employment, self-employment, access to capital and community economic development, wealth accumulation, and the poor. Work is the primary source of income for the vast majority of American households, and this is true for AAPIs. Marlene Kim in “Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: Employment Issues in the United States” examines labor-market outcomes and employment discrimination. She finds evidence of unequal and unfair treatment of AAPI workers. Self-employment is an alternative to paid work, and much has been made about AAPI entrepreneurship and self-employment, a topic examined by Diem Linda Tran and OiYan A. Poon in “The State of Asian American Businesses.” The more than 1.8 million AAPI-owned businesses (as of 2007) have contributed to economic growth, with their ranks growing twice as fast as all businesses. Their prominence among high-tech startups has been particularly noted and celebrated (Saxenian, 1999; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2011). Despite these successes, it is important to note that self-employment is not higher than it is for non-Hispanic whites, although there are ethnic groups with very high rates. Asian American businesses tend to be small and concentrated in less desirable niches and have less access to government contracts. One reason for this is limited capital access. Tarry Hum in “The Changing Landscape of Asian Entrepreneurship, Minority Banks, and Community Development” examines one source of financing: ethnic-owned banks. Although highly visible, these banks have a limited capacity to contribute significantly to community economic development, particularly to small businesses. She focuses on the financial institutions in New York City, but many of the findings are relevant to other regions. Although owning a business is an asset, much of the wealth held by AAPIs takes the form of home ownership, a point noted in “Disaggregation Matters: Asian Americans and Wealth Data” by Melany De La Cruz-Viesca. The data and existing analyses show that Asian Americans were able to close the wealth gap with non-Hispanic whites during the first few years of the twenty-first century, but much of the progress was built on a fragile founda-

tion, disproportionately tied up in homes located in metropolitan markets that experienced the extremes of “irrational exuberance.” With the collapse of housing prices after 2007 and the subsequent foreclosure crisis, the wealth position of Asian Americans has deteriorated much faster than non-Hispanic whites, reopening the gap in asset holding (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011). Wealth is not even an issue for those on the bottom because they tend not to have any assets. Much of the debate around the safety net centers on support for the poor, particularly those who fall below the federal poverty line. Howard Shih examines this segment of the Asian American population in “Working but Poor in New York City.” As the title indicates, one of the unique aspect of Asian Americans is the relatively high proportion of poor households still attached to the economy through work, but employment that pays too little to lift many above poverty. Although the data are specific to just one region, the issue of the working poor among AAPIs is national in scope.

Despite the diversity of topics, the five briefs share some common themes in terms of the analytical challenges that face AAPIs. First, widely held perceptions of AAPI economic success are often wrong or at least misleading. Several echo the previously mentioned disparate outcomes among ethnic groups, and they point to a bipolar distribution, with AAPIs being overrepresented in the top and bottom ends. Second, outcomes are shaped by demographic characteristics, particularly those associated with immigrants. Because the causal factors differ from those affecting the general populations, interventions need to acknowledge and overcome pervasive cultural and linguistic barriers. Third, all authors point to the need for more and timely data, which would require strategies such as oversampling, inclusion of ethnic identifiers in surveys, tapping administrative records, and better data access. One of the glaring data gaps is for Pacific Islanders, which means that they are not analyzed or are only superficially analyzed, including the analyses in this special issue of *AAPINexus Journal*. The five briefs are a good start to developing the knowledge base needed to shape an informed economic agenda and build sustainable communities for AAPIs, but we still have a long way to go.

Notes

1. Population and income data is taken from the Decennial Census and American Community Survey U.S. Bureau of the Census American

FactFinder Web site, <http://factfinder.census.gov> (accessed August 16, 2011).

2. Based on conversations and e-mail exchanges with Dr. William Spriggs, Assistant Secretary for Policy, U.S. Department of Labor, from March to June 2011.

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Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: Employment Issues in the United States

Marlene Kim

Summary

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in the United States face problems of discrimination, the glass ceiling, and very high long-term unemployment rates. As a diverse population, although some Asian Americans are more successful than average, others, like those from Southeast Asia and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPIs), work in low-paying jobs and suffer from high poverty rates, high unemployment rates, and low earnings. Collecting more detailed and additional data from employers, oversampling AAPIs in current data sets, making administrative data available to researchers, providing more resources for research on AAPIs, and enforcing nondiscrimination laws and affirmative action mandates would assist this population.

Introduction

Many people in the United States believe that Asian Americans are successful regarding their employment and thus are not in need of any type of assistance. However, this is a myth. Although it appears that Asian Americans fare well in terms of their employment and earnings, this is not true for many AAPIs. The following section examines these groups and shows that low earnings, working in low-paid jobs, and high unemployment and poverty rates continue to plague some AAPIs. In addition, as the subsequent section argues, AAPIs encounter employment discrimination in earnings and promotions. Unfortunately, lack of data prevents a complete understanding of AAPIs' employment barriers and needs. This paper concludes with a discussion of these problems, their remedies, and other public policies that would help AAPIs and their communities.

Deceiving Averages for a Heterogeneous Population

Although, on average, Asian Americans have higher earnings and lower unemployment rates than other workers in the United States, these measures are deceiving because the population of AAPIs is quite heterogeneous. Some Asian Americans from East Asia, such as those from Japan and India, are generally more prosperous, while others, such as NHPIs and those from Southeast Asia, do quite poorly in terms of their jobs and earnings (see Mar, 2005; Kim and Mar, 2007). Consequently, these latter workers have very high poverty and unemployment rates.

Cambodians, Hmongs, and Lao are among the most disadvantaged. As Table 1 shows, family and income per person is very low for Cambodians and Hmongs: income per person is \$11,000 for Hmongs compared to \$32,000 for whites and \$30,000 for all AAPIs. The result is high poverty rates. One-quarter of Hmong families are poor, including one-third of Hmong children. Laotians¹ also

Table 1. Income, Poverty, and Unemployment
by Race and Ancestry

	Family Income Median Per Person		Poverty Rates				Unemploy- ment Rate
			Families All	Families with Children	People All	Children Only	
Non-Hispanic white	69,636	31,735	6.3	10.10	9.50	11.2	6.2
Asians, all	79,145	30,055	8.1	9.60	10.80	11.7	5.9
Chinese	81,323	32,173	9.5	9.90	12.20	10.9	5.5
Japanese	88,033	38,920	3.5	5.00	8.20	7.4	3.5
Korean	64,142	28,004	11.4	12.30	14.10	13.1	5.9
Asian Indian	98,509	37,686	4.9	5.60	7.80	7.3	5.6
Filipino	85,648	29,001	4.0	5.00	5.60	5.4	5.9
Vietnamese	59,129	22,263	12.1	14.00	13.80	16.8	6.6
Cambodian	49,226	16,913	13.9	21.30	18.60	25.5	9.6
Hmong	46,918	11,030	24.7	27.60	26.80	33.2	11.5
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	60,515	20,286	12.9	16.70	15.60	20.3	9.9

Source: Author's calculations from the American Community Survey, 2007–09.

Note: All data are for non-Hispanics and for those of only one race or ancestry. The unemployment rate is calculated as the percent of the civilian labor force.

Table 2. Selected Industries for Foreign-Born Workers by Ancestry

	Finance, Insurance/ Real Estate	Arts/Entertain- ment Recreation/ Accommodation	Construc- tion	Manufac- turing	Military	Professional/ Scientific Management	Transportation/ Warehousing
Non-Hispanic White							
men	6.91	5.78	7.82	23.74	0.53	12.14	5.19
women	11.46	5.81	1.30	14.26	0.13	11.63	2.42
Asians, all							
men	5.99	8.57	2.63	26.4	0.84	13.73	5.34
women	9.52	7.68	0.60	21.29	0.12	9.25	3.04
Chinese							
men	6.99	14.09	2.11	24.38	0.17	13.43	4.71
women	10.99	8.44	0.57	22.77	0.05	11.93	3.48
Japanese							
men	7.95	10.65	1.61	26.60	0.33	12.02	4.25
women	9.56	10.33	0.63	15.16	0.00	16.52	5.98
Korean							
men	6.75	6.37	3.88	17.65	1.03	11.36	5.02
women	8.43	9.75	0.74	17.23	0.17	8.56	4.22
Asian Indian							
men	6.56	4.73	2.01	21.52	0.17	23.48	4.43
women	10.58	4.49	0.60	15.42	0.10	13.50	2.62
Filipino							
men	6.45	7.75	3.13	19.58	3.32	9.89	9.23
women	9.86	7.41	0.62	12.60	0.24	6.15	2.76
Vietnamese							
men	3.07	6.30	3.00	46.15	0.35	7.41	3.34
women	6.63	5.83	0.70	40.19	0.01	6.71	2.06
Cambodian, Hmong, Lao							
men	1.90	5.74	2.59	56.90	0.36	4.83	3.56
women	5.50	6.58	0.23	52.72	0.10	4.18	1.73
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander							
men	4.13	11.84	8.50	19.73	2.56	9.01	13.73
women	10.13	16.19	0.34	14.69	0.46	7.27	3.35

Source: Kim and Mar, 2007, Tables 7.8a–7.8d. Calculated from U.S. Census 2000 data, IPUMS, 5% sample.

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Table 3: Hourly Earnings by Ancestry, Race, and Nativity

	U.S.-Born		Foreign-Born	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Non-Hispanic White	\$21.88	\$15.78	\$26.4	\$17.55
Asians, all	23.14	18.86	22.92	17.22
Chinese	27.42	22.43	23.97	18.5
Japanese	24.67	19.64	35.83	16.85
Korean	23.58	20.43	21.97	15.9
Asian Indian	24.95	18.84	28.26	20.05
Filipino	19.77	16.84	19.08	17.67
Vietnamese	19.26	15.02	17.73	13.96
Cambodian, Hmong, Lao	N/A	N/A	14.18	11.13
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	17.41	14.24	15.67	13.26

Note: Data are for full-time year-round workers.

Source: Kim and Mar, 2007, Tables 7.8a–7.8d. Calculated from U.S. Census 2000 data, IPUMS, 5% sample.

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face high poverty rates and low income levels (Kim and Mar, 2007) so that among Cambodians, Hmongs and Lao, one-third are poor and more than half are near-poor (living below 200% of the poverty level; Kim and Mar, 2007). Unemployment rates are very high among these populations—at 10 percent or greater (see also Rho et al., 2011; Kim and Mar, 2007).

When employed, this population is almost entirely absent from professional, technical, scientific, and managerial jobs. Instead, they work in lower-paying production and manufacturing jobs (see Table 2). Consequently, their hourly and annual earnings are very low—\$14.18 per hour for men and \$11.13 for women (in comparison, foreign-born white men earn \$26.40; Asian men, \$22.92; white women, \$17.55; and Asian women, \$17.22 per hour) (see Table 3; see also Mar, 2005).

NHPIs also suffer from relatively low family incomes and income per person (income per person is approximately \$20,000;

Table 4: Selected Industries for U.S.-born Workers by Ancestry

	Finance, Insurance/ Real Estate	Arts/Entertain- ment Recreation/ Accommodation	Construc- tion	Manufac- turing	Military	Professional/ Scientific Management	Transportation/ Warehousing
Non-Hispanic White							
men	5.83	3.44	9.24	23.67	1.32	8.23	6.38
women	11.34	4.67	1.68	12.99	0.22	8.98	2.61
Asians, all							
men	8.21	5.98	4.76	14.96	2.09	12.06	6.72
women	12.31	5.82	1.43	9.00	0.53	12.17	3.57
Chinese							
men	10.55	4.32	2.21	15.06	0.85	14.26	6.41
women	14.37	3.46	1.41	8.91	0.21	15.04	3.13
Japanese							
men	7.31	5.51	5.21	14.31	1.15	10.87	6.08
women	11.85	5.14	1.52	7.89	0.56	11.06	3.62
Korean							
men	11.00	5.03	4.44	13.75	3.88	15.81	3.69
women	10.60	5.62	1.93	8.56	0.47	17.82	0.92
Asian Indian							
men	12.09	4.61	2.41	19.95	0.78	15.72	4.09
women	10.63	4.02	0.40	11.37	0.00	15.61	0.78
Filipino							
men	7.00	8.16	4.43	15.62	3.84	11.77	7.35
women	12.37	6.70	1.49	9.96	0.67	11.94	3.49
Vietnamese							
men	7.42	7.50	6.32	27.76	0.67	13.71	3.45
women	9.22	8.13	0.93	22.36	0.00	7.08	4.78
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander							
men	5.58	7.39	9.87	13.40	3.89	9.07	9.51
women	11.11	10.11	1.46	8.26	1.02	8.44	5.50

Source: Kim and Mar, 2007, Tables 7.8a–7.8d. Calculated from U.S. Census 2000 data, IPUMS, 5% sample.

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see Table 1). Consequently, one-fifth of these children are poor and two-fifths of NHPI families are near-poor (see Table 1 and Kim and Mar, 2007). NHPI workers also have very high unemployment rates—of 10 percent (see Table 1). When employed, they, too, are mostly absent from higher-paying professional, managerial, scien-

tific, and technical jobs, instead working in lower-paying industries such as in entertainment, manufacturing, and construction (see Tables 2 and 4). The result is relatively low earnings among these workers (see Table 3; see also Mar, 2005).

Vietnamese Americans also have relatively low incomes per person (\$22,000) and high poverty rates—17 percent of children are poor and more than one-third of Vietnamese families are near poverty (see Table 1, Kim and Mar, 2007). Although U.S.-born Vietnamese men have been able to attain higher-paying jobs working with computers and math, all Vietnamese—foreign- and U.S.-born, men and women—are overrepresented in production, manufacturing, and office support jobs, leading to low earnings among the Vietnamese (see Tables 2–4; see also Mar, 2005). Rho and colleagues (2011), using more recent data, find similar patterns by ancestry regarding earnings.

Moreover, not all measures indicate that Asian Americans are successful in employment. Poverty rates among AAPIs are higher than that of whites. The most recent data show poverty rates of 12.5 percent compared to 9.4 percent for non-Hispanic whites (U.S. Census, 2010). Although their unemployment rates are now currently lower than average (in June 2011 the AAPI unemployment rate was 6.8% compared to 8.1% for white workers²), their long-term unemployment rate is higher. In 2010, among workers who were unemployed, AAPIs had among the highest long-term unemployment rates: half were unemployed for longer than half a year (Kim, 2011).

Employment Discrimination

Research suggests that AAPIs experience employment discrimination because of their race. Numerous studies find that Asians earn less than white Americans who are similar in terms of their education level, work experience, geographical distribution, and other characteristics (Mar, 2005; see Kim and Mar, 2007, for a summary of these). Foreign-born Asians are more likely to face discrimination and greater wage penalties because of their race than are the native-born. Scholars also are more likely to find evidence of discrimination against men more than against women. In addition, the existence of discrimination varies by ancestral group, with studies finding discrimination more likely among the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and NHPIs than among those from East

Asia and India. Finally, much evidence shows discrimination “at the top”—among workers with the highest levels of education³ (Duleep and Sanders, 1992; Sakamoto and Furuichi, 2002; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1988; Yamane, 2002).

A Glass Ceiling

Research also indicates the existence of a glass ceiling for Asian Americans. Although Asians are able to obtain professional occupations because of their higher education levels, they are less likely than white Americans to advance to management positions, even after their age, education levels, nativity status, and other characteristics that can affect their advancement are accounted for (see Kim and Mar, 2007; Mar, 2005; Ong, 2000; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1992).

Why are Asians unable to advance? Numerous studies cite the presence of subtle biases. Implicit bias studies indicate that most people perceive Asians as foreign, as two-thirds of this population are indeed immigrants. But this perception can cause problems in career advancement. Those who are promoted into higher management are trusted and groomed by their predecessors. These tend to be workers who are similar in socioeconomic backgrounds—by race, gender, class, religion, and educational upbringing (Kim, 2010). Thus if Asians are perceived as foreign and outsiders, as most are, they are less likely to be promoted. In addition, although Asians are seen as good workers and technically proficient, they are perceived as followers rather than good leaders and thus are not considered to be management material (Ong and Hee, 1993; Takaki, 1989; Tang, 1997; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1992; Woo, 2000).

Data Availability

The data available to study employment issues severely restrict the types of inquiries one can make about AAPIs. The largest data set is the decennial census. These data allow analysis of earnings, income, occupation, poverty, and employment by ancestral group, gender, and nativity, all of which are important factors in employment and economic outcomes. But these data are updated only every ten years, and obviously, more frequent updates are needed. In addition, there is limited data on welfare participation, assets, and wealth, and there is no information on work history.

The Current Population Survey (CPS) provides alternative data because it is issued every year and contains detailed information on employment, unemployment, welfare participation, work hours, and earnings. But the sample size is small for AAPIs, so researchers who have used this survey have had to combine several years of data in order to obtain an adequate sample size. In addition, information on wealth is very limited, and ancestral origin is not collected for AAPIs. This is problematic because employment and economic outcomes vary tremendously by ancestral origin.

The American Community Survey (ACS) contains ancestral information and some labor force data, but this data set has limited information on wealth and welfare participation. Its labor-market indicators are not as extensive as the CPS. The number of weeks of continuous unemployment, job search methods, and reasons for leaving a job, being part-time employed, or being without work or not looking for work are omitted. In addition, to analyze small subsets of AAPIs, such as NHPIs, several years of data must be analyzed in order to obtain adequate sample sizes.

The Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics includes data by area (state or census area) on the number of jobs by industry, age, earnings, race, and education. But there are no reported data on nativity or ancestry, and permission is needed in order to gain access to the microdata (the data available by people, rather than areas).

Other data sets, such as the National Longitudinal Survey (NLS), Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), and the Survey of Consumer Finance (SCF) have a plethora of data on wealth, employment history, socioeconomic status of parents, health, schooling history and achievements, and welfare participation history. However, the sample of AAPIs is too small to examine any of these topics in any meaningful way except when calculating group averages on overall measures (e.g., median wealth of AAPIs). Thus using the microdata to study such topics such as the causes of wealth disparities between AAPIs and whites, how welfare history affects employment, how the socioeconomic status of parents affect AAPIs, and how bouts of unemployment affect AAPIs is not possible given the limited sample sizes. Analysis by ancestry is also not collected in some (SIPP and SCF) of these surveys.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

There are several important implications from these findings. First, discrimination against AAPIs should be identified and remedied. To do this, gathering additional data is necessary in order to uncover where the problems occur. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) can alter its reporting requirements for employers so that it can more easily detect and remedy discrimination. Currently, the EEOC mandates that employers report to it the number of workers by race and gender who work in ten broad occupational groups: executives and senior managers, midlevel managers, professionals, technicians, sales workers, administrative support, craft, operatives, laborers and helpers, and service workers. But these occupations are often too broad to assess job segregation by race. The EEOC can expand the number of occupations reported, such as those in two-digit occupational census classifications, so it can determine whether job segregation by race (and gender) exists. Changing the law so that these EEO-1 reports are available to the public (currently they are kept confidential) would allow employees and researchers to assess if discriminatory hiring practices are occurring within firms.

In addition, requiring employers to collect and report additional data on hiring (including the number of job applications and those hired by race and gender), promotions (the number of promotions into professional, managerial, and higher management jobs by gender and race), and training by race and gender—and making these data public—would help identify racial discrimination and where it occurs, so that equal opportunity remedies can be implemented.

Second, because AAPIs are very heterogeneous, a one-size-fits-all policy does not meet the needs of this community. Certainly, the high poverty rates, low earnings, and low-paying jobs of Southeast Asians and NHPs merit consideration in affirmative action policies. But many employers and universities count only NHPs as affirmative action candidates, if even these. Given the obstacles that other Asian groups face, acknowledging that some Asian Americans face great difficulties is important, and having the Office of Federal Contract Compliance include them as a group that needs affirmative steps in employment would allow these workers to receive the assistance that they need.

Third, in order to properly identify and target Asian populations in need, it is critical to oversample the AAPI population in the data that are already collected. There is much we do not know about AAPIs because of data limitations, much of which is already known about other racial groups: How is wealth accumulated? What is the role of neighborhoods and family backgrounds in regard to future earnings and careers? How much career mobility do AAPIs have? How does long-term unemployment vary by ancestry? Is wealth transmitted intergenerationally among AAPIs?

Thus the Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, and Bureau of Labor Statistics should oversample AAPIs in current data sets, such as the ACS, CPS, SIPP, PSID, and NLS.

The NLS already oversamples African Americans and Hispanics, so that detailed information can be analyzed, including work histories, job training, and family and neighborhood backgrounds. If the same were performed for Asians, researchers could study AAPIs in much more detail, improving our knowledge about their socioeconomic conditions and barriers in employment over their lifetimes.

Oversampling Asian Americans in the PSID, which is sponsored by several agencies, including government-funded ones,⁴ would also lead to important information about AAPIs that is currently missing, including wealth disparities and how these may arise. Currently, a Ford Foundation study is underway to conduct a survey of minority groups, including Asian Americans, in order to assess racial wealth disparities because the current data sets do not allow for us to examine this issue.

Fourth, administrative data that are already collected should be available to researchers, conditional on ensuring confidentiality. This includes the microdata (data on individuals) in the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics, which is a potentially rich source of longitudinal data on employment patterns. These data should be enhanced so that U.S.-born and immigrant workers can be differentiated.

Finally, providing more resources to study issues of race and ethnicity is important. The government and private foundations should provide grants to study race so that researchers have the necessary resources with which to investigate important issues in the AAPI community.

Thus collecting additional and more detailed employer data, oversampling AAPIs in current data sets, opening administrative data to researchers, providing resources to investigate issues of race, and responding to workplace discrimination through enforcing nondiscrimination, affirmative action, and equal opportunity public policies will assist AAPI workers and communities.

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Notes

1. The ACS data used in Table 1 produced unreliable statistics for the Lao due to small sample sizes, so these are omitted from this table. The analysis of Lao rely on more reliable data from the 2000 census used in Kim and Mar (2007).
2. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011. Table A-2. Employment Status of the Civilian Population by Race, Sex and Age. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t02.htm> (accessed July 15, 2011). Data not seasonally adjusted (seasonal adjustments not available for AAPIs).
3. However, see Yamane (2011), who finds more discrimination among foreign-born Vietnamese workers with lower, rather than higher, education levels.
4. These include the National Institute on Aging, National Science Foundation, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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The State of Asian American Businesses

Diem Linda Tran and OiYan A. Poon

Summary

Business success is a dominant theme in the Asian American narrative. However, Asian American entrepreneurship is more complex and multilayered than commonly believed and requires careful scrutiny. This brief examines the state of Asian American business ownership between 2005 and 2007. Findings suggest that although Asian Americans form businesses at higher rates than other racial/ethnic minorities, Asian American business ownership and outcomes continue to trail those of non-Hispanic whites. Potential factors contributing to racial/ethnic gaps and policy recommendations are discussed.

Introduction

Researchers have paid notable attention to self-employment as an alternative to poor labor-market prospects (Light, 1972), as well as a potential path for economic success for racial/ethnic minorities and immigrants (Portes and Zhou, 1996). Their findings are complex and multilayered, as are the results in this policy brief. This brief draws from an earlier report on the state of Asian American businesses and presents a complicated assessment of Asian American entrepreneurship (Poon, Tran, and Ong, 2009). Self-employment among Asian Americans (11%) was nearly comparable to those of non-Hispanic whites (12%) between 2005 and 2007 and was higher compared to other racial/ethnic minorities. Asian American firms also accounted for 6 percent of all firms in the United States during 2007. (Asian Americans represented a little more than 4% of the population in 2007).

However, further analysis reveals both U.S.-born and foreign-born non-Hispanic whites were more likely to be self-employed than Asian Americans. Asian American businesses were also more heavily involved in lower-wage industries, such as per-

sonal services, retail, and restaurants, compared to firms owned by non-Hispanic whites and on average had fewer employees. We also found firms primarily owned by non-Hispanic whites also brought in 1.5 times more sales and receipts compared to Asian American businesses during 2007.

Finally, our analysis illustrates the diversity of self-employment among Asian American ethnic groups and highlights missed policy opportunities when treating Asian Americans as a panethnic whole. The last section of this brief discusses the implications of these findings from a policy lens.

Methodology

Observations presented in this brief are drawn from two data sets: the American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (1%) 2005–2007 and the 2007 Survey of Business Owners (SBO). Analyses focused on civilian employed persons age sixteen and over. Self-employment was defined as those who reported being employed in their own unincorporated or incorporated businesses. A broader definition of self-employment was also determined and included persons who worked as an unpaid family member, identified as being self-employed, and/or reported self-employment income or earnings. “Asian American” in ACS findings refers to non-Hispanic Asian Americans who identified only as “Asian” and no other race.

The 2007 SBO data offers firm characteristics by type of owner. Firms included in the survey were nonfarm sole proprietorships, partnerships, or corporations with annual receipts of \$1,000 or more. Asian American–owned businesses were defined as firms of which 51 percent or more of the stock or equity were owned by single and/or multiracial Asian Americans.

Although rates and means help describe the state of Asian American business ownership, they do not take into account or help explain observed differences between Asian Americans and non-Hispanic whites. Studies using higher-level statistics will be presented to supplement the findings discussed in the following text.

Findings

1. Asian Americans are less likely to be self-employed compared to non-Hispanic whites, regardless of whether they were born in the United States.

Estimated self-employment rates show Asian American self-employment rates (11%) were comparable to that of the general population (11%) but fell slightly behind non-Hispanic whites (12%) between 2005 and 2007 (see Table 1). Both Asian Americans and non-Hispanic whites were much more likely to identify as being self-employed compared to Latinos/Hispanics and blacks/African Americans. Expanding “self-employment” to include unpaid family workers and those who reported self-employment income or earnings takes into account people who may have been self-employed on a part-time basis. Racial/ethnic comparisons using this broader definition produced similar self-employment patterns.

More than 80 percent of Asian American business owners identified in the ACS were foreign-born. However, self-employment rate comparisons by race/ethnicity and nativity continued to show Asian Americans were less likely to own a business compared to non-Hispanic whites, regardless of nativity or when they entered the country. Approximately 8 percent of U.S.-born Asian Americans owned a business between 2005 and 2007 compared

Table 1. Self-Employment Rates by Race/Ethnicity – United States 2005-07

	Self-employed in incorporated or unincorporated business	Self-employed, unpaid worker in family business, and/or reported self-employment income/earnings
Non-Hispanic White	11.8%	15.0%
Latino/Hispanic	8.1%	9.4%
Black/African American	5.2%	6.8%
Asian American	10.9%	13.0%
Korean	21.4%	-
Vietnamese	12.1%	-
Japanese	12.0%	-
South Asian	11.5%	-
Chinese	10.9%	-
Filipino	5.3%	-
Other Asian	10.5%	-
Other Southeast Asian	5.9%	-
Pacific Islander	6.1%	8.2%
Other	8.4%	11.3%
All Persons	10.5%	13.2%

Source: American Community Survey 2005-07

Note: - Information was not computed at the time of the report.

to 12 percent of U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites. Self-employment rates increased among Asian American immigrants but still trailed those of foreign-born non-Hispanic whites between 2005 and 2007.

Using microlevel data, researchers have further examined the role of race/ethnicity in business ownership through statistical modeling. Fairlie (2010) performed a series of probit regressions using the U.S. Census 2000 and matched Current Population Survey data to estimate the likelihood that survey participants started a business. He found that African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans, after controlling for factors such as gender, age, and education, were less likely to own a business compared to non-Hispanic whites, which is consistent with our findings. Immigrants were also more likely to own a business compared to nonimmigrants.

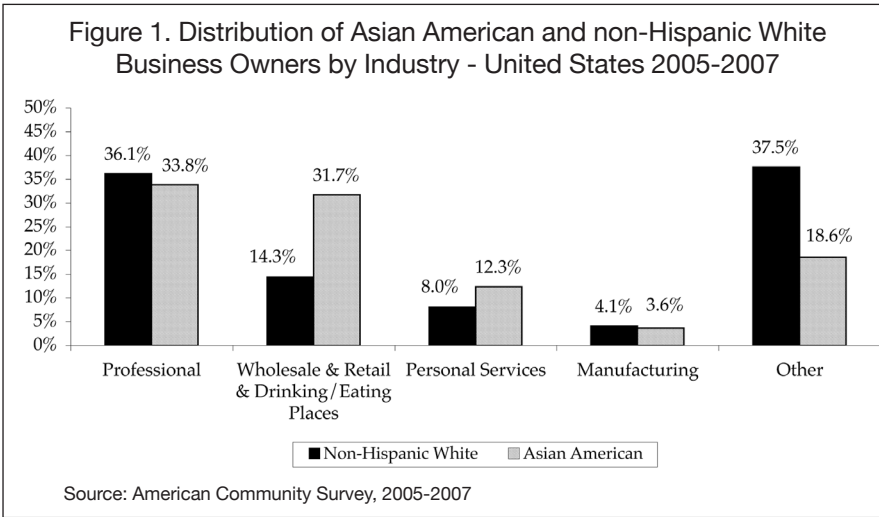
2. Self-employment rates across Asian American ethnic groups vastly differ.

Table 1 also underscores considerable differences in self-employment among Asian American ethnic groups. Approximately 21 percent of Korean Americans were self-employed in their own businesses, which was twice the rate of the general population. Vietnamese (12%) and Japanese Americans (12%) reported self-employment rates similar to that of non-Hispanic whites, while Filipino (5%) and other Southeast Asian Americans (6%) were least likely to be self-employed. These findings underscore the diversity among Asian Americans and suggest some Asian American ethnic groups may have more propensity, access, and/or capacity to start their own businesses compared to others.

3. Asian American businesses are clustered in professional service industries that often require high levels of education. They are also concentrated in industries that do not require high education levels, such as retail, restaurants, and personal services.

Asian American owners were substantially more likely to own businesses in the wholesale, retail, and restaurant industries (32%), as well as in personal services (12%), compared to non-Hispanic whites (see Figure 1). Commonly found in ethnic enclaves, these industries are generally associated with lower wages and require relatively lower levels of education (Logan, Alba, and McNulty, 1994). One-third (34%) of self-employed Asian Americans owned businesses in professional services industries that typically pay higher wages and require

higher levels of education. In turn, Asian American firms are concentrated in lower-paying and higher-paying industries.



4. Asian American firms on average employ fewer workers and report substantially lower average receipts compared to firms primarily owned by non-Hispanic whites.

SBO data show Asian American businesses made up 6 percent of all firms in 2007 (see Table 2). Average sales and receipts for these firms were higher compared to other minority businesses. However, average receipts for Asian American firms represented only 67 percent of receipts brought in by non-Hispanic white firms. Limiting the analysis to firms with employees revealed Asian American businesses (26%) were most likely to employ workers compared to other racial/ethnic groups but had the fewest average number of employees per firm (7). Average sales and receipts for Asian American-owned businesses with employees (\$1,141,280) was lower compared to firms owned by Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (\$1,264,828) and American Indians and Alaska Natives (\$1,161,951) during 2007, and amounted to only 55 percent of average receipts brought in by non-Hispanic white businesses. Average payrolls per employee followed a similar pattern.

Recommendations

Although Asian Americans have achieved self-employment

Table 2. Firm Characteristics by Race/Ethnicity - United States 2007

	All Firms			Employer Firms			
	Number of All Firms	Percent of All Firms	Average Sales & Receipts	Percent Employer Firms	Average Sales & Receipts	Average Number of Employees	Average Payroll per Employee
Non-Hispanic White	20,334,403	75.1%	\$484,836	21.5%	\$2,082,036	11.5	\$34,986
Latino	2,260,269	8.3%	\$155,141	11.0%	\$1,124,848	7.7	\$28,454
Black or African American	1,921,864	7.1%	\$70,629	5.5%	\$911,594	8.5	\$25,655
Asian	1,549,559	5.7%	\$326,575	25.6%	\$1,141,280	7.1	\$28,218
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	37,687	0.1%	\$167,680	11.0%	\$1,264,828	9.1	\$32,199
American Indian and Alaska Native	236,691	0.9%	\$145,142	10.0%	\$1,161,951	7.8	\$32,049
All firms	27,092,908		\$1,108,464	21.2%	\$5,066,431	20.5	\$41,112

Source: 2007 Survey of Business Owners

at a rate nearly comparable to that of non-Hispanic whites and enjoy relatively better outcomes compared to other racial/ethnic minorities, their success in self-employment seems weighted. Asian American businesses tend to be smaller in size and receipts, which may reflect the industries in which they operate, and report smaller payrolls per employee. Nevertheless, self-employment remains an important source of income and wealth for a segment of the Asian American population. Support for Asian American entrepreneurship remains critical, especially as labor markets continue to struggle and Asian American wealth declines (Kochar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011).

1. Encourage entry into higher-yielding industries.

Limited knowledge and access to capital may prevent Asian Americans from starting businesses in more capital- and labor-intensive industries. Entry can be supported through focused outreach and education about existing resources. Programs can help Asian American entrepreneurs assess the benefits of incorporation and provide technical assistance as needed. Given the linguistic and cultural challenges that a large portion of the population faces, Asian American asset-building organizations have played a large role in helping their communities accumulate wealth (Patraporn,

Ong, and Pfeiffer, 2008). These ethnic-based intermediaries can also help connect Asian American entrepreneurs to the capital finances and resources they need in order to build their firms.

2. Increase Asian American firms' access to public-contracting opportunities.

A study by the Asian American Justice Center has shown that Asian American businesses are underutilized in public contracting, particularly in higher-yielding industries such as construction, civil engineering, and technology (Poon et al., 2010). The authors also deduced that discrimination may contribute to the underutilization of Asian American firms in government contracts. More needs to be done in order to remove barriers and increase Asian American firms' access to public-contracting opportunities. Ongoing research of Asian American businesses, including their participation in public contracting, is also needed to help inform advocates, policy makers, and government programs.

3. Monitor self-employment trends among racial/ethnic minorities and use disaggregated data to inform policy decisions.

As demonstrated in this brief, the story of self-employment among Asian Americans is complex and is likely different by geographic location. Continual research using disaggregated data will provide advocates and policy makers a more accurate understanding of Asian American business ownership in their respective areas.

4. Release SBO microdata for public research and use.

Published SBO reports suggest that Asian American firms on average produce less revenue than firms primarily owned by non-Hispanic whites. However, without access to microdata, researchers cannot test racial/ethnic differences and take into account other causal factors that may contribute to employment and annual receipts. Minority business outcomes remain not fully understood. By releasing individual-level data from the SBO, researchers can help fill this knowledge gap and better guide programs and policy decisions moving forward.

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The Changing Landscape of Asian Entrepreneurship, Minority Banks, and Community Development

Tarry Hum

Summary

This policy brief examines minority banks and their lending practices in New York City. By synthesizing various public data sources, this policy brief finds that Asian banks now make up a majority of minority banks, and their loans are concentrated in commercial real estate development. This brief underscores the need for improved data collection and access to research minority banks and the need to improve their contributions to equitable community development and sustainability.

Introduction

Immigrant-owned businesses are perceived as vital engines of economic growth in the United States (Farlie, 2008; Rath, 2007). Close to one in four (22%) of more than 1.5 million Asian-owned businesses are based in the New York and Los Angeles metropolitan areas. The impact of immigrant-owned businesses may be even greater because economic censuses tend to undercount minority-owned small businesses and their economic contributions (Tienda, 2001). This dynamic and growing entrepreneurial sector anchors many local Asian immigrant economies.

A parallel trend is the increasing number of Asian-owned banks. Although they represent a very small share of all U.S. banks, minority-owned financial institutions are promoted as a key component of advancing asset building and community development in neighborhoods typically ignored by mainstream banking institutions (Dugan, 2007; Tillman, Rell, and Scott, 2009). Moreover, demographic trends portend an increase in the number of banks and the scope of minority banking in the United States (Shanmuganathan, Stone, and Foss, 2004).

Despite their growing presence, Asian-owned banks have garnered little attention, with most studies based on Los Angeles banks (Li et al., 2001, 2002). Moreover, there is a lack of data to quantify the role of minority financial institutions in supporting small business development and immigrant entrepreneurship (Min, 2010; Nopper, 2010; Park, 2010). To address the dearth of research on minority banks in New York, this policy brief focuses on New York City and mines publicly available data, including Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) call reports and Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) and Small Business Administration (SBA) loan data in order to profile the landscape of minority banks and their lending practices. Although far from comprehensive, this New York City profile contributes to an empirically informed discussion on the significance of minority financial institutions and the necessary policy recommendations to improve and expand data collection and strengthen fair capital access and equitable community development.

The Landscape of Minority Banks

New York City is a global capital, which is evident in the number of foreign banks with U.S. branches, representative offices, and subsidiaries located in the five boroughs. As of September 2010, 42 percent of the 473 foreign bank offices in the United States are located in New York City. It is important, however, to differentiate between foreign banks and minority banks. Among Asian banks, this distinction is often difficult to discern because foreign banks such as Woori Bank and Shinhan Bank (based in South Korea), Bank of East Asia Ltd. (based in Hong Kong), and Chinatrust Bank and First Commercial Bank (based in Taiwan) are also chartered U.S. commercial banks and maintain a strong presence in immigrant neighborhoods. However, these banks are subsidiaries of foreign banks with more than 25 percent ownership held by a foreign bank.

Building on and synthesizing the lists compiled by the Federal Reserve Board, FDIC, and the U.S. Department of Treasury's Minority Bank Deposit Program, there are currently 206 minority banks in the United States (see Table 1). Even though minority banks comprise a very small share of total banking institutions in the United States (approximately 3%), the largest and fastest-growing segment of minority banks are owned by Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans/Latinos and serve majority immigrant communities. In contrast to black-owned banks whose numbers have

Table 1. Number and Total Assets of Minority Banks by Race Group, 2011

Minority Banks	Number	Percent	Total Assets March 31, 2011 (000s)	Percent	Number of Large Banks ^a	% Assets held by Large Banks
Total	206	100%	\$187,582,346	100%	24	—
Asian American	100	49%	\$71,787,236	38%	12	72%
Latino	44	21%	\$104,910,773	56%	12	93%
Black	38	18%	\$7,885,955	4%	0	—
Native American	21	10%	\$2,103,707	1%	0	—
Multi-Race	3	1%	\$894,675	0.5%	0	—

Note: ^aFederal regulators - FDIC, FRB, OCC and OTS - define Large Banks or Thrifts as those institutions with assets of one billion dollars or more.

Source: FDIC, Federal Reserve Board, US Department of Treasury

dropped, the number of Asian banks have not only increased but also the Asian share has grown such that they represent a majority (49%) of all minority banks.

The composition of minority banks is dynamic and constantly changing. For example, during the short period of preparation for this policy brief, two black-owned banks were acquired and consolidated with two other black-owned banks during the spring of 2011.¹ Two major Korean American banks—Nara Bank and Center Bank—agreed to consolidate several bank branches (*New York Times*, 2011). In addition to mergers, bank failures also factor into the continually evolving landscape of minority financial institutions. Just this past spring, two failed Asian community banks—First Vietnamese American Bank and Haven Trust Bank Florida—were sold to nonminority banks (Witkowski, 2008). According to a *Los Angeles Times* article, First Vietnamese American Bank located in Orange County’s Little Saigon neighborhood in Westminster was the first community lender “with a core clientele of Vietnamese immigrants” (Reckard, 2010). Another notable failure is the United Commercial Bank, which was ranked the second-largest Asian-owned bank in the country before its collapse and eventual sale to East West Bancorp, Inc. during 2009. As a result of the sale, East West Bank emerged not only as the largest Asian American bank but also as the largest bank based in Southern California (Reckard, 2009).

Table 1 notes the total assets of minority banks by race group and the relative share of minority banks that are “large banks” as defined by federal regulators (assets of \$1 billion or more).² Bank size determines the rigor and scope of CRA evaluations (Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council, 2011). As noted, there are 206 minority banks, and Asian banks are numerically dominant as they comprise nearly one in two (49%) minority banks. The total assets of all minority banks in the United States is \$187 billion of which well more than half (56%) is held by Latino banks. Twelve large Asian American and Latino banks hold an overwhelming majority share of total assets. For example, several megabanks such as Banco Popular de Puerto Rico and Firstbank of Puerto Rico have less than 51 percent minority ownership but are designated minority banks because they serve a predominantly minority population. These banks rank among the largest banks in the United States and are hardly representative of the smaller, community-oriented banks that define the majority of minority

Table 2. Loans and Leases of Minority Banks
by Race Group, March 31, 2011

	Asian American	Latino	Black	Native American	Multi-Race
Total Loans and Leases (000s)	\$49,180,229	\$68,233,897	\$5,043,339	\$1,290,402	\$638,925
Real Estate Loans	81%	71%	88%	70%	64%
Construction and Land Development	9%	11%	6%	10%	3%
Commercial Real Estate	65%	42%	44%	49%	37%
Multi-Family Residential (5 or more)	10%	4%	14%	2%	8%
1-4 Family Residential	16%	41%	35%	34%	52%
Farmland	0.2%	1%	0.3%	5%	0.2%
Farm Loans	0.001%	0.1%	0.1%	4%	0%
Commercial and Industrial Loans	17%	12%	9%	17%	19%
Individual Loans	2%	10%	2%	8%	2%
Other Loans and Leases	1%	7%	1%	2%	15%

Source: FDIC

banks. Only one of the twelve large Asian American banks—East West Bancorp—ranks on this megabank level, and as noted earlier, it was the acquisition of the failed United Commercial Bank that propelled East West Bank to this level, so that it now holds 30 percent of the total assets in Asian banks.

Asian minority banks serve as a “key facilitator for capital circulation” by establishing ethnic businesses, expanding the spatial boundaries of residential communities, and promoting opportunities for immigrant homeownership (Li et al., 2002, 779). Table 2 provides a compositional breakdown by major loan categories of the total lending by minority banks as of March 2011. The data show that minority bank lending is heavily concentrated in real estate loans. Business loans (including small business loans) are a form of commercial and industrial loans and represent less than 20 percent of total loan dollars across minority banks. Relative to other minority banks, Asian banks’ real estate investments are heavily concentrated in commercial real estate loans.

Promoting homeownership has been a key strategy for individual and community asset building. It is notable that Asian banks are least invested in home mortgage lending. Only 16 percent of Asian banks’ real estate investments are for individual asset building through homeownership, which is in sharp contrast to other minority banks with at least one-third of their real estate loan dollars in one to four family residential properties. This finding bears significant implications for the role of Asian banks and community economic development.³ Asian banks appear to be instrumental actors in an immigrant growth coalition comprised of developers, contractors, realtors, and community elites including nonprofit community development corporations. In New York City, this immigrant growth coalition is advancing the gentrification of working-class immigrant neighborhoods, which is evident in the dominating presence of new luxury condominium developments and upscale retail and commercial establishments (CAA AV and Urban Justice Center, 2008; Toy, 2006).

An example of the close relationship between Asian minority banks and local real estate developers is exemplified by John Lam⁴—a former Manhattan Chinatown garment factory owner who employed nearly two thousand workers and now owns a real estate firm that specializes in hotel and residential condominium development. In an interview, Lam noted the recent economic

downturn had not affected his access to capital due to his relationships with local Chinese-owned banks. As Lam explained, “All the decision makers are really good friends of mine. They really know our business and they feel comfortable with it” (Chow, 2010). In another example, the chairman of Eastbank, a Chinese bank based in Manhattan’s Chinatown, formed a separate holding company to develop a luxury twenty-seven-story hotel and condominium tower (Pincus, 2009). As underwriters of the construction and development of hotels, luxury condominiums, and retail and commercial buildings, Asian minority banks are key actors in this gentrification process (CAA AV and Urban Justice Center, 2008; Newhouse, 2009; *The Real Deal*, 2003).

Community Reinvestment Act and Small Business Administration Loans

Limited access to capital is one of the major challenges facing small businesses, particularly for immigrant entrepreneurs (Bates, 1996; Bowles and Colton, 2007). Small business loans are defined as nonfarm, nonresidential commercial and industrial loans of \$1 million or less (FDIC, 2008). Publicly available data sources that quantify small business lending are limited. The CRA requires large banks to collect and report small business loan data including the loan amount at origination, loan location (by census tract), and number of loans made to small businesses (i.e., businesses with gross annual revenues of \$1 million or less). Banks defined as small (less than \$250 million in assets) or intermediate (\$250 million to \$1 billion in assets) undergo less rigorous CRA evaluations and are not required to report comparable data on small business lending.

CRA data is perhaps the most accessible data source on small business lending; however, this data reporting is only required of large banks. As an illustration of the small business lending practices of Asian large banks, Table 3 presents the total small business loans originated by Cathay Bank, East West Bank, Nara Bank, and Hanmi Bank during 2009. The table lists the top states where the loans were made, the total loan amounts, and the volume and dollar amounts for loans originated to small businesses (defined as businesses with annual gross revenues of less than \$1 million). Although all four banks are headquartered in Los Angeles, they have expanded throughout the country and established a dominant presence in New York City. Cathay Bank and East West Bank are

Table 3. Small Business Loans for Select Large Asian Minority Banks by State, 2009

	Total Small Business Loans	Total Loan Amt. (000s)	Loans to Businesses with Gross Annual Revenue < \$1,000,000		% Loans to Small Business	% Loan Dollars to Small Business
			Number of Loans	Total Loan Amt. (000s)		
CATHAY BANK	833	\$281,055	251	\$61,001	30%	22%
California	610	\$217,849	171	\$42,229	28%	19%
New York	114	\$29,085	39	\$9,519	34%	33%
Washington	44	\$9,366	14	\$1,479	32%	16%
Other States	65	24755	27	7774	42%	31%
EAST WEST BANK	1,294	\$516,114	456	\$151,887	35%	29%
California	993	\$414,980	316	\$113,873	32%	27%
Washington	92	\$28,510	44	\$12,062	48%	42%
New York	90	\$26,233	41	\$7,693	46%	29%
Other States	119	46391	55	18259	46%	39%
NARA BANK	505	\$162,266	179	\$40,028	35%	25%
California	337	\$105,831	139	\$28,743	41%	27%
New York	127	\$42,358	32	\$8,714	25%	21%
Other States	41	14077	8	2571	20%	18%
HANMI BANK	709	\$134,848	240	\$45,011	34%	33%
California	693	\$129,265	234	\$42,712	34%	33%
Other States	16	5583	6	2299	38%	41%

Source: CRA Disclosure Reports, FFIEC

Chinese minority banks while Nara Bank and Hanmi Bank are Korean minority banks. These banks were selected, in part, because of the putative contributions of Chinese- and Korean-owned small businesses in revitalizing local urban economies.

Table 3 points out that the majority of small business loans (defined as loans of \$1 million or less) originated by these four sample Asian banks were made to California-based businesses (the majority located in Los Angeles County). The bulk of small business loans were made to businesses whose annual gross revenues exceed \$1 million. Only one-third of small business loans originated by these four Asian banks during 2009 were for small businesses.

The pattern of small business lending among the sample large banks is incongruent with the profile of Asian business ownership in the United States. According to the 2007 Economic Census, the overwhelming majority of Asian-owned businesses in Los Angeles County and New York City are small businesses with no paid employees at 74 percent and 80 percent, respectively. Moreover, the average receipts for Asian businesses in Los Angeles County is \$447,000, and it is only half that for New York City at \$247,000. These statistics suggest that most Asian businesses in these two metro gateways are very small nonemployer businesses with modest annual revenues.

The SBA represents the largest small business lending program in the country. Although the SBA does not originate loans, it facilitates lending by guaranteeing loans. SBA loans are vital to many small businesses; however, these loans represent less than 3 percent of total small business credit in the nation (PolEcon Research, 2011). Although SBA loan volume and dollar amounts are increasing in New York State, the extremely modest number (e.g., 843 in New York City for FY 2011) of loans, particularly in light of the central economic role of small businesses, is striking (Bowles and Colton, 2007). Nevertheless, the 19 percent increase in total loan dollars is notable for New York City, where average loan amounts also increased significantly from \$293,402 in FY 2010 to \$427,446 in FY 2011.

SBA loan data allows us to investigate whether minority banks are an important source of government-guaranteed loans. Table 4 lists the SBA lenders for FY 2011. By differentiating minority banks, I find that minority banks originated 193 SBA loans totaling \$157 million in New York State. This represents 15 percent of SBA loans and nearly one-third (32%) of total loan dollars originated in FY 2011. If lenders are disaggregated by ethnicity—it is apparent that a handful of Korean banks originated an overwhelming 88 percent all SBA loans made by minority banks—then SBA data provides further evidence that large Asian minority banks tend not to be major sources of small business loans. The top minority lender is NewBank, a Korean community bank based in Flushing, Queens. Finally, it is notable that the average SBA loan originated by Asian minority banks is nearly \$400,000 more than the average loan issued by nonminority banks. Unfortunately, public data does not provide any information regarding loan purpose or applicant

Table 4. SBA Loans by Minority Banks,
Loan Volumes and Amounts, Fiscal Year 2011

Lender	Fiscal Year 2011 Dollars	Fiscal Year 2011 Loan #s	Avg. Loan Amount
MINORITY BANKS	\$157,040,700	193	\$813,682
Chinese Banks	\$3,150,000	5	\$630,000
AMERASIA BANK	\$500,000	3	\$166,667
EAST WEST BANK	\$250,000	1	\$250,000
METRO BANK	\$2,400,000	1	\$2,400,000
Indian Bank			
INDUS AMERICAN BANK	\$4,132,500	7	\$590,357
Korean Banks	\$147,453,200	169	\$872,504
NEWBANK	\$54,060,000	63	\$858,095
BNB BANK, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION	\$38,897,500	36	\$1,080,486
BANKASIANA	\$16,334,000	24	\$680,583
NARA BANK	\$16,190,000	21	\$770,952
WILSHIRE STATE BANK	\$18,311,700	17	\$1,077,159
ROYAL ASIAN BANK	\$3,130,000	6	\$521,667
SAEHAN BANK	\$380,000	1	\$380,000
THE BANK OF PRINCETON	\$150,000	1	\$150,000
Latino Bank			
BANCO POPULAR NORTH AMERICA	\$195,000	6	\$32,500
Native American Bank			
BORREGO SPRINGS BANK, N.A.	\$2,110,000	6	\$351,667
Asian Foreign Banks	\$9,865,500	17	\$580,324
SHINHAN BANK AMERICA	\$7,765,500	14	\$554,679
CHINATRUST BANK USA	\$600,000	2	\$300,000
WOORI AMERICA BANK	\$1,500,000	1	\$1,500,000
Korean Non-Bank SBA Lending Institution			
HANA SMALL BUS. LENDING INC.	\$5,370,000	3	\$1,790,000
Non-Minority Banks	\$311,401,300	1,102	\$282,578
TOTAL SBA Loans	\$483,677,500	1,315	\$367,816

Source: SBA, 2011.

business or industry sector, so the sizable differential in average loan amount remains to be investigated.

Policy Implications

Based on mining varied public data sources, this policy brief finds a multilayered profile of minority banks and uneven investments in community development and asset building. Most important, this policy brief underscores the outstanding need for comprehensive public data on financial institutions and their investments in promoting and sustaining small business development and community-based economic growth. Although several public data sources were synthesized to develop this profile of minority banks in New York City and to investigate their lending activities, this policy brief is incomplete. Further research is necessary to generate a small business lending profile for small and intermediate-sized banks. Although the CRA requires large banks to collect and report small business loans, comparable data for small and intermediate-size banks remains quite limited. The Community Reinvestment Modernization Act (H.R. 1479) of 2009 recommends collecting small business loan data that includes the race and gender of small business owners. Recognizing outstanding research needs, a policy recommendation is to improve the availability, access, and comprehensiveness of small business data for banks of all sizes in order to develop an understanding of the role of minority financial institutions in promoting economic development.

Even with limited data sources, this policy brief provides evidence that large banks are not incentivized to make small business loans. But more research and data is necessary to investigate the unmet needs of the growing and diverse Asian small business sector and persistent barriers to capital access. On the supply side, research should elaborate on the disincentives to small business lending.

Foreign banks are key actors in the economic landscape of local Asian neighborhoods (Semper, 2011). Their growing presence underscores the outstanding need to investigate how U.S. subsidiaries of foreign banks affect local neighborhood economies and the putative immigrant “mom and pop” business landscape. In conclusion, a research and policy agenda to promote Asian community-based economic development and small business ownership must include a comprehensive study of minority financial institutions including foreign banks.

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Notes

1. Black-owned American State Bank was acquired by Peoples Bank during February 2011 and Legacy Bank merged with Seaway Bank and Trust Co. during March 2011.
2. The four primary federal regulators are the Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS), the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), the Federal Reserve, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).
3. Even when the loan data of large banks is separated from the majority small and intermediate-sized banks, I found no difference in the relative distribution of loan dollars by loan category.
4. For a profile of John Lam's real estate development company and projects, refer to <http://www.lamgroupnyc.com/news.htm> (accessed August 10, 2011).

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Disaggregation Matters: Asian Americans and Wealth Data

Melany De La Cruz-Viesca

Summary

This policy brief explores the usefulness and limitations of existing federal government data sets in better understanding the wealth position and asset-building needs of Asian Americans. As Asian Americans continue to be one of the fastest-growing racial groups in the United States, it is critical for federal data sets to disaggregate Asian Americans by ethnicity and by immigrant versus nonimmigrant status, in order to provide a more accurate and nuanced analysis of the Asian American experience with asset accumulation. The lumping of all Asian American ethnic groups under the aggregate “Asian” category masks a high degree of variation in social and economic status across these subgroups.

Introduction

Asian Americans occupy a unique and often-misunderstood position within the U.S. racial hierarchy, in general and in the area of wealth holdings (Kim, 1999; Ong and Liu, 2000; Ong and Patraporn, 2006; Zhou, 2004). By a number of traditional aggregate indicators (e.g., income, home ownership, entrepreneurship, and educational attainment) Asian Americans are at near parity with non-Hispanic whites, and this has led some scholars and policy makers to utilize a new racial dichotomy with Asian Americans and non-Hispanic whites at the top and blacks and Latinos at the bottom (Patraporn, Ong, and Houston, 2009). However, this dichotomy buries some critical nuances among Asian Americans, and what is equally important is that it may lead scholars to dismiss an in-depth analysis of Asian Americans and asset building.

Moreover, aggregate numbers often mask tremendous differences between groups, and traditional indicators often overlook hidden issues and obstacles. A major concern with federal public data sets is that Asian American populations get combined with

Native American and Pacific Islander populations into one category, the “Other,” or sample sizes are too small to generate reliable estimates.

Survey of Consumer Finance and Panel Survey of Income Dynamics

Two major national surveys that track wealth and record excellent wealth variables, are limited in providing data on Asian Americans. The Survey of Consumer Finance public data set combines Asian American or Pacific Islander, Native American/Eskimo/Aleut, and Other into one category. Thus, in conducting empirical work it is impossible to separate Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) from Native American/Eskimo/Aleut. Similarly, the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics (PSID) usually lacks enough AAPI respondents to make the information useful in examining the wealth status of Asian American communities in the United States. AAPIs are collapsed into a single category and cannot be sorted by country of origin in the PSID.

Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data

Although helpful, the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data set provides knowledge about mortgages but not about Asian American use of other financial products and services. In cases in which such detailed data is available, samples may not include information on Asian Americans due to data-suppression practices associated with confidentiality requirements because the sample sizes are so small. The sample sizes are so small that even if they were accessible they would not necessarily be reliable. An example of the latter problem is the Federal Reserve’s Survey of Small Business Finance.

Survey of Income and Program Participation

The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), an economic questionnaire distributed periodically to tens of thousands of households by the U.S. Census Bureau, is considered the most comprehensive source of data about household wealth in the United States by race and ethnicity. However, it does not provide data for Asian Americans by subgroup.

Only the American Community Survey (ACS), when multiple years are combined, and the U.S. decennial census have large enough samples to look at the wealth status of Asian Americans

by subgroup. The ACS and the decennial census provide disaggregated data for up to sixteen Asian subgroups, depending on various levels of geography, with the ability to distinguish separately among people of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Pakistani, or Filipino origin. However, the quality and depth of questions capturing wealth information are not very high on either the ACS or the decennial census. As a result, there is a significant dearth of data on assets, liabilities, and economic behavior (e.g., savings vs. spending trends) that accurately reflect the enormous cultural and economic diversity within the Asian American community.

Asian American Population and Wealth Trends

At the national level, the Asian American population increased by 43 percent between 2000 and 2010, more than any other major race group.¹ According to the 2009 ACS estimates, Asian Americans remain a largely foreign-born population (60%) compared with the total U.S. population (13%). During the first part of this decade, Asian Americans made considerable progress in closing the wealth gap with non-Hispanic whites through the rapid appreciation of home values. From 2000 to 2005, the average value of homes for Asian American homeowners increased by 73 percent, compared to only 60 percent for non-Hispanic white homeowners, a difference of 13 percent (Patraporn, Ong, and Houston, 2009). In the fifteen metropolitan areas with the largest absolute number of Asian Americans, which make up two-thirds (66%) of all Asian Americans in the United States, mean values of owner-occupied housing units increased by 78 percent, while the rest of the nation experienced only a 54 percent increase (Patraporn, Ong, and Houston, 2009).² Only one-quarter of non-Hispanic whites lived in these fifteen metropolitan areas, hence a smaller proportion was able to benefit from the higher rate of appreciation (Patraporn, Ong, and Houston, 2009).

The most recent findings by the Pew Research Center indicate those gains have been wiped out due to the housing crisis. The housing market bubble burst in 2006, triggering the Great Recession in 2007 and a stock market collapse in 2007 and 2008 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011). Although housing values fell sooner than stock prices, the housing market has not begun to recover unlike the stock market in 2010. Thus minority households experienced greater losses because they are more dependent on home equity

as a source of wealth. In 2005, median Asian American household wealth had been greater than the median for white households, but by 2009 Asian Americans lost their position at the top of the wealth ranking. The net worth of Asian American households is estimated to have fallen by 54 percent, from \$168,103 in 2005 to \$78,066 in 2009 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011).³ Asian Americans are geographically concentrated in places, such as California, that were hit hard by the housing market meltdown. The arrival of new Asian American immigrants since 2004 also contributed significantly to the estimated decline in the overall wealth of this racial group. Absent the immigrants who arrived during this period, the median wealth of Asian American households is estimated to have dropped 31 percent from 2005 to 2009 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011).

In general, the net worth of the standard U.S. household decreased from \$96,894 in 2005 to \$70,000 in 2009, a loss of \$26,894 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011). However, median net worth in assets other than home equity fell by only \$3,522, from \$17,088 in 2005 to \$13,566 in 2009 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011). These estimates suggest that the total loss in net worth emanated principally from declining levels of home equity. For Asian American households, the net worth decreased from \$168,103 in 2005 to \$78,066 in 2009, a loss of \$90,037. However, median net worth excluding home equity fell by only \$6,837, from \$27,137 in 2005 to \$20,300 in 2009 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011).

The housing downturn that began in 2006 had noticeable geographic patterns. From the end of 2005 to the end of 2009, median home prices decreased by more than 30 percent in five states: Nevada (49%), Florida (38%), Arizona (38%), California (37%), and Michigan (34%).⁴ According to the Pew Research Center, more than two in five of the nation's Latino and Asian American households resided in Arizona, California, Florida, Michigan, and Nevada, the five states with the steepest declines in home prices in 2005; whereas, only about one in five of the nation's white or black households resided in these states. Thus Hispanic and Asian American households were more exposed to the housing downturn than were other households.

The estimates of household net worth by region reveal the differential impact of the housing downturn. Asian American residents of Arizona, California, Florida, Michigan, and Nevada ex-

perienced far greater drops in their net worth than residents elsewhere. For Asian Americans in these five states, median net worth fell from \$187,762 in 2005 to \$66,683 in 2009, a drop of 64 percent. In contrast, the median net worth of Asian Americans in all other states dropped from \$147,901 in 2005 to \$82,924 in 2009, a drop of 44 percent. Asian Americans residing in Arizona, California, Florida, Michigan, and Nevada now have lower levels of wealth. Hence, declining value, not declining ownership, is central to the loss in household wealth.

Overall, the cost of owning a home has increased more rapidly than household income, and the burden has grown more rapidly for Asian Americans than for non-Hispanic whites. As seen in Table 1,

Table 1: Percentage of Selected Monthly Owner Costs (SMOC), 2005 and 2009

	2005	2009	% change, 2005–09
	SMOC exceeds 30% or more of income	SMOC exceeds 30% or more of income	
Total Population	28.3%	37.6%	9%
Non-Hispanic White	25.5%	34.1%	9%
Black	39.6%	48.3%	9%
Latino	42.3%	52.9%	11%
Asian	37.3%	47.3%	10%
Asian Indian	35.7%	41.8%	6%
Cambodian	42.8%	56.5%	14%
Chinese	35.4%	46.2%	11%
Filipino	38.1%	47.9%	10%
Hmong	47.7%	51.8%	4%
Japanese	26.8%	39.1%	12%
Korean	46.3%	54.6%	8%
Laotian	43.1%	46.3%	3%
Pakistani	51.7%	53.3%	2%
Thai	42.2%	51.9%	10%
Vietnamese	41.0%	55.7%	15%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2005 1-year and 2009 1-year estimates, Selected Population Profiles Table S0201.

the proportion of Asian American households that pay 30 percent or more of their income toward selected monthly owner costs has risen significantly from 2005 to 2009.⁵ On average, Asian American households experienced a 10 percent increase in housing costs from 2005 to 2009, with six Asian American subgroups incurring costs of 10 percent or more: Filipinos (10%), Thai (10%), Chinese (11%), Japanese (12%), Cambodian (14%), and Vietnamese (15%).

In 2009, the proportion of Cambodian, Vietnamese, Thai, Hmong, Korean, and Pakistani households—ranging from 52 to 57 percent—were paying 30 percent or more of their income toward housing costs. Table 1 underscores the importance of disaggregating data for Asian Americans, noting how Southeast Asian groups face similar or sometimes greater wealth disparities as do Latinos and blacks. The majority of Southeast Asians, such as the Vietnamese, Hmong, and Cambodians, immigrated as political refugees and tend to have lower wealth than those who immigrated under policies aimed to fill quotas for more highly educated and skilled workers (Patraporn, Ong, and Houston, 2009). See Table 2 for more

Table 2: Mean Household Income and Assets in the United States by Asian Ethnicity

	Mean Income	Mean Interest, Dividend, and Rental Income	Mean Home Value	Mean Home Equity
All Asians	81,500	2,000	283,300	104,400
	<i>Parity Index (relative to all Asians)</i>			
Asian Indian	1.22	1.10	0.93	0.76
Chinese	1.01	1.35	1.14	1.29
Filipino	1.04	0.50	1.09	0.99
Japanese	0.99	1.65	1.18	1.84
Korean	0.86	1.00	0.88	0.68
Vietnamese	0.82	0.45	0.90	1.06
Other Southeast Asian	0.68	0.15	0.53	0.40
Other Asian	0.87	0.65	0.78	0.67

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 2006, 1% Public Use Microdata Sample

Note: “Mean income” and “mean interest, dividend, and rental income” include negative and zero dollar amounts. “Mean home value” includes those who do not own their own home. For those who do not own their home, home value was considered to be zero.

details illustrating how wealth varies across various Asian American ethnic groups by different asset types.

Nonhousing Asian American Asset Trends

According to the Pew Research Center, Asian American households experienced a 12 percent decline in the value of their 401(k) and thrift accounts and little change in their individual retirement accounts (IRAs) and Keogh accounts. The median value of unsecured liabilities for Asian Americans increased from \$5,494 to \$7,000, or by 27 percent (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011). Stocks and mutual funds owned by Asian Americans actually increased in value, rising 19 percent from \$25,270 in 2005 to \$30,000 in 2009 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011). Business equity for Asian Americans dropped from \$54,935 to \$27,000 (Kochhar, Fry, and Taylor, 2011). However, the largest single contributor to Asian American's total net worth is an owned home.

Conclusion

According to the Pew Research Center, since the official end of the recession in mid-2009, the housing market in the United States has remained in a slump while the stock market has recaptured much of the value it lost from 2007 to 2009. Given that a much higher share of whites than minorities own stocks—as well as mutual funds and 401(k) or IRAs—the stock market rebound since 2009 is likely to have benefited white households more than minority households.

Because the majority of Asian American homeowners, particularly the foreign-born, carry their net worth in their home, the loss of this asset is particularly devastating to their financial security. The analysis in this policy brief provides a baseline for understanding Asian American asset-building trends in the aftermath of the Great Recession and foreclosure crisis during the last decade. However, more research and quality data are needed to better capture the assets, liabilities, and economic behavior (e.g., savings vs. spending trends) that accurately reflect the enormous cultural and economic diversity within the Asian American community.

Recommendations

1. **Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) Data:** Require more granular reporting of certain race categories, such

as “Asian.”⁶ Currently, the HMDA utilizes “Asian” as one of its racial categories. However, this category includes a tremendously diverse population of people with origins in the world’s most populous continent. Thus the category is so broad as to be meaningless.

Analysis of HMDA data has generally shown that “Asian” borrowers have similar experiences as do non-Hispanic white borrowers. Yet community-based organizations working in the AAPI community know that several subpopulations in the community have a starkly different experience, and that the broad “Asian” race category has the effect of masking these differing experiences. This category should be broken down further. Additionally, community groups in California have long raised concerns with the Federal Reserve about limited English proficient borrowers being victimized by brokers and lenders. Although census data shows that 18 percent of Americans speak languages other than English in their homes, almost 40 percent of Californians fall into this category; more than half of this population speaks English less than “very well” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean are spoken by approximately 83 percent of all Californians who speak a language other than English in their homes. Specifically, HMDA should be enhanced to require the reporting of loan data that include:

- Disaggregated data for “Asian” borrowers that allow borrowers to identify as Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Thai, or Vietnamese American;
 - The primary language spoken by the loan or loan modification applicant; and
 - The language in which the loan or loan modification application and contract were negotiated.
2. **Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP):** Develop a special survey in connection with the SIPP that oversamples Asian Americans on characteristics in relation to assets, liabilities, and economic behavior (e.g., savings vs. spending trends) and requires more granular reporting of certain Asian American subgroups.
 3. **American Community Survey (ACS):** Develop a special survey in connection with the ACS that oversamples Asian Americans on certain characteristics related to assets, liabilities, and economic behavior (e.g., savings vs. spending trends).

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Notes

1. According to the 2010 Census Briefs, these statistics are based on Asian-alone data. The race-alone population is defined as "individuals who responded to the question on race by indicating only one race or the group that reported only one race category."
2. The 15 metro areas consisted of: 1) Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA; 2) New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA; 3) San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA; 4) San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA; 5) Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI; 6) Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV; 7) Honolulu, HI; 8) Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA; 9) San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA; 10) Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX; 11) Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX; 12) Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH; 13) Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD; 14) Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA; and 15) Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA.
3. The recorded decrease in the wealth of Asian American households, more than three-quarters of which are headed by immigrants, is sensitive to the arrival of new immigrants between 2005 and 2009. The accumulation of assets takes time, and immigrants initially tend to have low levels of wealth.
4. Includes one-unit, noncondominium properties only.
5. Selected monthly owner costs are calculated from the sum of payment for mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities, fuels, mobile home costs, and condominium fees. This item is used to measure housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. E.g., many government agencies define excessive as costs that exceed 30% of household income.
6. Author assisted with the California Reinvestment Coalition's recommendations to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System by providing them with data about Asian Americans.

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Working but Poor in New York City

Howard Shih

Summary

This policy brief summarizes the methodology and key findings of the Asian American Federation's report, *Working but Poor: Asian Americans in New York City*. The report marked the first time Asian American poverty in New York City was examined in detail using the new American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample. The report also uses two definitions to examine struggling Asian Americans, the official poverty thresholds traditionally used and a concept of low-income families defined as families living below twice the federal poverty thresholds. After a summary on the methodology of the report, the brief will cover the findings and recommendations through three issue areas: improving job opportunities for working-age Asian Americans, building skills to help Asian American children broaden their future opportunities, and helping seniors in need of access to the social safety net. The brief concludes with an overview of Asian American poverty from a national perspective and discussion of future areas of study.

Introduction

Even before the economic crisis of 2008, community organizations that serve Asian Americans had trouble attracting their fair share of funding (Gupta and Ritoper, 2007; Sim, 2002). One cause of this funding gap is that poverty in the Asian American community is largely hidden from the general public. This lack of awareness can be traced to a variety of reasons. The success stories of some Asian Americans have created a model minority myth that masks the real need felt by many other Asian American families. Asian Americans in poverty are also reluctant to seek government assistance, partly because of cultural or immigration concerns but also because antipoverty programs in recent years have been focusing on employment. Many Asian American families, as we shall see, are already fully employed and left out of many initiatives. Finally, reports on poverty in New York City often gloss over the issue

of poverty in the Asian American community largely because the headline numbers hide large portions of the Asian American community that are trapped in poverty.

In 2008, the Asian American Federation issued a report entitled *Working but Poor: Asian American Poverty in New York City*. The report tells the story of a productive, hard-working population that nevertheless remains poor for most of their lives, trapped at the bottom of the economic ladder. Release of new ACS data provided an opportunity to examine the characteristics of poor and low-income Asian Americans, inform policy discussions, and create a foundation for tracking the conditions of Asian Americans in the city over time. This policy brief will cover the methodology of our report and outreach, some key findings of our report, and policy considerations based on those findings. The brief will conclude with a discussion of Asian American poverty nationally and outline some future research needs.

Methodology

Because the report sought to shed light on Asian Americans in need, the federation chose to examine Asian Americans who are considered low-income and those who lived below the official poverty line, going beyond the standard reports on poverty. We also chose to compare Asian Americans with non-Hispanic whites in order to challenge the belief that Asian Americans are a model minority.

The report used the 2006 ACS Public Use Microdata Sample. This data set allowed us to take a detailed look at the characteristics of the Asian American population in need. The usual pretabulated products from the U.S. Census Bureau (available on their American Factfinder Web site) only report data for those living below the official poverty threshold and only for selected characteristics.

In creating the report, the federation decided on key characteristics that differentiated low-income Asian Americans from the rest of the low-income population in New York City, based on our knowledge of the challenges our member agencies face when serving Asian Americans in need. For example, we highlighted English proficiency because English-language classes run by our member agencies are oversubscribed in New York City.

Finally, a key component of our program was outreach. The federation sought to publicize the report through existing networks and relationships in order to maximize the impact of the

report. Accordingly, we held a community briefing cohosted by the United Way of New York City and the Human Services Council on October 30, 2008. We reached out to member agency directors, nonprofit leaders, foundation program officers, and government representatives. The federation also held a donor briefing. Attendees included past donors to the federation as well as two members of the mainstream media. As a result of this meeting, My9 and Fox5 stations in New York City ran a ten-minute local news segment that used the data of the report and stories of individuals in the community. All these outreach activities culminated in the New York State governor's office hosting a meeting with the federation, community leaders, and various other nonprofit organizations to discuss ways the state could better serve the Asian American community and its members who are in need.

Report Findings and Recommendations

Overall, Asian American New Yorkers were much more likely to live in poverty than non-Hispanic whites. In the 2006 ACS, Asian American poverty and low-income rates were 18.5 percent and 40.5 percent, respectively, compared with 10.8 percent and 23.8 percent for non-Hispanic whites and 19.3 percent and 38.8 percent for the total city population.

A parity index analysis of poverty rates and low-income rates is more revealing for the Asian American community. Comparing 2000 and 2006 data shows that although blacks and Hispanics improved their relative positions to that of non-Hispanic whites, Asian Americans did not improve their standing. A higher parity index for poverty rates in 2006 means that the Asian American poverty rate was higher in 2006 relative to that of non-Hispanic whites. The analysis suggests that whatever policies or economic conditions that helped reduce poverty in New York City from 2000 to 2006 failed to help Asian Americans as much as other race and ethnic groups. (See Table 1, next page)

Extending the analysis to children (those under 18 years of age), working-age residents (age 18 to 64), and seniors (those 65 years of age or older) shows a variety of changes in poverty between 2000 and 2006. Asian Americans of working age had comparable changes in poverty and low-income rate parity indices compared with blacks and Hispanics. For children and seniors, Asian Americans fared relatively worse than blacks and Hispanics.

Table 1. Parity Index Analysis of Poverty and Low Income Rates

Total Population	2000	2006	Percent Change
Parity Index for Poverty Rate (Normalized to Non-Hispanic Whites)			
Asian	1.63	1.71	5%
Black	2.14	2.13	-1%
Hispanic	2.57	2.56	0%
Parity Index for Low-Income Rates (Normalized to Non-Hispanic Whites)			
Asian	1.70	1.70	0%
Black	1.86	1.78	-4%
Hispanic	2.32	2.23	-4%
Working Age Population			
Parity Index for Poverty Rate (Normalized to Non-Hispanic Whites)			
Asian	1.71	1.62	-5%
Black	2.16	2.14	-1%
Hispanic	2.63	2.53	-4%
Parity Index for Low-Income Rates (Normalized to Non-Hispanic Whites)			
Asian	1.92	1.87	-3%
Black	1.98	1.93	-3%
Hispanic	2.56	2.50	-2%
Children			
Parity Index for Poverty Rate (Normalized to Non-Hispanic Whites)			
Asian	1.39	1.75	26%
Black	2.04	2.23	10%
Hispanic	2.43	2.62	8%
Parity Index for Low-Income Rates (Normalized to Non-Hispanic Whites)			
Asian	1.59	1.65	4%
Black	1.82	1.72	-5%
Hispanic	2.13	2.07	-3%
Seniors			
Parity Index for Poverty Rate (normalized to non-Hispanic whites)			
Asian	2.05	2.30	12%
Black	2.03	1.46	-28%
Hispanic	2.62	2.19	-16%
Parity Index for Low-Income Rates (normalized to non-Hispanic whites)			
Asian	1.12	1.03	-8%
Black	1.16	1.06	-8%
Hispanic	1.50	1.38	-8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4; 2006 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample

The poverty experiences of Asian American New Yorkers, and perhaps of the immigrant population in general, suggest several implications for policies and programs to increase economic opportunity for low-income Asian American New Yorkers. These recommendations seek to address three key issues that may help to explain the differences seen in the parity index analysis: low-income Asian Americans are more likely to be working in ethnic-enclave economies and unable to access the full range of economic opportunities that the city offers, low-income children tend to live in two-parent, linguistically isolated households, and Asian American seniors often are missed by many of the social safety nets that alleviate senior poverty in the United States.

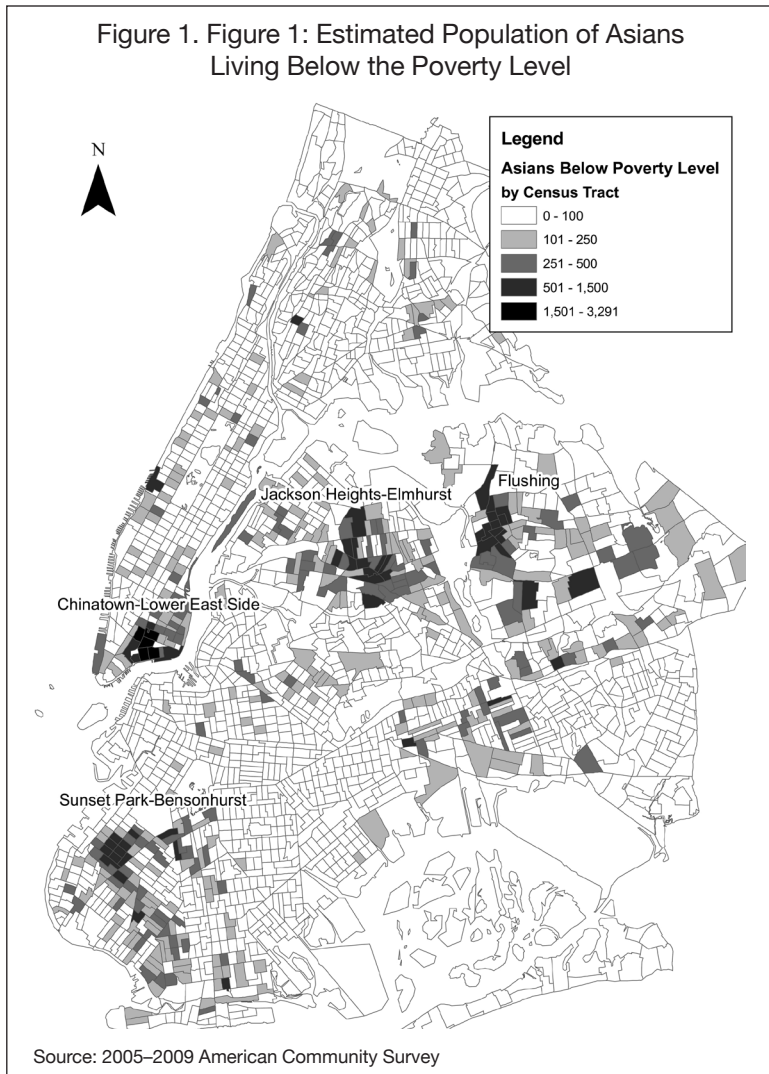
Low-Income Asian American Workers in Enclave Economies

The characteristics of working-age Asian American New Yorkers show that obtaining employment is not the primary challenge that faces poor Asian Americans. Rather developing job skills to seek work beyond the ethnic-enclave economies is a major barrier. Working-age Asian American New Yorkers were more likely to be among the working poor than the general city population in that age group. Almost half (47%) of working-age Asian Americans below the poverty level were participating in the labor force in 2006, compared with 42 percent of all working-age adults. The unemployment rate of working-age Asian Americans in poverty was 16 percent, compared with 27 percent for all poor New Yorkers in that age group.

Poor and low-income Asian Americans were more apt to work full time (35 or more hours a week) than the city's low-income population overall. Almost one-third (31%) of working-age Asian Americans in poverty worked full time, compared with less than one-fourth (24%) of all poor working-age adults. Among low-income working-age adults, 57 percent of Asian Americans and 52 percent of all New Yorkers worked full time.

Although employment is less of an obstacle to working-age Asian Americans in poverty, the quality of the jobs held remains a challenge. Recently released data from the 2005–2009 ACS confirms the physical ties that many poor Asian Americans have to the ethnic-enclave economies. Geographically, Asian American New Yorkers living in poverty were clustered around the four major ethnic enclaves. The most famous is the working-class Chinatown

and Lower East Side neighborhoods of Manhattan. In addition, Flushing in Queens and Sunset Park and Bensonhurst in Brooklyn have large populations of Asian Americans in poverty. The Jackson Heights and Elmhurst neighborhoods in Queens were home to many South Asians as well as to Chinese who were living below the poverty level. The Asian American poor cluster in these neighborhoods so that they may live close to sources of jobs and services. There also exists an alternative network of commuter vans



that connects the three major ethnic enclaves of Chinatown, Sunset Park, and Flushing that complements the extensive mass-transit network already in the city.

Further evidence of poor and low-income Asian Americans' reliance on the ethnic-enclave economies can be seen in the types of occupations and industries that employ them. Poor and low-income Asian Americans were more likely than Asian Americans with higher incomes to work in service, production, transportation, and material-moving occupations. These occupational categories reinforce what our social-service agency partners have seen in the community. Poor and low-income Asian Americans are more likely to be employed as waiters, cooks, hairdressers, barbers, garment workers, taxi drivers, and warehouse workers. Food services, retail trade, manufacturing, construction, and other service-industry groups employed disproportionately large percentages of poor and low-income Asian Americans. These reflect the ethnic-enclave economies' reliance on restaurants, retail stores, garment industry, personal care services, and laundry services.

As part of our report, the federation made several types of recommendations to help address the needs of low-income working-age Asian Americans:

- Improving economic opportunities for immigrants addresses the primary causes of persistent poverty: low wages and limited employment opportunities. Building English ability, learning new job skills, and using existing skills and credentials better would help immigrants advance to superior jobs.
- Supporting economic development efforts in enclave economies that encourage a diversified, vibrant business community rather than a hypercompetitive, low-margin, narrow economy would help stabilize the local economy and raise wages and labor standards.
- Increasing the availability of low-income housing is critical for alleviating poverty. More than 90 percent of Asian households in poverty spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, the commonly used threshold for affordable housing.

Children

We found that among children, family and language differences separated Asian American children in poverty from New

York City children in general. Roughly one in four Asian American children in New York City (25.6%) lived in poverty during 2006. Asian American children had a slightly lower poverty rate than all New York City children (28.3%) but a somewhat higher low-income rate (52.2% for Asian Americans compared with 51.1%).

The majority of Asian American children in poverty lived in a different family setting than poor New York City children as a group. More than half (55%) of Asian American children below the poverty level in 2006 lived in two-parent households in which only the father worked. An additional 15 percent lived in two-income, two-parent households. By contrast, among the general population, the majority (58%) of poor children lived in single-mother households, and slightly more than half of those mothers were employed. Asian American children in poverty were also less likely to live in households with all parents unemployed: less than one in eight poor Asian American children and about one in three of all children in poverty lived in such conditions.

Poor and low-income school-age Asian American children (ages 5 to 17) were about twice as likely to face language obstacles as school-age city children overall in those income categories. Almost one-third (32%) of poor school-age Asian American children were limited English proficient, compared with 15 percent of all city children in that age group, during 2006. For low-income school-age children, 28 percent of Asian Americans and 14 percent of all children had limited English skills. Almost half (49%) of Asian American children below the poverty level were in linguistically isolated households, compared with less than one-quarter (23%) of all children. In the low-income range, language isolation affected 44 percent of Asian American school-age children, double the rate for school-age children overall.

In our report, the federation made a series of recommendations to address the needs of low-income Asian American children. Many of the recommendations for working-age adults will positively improve conditions for many children; the following recommendations are targeted at the children and their parents specifically:

- Investing in child care, schools, and youth development programs in immigrant communities is essential to enabling working families to break out of poverty by enriching future opportunities for the next generation.

- Improve communications with immigrant parents to encourage them to enroll their children in these programs so youth can fully expand their resource repertoires beyond academic success.

Seniors

Seniors were the poorest of the three Asian American age groups in New York City. Almost one in three elderly Asian Americans (31.3%) lived in poverty during 2006. That poverty rate surpassed that of senior New Yorkers overall (19.4%) and all other race and ethnic groups in the city. Also in 2006, more than half (54.1%) of elderly Asian Americans were low-income, compared with 42.6 percent of all older New Yorkers.

Poor and low-income Asian American seniors, on the one hand, and seniors citywide, on the other, displayed major differences in household makeup. Almost two-thirds (64%) of elderly Asian Americans in poverty lived in households headed by married couples, compared with 27 percent of all poor New York City elders, during 2006. Only 28 percent of impoverished Asian American seniors lived in nonfamily households, compared with 59 percent of all city seniors in poverty. Although less than one-third (31%) of elderly Asian Americans in married-couple family households lived in poverty, the majority (58%) of older Asian Americans in nonfamily households were poor. More than four in five Asian American seniors in nonfamily households (83%) were low income.

Finally, Asian American immigrant seniors who recently arrived were much more likely to be living in poverty. More than half of Asian American immigrant seniors who arrived between 2000 and 2006 lived in poverty, compared to slightly more than one-quarter of Asian American immigrant seniors who arrived before the year 2000. Many of these most recent arrivals do not have access to Social Security or Medicare.

In our report the federation recommends:

- Educating workers to file income-tax returns and pay due employment taxes in order to establish a work history would enable workers to invest in the Social Security system for their future retirement. Many workers in the enclave economy who choose not to file income taxes put themselves at risk to be living in poverty when they retire.
- Enabling elderly Asian American immigrants to benefit fully from the social safety net that has protected the

general elderly population is vital to combating poverty among elderly Asian American and to nurturing their well-being.

- Providing opportunities for active Asian American seniors to participate in the economy and community as workers or paid volunteers would increase earning opportunities and enrich their quality of life. The Senior Community Service Employment Program provides subsidized, part-time community service employment and work-based training for low-income adults age fifty-five or older who have poor employment prospects. Participants are paid at the highest minimum-wage standard, whether federal, state, or local, and mostly work part time. The program's goal is to place 30 percent of participants into unsubsidized jobs. The Foster Grandparent Program is another example of engaging active seniors and includes a stipend.

National Implications and Future Work

The Asian American Federation submitted this paper to encourage other Asian American organizations to utilize public data to examine the issue of poverty in their region and to advocate for informed policy changes in order to help those in need.

Nationally, Asian Americans had a higher poverty rate than non-Hispanic whites. A parity index analysis of 2005–2009 ACS data shows that, nationally, the Asian American poverty parity index was 116, compared to 172 for New York State. The Asian American poverty rate was 10.9 percent nationally compared to 15.4 percent in New York State, compared with 9.4 percent nationally and 9.0 percent in New York for non-Hispanic whites. New York State is sadly not unique. Thirty-six other states had Asian American poverty parity indices greater than 116. Five states had higher parity indices than New York State: Minnesota, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Utah.

Although our analysis focused on New York City, many of the same issues are faced by Asian Americans across the country. The focus on improving job opportunities for working-age Asian Americans, building skills to help Asian American children broaden their future opportunities, and helping seniors in need access the social safety net are all generally applicable to Asian Americans nationally. However, a number of factors may differentiate New York City Asian Americans in poverty from their counterparts nationally. Poor Asian American New Yorkers are predominately working-

class economic migrants with a strong history of immigration. As a result, Asian American New Yorkers benefit from a network of community-based organizations focused on helping them navigate and adapt to life in the United States. In other parts of the country, some Asian American communities are refugees, who fled political and social turmoil in their home countries. Often they are resettled in areas far away from other Asian American communities and have to build their own support infrastructure. Examples of these groups include the Burmese and Bhutanese, who have seen large increases in refugees granted residency in the United States during the latter half of the 2000s. The federation found Burmese refugee communities in Albany and Buffalo, New York, during our 2010 census outreach campaign. Another factor of differentiation is that there exists a strong dichotomy between New York City and the surrounding suburbs. Low-income Asian Americans are more likely to live in New York City while more well-off Asian Americans are attracted to the suburbs. By contrast, in California, Asian Americans are less concentrated in the urban core and have a more balanced income distribution between the urban core and the suburbs.

In the future, the federation plans to update our *Working but Poor* report with new data from the ongoing ACS. We look to address new topics, such as health insurance coverage among the poor and low-income Asian Americans, and revisit the analyses in the first report to track how the community is doing.

Notes

1. The Urban Institute defines *low-income* as less than twice the federal poverty level. Urban Institute, "Low-Income Working Families: Facts and Figures." <http://www.urban.org/publications/900832.html> (accessed August 8, 2008).
2. *Linguistic isolation* is defined as including all members of a household in which no adults (people age 14 or older) speak English only or speak English very well.

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EDUCATION

aapi nexus

Educational Data, Research Methods, Policies, and Practices that Matter for AAPIs

Shirley Hune

The oft-cited proverb “It takes a whole village to raise a child” is clearly inadequate in the twenty-first century. To educate today’s youth, who are more diverse in race, culture, family background, and life experiences than ever before in this nation’s history, takes more than top-down educational reform. It takes an entire nation and the full participation of all constituents and institutions. Particularly for overlooked groups, it also requires policies and programs that matter, support and advance their needs, and include their input. Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) students are such groups.

Asian Americans and NHPs have faced three major conundrums in addressing their educational issues. First is the problem of stereotypes. Asian Americans are seen publically as a “model minority,” whereby, despite contrary evidence, all Asian Americans are deemed academically successful. NHPs are made “invisible,” lumped with Asian Americans, or discounted as distinct entities. These stereotypes contribute to the benign neglect they suffer by educators, researchers, and policy makers, which results in limited data and research on their education, and the unmet academic needs of segments of these populations. Second, even though the U.S. Census Bureau collects data on twenty-four Asian American ethnic categories, they are treated statistically and socially as a homogenous group, oftentimes combined with twenty-four ethnic categories of NHPs, in much other data collection and research information. Asian American or Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) aggregate data is insufficient; disaggregated data uncovers their complexity in order to better serve sectors of these diverse groups. Third, racism and anti-immigrant biases have not vanished for Asian Americans or NHPs, contrary

to the belief of many in U.S. society. Consequently, they should be included in policies, programs, and funding available to underserved racial and ethnic minority groups, from which they are often left out (CARE, 2008; Hune and Chan, 1997). The five policy briefs in this section provide new insights, findings, and recommendations regarding these three matters.

Four of the briefs make suggestions to strengthen research design and data collection. First, Julie J. Park discusses the value of survey research by using the disaggregated data in the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute's Cooperative Institutional Research Program's Freshman Survey, namely, gender and income level. The data reveal how Asian American first-year college students have changed over time from 1971 to 2005 and in what ways their experiences and attitudes have remained much the same. Park identifies "potentially troubling findings." For example, Asian American students' report lower self-perceptions of their leadership abilities compared to other groups. She makes recommendations for survey research design to enhance the collection of rich and nuanced data from Asian American students upon which educators and policy makers can act in order to improve educational outcomes.

In the second brief, Dina C. Maramba focuses on Southeast Asian American (SEAA) college students, an overlooked group. She also affirms the importance of disaggregated data that identifies SEAs as having more economic and educational challenges than other Asian American groups. Maramba finds qualitative studies equally valuable in informing policy, calls for meaningful research on SEAs, using both quantitative and ethnic-specific qualitative approaches, and advocates for collaboration with SEAA community organizations. She also recommends effective collection of disaggregated data at all stages of the pipeline in order to develop appropriate policies and support services for SEAA college students.

Two case studies by Nga-Wing Anjela Wong and Jacob Cohen and OiYan A. Poon, respectively, focus on the K-12 sector. They adopt qualitative methods and community-based research as valued modes of data collection, incorporate students' interviews and observations, and illustrate the role that Asian Americans do play and can play in the educational arena, if they are included. They point out such activities are insufficiently recognized by educators, researchers, and policy makers to the detriment of students' academic development.

The third brief by Wong views community-based organizations (CBOs) as a form of “community cultural wealth” and reinforces Maramba’s suggestion to include CBOs in family-community-school partnerships. Based on ethnographic research, Wong documents the role and impact of an East Coast CBO she calls Harborview Chinatown Community Center and its out-of-school time (OST) programs in supporting low-income youth and their immigrant families in their efforts to navigate and negotiate the disconnects among school, home, and U.S. society that may hinder student success. Her recommendations include greater recognition and funding for culturally relevant CBOs and OST programs as well as suggestions for researchers.

The fourth brief by Cohen and Poon challenges the “charter school miracle” in post-Katrina New Orleans for Vietnamese Americans and other students. This study adopts a community-based Youth Participatory Action Research methodology that involves students as researchers in the evaluation of six New Orleans high schools, a marked contrast from quantitative measures used by officials. In incorporating students’ views and experiences regarding academic rigor and access to quality teachers, for example, the study finds the persistence of disparities whereby Vietnamese American students are severely underserved. To expand the democratic process and increase the validity and relevance of research findings, Cohen and Poon recommend methodologies that incorporate the input of youth in educational policy reform in which they are the subjects being acted upon and from which they are currently excluded in what is largely a top-down process.

In the final brief, Robert T. Teranishi raises the national visibility of the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) program and considers its importance in meeting the needs of AAPI students with economic challenges. This initiative is part of the federally funded Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI) program. In evaluating how the initial fifteen AANAPISI-designated campuses have used their funds, he finds that the three areas common to most academic and student support services, leadership and mentorship opportunities, and research and resource development, are having a measureable impact on the access and success of low-income AAPI college students. Teranishi’s recommendations to strengthen the AANAPISI program include the full recognition of AANAPISI-designated institutions as MSIs and increasing their number and funding.

Collectively, these five policy briefs provide valuable new data. They also make recommendations for improved data collection, research approaches, policy development, and program funding to meet Asian American and NHPI educational needs.

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Asian American College Students over the Decades:

Insights from Studying
Asian American First-Year Students
from 1971 to 2005 Using
Survey Research Data

Julie J. Park

Summary

The purpose of this brief is to discuss insights from using survey data from the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute's Cooperative Institutional Research Program's (CIRP) Freshman Survey to study Asian American first-year students. The CIRP is the country's oldest, ongoing study of college students, and 361,271 Asian American students have completed the survey since its inception. In addition to describing unique findings that came from disaggregating data by gender and income level, I discuss the need for survey response options to be tailored to the needs of Asian American students.

Introduction

A perennial lament in the research on Asian American college students is that there is simply not enough. As part of the effort to help fill this void, I was part of a research team with collaborators Mitchell Chang, OiYan A. Poon, Monica Lin, and Don Nakanishi that wrote two reports, *Beyond Myths: The Growth and Diversity of Asian American College Freshman, 1971–2005* (Chang et al., 2007), and "Asian American College Students and Civic Engagement" (Park et al., 2008). I begin by explaining the background of our projects and note some of the unique findings that our analyses unveiled due to our ability to disaggregate by sex and family income. I then discuss some of the questions raised by our work, as well as its limitations, and end with suggestions for future research.

Background

The projects originated from an invitation from the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute to analyze thirty-five years of accumulated data on Asian American college students. The CIRP is the country's oldest ongoing national longitudinal study of college students, with more than fifteen million participants since the surveys began in 1966. It is important to note that the CIRP is representative of the national first-time (both first-time enrollment and first year of college), full-time college-going population. The Asian American college-going population is exceptionally diverse, and almost half of Asian American undergraduates enrolled in higher education institutions attend two-year institutions. Unfortunately, the data do not adequately capture this sector of the college population. Still, the survey is a rich repository of data on college students' beliefs, values, and experiences over time. With 361,271 students, it is the largest compilation and analysis of data on Asian American college students to date. One sign of the times is how racial/ethnic categorizations have evolved in CIRP surveys, and they continue to do so. For instance, during the early years of the survey, Asian American students only had the option of checking "Oriental." It is important to note that the CIRP did not include a separate "Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander" response option until 2001; prior to this, students would have either checked "Asian/Asian American" or "Other." The analyses described below are limited to participants who identified as Asian/Asian American in the CIRP over the years.

Methods and Key Findings

When we began the project, we were interested in disaggregating the data by sex and household income. A common misperception of Asian American college students is that they are a homogeneous population. Unfortunately, only one year of the CIRP, 1997, disaggregated the Asian American category by ethnic subgroup (giving the response options of "Chinese American/Chinese, Filipino American/Pilipino, Japanese American/Japanese, Korean American/Korean, Southeast Asian [Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, etc.], and other Asian American/Asian"), and thus we were unable to make comparisons over time using data disaggregated by ethnicity. However, by disaggregating by sex and income, we were able to identify key findings that would have gone otherwise

undetected. As documented in the *Beyond Myths* report, we found that although 48.1 percent of respondents reported being native English speakers in 1987 when the question was first introduced, by 2005, 58.6 percent reported being native English speakers. When we disaggregated responses by household income, we found that from 1990 to 2005 nearly half of nonnative English speakers consistently came from low-income families, suggesting that nonnative English speakers encounter multiple challenges in higher education.

We also found notable trends when disaggregating by sex and income. In 1971, a higher percentage of Asian American men than women came from low-income backgrounds. In 1980 and 1990, roughly equal proportions of Asian American men and women came from low-income backgrounds, but beginning in 2000 and continuing into 2005, Asian American female college students were more likely than male students to come from low-income families. In the report we commented: "This trend is partially related to the increased enrollment of Asian American women in higher education, but it also reveals that a significant portion of these female students are coming from low-income backgrounds. Although the increased enrollment of Asian American female students in higher education is something to celebrate, it begs the question of whose enrollment is not keeping pace: male Asian American students, particularly those from low-income households" (Chang et al., 2007, 11).

Another advantage of our data was the ability to compare cohorts of students over time. This approach was especially helpful when studying trends related to college access and choice. We found that the percentage of Asian Americans applying to six or more colleges increased substantially over time, from 10.7 percent in 1980 to 35.9 percent in 2005. We also found that, consistently over time, high-income Asian American students were most likely to apply to six or more colleges, although the gaps between the income groups have narrowed over time. A key benefit of the CIRP data is that we were able to compare Asian Americans with the overall national population of first-time, full-time college students who completed the CIRP. Thus, we found that the percentage of Asian American students applying to six or more colleges (35.9%) far exceeded the percentage of students from the national population (17.4%). Additionally, we found that, "In 1974, 77.2% of the national population and 68.0% of Asian American students reported attending their first choice college. By 2005, the difference between

the two groups doubled: while 69.8% of students from the national population reported attending their first choice college, only 51.8% of Asian American students did so. Also, the percentage of Asian American first-year students who reported to be enrolled at an institution considered to be less than their second choice more than tripled from 5.3% in 1975 to 19.7% in 2005" (Chang et al., 2007, 17). Contrary to the model minority stereotype, the majority of Asian American college students do not attend selective or highly selective institutions. Still, our findings identify some noteworthy trends about how some Asian American students are navigating the selective admissions process.

In addition to findings related to students' academic preparation, career aspirations, and majors, our analyses include rich information about Asian American students' political and civic activities and attitudes. This information is particularly relevant for policy makers and community activists interested in understanding the landscape for the Asian American young adult vote, as well as those interested in how Asian Americans are reacting to key social issues. We found that, overall, there was a substantial decline in the percentage of Asian American college students who found it very important or essential to keep up to date with political affairs from 1990 to 2000, although the percentages increased slightly from 2000 to 2005. In 2005, slightly more Asian Americans identified as "middle of the road" or "left or liberal" in comparison to the national population of first-time, full-time college students.

With specific political issues, we found some consistency as well as some shifts over time. The percentage of students who supported a national plan to "cover everybody's medical costs" increased from 68.1 percent to 78.1 percent from 1980 to 2005. Almost half (44.7%) of Asian American students opposed same-sex relationships in 1980, but only 24.7 percent of students supported prohibiting them by 2005. Consistently, more than 60 percent of cohorts over time supported keeping abortion legal, with the highest percentage being in 1992. Consistent with previous research, we found that Asian American students were roughly split fifty-fifty on the issue of affirmative action. However, when we disaggregated findings by sex, we found that there was less of a gap between female and male support for affirmative action for Asian Americans than the overall college population. In 2005, the national population of male college students was approximately ten percentage

more points likely than female college students to oppose affirmative action, while Asian American men were only 5.4 percentage points more likely to oppose the policy than Asian American women. In subsequent analysis of CIRP data (Park, 2009) I found that although 51.1 percent of Asian American first-year students supported affirmative action, by the end of their fourth year of college, 62.6 percent of Asian American college students indicated support for race-conscious admissions policies.

We also found that Asian American students have expressed more interest in shaping the world around them in recent years. The percentage of Asian American students stating that it was very important or essential for them to be a leader in their community almost tripled from 1971 (13.0%) to 2005 (32.3%). From 1971 to 2005, we also found increases in the percentage of students who wanted to influence social values (29.8% to 42.3%) and the political structure (15.8% to 21.4%). In 2005, 44.6 percent of Asian American first-year students stated that it was very important or essential to have administrative responsibility for others, versus 25.1 percent in 1971.

The findings from *Beyond Myths* sparked our interest in Asian American students' civic and political capacities. Thus, we continued our analysis in a chapter focusing specifically on civic and political engagement featured for a volume compiled by Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP). In the LEAP report, we also disaggregated data in certain cases by citizenship and language heritage. Interestingly, we found little difference between Asian American students who were citizens versus those who were not, as well as between native English speakers versus nonnative English speakers, in their reported levels of volunteering prior to college. We found some differences between male and female respondents in the area of volunteering. In 2005, Asian American women were 18.4 percentage points more likely to anticipate volunteering in the future than men, and they were more likely to prioritize becoming involved in a community action program. We also found that Asian Americans have been consistently slightly more likely than the national population to view participating in environmental cleanup programs as important or very important.

One of our most intriguing but potentially troubling findings is related to shifts in self-rated leadership ability over time. In 1971, roughly the same percentage of Asian American women

and women from the overall national population ranked themselves as being in the top 10 percent amongst their peers in leadership ability. Both groups of women trailed behind Asian American men and men from the overall national population. In 1971, Asian American men were actually slightly more likely than men from the national population to see themselves as being in the top 10 percent of their peers in leadership ability. However, this dynamic has shifted over time. By 1990, males from the overall national population were most likely to see themselves as being in the upper echelon of leadership ability, followed by women from the overall national population, followed by Asian American men, and finally by Asian American women. By 2005, the overall male first-year college population was notably more likely than Asian American female college students to see themselves as being in the top 10 percent of leadership ability: "In 2005, 64.5% of men overall, 58.7% of women overall, 51.6% of Asian American men, and 49.4% of Asian American females rated themselves as having top leadership abilities" (Park et al., 2008, 87). Overall, we found that although roughly equitable percentages of Asian American male and female college students see themselves as having top leadership potential, they are less likely to regard themselves as being top leaders than the overall national populations of male and female populations of first-year college students.

Limitations and Unanswered Questions

Although quantitative analysis provides rich snapshots of broad trends affecting a substantial portion of the Asian American college-going population, it is constrained by the limitations of survey research and secondary data analysis. One of the biggest limitations is the inability to disaggregate CIRP data beyond the 1997 dataset. Another key limitation is that all surveys rely on self-reported data, and at times we may be unsure of how students interpreted certain questions or why they answered certain questions the way they did. For instance, the gap between Asian Americans and the national population's self-rated leadership ability seems troubling. However, do we really know that Asian American students have less self-confidence in their leadership skills? Wang, Hempton, Dugan, and Komives (2008) summarize several studies that found that Asian Americans are less likely to select extreme survey responses on Likert scale-type questions

(e.g., “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree”). In their own analysis from data from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership, they found that U.S.-born Asian Americans were slightly more likely than foreign-born Asian Americans to select extreme survey responses, but that overall, “Asian/Asian American students favor middle options and avoid extreme responses more often than any other racial/ethnic groups, no matter what the question was asked about.” Fascinatingly, they found that some trends depend on the racial diversity of the respondent’s institution: “For 78% of the items, the odds of selecting middle options for Asian/Asian American students increased as the percentage of Asian students in the total student population increased.” They note several implications of their study; for instance, they suggest that researchers interpret Likert scales with caution and test different types of questions in order to capture Asian/Asian American opinions better.

Recommendations

Overall, our findings illuminate the numerous complexities and nuances that emerge when data on Asian American college students are disaggregated by sex and household income. They also provide a rich snapshot of the ways in which Asian American students have changed over time and identify areas in which their experiences and attitudes have remained more consistent throughout the decades. Such findings pave the way for future studies and provide greater context for researchers trying to understand better the experiences of Asian Americans attending four-year institutions. Our studies affirm and reflect much of the diversity of the Asian American college-going population—past, present, and future.

Survey research plays a critical role in identifying key trends within and between populations, and such research is an essential tool for researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and community members as they seek to understand the needs of the Asian American community. Beyond the CIRP surveys, it is critical for other large-scale surveys of college students to make a special effort to capture representative samples of Asian American students. Data disaggregation by ethnicity is also necessary in order to ensure that sampling procedures are capturing the diversity of the Asian American college-going population; disaggregation is also needed to allow researchers to identify pertinent trends and inequalities in educational outcomes.

However, as Wang et al. (2008) remind us, it is important for researchers to be sensitive to some of the limitations of survey research. Future researchers should further analyze how Asian Americans respond to certain types of survey questions; they should also consider triangulating responses from multiple questions and/or data sources. Qualitative research is particularly needed to provide some of the depth and detail of Asian American students' experiences, attitudes, and self-assessments. In addition, mixed-methods approaches can supply valuable insight. By using multiple analytic methods, researchers can furnish a valuable service to the community by capturing patterns in Asian American students' experiences that can illuminate our collective understanding of this growing and diverse population.

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The Importance of Critically Disaggregating Data: The Case of Southeast Asian American College Students

Dina C. Maramba

Summary

The following policy brief calls for the improvement in data collection of Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) and, more specifically, Southeast Asian Americans (SEAs) in order to facilitate college access and success. First, context and the concern for the lack of data are provided. Second, an explanation of the challenges with the existing data and importance of disaggregating data with regard to ethnicity and other important factors such as language and generational status are discussed. Also emphasized is the importance of incorporating the use of qualitative data in the policy decision-making process. Third, suggestions and recommendations that will benefit research and eventually positively influence policy decisions regarding SEAs in education are discussed.

Context and Concern for the Lack of Data

AAPI college students continue to be one of the most misunderstood and misrepresented populations in higher education. In comparison to other racial groups, empirical research on AAPIs is severely lacking. For example, despite the increasing number of AAPIs entering higher education overall, a recent study conducted on major scholarly journals (Museus, 2009b) revealed that only 1 percent of articles focused specifically on Asian Americans. Thus, the little research that exists provides only a partial picture of the college experiences and issues concerning AAPI students in higher education.

Though there are a myriad of root causes for the lack of research on AAPI college students, three will be discussed here.

First, the pervasive model minority stereotype continues to plague the discourse on AAPIs. The many misperceptions associated with this stereotype that suggest all AAPI students are academically successful have created a skewed view of them for higher education institutions, especially with regard to serving the needs and concerns of AAPI college students. Second, attempting to capture an accurate picture of specific AAPIs, which include forty-eight ethnic groups within this category, is virtually impossible (National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education [CARE], 2010).

Third, the lumping together of these diverse ethnic groups fails to provide a clear understanding of the multiplicity and complexity that exists within the AAPI group (Hune, 2002; Maramba, 2008a). Diversity within the AAPI grouping varies, for example, with regard to ethnicity, language, religion, U.S. generational status, social class, and family characteristics (Yeh, 2004). These differences are critical to understanding the AAPI subpopulations. Thus, a number of researchers have advocated considering these factors when assessing the needs and concerns of AAPI college students.

Challenges of Existing Data and Research

Researchers who study the AAPI population have long stressed the need to disaggregate existing data on AAPIs. The limited data that exists indicates that there are large disparities among the AAPI ethnic groups. One such group, SEAs, namely, Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese, offers a particular challenge to the discourse on AAPIs.

Upon closer examination, SEAs have some of the highest poverty rates among communities of color with 37.8 percent of the Hmong, 29.3 percent of the Cambodians, 18.5 percent of Laotians, and 16.6 percent of the Vietnamese living in poverty compared to the national average of 12.4 percent (Reeves and Bennett, 2004; Teranishi, 2010). With regard to educational attainment, the rate of SEAs with less than a high school education is considerably high (Hmong, 59.6%; Cambodian, 53.3%; Lao, 49.6%; and Vietnamese, 38.1%) (Reeves and Bennett, 2004; Teranishi, 2010). Moreover, the number of those who obtain a bachelor of arts degree or higher is disproportionately low (Hmong, 7.5%; Cambodian, 9.2%; Lao, 7.7%; and Vietnamese, 19.4%) compared to the national average of 25.9 percent (Reeves and Bennett, 2004; Teranishi, 2010).

Despite the popular notion that most AAPIs attend Ivy League institutions, the majority enrolls in public institutions. Moreover, SEAs are less likely than other AAPI groups to attend selective institutions. They are also more likely than other AAPI groups to attend a community college after high school (CARE, 2010). Also worth noting is that although many SEAs enroll in college, they are less likely than other AAPIs to earn a degree (Laotians, 49.2%; Cambodians, 48.2%; Hmong, 45.5%; and Vietnamese, 36.7%) (CARE, 2010). In addition, they are twice as likely to transfer out of school for nonacademic reasons (CARE, 2010). With regard to financing college, SEAs compared to their Asian American counterparts are more likely to need more financial support (Chang et al., 2007). The existing statistical data on SEAs are useful and have brought the need for increased research on this population to the surface. More specifically, although the few available quantitative data (e.g., U.S. Census and National Center for Education Studies data) provide a broad picture of issues that need to be addressed, gaps remain.

The need for increased qualitative data is equally important. To date, just as there is a lack of quantitative data, empirical qualitative data is severely needed. The emergence of a few qualitative studies on AAPIs has further provided us with critical and in-depth information about the challenges that AAPIs face in educational institutions (e.g., Hune, 2002; Hune and Chan, 2000; Kiang, 2006; Suzuki, 2002). These studies have given us an emerging picture of the AAPI experiences in K-12 and address other prevalent issues affecting the population in general. Qualitative research approaches have contributed to new understandings about AAPIs as a general category as well as given insight about specific AAPI ethnicities. These studies have also challenged existing policies and practices in the K-12 arena (e.g., Kiang, 2006; Lee, 1996, 2005, 2006; Lew, 2004a, 2004b).

In addition, research on AAPIs at the higher education level, although few in number (e.g., Chang et al., 2007; Hune, 2002; Maramba, 2008a; Museus, 2009a; Park et al., 2008), have addressed the challenges that AAPI students face in postsecondary environments. Moreover, some higher education researchers have also studied specific AAPI ethnicities (e.g., Maramba, 2008a, 2008b; Museus and Maramba, 2011) including an emerging number focusing on SEAA college students (e.g., Chhuon and Hudley, 2008;

Dao, 1991; Museus, 2009b; Teranishi and Nguyen, 2009). For example, Chhuon and Hudley (2008) examined the college experiences of Cambodian Americans and emphasized the importance of how keeping strong connections with their communities enhanced academic success during college. Additionally, in their study of SEAA youth in California, Teranishi and Nguyen (2009) underscored the significance of the effects of ethnic segregation and isolation on the college-going aspirations and preparation of this population. These critical examinations of AAPIs with regard to specific ethnicities must continue. Moreover, these qualitative studies also demonstrate the significance and the need for more research in this area. In sum, research on AAPIs reveals the value that qualitative data complemented with quantitative data provide in informing and eventually creating more effective policies that affect AAPIs.

The concern regarding data on SEAs is not only the lack thereof but also the necessity of more critical data, quantitative and qualitative, for policy makers to use in effective decision-making and implementation.

Recommendations for Research and Policy

These concerns regarding SEAA college students have grave implications for research and its relationship to policy. Without the availability of data, ineffective or even nonexistent policies may result. Although the current data on SEAs is very useful, a number of areas in research can be vastly improved in order to provide information that will allow for effective decision making for policy makers. The following are suggestions and recommendations that will benefit research and eventually positively influence policy decisions regarding SEAs.

- Aggressive steps toward supporting research on SEAs need to continue. Investment, for example, through funded research grants can encourage additional research in this area. In addition, collaboration of various entities must take place. More specifically, empirical research studies and data collected by research faculty as well as the important work of community organizations should be further supported. For example, organizations such as the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center and the National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese Americans are key components in helping advance the concerns of SEAs.

Collaboration among researchers, faculty, and community organizations supported through funding may help identify needs and drive research on SEAs.

- The effective utilization of varied research methodologies by researchers and policy makers is vital. Although quantitative data are critical in understanding this population, qualitative empirical data are equally valuable. Utilizing qualitative data during the policy-making process can often be overlooked, dismissed, or misperceived as anecdotal and unimportant. Although quantitative data may explain trends, qualitative data elucidates why these trends are occurring. Understanding the complementary relationship of quantitative and qualitative data is particularly important in studying populations that are underserved and underrepresented in educational institutions, such as SEAs. Furthermore, comparative and longitudinal studies are also important toward documenting inequities across groups and change over time.
- Most importantly, the effective collection of data by educational institutions at all stages of the pipeline is critical. As asserted by a number of researchers, not only is it important to collect data on Asian Americans, but also it is imperative to collect data disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender separately, race/ethnicity and gender combined, socioeconomic class, and other variables. Data concerning generational status, language used at home and at school, and parents' educational background and income are especially useful in addressing the needs of SEAA students. These types of data are vital for researchers and policy makers to understand critically the contextual relationships and inextricable links amongst them. Most importantly, when higher education institutions collect data on SEAA students at various stages and places of their college/university participation (e.g., admissions, retention, persistence, financial aid needs, and graduate enrollment), the needs and progress or lack of advancement of SEAA students will be better understood. This understanding will translate into more effective support services and policy implementation for SEAA students at all educational levels.

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Broadening Support for Asian American and Pacific Islander Immigrant Families:

The Role and Impact of Community-based Organizations in Family-Community-School Partnerships

Nga-Wing Anjela Wong

Summary

Children of immigrants are the fastest-growing population in the United States; therefore addressing their needs has become an important issue that faces educators, researchers, and policy makers nationwide. This policy brief examines the services and support for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) families during nonschool hours. Specifically, I illustrate the role and impact of a community-based organization (CBO) in family-community-school partnerships and how CBOs provide information, support, and advocacy for low-income Chinese immigrant families.

Background and Context

Currently in the United States, 16.5 million children under the age of eighteen are children of immigrants¹ (Fortuny, 2010), and they are the fastest-growing population in the United States (Mather, 2009). Addressing their needs has become an important issue that faces educators, researchers, and policy makers nationwide. Children of immigrants, the majority of whom are of Asian and Latina/o origin, face special challenges as they negotiate between “multiple worlds” (Phelan, Davidson, and Yu, 1998). For instance, scholars have noted that they often experience academic, social, and emotional difficulties (Li, 2003; Olsen, 1997; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Valdés, 1996; Wong, 2008, 2010). Research also has shown that students of color perceive a lack of “authentic caring” in schools and students of color view these in-

stitutions as a space of “subtractive schooling” whereby schools are structured in ways that subtract students’ cultures, identities, and languages because their differences are considered of less value (Valenzuela, 1999). As I have noted, “out-of-school time (OST) programs attempt to ameliorate this institutional deficiency by providing students of color with support programs and services” (2008, 181).

In this research brief, I consider the role of CBOs, a form of OST program, as critical partners in bridging family and school. OST settings offer a unique context, and as Irby, Pittman, and Tolman remind us, “schools are only one of a range of learning environments that share responsibility for helping students learn and achieve mastery . . . community-based organizations are also themselves settings for learning and engagement” (2003, 18–19). Although the research literature on OST programs is growing, few studies have examined qualitatively what these programs do and how they support the youth who participate. Even fewer studies focus on the specific needs of youth from low-income and working-class immigrant families. Using a case study, I illustrate how a CBO assists low-income first-, 1.5- (or those who came to the United States as young children), and second-generation Chinese American youth and their families with advocacy, information, and support (Wong, 2008, 2010, under review). More specifically, I examine the services and support it provides during nonschool hours that assist Asian American youth in mediating their multiple worlds.

Methodology and Framework

The data draws from an ethnographic research at the Harborview Chinatown Community Center (HCCC), a CBO in an East Coast city I call Harborview, and its youth program, Community Youth Center (CYC). HCCC, the largest Asian American social service provider in the state, is a multiservice 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization located in the heart of Chinatown that began during the late 1960s as a grassroots community effort. Opened in 1995, CYC offers college preparatory and English as a Second Language classes, leadership skills building, social recreational activities, and volunteer-run academic tutoring.² The primary forms of data collection were conducted in 2004 and from 2006 to 2007 and consisted of participant observations, document analysis, and in-depth interviews with thirty-eight youth, fourteen parents, and nine HCCC staff members.

I employ Yosso's (2005) "community cultural wealth" framework to argue that HCCC helps low-income Chinese immigrant families negotiate and navigate their multiple worlds. The community cultural wealth framework consists of at least six forms of capital that are often overlooked by schools and other institutions: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital. "These various forms of capital," as Yosso states, "are not mutually exclusive or static, but rather are dynamic processes that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth" (2005, 77). Rather than using a top-down hierarchical model and cultural deficit framework (i.e., perceiving difference as a deficit and thus placing the blame on families and communities for inadequacies), HCCC acknowledges the importance of implementing a cultural wealth model in serving the community (Wong, 2008, 2010, under review). Although it is crucial to provide the codes needed to access and navigate U.S. society, it is equally important to honor and uphold the families' cultural wealth, which HCCC has been doing for forty-plus years.

Findings

"Asian Pride": Providing a Sense of Ethnic and Racial Identity

Schools for these Asian American youth are places that take their cultural identities away in order to make them conform and assimilate to the school's dominant culture. Consequently, the youth hide their identities and thus are silenced. CYC provides them with not just a place but also a space where they can express their "Asian Pride"; these youth are free from the racial hegemony of the dominant culture. For example, Steven, a 1.5-generation youth, was able to speak Cantonese comfortably at CYC but not at school because "people make fun of us [for speaking Cantonese]." CYC therefore serves as a "culturally relevant" (Ladson-Billings, 1994) space for participating youth and their immigrant families.

"All they see is the pressure": Providing a Sense of Being a Teenager

In many immigrant families, role reversal between immigrant parents and their children is extremely common when the children assist their parents in a new society (Hune and Takeuchi, 2008; Kibria, 1993; Lee and Kumashiro, 2005; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Immigrant parents depend on their children

to help them negotiate and navigate the outside world (i.e., the United States) because their children often come into contact with U.S. American³ culture sooner than they do. As a result, “they are learning things that most American kids don’t even know until they get to college and some of them even later,” remarked Jeff, a youth worker. “All they see is the pressure [their parents face]. And the negative is, you know, in terms of growing up as a teenager, you have to grow a lot faster.” Therefore, for these youth, CYC is a place where they could be teenagers and have a sense of community. In doing so, CYC provides a supportive space between the youths’ multiple worlds.

**“We can’t help them anymore”:
Immigrant Parents and the U.S. School System**

Immigrant families from low-income backgrounds frequently struggle with negotiating the U.S. school system because of limited access to institutional support and dominant social capital (Lew, 2004; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999; Wong, 2008). Lew (2006) and Stanton-Salazar’s (2001) notions of class and social capital can be applied here to understand how the school system is an example of a stratified structure that places low-income immigrants of color in the margins. The families in this research noted not knowing how the U.S. school system worked; as a result, they were unable to assist and advocate for their child. Essentially, they felt ignored by the school system. Moreover, similar to other studies (Advocates for Children, 2004; Valdés, 1996), immigrant parents routinely feel uncomfortable going to their children’s schools due to language and cultural differences. However, parents did attend school events during their children’s elementary school years because multicultural and bilingual services were available (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Wong, 2008).

CBOs can bridge the disconnections and tensions for immigrant families. The families in my research were able to find the advocacy, information, and support from HCCC through workshops and one-on-one relationships. By using a cultural sensitivity approach, rather than a cultural deficit approach of blaming the family, the parents viewed HCCC to be helpful. Additionally, “by maintaining an ongoing communication with the youth and their families, CYC is viewed as a visible resource because the staff are connected with the community and had often acquired the infor-

mation, skills, and social capital to successfully negotiate the dominant society” (Wong, 2008, 193).

Recommendations

CBOs can be extremely beneficial and validating for students from low-income and working-class (immigrant) families. What makes HCCC important and successful is that it has a culturally relevant understanding of the community that it serves (Wong, 2008). Youth and families who identified the United States as difficult to navigate and negotiate, find the services and support at CBOs, like HCCC, valuable because the CBO understands and acknowledges their family background. Instead of viewing the Chinese American youth and their families as deficient, HCCC acknowledges their cultural wealth and serves as a bridge and resource for the community.

This research has sought to broaden the current and narrow home-school relationship paradigm by including the community, as represented by CBOs, as another pivotal player in the discussion. Implementing and retaining culturally relevant OST programs can assist in strengthening the partnerships between schools and Asian Americans, immigrants, and other communities of color. We also need more collaborative research, practices, and policies between family-community-school partnerships in order to better serve our students. Accordingly, I make the following recommendations:

For Policy Makers

- Provide additional and continual funding opportunities for CBOs and other OST programs to maintain their work and where necessary expand to meet the growing need. An increase in resources during OST would better serve our children and youth because they spend only 20 percent of their time in school (Miller, 2003). For instance, provide funding to those that encourage and practice culturally relevant family-community-school partnerships.

For Education Advocates and School Personnel

- Understand that no single entity (e.g., family, school, or community) can improve our educational system alone; instead work to ensure that a dialogical and collaborative approach, which also includes the voices of our children and youth, is implemented in order to better serve them.

- Recognize that CBOs have much to offer our educational systems and can play an important role in the board effort to educate our children and youth. Their capacity to develop and maintain culturally relevant and culturally competent services is often in stark contrast to many of our schools. Support their community-based educational workshops and programs that inform immigrant families about the United States and U.S. schools, bridge cultural and generational differences within families, and provide a space for middle and high school Asian American youth during OST.
- Implement policies and procedures that encourage and allow family-community-school partnerships to occur and are where a continual and effective agenda is maintained among all groups. As other scholars have suggested, we need to start “blurring school and community boundaries” (Irby, Pittman, and Tolman, 2003). In doing so, school and community programs are able to support and utilize each other as a resource, and each other’s work would be enhanced. For instance, implement a local and national network for school personnel and youth and community workers. Rather than viewing the school and community as two separate worlds, immigrant families are then able to feel a sense of unity with the institutions that serve their children.
- Create opportunities for partnerships among higher education, school districts, and CBOs. In doing so, the relationship between schools and communities are more cooperative and transparent, rather than working on assumptions, hierarchical order, and competitiveness. For instance, support policies and practices that bring together researchers, teacher educators, school personnel, and youth workers.

For Researchers

- Further research is needed to include other CBOs and OST programs and that examine different identities and contexts (e.g., race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, gender, age, language, and region). Comparative and longitudinal studies of different OST programming would capture these identities and contexts.
- All research should honor and work to benefit the community, particularly communities of color that are often marginalized or invisible in academia and the dominant society.

- Recognize the dangers of utilizing the term *giving voice* in policy, practice, and research, because it assumes that the “oppressed” (Freire, 1999) do not have a voice and, thus, they must be given permission by an authority (e.g., a researcher) to speak. If researchers are holding to such a belief and mentality then we, too, are guilty of perpetuating oppressive ideology and practices. Rather than giving voice, I “amplify” (Diniz-Pereira, 2005) the voices (e.g., the individuals and communities I collaborate with) that are too often unheard, marginalized, and ignored by the systems and structures that hold inequality in place.⁴

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Notes

1. The term *children of immigrants* refers to both U.S.-born (i.e., second generation) and foreign-born (i.e., the first and 1.5 generation) children, and although there are differences in their experiences, “they nevertheless share an important common denominator: immigrant parents” (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001, 1).
2. Please see Wong (2008, under review) for more details about CYC’s programs and services.
3. I use the term “U.S. American” to refer to individuals from the U.S.A. because “[t]he common usage of “American” as referring to only people of the U.S. is inaccurate and problematic because America includes the entire Western Hemisphere” (Kishimoto and Mwangi, 2009).
4. For more details, please see Wong (2008, 2010, under review).

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Charter School “Miracle”?

Youth Participatory Action Research and Education Reform in Post-Katrina New Orleans

Jacob Cohen and OiYan A. Poon

Summary

This policy brief examines and identifies education disparities within the context of a much-touted New Orleans “charter school miracle.” After describing the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) method employed at a local Vietnamese American youth organization in New Orleans, we summarize findings on inequalities in academic rigor and access to quality teaching, which suggest that charter school reforms are not bringing about an education “miracle” in post-Katrina New Orleans and that students of color, in particular, are inadequately served. The brief also discusses the potential implications of YPAR methods for asserting Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) perspectives and voices in ongoing education reform debates.

Introduction

Since Hurricane Katrina, the public school system in New Orleans has been in an intense state of transition. As politicians on the left and the right have joined in a national bipartisan agenda of education reform through charter schools and choice policies, urban school settings have been impacted in significant ways. Proponents have argued that deregulation of public schools can lead to healthy competition and innovation. However, the case for charter schools as a proven strategy to improve U.S. education is circumstantial at best (Ravitch, 2010). Although they were originally conceived as teacher- and community-led laboratory schools to seek evidence-based solutions to the most challenging problems in public education, charter schools have opened the door to de-

regulation and corporate interests in the governing of schools—largely leaving democratic participation and local, public accountability in school governance behind (Lipman and Haines, 2007). The new education paradigm in New Orleans combines privatization through charter contracts, testing, operational autonomy for schools, and market-style choice for families. Considered a test tube for the national charter and privatization movement, New Orleans is now the first major urban “public” education system in which a majority of public school students attend schools that are operated by private organizations and governed by independent volunteer boards.

Recognized as one of the most underperforming urban school systems in the nation, some have touted the transition to charter schools after Katrina as the “New Orleans’ School Miracle” (Carr, 2010). Although changes in the student population since Hurricane Katrina have made system performance comparisons difficult, proponents of reforms point to increases in test scores and a decline in the number of schools designated by the state as “failing,” which others argue are circumstantial evidence of the success of charter schools (Levin, Daschbach, and Perry, 2010). Nonetheless, popular representations of the city’s educational restructuring have portrayed the transformation as nothing short of dazzling. The *Huffington Post* has even proclaimed Orleans Parish school reform, “a model for struggling school districts around the nation” (Bassett, 2010).

Given that the appraisal of the New Orleans’ reform project will have serious implications for the future of public education in this country, it is critical to listen to the experiences and voices of public school students: those who are most affected by drastic reforms in the city schools, yet who arguably have the least amount of power over education policy. Rather than looking exclusively at conventional indicators such as results from tests, which are arguably highly unreliable, or deferring to the authority of people who govern and operate the school system, we draw on the experiential knowledge of students who spend forty hours a week in New Orleans schools. Our project operates from the principle that reliable and accurate assessments of educational institutions should be informed by the knowledge of those who experience education reform policies everyday in schools. As insiders, students in New Orleans public schools are equipped to articulate the standards of

quality and equity that constitute “progress” or “success” and to measure the extent to which schools are achieving these standards.

Since June 2010, we have utilized a YPAR methodology to evaluate six New Orleans high schools and empower youth with research skills to participate as democratic citizens in education reform debates. Oftentimes, education policy research is reduced to a focus on quantitative outcomes, and education policy debates exclude the involvement of young people even though they are impacted the most by policy decisions. YPAR is a methodological approach that fills an “intellectual void that occurs when people’s voices are left out of the research and thus policy decisions that affect their lives and opportunities” (Cannella, 2008, 205). It empowers students who are being acted upon and spoken about by the state, allowing communities to appropriate the tools of research and become producers of knowledge. YPAR is characterized by the following three principles:

1. The collective investigation of a problem.
2. The reliance on indigenous knowledge to understand that problem better.
3. The desire to take individual and/or collective action to deal with the stated problem (Morrell, 2008, 157).

Our YPAR project includes youth researchers ranging in age from fourteen to nineteen. They include a core group of twelve youth leaders and fifteen additional youth volunteers, who are all residents of New Orleans East and members of the Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans, which is a community-based nonprofit organization in a neighborhood called Versailles. Calling their project the Raise Your Hand Campaign (RYHC), the youth researchers’ mission is to promote education equity in New Orleans, including equal access to quality education for geographically, economically, or linguistically marginalized students.

The RYHC leadership team conducted more than forty, open-ended peer interviews, two youth forums, and two bilingual English-Vietnamese parent forums with participants from New Orleans East in order to identify key factors that contribute to a quality education from community perspectives and arrived at a list of critical dimensions of quality education according to community

interests. The team constructed a survey to evaluate and compare six local high schools along the identified dimensions from student perspectives. After being trained in how to administer surveys, RYHC team leaders and Vietnamese American Youth Leaders Association of New Orleans (VAYLA-NO) volunteers collected 415 surveys from local youth enrolled in six high schools that were selected because they serve 2,660 students, many from New Orleans East. A comparison between the latest data on enrollment in these six schools and our RYHC survey sample is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of School Enrollment in RYHC Survey Sample

School	Enrollment	% Black	% Asian	% Free/ Reduced Lunch	RYHC Sample	% of School
1	180	91.0%	6.1%	80.0%	37	20.6%
2	657	29.7%	22.5%	27.6%	71	10.8%
3	430	82.0%	16.0%	87.0%	126	29.3%
4	564	92.0%	6.0%	78.0%	85	15.1%
5	268	99.0%	0.0%	79.0%	38	14.2%
6	561	98.0%	0.0%	75.0%	58	10.3%
Total	2,660	76.9%	9.8%	66.6%	415	15.6%*
RYHC Sample	415	56.7%	32.4%	76.3%		

Data Source: 2009-2010 School Enrollment Data Note:

* Sample as a percent of the total enrollment

With data collected through the survey, we reexamined the New Orleans Miracle through the perspectives of youth directly affected by ongoing education reform decisions.

Findings

Our survey project examined multiple dimensions of schools that we believe are integral to a quality education—physical environment, instructional quality and learning, academic rigor, student support services, English instruction for Limited English Proficiency students, parental involvement, and textbook availability—through the eyes of the students in these schools. Across

all six dimensions, we found numerous deficits in these schools that meet the RYHC's standards of excellence. We also found systemic inequalities in the quality of education accessible to students on the basis of school, race, income, geography, and language. For the purposes of this brief, we will review findings from two dimensions—access to quality teachers and academic rigor.

Disparities in Access to Experienced Teachers

The RYHC team found startling disparities¹ in access to quality instruction across the different racial groups in our sample. More than 80 percent of white students in the survey said they have teachers who are prepared (4 or 5 rating), compared to 57 percent of Asian American students and 61 percent of African American students who said the same. Additionally, more than 80 percent of white students in our sample stated that they have teachers who put considerable effort into helping students (4 or 5 rating); for Asian American and African American students, this figure is less than 60 percent. In both areas of teacher quality (class preparation and effort to help students), the mean response from white students is significantly higher than the mean responses from Asian American and African American students.

Disparities in Academic Rigor

Our group was also concerned by the lack of academic rigor at many of the schools in our sample. In interviews, numerous students reported feeling unchallenged and unprepared for college. Homework load is one way we chose to examine academic rigor. Nearly 60 percent of students across the six target high schools complete one hour or less of homework each night. Schools 1, 5, and 6 had means of 1.15, 1.30, and 1.35 hours respectively, compared to 0.74 hours for students at school 4 and 2.81 hours at school 2. The disparities between school 4 and the other five schools are statistically significant, as are those between school 2 and the other schools.

Implications

The examples of findings from the RYHC research project presented here confound the assertion that charter school reforms in New Orleans have led to an education "miracle." Even a small sample of six public high schools reveals a highly unequal sys-

tem in which “miraculous” opportunities are anything but widespread. Findings from this study indicate significant and persistent disparities in the system by school and by race. In our study, student respondents at schools 2 and 3 reported far better conditions almost across the board, compared to the students who attend school 4. Moreover, five of the six schools (i.e., schools 1 and 3–6) consistently underperform when measured against the standards that RYHC students believe constitute a holistic, high-quality education. There were very few metrics on our survey in which students, on average, rated their schools as adequate. Thus, the overall quality of schooling in New Orleans is inadequate from the perspective of those who matter most: the students.

Proponents of charter school and school choice policies would argue that disparities should lead families to choose to attend better schools to fit their interests (Ravitch, 2010). Confidence in these policies to remedy education inequalities depends on the assumption that all families have equal levels of knowledge about educational options. However, our study also found that home language and family class status are significant in influencing how much knowledge students believe their parents have about the various school options in New Orleans. Students from Vietnamese-speaking families are half as likely as students from English-speaking families to report having parents who are “knowledgeable” or “very knowledgeable” about the various school options in New Orleans (20% vs. 40%). We also found that students who receive free and reduced lunch, a proxy for economic status, are significantly less likely to report having parents who are very knowledgeable about school choices in New Orleans (15%), compared to student do not receive free or reduced lunch (40%). We conclude that factors such as income and language significantly impact families’ knowledge of the educational landscape. Consequently, charter school and choice policies may be maintaining education inequalities in the school system and leaving behind students from immigrant and low-income families to endure low-performing schools.

In conclusion, the charter school and reform “miracle” in New Orleans and nationally must be critically evaluated by AAPI youth and communities. For youth and communities, YPAR holds significant promise in asserting AAPI voices in education reform discourse, which tends to be focused on African American and Latino populations. It can also lead to the development of an AAPI

community-based agenda in education equity advocacy. RYHC has created a space for Vietnamese American youth to assert their voices in a debate over charter school reform that has largely rendered them silent. At the heart of YPAR is an agenda to increase the democratic participation of youth in education policy discussions and decisions from which they are typically excluded (Rubin and Silva, 2003). The RYHC represents an important YPAR project advancing the principle that youth should be empowered to participate as equals in education policy reform debates.

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Notes

1. Significance testing done with 95% confidence intervals.

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Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions:

Areas of Growth, Innovation, and Collaboration¹

Robert T. Teranishi

Summary

This policy brief aims to raise the national visibility of the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) program and link the needs of these institutions to the hundreds of similar Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) (e.g., historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities). More specifically, this brief demonstrates how and why the MSI policy strategy is an effective way to increase the success of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) college students, and how the AANAPISI program can be further strengthened.

Overview

The changing demography of our nation means that our system of higher education must realize a fundamentally different approach to teaching and learning. Responding to this twenty-first-century challenge is the AANAPISI federal program, which is structured as a competitive grant process for institutions with at least a 10 percent enrollment of AAPI full-time equivalent students, a minimum threshold of low-income students, and lower than average educational and general expenditures per student. As of FY2011, there were fifty-two institutions with the AANAPISI designation—of which fifteen that have been funded (see n. 1)—and sixty-four more that met the criteria but were not designated or funded.

The AANAPISI program, which is one of the most significant investments ever made for the AAPI college student population by the federal government, is notable because it:

- Acknowledges the unique challenges facing nearly 1.2 million AAPI students relative to college access and completion (Teranishi, 2010),
- Represents a significant commitment of much-needed resources to improve the postsecondary completion rates among low-income AAPI students, and
- Recognizes that campus settings are mutable points of intervention—sites of possibilities for responding to the impediments encountered by AAPI students (CARE, 2010).

This policy brief aims to raise the national visibility of the AANAPISI program and link the needs of these institutions to the hundreds of similar MSIs (e.g., historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities). More specifically, this brief demonstrates how and why the MSI policy strategy is an effective way to increase the success of AAPI college students and how the AANAPISI program can be further strengthened.

How and Why the MSI Policy Strategy Works for AAPI Students

The AANAPISI program not only demonstrates a significant commitment to the AAPI community by the federal government, but also it provides much-needed resources to high concentrations of AAPI students with economic challenges and responds to specific needs that impact college access and success.

- A large proportion of AAPI students are from low-income backgrounds, are the first in their families to attend college, and struggle to secure the financial resources to support themselves while in school (CARE, 2008; Yeh, 2004). AAPI students are also more likely than other students to be immigrants, non-native speakers of English, and often enroll in English Learner programs (often geared toward Spanish speakers) (CARE, 2010; Suzuki, 2002; Yeh, 2004).
- AAPI undergraduates are highly concentrated in a small number of postsecondary institutions. In 2009, two-thirds of AAPI students were concentrated in two hundred institutions (CARE, 2010). The 116 institutions that met the criteria for AANAPISI eligibility enrolled 75 percent of the low-income AAPI undergraduate students (Congressional Research Service, 2009).

- Nearly one in ten AAPI undergraduate students² nationally attended one of the first fifteen AANAPISI campuses, which is in sharp contrast to their enrollment of 1.5 percent of the nation's total undergraduate population. These institutions enrolled nearly 89,000 AAPI undergraduates and awarded nearly 9,500 associate and bachelor degrees to AAPI students in 2009 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

AANAPISI Grantees Promoting AAPI Student Success

Federal funding is incentivizing institutional reform on AANAPISI campuses by supporting programs to increase access (increase in enrollment) to and success (e.g., persistence, degree attainment, and transfer) in college for AAPI students. Although each one of the AANAPISIs uses the funding in unique ways, several commonalities exist among the programs. These services were concentrated around the following three areas:

- *Academic and Student Support Services.* AANAPISI funding increases access to and utilization of academic counseling, learning communities, financial aid counseling, and tutoring programs, which help students to be more academically engaged and improve retention and degree attainment.
- *Leadership and Mentorship Opportunities.* AANAPISI funding provides students with greater leadership development and mentorship opportunities, which increase academic and social engagement among AAPI students and improve their academic and career trajectories.
- *Research and Resource Development.* AANAPISI funding is being used to improve the quality of statistical information on AAPI students. This more accurately reflects the variations that exist between AAPI ethnic subgroups and develops better systems for tracking student progress and degree-attainment rates.

Recommendations and Areas of Opportunity

AANAPISIs are in a position to benefit from and contribute to the common interests of MSIs, including the need for greater policy advocacy, the promotion of targeted services for minority students, and faculty and staff development for institutions that serve disproportionately high concentrations of low-income students of color. To strengthen the AANAPISI program further, we offer the following recommendations:

- Make it clear that any references to MSIs include AANAPISIs. These institutions can then gain access to opportunities and resources for designated MSIs and participate in dialogue among MSI leaders. Being more fully recognized as MSIs, AANAPISIs can gain access to a number of federal and private initiatives that are targeted at MSIs.
- Increase investment in the AANAPISI program, including funding to increase the number of AANAPISIs and a greater investment in each individual campus, and resources for outreach to and greater awareness among other federal agencies. A need exists for outreach to “emerging AANAPISIs” and technical assistance for existing programs.
- Promote modifications to existing legislation to allow for outreach activities and community engagement, which are currently prohibited under Title III-Part F, and the ability for institutions to carry both AANAPISI and another MSI designation, which is also currently prohibited.
- Support the development of the new AANAPISI umbrella organization. A new advocacy organization, Asian American and Pacific Islander Association for Colleges and Universities, has been created to help advocate for AANAPISI institutions, support research, and sustain contact among the institutions. A need exists for greater awareness about this organization among institutions and the broader MSI community.

Notes

1. This briefing material was a part of a presentation to Martha Kanter, Under Secretary of Education and Eduardo Ochoa, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education on April 21, 2011. The author would like to acknowledge the input of representatives from a number of AANAPISI campuses during the preparation of this brief.
2. Among Title IV undergraduate degree-granting, public institutions.

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HEALTH

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What a Difference a Data Set and Advocacy Make for AAPI Health

Ninez A. Ponce

The year 1976 was pivotal in the use of data for evidence-based health policy making in the United States. In 1976, the new U.S. Department of Health and Human Services put forth the “Proposed Rule” whereby area-level data on poverty rates, the share of elderly population, the infant mortality rate, and the density of primary care physicians translated from mere data points to a vivid picture of a population’s “need.” These indicators shed light on areas in which federal monies could make a difference. With this proposed rule, building the United States’ landscape of safety-net clinics ostensibly resulted in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

Thirty-five years later, particularly with the changing demographics of the United States, the Proposed Rule now requires updating, and new data sets and studies, primed by advocacy, can inform this reform. Rosy Chang Weir, Stacy Lavilla, Winston Tseng, Luella J. Penserga, Hui Song, Sherry M. Hirota, Jeffrey B. Caballero, and Won Kim Cook argue that the omission of indicators on the population’s need for language services systematically neglects to acknowledge the established disadvantage of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) and other LEP immigrant groups in accessing timely and appropriate healthcare. In their article, Weir and her colleagues from the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) and co-authors from Asian Health Services, the Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum, the Alameda Health Consortium, and the University of California, Berkeley present a strong case that the LEP measure indicates need, that measures are available from public data sets, specifically the American Community Survey (ACS), and the measure is effective in detecting medically underserved areas (MUAs) that AAPCHO—a national association representing community health centers serving AAPIs—currently serves.

Absent of an LEP indicator, the Proposed Rule could systematically exclude MUAs in which medically underserved AAPIs reside.

Reforming measures with new data sets not available thirty-five years ago such as the ACS, and state data sets such as the California Health Interview Survey would authentically detect the needs of vulnerable AAPI populations. Further, federally funded national data sets that existed thirty-five years ago, such as the National Health Interview Survey and the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, have recently embarked on conducting their surveys in some Asian languages and oversampling for some Asian ethnic groups. Banking on an evidence base built from good data is especially critical today, as funding cuts threaten to limit community health centers or exclude funding for interventions for the AAPI population because of unmeasured, and therefore unheralded, health needs.

Weir and colleagues are in good company in this issue with contributions by researchers and advocates sharing the successful experience in building a local data set for designing interventions and program evaluation (Beverly J. Gor and Lovell A. Jones), documenting the state of data needed to fight childhood obesity in AAPI populations (Shao-Chee Sim), and in moving forward a national data development and policy agenda for AAPIs as health-care reform mandated by the 2010 Affordable Care Act becomes implemented in 2014 (Winston Tseng, Priscilla Huang, and Won Kim Cook). It is clear from these articles that data sets and data advocacy is more mature than it was thirty-five years ago, but in the words of Tseng, Huang, and Cook, "Core issues about lack of data persist."

The article by Gor and Jones is a "lessons learned" article, which would be instructive for all local areas hoping to build local data sets depicting the health needs of AAPIs that national/federal data sets fail to capture. Gor and Jones suggest that the lack of data could be overcome with support from policy makers, committed academic partnerships, and genuine engagement of the community. To this end, they describe a 2003 community-academic collaboration that produced a telephone survey to document the cancer needs of Chinese and Vietnamese in Houston, a city that ranks fifteenth in metropolitan areas in the United States for having an Asian American population, in a state that ranks fourth in the nation for having the largest Asian American population. This

data has led to advocacy for health care access and language services, evaluation studies on cancer education, and a tool to design interventions that raise health literacy and empowerment.

In contrast to the local data success in Houston, Sim's article about the lack of data and childhood obesity in AAPIs is sobering: only 20 out of 18,014 or 0.11% of articles on childhood obesity are about AAPIs. Sim's suggestions for building the evidence base include targeting community prevalence studies, community needs assessments, risk factor studies, and program evaluations. But importantly, Sim points out that the generation of these studies require a research infrastructure focusing on fighting childhood obesity—an infrastructure perhaps that we have seen most prominently in the AAPI cancer prevention community—for example, through the two National Cancer Institute-funded Community Network Projects, the National Center for the Reduction of Asian American Cancer Health Disparities through Cancer Awareness, Research and Training, and Weaving an Islander Network for Cancer Awareness, Research and Training. The local survey that Gor and Jones describe also had a cancer-prevention focus and was supported by the Center for Research on Minority Health at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. To effectively fight childhood obesity through data and research, Sim entreats the need for funding to train and mentor junior researchers and the need to create a national clearinghouse to compile research literature and evidence-based practices for AAPIs.

Finally, Tseng, Huang, and Cook evaluate the provision of Section 4302 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in collecting race, ethnicity, and language data to reduce health disparities. But because Section 4302 is vaguely worded, Tseng, Huang, and Cook put teeth to the provisions by specific recommendations to make the ACA more responsive to the AAPI population. For example, they suggest implementing the 2009 Institute of Medicine recommendations on standardizing the collection of race, ethnicity, and language data; that national surveys, health care providers, and health programs collect data at the point of care and enrollment; and that health surveys should be translated based on the community's need. Resonant in their recommendations as with all the other companion articles, is the engagement of communities in the design, planning, and implementation and dissemination of data on race, ethnicity, and language.

Each of the four articles provides unique factual lessons on the health policy arena—federal and local—that affects AAPIs in the United States. All promulgate a shared message: better data sets and relentless advocacy make a policy difference. Funding helps, but a shared vision, and the academic-community-legislator collaborations that have built and continue to mount the evidence base in the service of meeting AAPI health needs, has certainly come a long way since 1976. Now we know how to achieve better data, and the AAPI community has the organizational acumen to put forth these recommendations with a unified voice.

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Limited English Proficiency as a Critical Component of the Department of Health and Human Services Proposed Rule for Medically Underserved Areas

Rosy Chang Weir, Stacy Lavilla, Winston Tseng,
Luella J. Penserga, Hui Song, Sherry M. Hirota,
Jeffrey B. Caballero, and Won Kim Cook

Summary

Medically underserved Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders (AA&NHOPIs) and other racial/ethnic minorities are often left out of the health center system (OMB, 1997; Papa Ola Lokahi, 2007). The Department of Human and Health Services is updating its Proposed Rule, which determines key population health indicators for medically underserved areas (MUA) and health professional shortage designations. This is important as revisions could increase Community Health Center (CHC) health care access for underserved AA&NHOPIs. We recommend that Limited English Proficiency be used as one of the measures in determining MUAs, as it is a scientifically valid and available measure that can identify where underserved AA&NHOPIs and other minorities who face an added language barrier can access needed health services.

Introduction

Since 1976, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has used an index of “need indicators” to identify medically underserved areas (MUAs), or areas of the country where residents are without adequate access to health care services. The MUA indicators include the percent of the catchment area population in poverty, population age sixty-five and over, infant mortality, and primary care physicians to 1,000 population ratio

(DHHS, 1995). DHHS identifies MUAs to determine where health care needs exist and allocates funding for community health centers (CHCs) based on that need. As required by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, DHHS announced it would update the Proposed Rule in 2010, which allows for revisions in how DHHS identifies MUAs. In 2010, a special national committee of stakeholders, or the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee (NRM) consisting of CHC stakeholders, was created and tasked with issuing recommendations to help DHHS update its MUA index. This effort to identify new MUA standards that would better represent diverse medically underserved populations is critical given its potential impact on the current and future CHCs serving these growing populations.

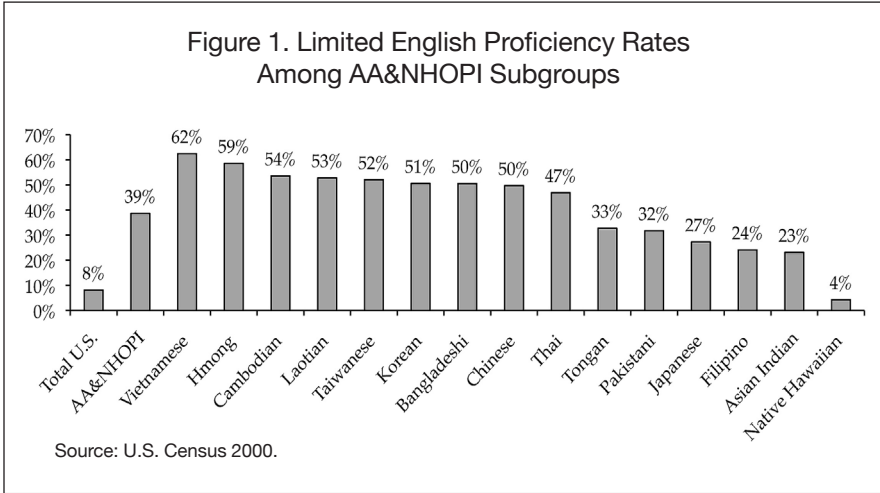
The health issues of Asian American & Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders (AA&NHOPIs) and other communities of color are a growing national concern.¹ AA&NHOPIs are among the fastest-growing racial groups and will grow from 5.3 percent (or 16.5 million people) and 0.4 percent (1.2 million people) of the total U.S. population in 2010 to 9.2 percent (40.6 million people) and 0.6 percent (2.6 million people) of the total U.S. population in 2050, respectively (Bureau of Census [BOC], 2008). They represent over forty-nine ethnic groups with more than one hundred languages and are socioeconomically and linguistically disadvantaged compared to non-Hispanic whites with 14 percent versus 8 percent poverty, 18 percent versus 11 percent uninsured, and 50 percent versus 2 percent Limited English Proficiency (LEP) rates nationally (Barnes and Bennett, 2002; Grieco, 2001; Islam et al., 2010). AA&NHOPIs experience multiple health disparities, including higher prevalence rates of tuberculosis, hepatitis B, and stomach and liver cancer than other racial/ethnic groups and are unable to access care due, in part, to a lack of adequate funding for health centers in their area, including resources for staffing in-house bilingual providers (Asian Liver Center, 2009; Centers for Disease Control, 2004; DHHS, 2009; Miller et al., 1996; Pamuk et al., 1998).

CHCs provide high-quality, cost-effective, and culturally appropriate primary and preventive health care to an increasing number of underserved patients, including more than six hundred fifty thousand AA&NHOPIs, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay (DHHS, 2009). However, the CHC system has also excluded many AA&NHOPIs because of its current Index of Medical

Underservice for determining MUAs (Weir et al., 2009). Increasing the range of comprehensive services and number of existing health centers is required to provide culturally appropriate health care to the growing AA&NHOPi population (BOC, 2008).

The current DHHS MUA methodology does not account for the unique health and social factors that affect AA&NHOPi and other ethnic and indigenous populations. LEP is a fundamental measure that should be included in the final updated methodology to identify MUAs. The number of LEP individuals in the United States is growing. For the purpose of this paper, LEP individuals are defined as those whose primary language is not English and are unable to speak, read, write, or understand English at a level that allows effective interaction with health care providers. More than fifty-five million people speak a language other than English at home (19.7% of the population and an increase of 8 million since 2000) (BOC, 2000a, 2008). More than twenty-five million (9% of the population and an increase of 3 million from 2000) speak English less than “very well” and are considered LEP. Eighty-four percent of federally qualified health centers provide clinical services daily to LEP patients, 45 percent of CHCs see more than ten LEP patients a day, and 39 percent see from one to ten LEP patients a day (BOC, 2000c; NACHC, 2008; Weir, 2005). The national survey did not report results by center size, as smaller centers may lack language capacity. Patients best served in a language other than English at the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations’ (AAPCHO’s) twenty-one member CHCs, which serve primarily AA&NHOPis, average 51.2 percent with a range of from 0.16 percent to as high as 99.8 percent. The AAPCHD average LEP rate is even higher at 68 percent when eight health centers in the state of Hawaii are excluded (DHHS, 2009). Thirty-five percent of AA&NHOPis and more than 28 percent of Spanish speakers live in linguistically isolated households and some ethnic groups, such as the Vietnamese, have LEP rates as high as 62 percent (see Figure 1).

Numerous studies indicate that health disparities are often magnified for patients who are LEP (Fox and Stein, 1991; Ghandi et al., 2000; Jacobs et al., 2003; Pitkin and Baker, 2000). Non-English speaking patients are less likely to use primary and preventive care services and more likely to use emergency departments (Bernstein et al., 2002; Flores et al., 2003). They are less likely to be given follow-up appointments than English-speaking patients, use



fewer preventative services such as mammograms and cervical screening, and often are unaware of the need for these services. In addition, they are less likely to participate in health care programs in which they are eligible (Andrulis, Goodman, and Pryor, 2002). These barriers associated with patients who are LEP demonstrate the need for inclusion of the criteria of LEP in the Proposed Rule so that CHCs can better serve LEP AA&NHOPi who are typically excluded due to outdated MUA designations. New recommendations are currently being considered, and the evidence presented in this brief supports inclusion of an LEP measure.

Methodology/Analysis

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that the LEP indicator can feasibly be utilized in DHHS’s proposed definition of MUA by providing evidence that (1) the data are scientifically reliable and (2) the data have proven useful in identifying areas with medically underserved AA&NHOPi.

The NRM has been hesitant to include LEP data in the Proposed Rule due to purported methodological issues. However, LEP data recently became available through the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) and is estimated using a five-year average from 2005 to 2009 providing the most detailed and scientifically reliable data since the 2000 Census. The ACS is updated with current estimates annually. The definition of LEP uses the U.S. Census categories of ability to speak, read, and write English less

than “very well.” The data is available by census-tract geographic level through the five-year ACS data sets that will be updated annually starting from 2005 to 2009 (BOC, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c).

Our efforts to develop an index of MUAs for AA&NHOPIs using LEP data clearly demonstrate that LEP is a feasible indicator in representing underserved areas nationally and distinguishing AA&NHOPi priority need areas. The Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) uses a MUA index to determine federally qualified health centers’ budgetary allocations. BPHC’s MUA index utilizes poverty, population age sixty-five years and over, infant mortality, and primary care physician to 1,000 population ratio in its formula (DHHS, 1995). In contrast, the AAPCHO alternative methodology to identify medically underserved AA&NHOPi counties (MUACs) includes a standardized, weighted index, which is based on the BPHC’s index and utilizes U.S. Census and BPHC data sets. AAPCHO’s MUAC index uses AA&NHOPi poverty, primary care physician to 1,000 population ratio, AA&NHOPi population, and AA&NHOPi LEP. The most significant difference between the two indexes is that BPHC MUA applies to the general population and does not include LEP. (Please see Table 1 for a comparison of the indexes.)

Table 1: Comparison of Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) Medically Underserved Asian American & Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (AA&NHOPi) County (MUAC) and Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) Medically Underserved Area (MUA) Indices

Measure	AAPCHO MUAC	BPHC MUA
Population	Rate for AA&NHOPis	Rate for all populations age sixty-five years and older
Poverty	Rate for AA&NHOPis	Rate for all populations
Physician Supply	Primary care physician full-time equivalents (FTE) per 1,000 population ratio	Primary care physician full-time equivalents (FTE) per 1,000 population ratio
Additional Measure	Limited English proficiency	Infant mortality

Original Source: Weir, Rosy Chang, Tseng, Winston, Yen, Irene H., and Jeffrey Caballero. 2009. “Primary Health-Care Delivery Gaps Among Medically Underserved Asian American and Pacific Islander Populations.” *Public Health Reports* 124(6): 831-40.

Table 2. AAPCHO MUACs with AA&NHOPi populations >10,000 that were excluded from the Bureau of Primary Health Care's Medically Underserved Area County-Level^a

County	AA&NHOP ^b N (%)	Limited English Proficiency ^a N (%)	Below poverty level ^b N (%)	Physician FTE/1,000 population ^b ratio (proportion)	AAPCHO MUAC score
Philadelphia, PA	68,383 (5)	31,002 (50)	18,738 (30)	0.07 (1:14,329)	28.4
Suffolk, MA	48,728 (7)	24,030 (52)	13,874 (30)	1.10 (1:910)	31
Merced, CA	14,717 (7)	6,477 (48)	5,604 (38)	0.38 (1:2,655)	32.1
Fresno, CA	65,362 (8)	28,637 (48)	24,626 (39)	0.48 (1:2,068)	32.5
San Francisco, CA ^c	243,409 (31)	120,459 (52)	26,429 (11)	0.06 (1:16,595)	33.1
Kings, NY ^c	187,283 (8)	105,215 (60)	48,464 (26)	0.19 (1:5,189)	33.7
Baltimore, MD	10,207 (2)	3,541 (36)	2,865 (30)	0.18 (1:5,495)	36.3
Ramsey, MN	45,159 (9)	20,628 (53)	11,994 (27)	0.88 (1:1,135)	36.7
San Joaquin, CA	66,238 (12)	27,772 (45)	18,530 (28)	0.47 (1:2,122)	38.7
Yolo, CA	17,121 (10)	4,385 (28)	6,130 (41)	0.50 (1:2,015)	39.8
Oklahoma, OK	19,085 (3)	8,527 (49)	3,665 (20) 0.11	(1:8,986)	40.5
Orleans, LA	11,081 (2)	4,637 (47)	3,051 (30)	1.22 (1:820)	40.8
Alameda, CA ^c	304,360 (21)	111,945 (40)	33,487 (11)	0.05 (1:19,775)	41.3

Stanislaus, CA	20,377 (5)	7,613 (40)	5,108 (25)	0.43 (1:2,326)	41.9
New York, NY ^c	145,607 (10)	67,988 (49)	32,742 (24)	0.21 (1:4,696)	42.1
Providence, RI	18,442 (3)	7,665 (44)	4,498 (26)	0.80 (1:1,247)	43.1
Ingham, MI	10,416 (4)	3,949 (41)	2,578 (28)	1.47 (1:681)	43.4
Sacramento, CA	142,163 (12)	54,739 (42)	28,878 (21)	0.57 (1:1,764)	44.8
Queens, NY ^c	392,831 (18)	183,346 (50)	62,460 (16)	0.26 (1:3,788)	44.9
Dane, WI	14,868 (4)	5,201 (39)	3,577 (26)	0.80 (1:1,249)	45.3

Notes: MUAC = medically underserved AA&NHOPHI county, FTE = full time equivalent

AAPCHO MUAC index score calculated using measures of AA&NHOPHI population, AA&NHOPHI limited English proficiency (LEP), AA&NHOPHI poverty, and primary care physician full-time equivalents (FTE) per 1,000 population ratio. BPHC MUJA index score was calculated using general population measures of poverty, population aged 65 and older, infant mortality rate and primary care physician full-time equivalents (FTE) per 1,000 population ratio. Differences between the indices' are italicized. Please see Weir, Tseng, and Yen (2009) for further description of the indices and their rationale for selection.

^aData are from the Census Bureau 2000 (US) and the Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration Bureau of Health Professions (US), Summary File 3 for the poverty and LEP data, U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 1 for the population data, and the Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) 2004 dataset for the primary care physician FTE per 1,000 population ratio data.

^bWe calculated the AAPCHO MUAC index score using AA&NHOPHI population, AA&NHOPHI LEP population, AA&NHOPHI poverty, and primary care physician FTE per 1,000 population ratio.

^cCountries representing the top five MUACs with the greatest AA&NHOPHI population

Original Source: Weir, Rosy Chang, Tseng, Winston, Yen, Irene H., and Jeffrey Caballero. 2009. "Primary Health-Care Delivery Gaps Among Medically Underserved Asian American and Pacific Islander Populations." *Public Health Reports* 124(6): 831-40.

AAPCHO's MUAC analysis identified the top counties with both the lowest AAPCHO MUAC scores and the largest AA&NHOPHI populations, together indicating areas in which health services need expansion in order to more adequately serve AA&NHOPIs. We also compared the AAPCHO MUAC index with the National Association of Community Health Centers' (NACHC) existing national MUA data and identified a number of "unserved counties" (those with more than 35.3% of residents living below 200% of federal poverty level and lacking a CHC) (Weir et al., 2009).

Findings

When we compared the AAPCHO MUAC index with other national MUA indexes at the county-level, we found that 138 (51.9%) of the 266 AAPCHO MUACs were not designated as federal MUA counties. Of these unidentified 138 AAPCHO MUACs in the federal MUA index, twenty counties (14.8%) had an AA&NHOPHI population of ten thousand or more, and twenty-nine counties (21.0%) had an AA&NHOPHI population of five thousand or more. The AA&NHOPHI poverty and LEP rates for these counties on average were 28.5% and 44.6%, respectively (see Table 2). We also compared the unidentified 138 AAPCHO MUACs in the federal MUA index with the NACHC's designations of "unserved counties" and found that only 23 percent, or 32 of the 138 AAPCHO MUACs, overlapped. Overall, these findings illustrate the value of using the LEP indicator to identify and compare national MUAs in addition to how the LEP indicator may be feasibly used in the Proposed Rule.

Recommendations

This article has demonstrated that: (1) LEP patients who encounter barriers to accessing health services are significant and increasing in number due to rapidly growing diverse ethnic populations, and that being LEP is a major barrier to health and health care delivery; (2) LEP data are scientifically reliable given its five-year pooled data set measurement and are readily available from the ACS; and (3) LEP data can be feasibly used in national indexes and can distinguish gaps in services for underserved populations, as evidenced in AAPCHO's aforementioned study. Based on these findings, we recommend that DHHS's Proposed Rule use LEP as an indicator.

Identifying more appropriate index indicators for DHHS's Proposed Rule is more critical than ever, given the impending threat to health care reform and associated funding cuts that limit CHCs in their ability to serve existing patients and growing medically underserved AA&NHOPi populations nationally. The diversity of languages, relative population size, and other socio-economic characteristics of AA&NHOPis and other communities of color may lead many to understate the importance of LEP for inclusion in the Proposed Rule. However, without consideration of LEP, the Proposed Rule would neglect the unique health and social factors that affect medically underserved AA&NHOPi and other populations served by CHCs. As the number of underserved citizens continues to rise, the CHC program is more vital than ever to this country's safety net. By including LEP in the new MUA index, we would be one step closer to assuring that underserved AA&NHOPi and other growing ethnic populations, such as Latinos, with sizable LEP populations could access health care services. Overall, we need to support adequate and sustainable CHC funding in order to improve health care access for AA&NHOPis and others who are uninsured or publicly insured, low income, and otherwise medically vulnerable, and thus reduce health disparities for all.

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Notes

1. The term *Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander* is used in this article in order to adhere to the Office of Management and Budget standards for the classification of federal data on race and ethnicity.

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Collection of Local Asian American Health Data Closes Health Disparity Gaps

Beverly J. Gor and Lovell A. Jones

Summary

Lack of disaggregated health data for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) continues to be a barrier to identifying and addressing health disparities in the AAPI population. Because the AAPI population is relatively small, health surveillance groups frequently overlook or disregard them in their data collection, often citing that AAPIs are “difficult to reach,” or that it is too costly to include them in data sets. This brief addresses these barriers and demonstrates that when there is sufficient support from policymakers, committed academic partnerships, and genuine engagement of the community, scientifically sound health data can be collected in a cost efficient manner. Such data not only identifies health needs, but also may generate significant benefits to communities, health planners and researchers and can lead to funding to address those needs.

Introduction

The lack of disaggregated data on the health status of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) has been a persistent barrier to understanding the health issues and disparities that impact these populations (Ghosh, 2010). The paucity of useful information on the health concerns of AAPIs continues to perpetuate the myth of the model minority (Lee et al., 2011). Agencies responsible for health data collection cite the relatively small size of the population, language barriers, inadequate funding, and the perception of AAPIs as “difficult to reach” as reasons for not collecting health data among AAPIs (Ghosh, 2003). However, one might argue that this omission is a matter of social equity—especially in light of recent statistics that reveal how the AAPI population has increased

dramatically during the last decade, and particularly in new geographic areas (*Asian Week*, 2011).

Several organizations have successfully collected scientifically sound data on small populations of AAPIs. These projects include the Vietnamese Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (Luong, 1999), the King County Ethnicity and Health Survey (Epidemiology Planning and Evaluation Unit, 1995–6), the California Health Interview Survey (Yu, Huang, and Singh, 2010), Health Needs Assessment in Maryland (Lee et al., 2011), a Filipino diabetes prevalence study (Cuasay et al., 2001), monographs such as the Pacific Islander Pipeline, (Tran et al., 2009), and the Community Health Needs and Resource Assessment series in the New York Metropolitan area (Abesamis-Mendoza et al., 2007; Ahn et al., 2007a, 2007b; Ngo et al., 2007a, 2007b).

Until 2005, there was little available data on the health status of the Asian American community in Houston although its Asian American population was among the top fifteen largest in the United States and Texas had the fourth-largest AAPI population in the United States (Yi, Gor, and Hoang, 2004). Through collaborations between the research community (the Center for Research on Minority Health [CRMH] at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center) and community organizations, such as the Asian American Health Coalition, the Chinese Community Center, and VN Teamwork, which are supported by funding from the Centers for Disease Control and other sources, a telephone survey including more than four hundred Chinese and four hundred Vietnamese randomly selected households was conducted. This project generated data documenting the health and cancer needs of these two rapidly growing Asian subgroups. It also identified the educational and health care needs of the Chinese and Vietnamese communities, guiding the development of culturally and linguistically appropriate health programs and services.

Community organizations and other researchers utilized the data to write grant applications, which led to the development of additional health research and educational programs. One successfully funded application provided support to develop the capacity of Asian American community members to advocate for social justice in health care access and language services. Another successful application supports and evaluates cancer education among Asian Houstonians. This project demonstrated that an investment in lo-

cal data collection supported by policy makers, researchers, and community members can reap long-term, sustainable benefits for the Asian American community by expanding health care access, health literacy, and empowerment. This model may be useful in other communities to bring attention to the unique health issues of local AAPI populations and to develop sustainable and relevant programs to address them.

Methodology

In 1999, Congress funded the creation of the CRMH at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Among the key legislators supporting the CRMH was Senator Daniel Inouye, who insisted that one of the deliverables for the new center was to conduct an Asian American Health Needs Assessment (AsANA) in Texas.

To begin this process, CRMH researchers consulted with the Texas Department of State Health Services, specifically the individuals coordinating the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System (BRFSS). State officials recommended the use of a telephone survey instrument called the Texas Community Health Survey (CHS), which was similar but more concise than the BRFSS. They suggested that it might be more acceptable to the Asian American population because it took less time to administer than the full BRFSS and because the Asian American population might be reluctant to participate due to their lack of familiarity with health surveys. It had also been used to collect health data from the Spanish-speaking population living along the Rio Grande Valley border, another rapidly growing minority U.S. population. Data from the proposed Asian CHS could be compared with the data collected from the survey along the border and data from other BRFSS-based studies to identify differences in health risks among populations in Texas.

An extensive literature review by the research team confirmed that few health studies were conducted on the Asian population in Texas, although several surveys had been conducted in other regions of the United States with large Asian American populations. They contacted the investigators in those studies regarding the logistics of carrying out an Asian health survey. One of the recommendations was to coordinate a media campaign prior to the implementation of the survey in order to improve participation rates. Experienced researchers also provided estimates of antici-

pated response rates, projected costs, and time frames. They also identified telephone survey companies with Asian-language capability and shared their survey instruments with the CRMH team.

Throughout a two-year period, the survey instrument was developed and refined to ensure its linguistic and cultural relevance through focus groups with content experts and community members and through several pilot tests, both in-person and over the telephone (Gor et al., 2007).

Findings

The AsANA data collection was completed over a nine-week period. More than four thousand phone calls were placed. Callers were successful in reaching approximately 2,500 community members, resulting in complete data collection on a statistically representative sample of 405 Chinese and 409 Vietnamese households randomly selected from Harris, Fort Bend, Brazoria, and Galveston counties. Highlights of the results were disseminated to the community in a simple, downloadable PDF format (Hoang et al., 2006), and peer-reviewed manuscripts are in preparation. Some noteworthy data from the AsANA study are:

- More than 90 percent of the Chinese and Vietnamese in the Greater Houston area were immigrants versus U.S.-born.
- Less than 50 percent of the Vietnamese respondents spoke English well and only 61 percent read English well. More than 95 percent of the Chinese and Vietnamese reported speaking Chinese or Vietnamese well.
- Approximately 20 percent of the Chinese and more than 30 percent of the Vietnamese participants lacked health insurance.
- Sixty-two percent of Chinese respondents reported no leisure-time physical activity.
- More than 92 percent of Vietnamese respondents reported consuming less than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- Chinese and Vietnamese participants had lower screening rates for colorectal, cervical, and prostate cancer than Anglos, blacks, and Hispanics in Texas.

Recommendations

The Houston AsANA study was able to overcome the commonly cited barriers to local data collection, because several factors

helped to propel the project forward. These included the significant growth of the Asian American population in Texas; support from policy makers, community members, and culturally informed researchers in academia; coordination of the project through a collaboration that included individuals embedded in and knowledgeable of the communities involved; and adequate funding.

For communities seeking to conduct similar projects, we recommend becoming familiar with data sources, such as the 2010 Census, local health and surveillance agencies, state demographers' offices, university-conducted research, and national Asian American advocacy groups. These organizations can provide technical assistance in identifying the gaps in local Asian American data and suggesting scientifically sound data-collection methods so that results can be compared with that of other population groups. Academic institutions may also provide assistance with statistical and data-analysis services.

For very small Asian American populations, other data-collection methods such as focus groups, key informant interviews, or online surveys might be considered. These methodologies may be less costly than telephone surveys, and because many Asian Americans are abandoning landlines and solely depending on cell phones (Magazine Publishers of America, 2004), telephone surveys may become obsolete or irrelevant for Asian American populations.

Linguistically and culturally competent staff and community members should be engaged to develop a customized data-collection instrument. Each Asian American community may have significant differences in regional dialects or low health literacy, resulting in respondents misinterpreting questions and the subsequent collection of inaccurate data. Survey questions must be thoroughly pilot tested to ensure comprehension by respondents and instruments should be validated with Asian American populations. Dependence on volunteers or students for data collection is not recommended. Interviewers and focus-group facilitators should be trained as skilled professionals and in the protection of human subjects, including confidentiality and the ethical conduct of research.

In our experience, Asian Americans were not "difficult to reach." We attribute this ease of entry into the Asian community to the fact that the study coordinators were already embedded in Asian community organizations and had a history of community involvement. We also believe that the media campaign, which in-

cluded ethnic and mainstream radio and television, distribution of bilingual flyers, and announcements at Asian community meetings conducted prior to the launch of the survey, prepared and encouraged the community to respond.

We were fortunate to have political and financial support for the infrastructure and personnel to coordinate this project. Additional support was provided by the National Center (now Institute) for Minority Health and Health Disparities through a P60 grant. At that time, the CRMH was also affiliated with the Asian American Network for Cancer Awareness, Research and Training, which also provided support. Finally, a pharmaceutical company provided support in exchange for including questions on the survey instrument that were of interest to them. In the current era of fiscal constraints, plans to conduct assessments in additional Asian subgroups may require more innovative approaches to funding, including fundraising from the individual communities.

The AsANA study demonstrates that the collection of local Asian American data can narrow health disparity gaps. It has exponentially increased the health programs targeted at Asian Americans in Houston. The results of the AsANA study have been used to apply for funding to develop and evaluate programs to address hepatitis B, cervical cancer, breast cancer, cancer survivorship, tobacco cessation, and access to care. However, the collection of local health data requires committed personnel, community and political support, and sufficient time and funding. Communities that are dedicated to improving the health status of AAPIs can do so if policy makers make such objectives a priority.

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Childhood Obesity in the Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities: Critical Data Needs and Research Priorities

Shao-Chee Sim

Summary

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) have some of the fastest-growing rates of obesity of all ethnic groups (Harrison et al., 2005). Preventing childhood obesity among AANHPIs is a challenge constrained by resource and research gaps. These include the lack of national prevalence data, insufficient funding support, limited knowledge of risk factors associated with childhood obesity, particularly in these populations, and the lack of programmatic evaluations. The finding of this literature review shows that only 0.11 percent of PubMed articles on childhood obesity focused on AANHPIs. Recommendations to advance what is known about AANHPI and childhood obesity include targeting community prevalence studies, community needs assessments, risk factor studies, and program evaluations; training and mentoring junior researchers; and creating a national clearinghouse to compile research literature and evidence-based practices.

Methodology

To identify research gaps in childhood obesity for AANHPIs, a search was conducted for peer-reviewed articles published from January 1990 to May 2009 on PubMed/Medline. Search terms included *Asian American, Chinese American, Japanese American, Korean American, Filipino American, South Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Samoan, childhood obesity, overweight children, and obese children*. The search also included AANHPI childhood obesity data in national population-based survey studies such as National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH); Youth Risk Behav-

ior Surveillance System (YRBSS); and Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS).

Findings

Summary of Literature

A total of twenty-eight articles that contain the key words *Asian American*, *Native Hawaiian*, *Pacific Islander*, and *childhood obesity* were found. Eight articles were excluded as they did not study the appropriate populations or did not have a large AANHPI population (less than 5%) included in its sample size. Twenty articles are hardly significant as the total number of “childhood obesity” published articles is 18,014. Of these twenty articles, twelve focused on the prevalence of childhood obesity; six addressed risk factors associated with childhood obesity; and two examined the effectiveness of intervention in combating childhood obesity. The articles on childhood obesity among AANHPI groups comprised merely 0.11 percent of all articles on childhood obesity.

Prevalence Studies

The available national-level data show that AANHPI children face risks from childhood obesity and overweight. The most recent Early Childhood Longitudinal Study data set shows that 12.8 percent of Asian American four-year-old children are obese (Anderson and Whitaker, 2009). An analysis of the NSCH data set (Singh, Kogan, and Yu, 2009) found that significant percentages of Asian immigrant children were overweight and obese (14.5%-31.8%), at nearly twice the rate of American-born Asian children (6.3%-17.5%). However, one study of overweight children among a representative sample of pediatric patients, ages two to eleven, in community health centers found no significant differences in overweight prevalence among Asian American, Hispanic, non-Hispanic black, and non-Hispanic white children, and that prevalence among Asian American males, ages six to eleven, was 33.6 percent, the highest across all racial groups (Stettler et al., 2005). Another study of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health survey found that the obesity prevalence rate for Asian American adolescents was 20.6 percent (Popkin and Udry, 1998).

At the state and local levels, childhood obesity prevalence studies are only available from Hawaii, California, and New York. In a review of student health records between 2002 and 2003, Po-

bustky and colleagues (2006) found that almost one-third of children aged four to six entering Hawaii public schools are either overweight or at risk for being overweight. Similarly, Baruffi and colleagues (2004) and Chai and colleagues (2003) found that Hawaiian children were taller and heavier than their counterparts. Using 2003 and 2005 data from the California Health Interview Survey, Ponce and colleagues (2009) found that AANHPIs had the fastest rate of increase in overweight and obese youths of all ethnic groups in California. Specifically, Samoan fifth graders have the highest percentage (54%) of all children in the state whose body mass index (BMI) is not within the Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ). HFZs are research-based standards for aerobic capacity; body composition; and muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility. These standards indicate levels of fitness necessary for good health. At a local community level, Au and colleagues (2009) conducted a chart review of Chinese American pediatric patients at Charles B. Wang Community Health Center in New York City's Chinatown. They found that the combined overweight and obesity prevalence rate among Chinese American children aged six to nineteen years was 24.6 percent while the prevalence rate among U.S. born Chinese American boys aged six to twelve years was 40 percent.

Risk Factors Studies

A number of studies (Chen 2009; Chen and Wu, 2008; Chen and Kennedy, 2005; Harrison et al., 2005; Unger et al., 2004) suggest that acculturation of children and mothers is associated with lower levels of physical activity, higher levels of fast food consumption, and children being overweight. Both Chen (2009) and Harrison and colleagues (2005) identified household income and parents' long work hours as barriers to adopting a healthier lifestyle. Also, Chen and Kennedy (2005) indicated that older age, a democratic parenting style, and poor family communication had contributed to an increased BMI in Chinese American children. However, due to the small number of studies, more research is needed to ascertain whether these findings can be generalized across various AANHPI ethnic groups and age cohorts.

Intervention Studies

In the two published articles assessing the effectiveness of childhood obesity intervention (Chen et al., 2008; DeRenne et al.,

2008), both research teams applied a conventional prepost design. In assessing the effectiveness of the individually tailored educational intervention that focused on health behavior modification within the context of the family and its environment and culture,¹ Chen and colleagues found general improvements in children's usual food choices, knowledge of nutrition and physical activity needs, and time spent engaging in physical activities. In another evaluation, DeRenne and colleagues found a significant decrease in skinfold thicknesses and an increase in distance covered in the three-minute walk-run test among participants in two different physical activity interventions over a twelve-week period.²

Unfortunately, given the small sample and the prepost design of these studies (e.g., lack of control group), these results are not generalizable and suggest very little about "what works and what does not" in regard to the interventions. Equally important, very little is known about "culturally and linguistically appropriate" childhood obesity interventions in AANHPI communities.

Summary of National Health Survey Data Sets

In many government-funded national health surveys, AANHPI samples remain too small to be analyzed as a distinct ethnic/racial category. The NHANES data set, which produces childhood obesity prevalence estimates and has been used by policy makers, funders, and researchers to inform policy and funding decisions, did not report on AANHPIs. Also, AANHPIs were categorized as "Other" in the NSCH and the YRBSS data sets. In the PedNSS, an AANHPI category exists. However, the data was not disaggregated among AANHPI subgroups in PedNSS, and this broad grouping of AANHPIs could potentially mask substantial heterogeneity within groups.

In summary, the three AANHPI childhood obesity data gaps and research needs are (1) the lack of reliable prevalence estimate on AANHPI childhood obesity; (2) the lack of data to ascertain the complex interplay of risk factors associated with childhood obesity, such as acculturation, household income, parenting style, family communication; and (3) the lack of local programmatic evaluation data to inform childhood obesity intervention design in the AANHPI communities. These challenges, to a large extent, can be attributed to the lack of dedicated funding resources and researchers to support research activities or build an evidence base to address childhood obesity in AANHPI communities.³

Recommendations

Based on the findings, policy makers, funders, and community advocates should target their resources to expand the knowledge base on how best to prevent and combat childhood obesity in the AANHPI communities.

Criteria

1. Consider target states and local communities that have the highest AANHPI populations and/or AANHPI children populations.
2. Focus areas could, with scientifically rigorous sampling strategies, be local prevalence studies, community needs assessments, risk factor studies, and program evaluation studies.
3. Through more targeted research/evaluations, identify aspects of program interventions that can be replicated in other organizations serving AANHPI populations.

Strategies

1. Develop a network of researchers and community leaders interested in preventing obesity among AANHPI children.
2. Train and mentor researchers throughout their projects. Conduct a series of national summit meetings to shape research priority agenda and to share research evidence.
3. Create a national clearinghouse to compile research literature and evidence-based practices on how best to prevent childhood obesity in the AANHPI communities.
4. Develop a public health education and technical assistance toolkit to assist community organizations that serve AANHPI population in efforts to prevent childhood obesity.
5. Finally, due to the tremendous diversity within AANHPI communities, public and private funders should consider supporting either university-based research centers with a national reputation in public health and/or childhood obesity research, national nonprofit intermediary organizations with some public health research understanding and capacity, or a university/community partnership that could work with AANHPI community organizations (e.g., community health centers, schools, afterschool programs, parent teacher associations, and/or other civic organizations) to understand the local history, culture, norms, and lifestyles; have trust and credibility

with local AANHPI communities; and network with key stakeholders at various local AANHPI communities.

The issue of childhood obesity within the AANHPI community has remained on the sideline for too long in most public policy and funding decision discourses, despite the alarming statistics of childhood obesity within AANHPI communities revealed in the limited number of published studies. It is essential that funders, public health advocates, community practitioners and researchers begin advancing a knowledge and action agenda to prevent and combat childhood obesity within the diverse AAPI communities. Policy makers and funders should consider some of the recommendations mentioned in this brief, including community prevalence studies, community needs assessments, risk factor studies, and program evaluations; training and mentoring junior researchers; and the development of a national clearinghouse to compile research literature and evidence-based practices.

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Notes

1. In this intervention, mothers received several educational materials on nutrition, physical activity, and healthy weight maintenance. The materials, which were written in English and Chinese, were adapted from materials developed from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, and Joslin Diabetes Center. These documents were adapted to reflect the health practices of Chinese and Chinese Americans.
2. School A implemented the Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum, a curriculum designed to help youth attain necessary fitness levels, motor skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be fit for life. School B's supervisor, who has a background in physical education, offered her own structured program, featuring a three-week block with sessions of flag football, basketball, volleyball, and softball. The total physical activity time was about fifty minutes. Anthropometric measurements, health-related physical fitness, and knowledge and attitudes on physical activity were taken at the beginning and end of the twelve-week period.

3. The only local grant-making effort is a recent childhood obesity initiative of the Asian Pacific Fund, a California-based intermediary organization, which provided small grants (ranging from \$1,000 to \$23,000) to ten diverse community-based organizations serving low-income Asian American youth. These grants focused on exercise, general recreation, and healthy eating habits. However, the Asian Pacific Fund could only devote the limited funding to support program activities and services rather than research or evaluation activities.

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Strategic Data and Research Opportunities on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Health through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Winston Tseng, Priscilla Huang, and Won Kim Cook

Summary

This paper summarizes the federal requirements under Section 4302(a) of the Affordable Care Act (ACA); the opportunities for improving data collection to address health disparities affecting Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders; the provision's limitations; and how to address these limitations. Our recommendations for ACA Section 4302(a) implementation include: (1) adhering to the 2009 Institute of Medicine's data standards on race, ethnicity, and primary language; (2) requiring federally-supported national surveys, health care providers, and publicly-administered health programs at the point of care and enrollment to comply with Section 4302 requirements; (3) ensuring compliance with Title VI and ACA Section 1557 non-discrimination requirements by providing translated health surveys and increasing language assistance capacity; and (4) engaging communities in the design of race, ethnicity, and language data to ensure community relevance.

Introduction

The country's diverse ethnic populations contribute to America's vitality and health. Populations of color are projected to dramatically increase from 38 percent of the total U.S. population or 116.3 million in 2010 (U.S. Census, 2011b), to 57 percent of the total U.S. population or 250.3 million by 2050 (U.S. Census, 2008). In addition, immigrants continue to play a fundamental historical role in nation building and in transforming the social demographic characteristics of the United States, with about 13 percent of the

total population or 38.1 million people currently foreign-born (U.S. Census, 2011a). Immigrants, however, often face multiple barriers to accessing health insurance coverage and health care services due to statutory restrictions, culture, language, and confusion over complex eligibility requirements (Choi, 2009; Derose et al., 2009).

Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) are among the fastest-growing racial groups. Throughout the next few decades, Asian Americans will increase from 5.6 percent of the total U.S. population or 17.3 million people in 2010 (U.S. Census, 2011b) to 9.2 percent or 40.6 million people in 2050 (U.S. Census, 2008). NHPIs will increase from 0.4 percent or 1.2 million people in 2010 (U.S. Census, 2011b) to 0.6 percent or 2.6 million people in 2050 (U.S. Census, 2008). About 60 percent of Asian Americans or 9.2 million people are foreign-born, and 23 percent or 3.5 million people have Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Among NHPIs, 14 percent or 119,000 people are foreign-born, and 2 percent or 21,000 have LEP (U.S. Census, 2011a). These rapid demographic changes in the Asian American and NHPI communities are transforming contexts for national policy and population health.

To be responsive to the needs of these growing Asian American and NHPI populations, the way health care and preventive services are delivered across the United States needs to be transformed, particularly in terms of culturally and linguistically competent care. Data and research are important tools that can help ensure adequate resources and support for quality health care and preventive services for all, especially for underserved populations such as communities of color and indigenous people. The paucity of data and research on health care delivery and health disparities among Asian Americans and NHPIs are fundamental barriers to understanding population health and addressing the health care needs of these communities (Ghosh, 2003; Islam et al., 2010).

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) signed into law on March 23, 2010, offers a major opportunity for improving data and research on race, ethnicity, and language that supports quality improvement efforts to address unequal treatment and health disparities among Asian Americans and NHPIs and other underserved ethnic and indigenous populations (IOM, 2002). This article summarizes the new federal requirements under Section 4302(a) of the ACA; the opportunities they offer for improving data collection, analysis, and reporting that are necessary to identify and address health

disparities affecting Asian Americans and NHPs; the limitations of the provision; and how these limitations might be addressed.

Section 4302(a) of the Affordable Care Act

Section 4302, entitled “Understanding Health Disparities: Data Collection and Analysis,” makes significant strides to improve identification of the health needs of underserved populations. Section 4302(a)(1) amends the Public Health Service Act and requires the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to develop standards for the collection of the federal statutorily required categories of race, ethnicity, sex, primary language, and disability status. Under the new law, the secretary must, within two years of enactment, establish methods to uniformly collect, analyze, and report these data categories to document and monitor the progress toward reducing disparities in health and health care.

As DHHS defines these standards, it must also determine the scope of this provision in its applicability and in its data categories. The statutory language of Section 4302(a)(1) applies data-collection requirements to any “federally conducted or supported health care or public health program, activity or survey . . . to the extent practicable.” A narrow definition could limit applicability of the new data requirements to existing federal health surveys, although a broader definition could direct the requirements to apply to all federally supported health care providers at the point of care, publicly administered or financially assisted health programs at enrollment, and any quality reporting measures. Section 4302(a)(1)(d) also gives the secretary discretionary authority to expand the number of data categories. Accordingly, DHHS could mandate the collection and reporting of sexual orientation, gender identity, and other demographic categories beyond those currently required in the statute.

Although the intent of this law is profound for all Americans, there are potential challenges in its implementation among Asian Americans and NHP communities and other underserved populations due to the lack of language and cultural access, health literacy, and trust in the data-collection process (Gollin et al., 2005; Ngo-Metzger et al., 2007). Current reporting standards and practices for Asian Americans and NHPs are a fundamental barrier to the improvement of care for these populations. The disaggregation of smaller racial groups such as Asian Americans and NHPs is important to identify diverse health needs and disparities affect-

ing them. However, even with some progress made, these racial categories have not been consistently used in collecting and reporting health data. The data collected and reported by federally supported health care programs and in national health surveys often fail to comply with the 1997 revised Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards for race and ethnicity. Asian American and NHP data are often not collected, collected but not adequately analyzed by race and ethnicity, not reported due to small sample sizes, or lumped into the “Other” category exclusive of “Whites” and “Black or African Americans” in the reporting. Select federal DHHS programs such as Healthy People 2010 and Healthy People 2020 have been providing notations when data on Asian Americans and NHPs are not available, which has helped to raise visibility around the need for improved data collection and analysis (Jang and Tran, 2009). However, the core issues about lack of data among Asian Americans and NHPs persist.

Standardizing Race, Ethnicity, and Primary-Language Data Collection

Section 4302(a)(2)(A) directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to comply, *at a minimum*, with the 1997 revised OMB standards for race and ethnicity. Importantly, these OMB standards separated the traditional “Asian Pacific Islander” grouping into two groups: “Asian Americans” and “Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders” (Jang and Tran, 2009). This separation improved data collection for both groups to identify their unique health needs and disparities and also recognized the unique political status of NHPs within the United States (Spoehr, 2007). The five OMB standards categories for racial identification are “American Indian or Alaska Native,” “Asian,” “Black or African American,” “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander,” and “White,” and there are two categories for ethnicity: “Hispanic or Latino” and “Not Hispanic or Latino.” The development of new uniform standards of data collection in order to understand health disparities beyond these current standards and practices, particularly by granular ethnicity, are important to ensure that Asian Americans and NHPs are visible and that the data is available and appropriately reported (Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum [APIAHF], 2007, 2010).

Data reflecting primary-language use also remains a challenge for DHHS across communities of color. A majority of Asian

Americans (71%) and Latinos (77%) speak languages other than English in their home (U.S. Census, 2011a). Members of these communities are often linguistically isolated (defined as no one over the age of 14 in the household speaks English) and continue to encounter significant health and health care disparities (Ngo-Metzger et al., 2007). In addition, those with LEP may experience significantly greater barriers in accessing health care and information, often due to low health literacy, and thus suffer from poor health outcomes. The DHHS National Standards on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) have supported new data standards for health care organizations such as hospitals and health plans. However, it has not yet led to their adoption across DHHS agencies and programs.

In June 2011, DHHS announced new standards for race, ethnicity, and primary-language data collection for complying with the ACA Section 4302, along with plans for initial implementation of these standards across the major DHHS surveys starting in 2012. The new standards have the potential to transform the paradigm for data collection to identify gaps and develop strategies in order to address racial, ethnic, and linguistic disparities in health and health care throughout the next decade (U.S. DHHS, 2011). The standards go beyond the OMB guidelines and include data collection by granular ethnicity for six Asian American subgroups (Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other Asian) and three NHPI subgroups (Native Hawaiian, Guamanian, or Chamorro, Samoan, and other Pacific Islander). In addition, new data standards for primary language include data collection on English language proficiency and primary language spoken at home.

However, the fragmented structure of the current U.S. health care system and the unfunded nature of this mandate will make it difficult for DHHS to enforce or hold programs accountable to the new Section 4302(a) standards. Four major issues must be addressed. First, a lack of uniformity exists on how race, ethnicity, language, and other demographic data is collected and reported across federal DHHS agencies, all federally supported health care programs, and publically administered or assisted health programs (IOM, 2009). For example, data are reported in different categories across DHHS health care programs such as the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, Physician Quality Reporting Initiative, and Uniform Data System, with many continuing to lump Asian Americans and

NHPIs into the “Other” category while others still combine Asian Americans and NHPIs together into the single “API” category, thus not complying with the 1997 revised OMB standards.

The second issue is that few DHHS-supported health care programs incorporate appropriate in-language services and materials for data collection. Third, culturally sensitive designs in the front end of data collection are lacking, and few provide adequate and meaningful analysis and reporting of existing and new data for Asian Americans and NHPIs. A fourth issue involves the lack of national data standards for race, ethnicity, and language in electronic health records across the health care system. Health information technology (HIT) has the potential to advance or limit the standardization of race, ethnicity, and language. The close coordination and compliance with the new DHHS data standards among the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, major regional HIT networks, and HIT corporations will be critical to ensure uniformity in data standards and implementation across health information exchanges and networks.

Recommendations

We offer four key recommendations to support the implementation of ACA Section 4302(a)(1) by DHHS: (1) fully implement the 2009 Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) recommendations on the standardization of race, ethnicity, and primary-language data; (2) require federally supported national surveys, federally supported health care providers, and publicly administered health programs at the point of care and enrollment to comply with the Section 4302 requirements; (3) ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and ACA’s Section 1557 nondiscrimination requirements by providing translated health surveys and increase DHHS’s language assistance capacity; and (4) engage communities in the design, planning, implementation, and dissemination of data on race, ethnicity, and language to ensure community participation and relevance. More specific suggestions are provided for each of these four recommendations.

First, DHHS should adopt all of the recommendations from the 2009 IOM report, *Race, Ethnicity, and Language Data: Standardization for Health Care Quality Improvement*. In particular, the report highlighted the need for granular ethnicity data, recommended that DHHS develop and make available nationally standardized

lists for granular ethnicity categories, and proposed strategies for aggregating ethnicity categories with the broader OMB race and Hispanic ethnicity categories. DHHS should also follow the IOM report recommendations regarding language need. Although the statute requires “primary language” data collection, it is silent on the meaning and application of the term *primary language*. The report prioritizes spoken-language need for LEP individuals. Specifically, the report proposes a two-step process to assess spoken-language need: the first is to assess the respondent’s ability to speak English and the second is to determine the spoken language preferred in a health care setting by using a list of locally relevant response categories from a national standard list.

The recent proposed new DHHS data standards for race, ethnicity, and primary language take into consideration and propose to implement a number of 2009 IOM report recommendations (U.S. DHHS, 2011) and demonstrate a major commitment by the federal government and DHHS to transform the data-collection paradigm in order to reduce and eliminate health disparities. However, further steps are needed in implementing the new data standards in order to ensure inclusion of all medically underserved Asian Americans and NHPs in the data collection and reporting. The new standards include only select Asian American and NHPI ethnic groups with the largest populations and exclude some of the most medically underserved ethnic groups such as Cambodians, Hmong, Laotians, and Tongans. The categories for primary language spoken at home include “English,” “Spanish,” and “Other Language” categories and exclude additional language groups. Further refinement of the language data standards is needed to ensure that underserved Asian American and NHPI language groups are not lumped into the “Other Language” category or excluded from data collection and reporting.

Second, DHHS should interpret Section 4302 to apply to all federally supported health care providers and publically administered health programs at the point of care and enrollment, in addition to federally supported national surveys. For those programs utilizing or implementing electronic health records, the standardization of race, ethnicity, and language data collection with pull-down options for granular ethnicity and primary language based on the new DHHS proposed minimum data standards is a key starting point. Application of Section 4302 to these areas is necessary to iden-

tify and address health care disparities more fully. The collection of demographic data will be especially important as we move toward a health care payment system that rewards quality rather than quantity. Many health care providers already collect demographic data, either voluntarily or because of existing federal or state laws and regulations. Nationally, 82 percent of hospitals already collect race and ethnicity data and 67 percent collect data on primary language (Hasnain-Wynia et al., 2007). Twenty-two states have passed regulations requiring hospitals to collect race, ethnicity, and language data. Health Resources and Services Administration primary care grantees, including community health centers, are also required to collect and report patient demographic data. Publicly administered health programs such as Medicare should also be required to collect data at enrollment. Mandating and standardizing the national collection of demographic data is not only practicable but also critical to ensuring that these programs meet the needs of eligible participants.

Medicare does not currently collect language data and relies on data from the Social Security Administration (Form SS-5) for race and ethnicity, which is significantly flawed. An analysis of the 2002 Medicare administrative data on race and ethnicity revealed that only 52 percent of Asian beneficiaries and 33 percent of both Hispanic and American Indian / Alaska Native beneficiaries were correctly classified (McBean, 2004). Another analysis of 2000 to 2002 Medicare administrative data showed similar results with 55 percent of Asian / Pacific Islander, 30 percent of Hispanic, and 36 percent of American Indian / Alaska Native beneficiaries incorrectly identified (Eicheldinger and Bonito, 2008). Addressing existing inaccuracies in racial and ethnic classification and standardizing language codes for Medicare administrative data through the full adoption of the 2009 IOM report recommendations are key starting points in order to ensure improved analyses by race, ethnicity, and language and reduction of health care disparities. Recent changes to SS-5 improve data collection on race and ethnicity for new Social Security card applicants, now go a step further than the 1997 OMB guidance, and collect information on Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders separately, but do not track granular ethnicity. In addition, ensuring data collection of race, ethnicity, and language at the point of Medicare enrollment and conducting a study to examine strategies for addressing the gaps in the accuracy of data by race and ethnicity, particularly among Asian Americans and NHPs, would

further reduce errors in racial and ethnic classification, improve evaluation of data on health care disparities, and support Medicare efforts to comply with Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 and ACA's Section 4302.

Third, DHHS must ensure compliance with Title VI and the ACA's Section 1557 nondiscrimination requirements and provide proper allocation of resources for written translation and spoken interpretation assistance for data collection in support of the implementation of Section 4302(a). Providing language assistance helps address privacy and confidentiality concerns of respondents and also ensures DHHS's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits any federally funded program or activity from discrimination due to race or national origin. Section 1557 reinforces this prohibition against discrimination by forbidding any federally conducted program or entity that receives federal funding or assistance from discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, or disability. National data-collection efforts should standardize language access by hiring bilingual interviewers and translators and translating and administering surveys and forms in multiple languages. Although the statute limits data-collection requirements to what is "practical," DHHS should not apply a strict interpretation to this limit and look to existing federal and state practices as models. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau hires bilingual enumerators to ensure meaningful participation, and the California Health Interview Survey reaches linguistically isolated communities through English simplification and linguistic interpretation (in Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, and Vietnamese) of its survey.

Finally, DHHS should ensure that community health stakeholders representing Asian Americans and NHPs and other underserved populations are included in the decision-making process and testing of the secretary's new standards on data collection, reporting, and analysis protocol under Section 4302(a). The inclusion of nongovernmental partners would help address privacy concerns and the unique cultural, linguistic, and social barriers that prevent underserved populations from participation in data collection and research. In addition, DHHS should strengthen its community health partnerships to ensure sufficient geographic and population-specific representation in any data collected, reported, or analyzed pursuant to Section 4302.

Federal data and research efforts to fully understand Asian American and NHPI health disparities and solutions lag significantly behind efforts to do so for other racial and ethnic groups. Strategic data collection collaborations with Asian American and NHPI communities, especially NHPIs, will be critical for building the evidence base. Strategic public-private partnerships between Asian American- and NHPI-serving community organizations, federal agencies, and health care organizations are vital to support the implementation of ACA Section 4302(a) for all Americans; such collaborative efforts are especially important under the current tight-budget climate, ensure broad stakeholder engagement that is inclusive of Asian Americans and NHPIs, and create a transparent public process for designing and implementing uniform standards of data on race, ethnicity, and language across the various components of the health care system (e.g., HIT and accountable care organizations). Advancing the national standardization of Asian American and NHPI health data collection through ACA Section 4302(a) can be a major step forward to ensuring all Americans are counted and eliminating racial, ethnic, and linguistic health disparities.

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NATIVE
HAWAIIANS
AND
PACIFIC
ISLANDERS

aapi nexus

Lots of Aloha, Little Data:

Data and Research on Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders

Shawn Malia Kana'iaupuni

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) people are those tracing their ancestry to any of the original peoples of Hawai'i, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands (Office of Management and Budget [OMB], 1997). These include Native Hawaiians, Chamorro, Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, Palauan, Pohnpeian, Chuukese, Yapese, Kosraen, and others in the Micronesian, Melanesian, and Polynesian Pacific Islander groupings. The largest of these, Native Hawaiians, Samoans, and Chamorro, are indigenous peoples of the state of Hawai'i, the U.S. Territory of American Samoa, and the U.S. Territory of Guam, respectively, and as such, eight of every ten NHPIs are U.S.-born (Waksberg, Levine, and Marker, 2000). The Census 2010 results indicate that 73 percent of the NHPI populations live in the West, predominantly in the states of Hawai'i and California, followed by Washington.

Recent assessments of federal data sets document the egregious lack of coverage of NHPI populations in nearly all data sources, with exception of vital statistics and the U.S. Census. The lack of data limits the ability of federal and state efforts, public and private, to understand issues and trends that inform policy and programs targeting NHPI populations. Also concerning, is the fact that many state and federal entities continue to aggregate NHPI population data with other Asian American groups, despite the widely divergent historical experiences, culture, and social and demographic characteristics of NHPI and Asian American groups. This practice occurs despite well-known inadequacies of aggregated data, which yields misleading information that is challenging to use effectively. The need for disaggregated data is especially urgent in light of recent Census 2010 data recording some of the highest growth rates in the United States among the NHPI population (averaging 40%, compared to 10% across the nation since

2000). According to the U.S. Census 2010, there are about 1,225,000 NHPs in the country. Native Hawaiians comprise about 45 percent of the NHPI census population, numbering about 521,000 alone or in combination (AOIC), followed by Samoan, Chamorro, and other smaller groups. Hawai'i is the native homeland of the Hawaiian people and is where 55 percent still reside (about 289,000 AOIC). As an indigenous group in the United States, this experience differentiates Native Hawaiians significantly from other Pacific Islanders and from Asian Americans.

A limited set of reliable social and economic statistics on NHPs formerly came from the decennial census long form, which was replaced by the American Community Survey (ACS) in 2005. The ACS relies on a smaller sample than the decennial census, which impairs the ability to produce reliable estimates for numerically small populations. National education data sets are another example of the limited information on NHPs. There are 154 Hawaiians reported in the National Center for Education Statistics, 54 in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), 34 in the ECLS Birth cohort, and even fewer Pacific Islanders in these datasets, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Oversampling techniques typically are required to attain sufficient sample sizes for statistical reliability, yet rarely has this occurred in national data sets.

To compensate for the small sample sizes in most data sets, researchers often aggregate NHPs with other Asian Americans to attain statistically reliable results. This practice masks significant differences between groups and also gives an inaccurate portrait of the NHPI population, which may be more statistically similar to the American Indian and Alaska Native population in terms of indigeneity, educational attainment, and other socioeconomic characteristics than to the Asian American population.

From the available information on NHPs, we know that the population is young and increasing at a higher rate compared to other groups. NHPs experience higher rates of poverty and homelessness, lower-paying jobs, and are more likely to be employed in positions that are eliminated during economic downturns, relative to other groups. Data on health and wellness suggest few improvements and much need. Most NHPI also struggle to maintain their unique languages and cultures. Where education data exist, we find a persistent lack of positive educational experiences that has resulted in substantial gaps in NHPI student outcomes, including

lower student achievement and growth, school engagement, promotion and graduation, and college enrollment and completion. Promisingly, research featured in this volume demonstrates the strengths of cultural approaches, consistent with a growing body of research in education and other areas.

Knowledge is power in social change efforts, and data and diverse approaches are needed to fuel it. Recommendations from this section's experts in the field are united in calling for using the OMB guidelines consistently; disaggregating data collection and reporting on socioeconomic, educational, cultural, youth, and health challenges facing NHPs; improving data estimates by addressing small sample sizes with oversampling methods and targeted surveys; and collaborating with public and private community-based organizations to promote high response rates and/or data partnerships. A great need exists for trend analyses over time on NHPs. These analyses will shed insight on the effects of programs and policies, including longitudinal studies, such as the ECLS and the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. Consistently, research by these authors highlights the power of culturally relevant approaches and the importance of developing innovative approaches to data, knowledge, and research that embrace indigenous perspectives in program and policy design, particularly in education, health, and science.

Five briefs in this section identify needs for NHPs and provide recommendations on how to support data-collection efforts and services for these communities. First, Sela Panapasa, Kamana'opono Crabbe, and Joseph Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula discuss the rationale for separating NHPs from Asian Americans in federal data by reviewing sixteen federal data sets that comply with OMB standards for data collection. However, only one of these data sets is fully compliant with OMB standards for reporting disaggregated information on NHPs. The authors provide recommendations on how to improve reliable data for NHPs and how to obtain robust samples of these communities.

Subsequently, I, along with my colleagues Brandon Ledward and Ku'ulani Keohokalole, share the results of a quantitative research study examining the impact of culture-based education on student achievement and socio-emotional development for NHP students. The results of the study emphasized the correlation between culturally relevant education and better school performance. To close the achievement gap for many of these students,

the policy brief argues for greater advocacy, funding, and policies that promote community-based, culturally relevant education, which would benefit all children.

Karen Umemoto and Earl S. Hishinuma's paper discusses policy recommendations for programs that support youth substance-abuse prevention, also through culture-based programming and strategies. NHPI adolescents are at a much greater risk than Asian Americans for several health-related indicators, including violence, alcohol, and drug use throughout the past decade. In order to form effective strength-based interventions, the authors recommend the application of a socio-ecological approach that incorporates family relations, friends, schools, and community organizations in reducing negative youth behaviors.

The Hi'iaka Working Group article calls for bringing together indigenous and cultural perspectives and knowledge systems to inform geographic information systems (GIS) and the process of creating a set of guiding principles for creating an indigenous GIS. GIS is limited to a Western philosophical understanding of the world, and the authors advocate for new technologies that integrate indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, which also benefits cultural heritage and survival.

This section ends with a piece by Maile Taualii, Joey Quenga, Raynald Samoa, Salim Samanani, and Doug Dover. These authors discuss the limitations of data and the mortality of NHPs in California and Hawai'i, which they use as a starting place for policy recommendations. As with other briefs, Taualii and colleagues advocate for all states to comply with OMB standards for racial reporting of deaths. Until compliance is achieved, it remains difficult to analyze health data for and address disparities experienced by NHPs.

Note

Most reports and the public use microdata products released by the Census using ACS data are limited also in that they report on single race/ethnic groups, combining all individuals with two or more races into a single category. This reporting is a major concern for multiracial NHPs, of whom 55% report more than one race. E.g., about two of every three Native Hawaiians report two or more races on the Census and ACS surveys. Thus, two-thirds of the entire population are lumped into the nationwide "two or more races" category; a category that is very difficult to decipher or use effectively.

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Efficacy of Federal Data:

Revised Office of Management and Budget Standard for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders Examined

Sela V. Panapasa, Kamana'opono M. Crabbe, and Joseph Keawe'aimoku Kaholokula

Summary

This policy brief examines the status of federal data since the implementation of the 1997 Revised OMB 15 standards for the collection of race and ethnic data, identifies ongoing data limitations, and present recommendations to improve policy and interventions for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders (NHPI). While most federal agencies are taking appropriate steps to comply with the revised OMB standards, many are having less success reporting disaggregated information on NHPIs. This suggests that increased efforts to obtain robust samples of NHPIs warrants immediate attention in order for federal agencies to fully comply with the revised OMB standards.

Introduction

Research and survey findings have strong implications for policy and program development. Federal agencies rely on robust data collection of administrative records (e.g., vital registries for births and deaths) and national surveys, including the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the Current Population Survey, to make decisions that ultimately influence the distribution of resources and services nationwide. Failure to produce highly reliable estimates on numerically small diverse populations at the national level compromises effective planning and interventions to address their social, economic, and health concerns (Department of Health and Human Services, 1999; Institute of Medicine [IOM], 2009; Williams, 1999). Consequently, identifiable segments of the total population risk being overlooked, understudied, and under-

served (IOM, 1998; Panapasa, Weed, and Atkinson, 2009; Panapasa et al., 2010; Williams, 1999).

In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) implemented a new racial and ethnic category that disaggregated Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) into two groups: Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (NHPs) and Asians, and mandated that federal agencies collect and report data using the new racial and ethnic categories by the year 2003 (OMB, 1997). Several reasons led to the separation of NHPs from Asians as a single federal racial/ethnic category. Some of the important reasons were: (1) NHPs, compared to Asians, have higher rates of many chronic diseases and are more socio-economically and socio-culturally disadvantaged—issues masked by aggregation with Asians (Blaisdell, 1993; Braun et al., 1997; Chen and Hawks, 1995; Chen et al., 1993; Department of Health and Human Services, 1995; Hoyert and Kung, 1997; Lin-Fu, 1988); (2) because Asians were overrepresented in higher education, many NHP college students were adversely affected by graduate schools' admission policies to limit the enrollment of Asians and were bypassed for scholarships (Lin-Fu, 1993; U.S. Census Bureau, 1991); and (3) disproportionate allocation of federal resources and support did not match the extent of the medical, social, and economic issues faced by NHPs given their population size relative to Asians (Fernandez, 1996; Lin-Fu, 1993; Yu and Liu, 1992). The disaggregation of NHPs from AAPIs represents a major step toward accurately characterizing these distinct populations across various key measures and outcomes (Bitton, Zaslavsky, and Ayanian, 2010; Panapasa et al., 2010; Srinivasan and Guillermo, 2000). Additionally, the revised OMB standards reflected the proper attention to the diverse characteristics of Native Hawaiians, migrants from the U.S. Associated Pacific Islands, and immigrants from Pacific Island countries.

This brief represents a review of select federal data sets since the implementation of the revised OMB standards as means of highlighting existing data limitations. Based on this review, recommendations to improve federal data and information on NHPs are provided.

Methodology

Data from six federal agencies—the Department of Commerce, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Justice—were

Table 1: Description of Select Federal Data Sources and Compliance with Revised OMB 15 Standard on the Collection and Reporting of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Data

Federal Agency and Data Source	Collecting Data Using Revised OMB 15 Categories?	Race/Ethnicity Identifiers for Data Collection?	Reporting Data Using Revised OMB 15 Mandate?	Race/Ethnicity Identifiers for Data Collection?
1. Department of Commerce				
US Census FY 2000, 2010	Yes	All	Yes	Detailed Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Race
American Community Survey	Yes	All	Partial	Native Hawaiian, and Other Asian American Pacific Islander
Current Population Survey (CPS)	Yes	All	No	Asian American Pacific Islander
2. Department of Health and Human Services				
Vital Fertility and Mortality Events	Yes	All	Partial	Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Guamanian/Chamorro, and Other Asian Pacific Islander
National Longitudinal Mortality Study	Yes	All	No	Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, "Other"
National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)	Yes	All	No	Not Releasable
National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)	Yes	All	No	Other Race
National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG)	Yes	All	No	Other Race
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)	Yes	All	No	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS)	Yes	All	No	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
National Hospital Discharge Survey	Yes	All	No	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)	Yes	All	No	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
3. Department of Education				
Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey				
Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K)	Yes	All	No	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
National Household Education Surveys (NHES)	Yes	All	No	Unknown
National Crime Victimization Survey	Yes	All	No	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS)	Yes	All	No	Unknown
Medical Expenditure Panel Survey	Yes	All	No	Asian American Pacific Islander, Single Race and "Other Races/Multiple Races"
4. Department of Agriculture				
Food Stamp Quality Control Database (FSPQC)	Yes	All	No	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
5. Department of Housing and Urban Development				
American Housing Survey (AHS)	Yes		No	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
6. Department of Justice				
Census of Jails	Yes	All		Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

Source: University of Michigan, Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research.

examined for their compliance with the revised OMB standards. Data set selection was based on (1) accessibility, (2) degree of national coverage of the U.S. population, and (3) the potential source of information for policy and intervention. The data sources identified are by no means exhaustive but do represent a useful cross-section of studies that collect and report race and ethnicity data post revised OMB standard (Department of Commerce, 2011; Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2011; National Center for Education Statistics, 2011; National Center for Health Statistics, 2011). Specifically, we examine whether the select federal agencies are in full compliance with the revised OMB 15 standards: to collect and report disaggregated AA and NHPI information.

Findings

Overall, sixteen of the sixteen administrative data and national surveys are in compliance with the revised OMB standard for collecting disaggregated NHPI information. However, of the sixteen data sets, only one is in compliance in reporting (U.S. Census) and two are partial (American Community Survey and Vital Fertility and Mortality Events). Significant problems persist in reporting disaggregated NHPI information. Table 1 presents a description of existing NHPI documentation in national data across various federal agencies and a notation of their compliance with the revised OMB standards.

Reporting issues that violate the intent of the revised OMB standard generally fall into one of two approaches. The NHIS, for example, reports race information for small case size respondents as “not able to release,” thus reflecting a general failure of most national sampling frames to capture representative samples of U.S. subpopulations. The other approach is to clump small racial groups into aggregate categories such as “AAPI” or “Other Races.” Neither approach aids in analysis but instead introduces potential biases (e.g., overestimates for some populations and underestimates for others) into any studies that use these categories due to unmeasured heterogeneity.

Recommendations

Evidence-based research is essential to develop effective policies and interventions. Despite the implementation of the revised OMB standards, federal data collection on NHPIs remains inadequate because sample sizes are too small to produce reliable esti-

mates. New legislation and commitment of resources are needed to obtain robust data and reliable estimates. Representative samples of NHPIs need to be increased across national surveys and reporting of results need to be improved. Therefore, we propose the following three recommendations.

1. *Collect and Report Reliable Disaggregated Information on NHPIs to Fully Comply with the Revised OMB 15 Standards*

Inclusion of separate “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander” identifiers and increased sample sizes are essential to achieve meaningful policies and interventions for NHPIs. Unlike other racial and ethnic groups, the relatively small number of NHPI respondents in national surveys will continue to be a problem without specific oversampling strategies. At a minimum, the collapsing of NHPI and Asian populations into an aggregate AAPI classification should be avoided. Studies have shown clear evidence that this practice introduces significant bias into measurements and indicators for both groups (Cho and Hummer, 2001; Miller et al., 2008; Srinivasan and Guillermo, 2000). The ongoing use of higher-order aggregations such as “Other Asian Pacific Islander” is also unacceptable as it merely reflects the failure of current survey designs to capture the real composition of the U.S. population. For example, the National Center for Health Statistics currently aggregates and reports vital events for “Other Asian Pacific Islanders” instead of two separate categories: “Other Asians” and “Other Pacific Islanders.”

2. *Develop Appropriate Methodologies for Data Collection, Tabulation, and Reporting Strategies to Produce Reliable Estimates on the NHPI Population.*

Reliable estimates on NHPIs outcomes are essential to fully satisfy the requirements of the revised OMB standard. Increase support for investigator-initiated research projects in survey methodology for hard-to-reach NHPI subpopulations is necessary to improve the reliable reporting of data on the NHPI populations.

3. *Develop NHPI Community Partnerships*

NHPI community advocates represent valuable resources to improve research and help contextualize data collection in local communities. The U.S. Census Bureau Advisory Committees have shown how this model helps capitalize on community input (U.S. Census, 2011). Active NHPI community involvement empowers advocacy for meaningful

policy and interventions and aids in the implementation of evidence-based research. Community support also helps to reduce refusal rates by NHPIs in surveys and ensure the accurate collection of sensitive or difficult questions regarding health, finances, or family life.

Implementation of these three recommendations would more accurately identify and characterize the needs of the NHPI Americans—a significantly underserved population in the United States.

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New Research on the Impact of Cultural Influences in Education on Native Hawaiian Student Outcomes

Shawn Malia Kana'iaupuni, Brandon Ledward,
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Summary

The long-standing education achievement gaps of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) students in our nation represent a significant concern, one that diverse stakeholders are committed to resolving. Although national data sets fail to address NHPI populations, thereby limiting the ability to drive effective policy and programs, local-level research and developments in education provide fresh opportunities to reexamine the learning and teaching of NHPI students. This report shares the results of a quantitative research study that examines the impact of culture-based education (CBE) on student achievement and socio-emotional development. The findings indicate that culture-based educational strategies positively impact student outcomes, especially Native Hawaiian student outcomes. The implications of this study are valuable for education practitioners, programs, and policy makers seeking to eliminate achievement gaps for NHPI and indigenous students.

Introduction

The long-standing education gaps of NHPI students in the United States represent a significant concern, one that diverse stakeholders are committed to resolving. New local-level research and innovations in education provide fresh opportunities to reexamine the learning and teaching of culturally diverse students in ways other than the conventional models that many schools have used, most of the latter having failed to significantly improve NHPI student outcomes. This article shares results and policy implications from the Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education

(HCIE) study, which provides new quantitative data linking student outcomes to culturally relevant educational approaches.

Background

High-level data from past decennial censuses and from states that collect and report disaggregated data on NHPIs consistently document the longstanding gaps in NHPI educational outcomes, ranging from lower achievement, attendance, and graduation rates to higher disciplinary and risk-taking behavior among our youth (e.g., Kana'iaupuni, Malone, and Ishibashi, 2005). Various theories have emerged to explain such gaps in student performance. The cultural deficit theory attributes the academic shortcomings of minority students to the students' home culture and environment whereas cultural difference theories shift their focus from the home to differences in language and communication styles between home and school (Erickson, 1993). The cultural compatibility (Vogt, Jordan, and Tharp, 1993) and cultural congruence (Mohatt and Erickson, 1981) theories similarly explain poorer student outcomes among some groups as a result of language differences and cultural mismatches. The oppositional theory focuses on student responses to these mismatches and includes broader societal inequities and experiences with discrimination (Ogbu, 1993).

Recent theories place culture at the center of debates surrounding relevance, relationships, and rigor in learning processes. Culturally responsive/relevant education recognizes cultural gaps between home and school as part of the achievement gap and calls for increased cultural relevance in education to engage, support, and empower learners (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). Cognitive theory (Demmert and Towner, 2003) reasons that students learn more readily when prior knowledge is activated and connected to new information they are learning, hence supporting the importance of cultural relevance. Finally, the cultural-historical-activity theory more specifically emphasizes connectedness to community and culture as the foundation for teaching and learning (Roth and Lee, 2007).

Despite differences in approach and emphasis, these theories all consider the degree of continuity and congruence between home and school. This body of work suggests that education is an individual and a collective experience, where engagement and success can be enhanced and enriched through strengths-based approaches integrating the culture and community. In this research,

the term *CBE* is used to represent a holistic and comprehensive application of culturally relevant education and refers to educational approaches that are grounded in a particular cultural worldview (Demmert and Towner, 2003).

A strong premise of this body of work is that education is a cultural process. Schools are the primary vehicle for transmitting knowledge and skills as well as the values, practices, and culture of a society. What may be less obvious is that all educational systems and institutions are rooted in a particular cultural worldview. Critical questions to consider are whose culture is being transmitted and what cultural values are being instilled in children? In the United States, schools reflect mainstream worldviews in which Western culture is the norm. Some scholars argue that there is bias against non-Western worldviews and that children of non-Western ethnic or indigenous groups are thereby disadvantaged (Cornelius, 1999; Jacob and Jordan, 1993; King, 2005; Loewen, 2007; Sue, 2004). Although these biases may be invisible or unrecognized, students of indigenous and other minority communities often feel disconnected in an educational system in which their values, knowledge, and practices are largely ignored and result in educational disparities. The gaps are particularly serious for cultural groups that have not voluntarily migrated to this country with the intent of assimilating.

As Kana'iaupuni and Kawai'ae'a (2008) point out, at its simplest, culture may be defined as shared ways of being, knowing, and doing. The educational literature describes the role of culture in education in various ways, from cultural styles or sensitivity approaches that stress teaching respect and tolerance for other cultures and ways of learning, to learning strategies that teachers can use to be culturally attuned and responsive to their student needs (Castagno and Brayboy, 2008). Our use of the term *CBE* is consistent with more in-depth treatments referring to the grounding of instruction and student learning in the values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences, places, and language that are the foundation of a culture, in this case Hawaiian indigenous culture. It is community-based. It is place-based. *CBE* may include teaching the traditions and practices of a particular culture, but it is not restricted to these skills and knowledge. Most important, *CBE* refers to teaching and learning that are grounded in a cultural worldview, from whose lens are taught the skills, knowledge, content, and values that support student success in our modern, global society.

The recent HCIE study provides fresh insight into the question of how CBE approaches impact student outcomes. The study is based on interviews with 600 teachers, 2,969 students, and 2,264 parents at sixty-two participating schools, including conventional public schools, Hawaiian-focused and Western charter schools, schools with Hawaiian-language immersion programs, and select private school campuses. It is a collaborative effort of the Kamehameha Schools, Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE), and Na Lei Na'auao (an alliance of Hawaiian-focused public charter schools). As such, it is the first large-scale empirical study of its kind. Data were collected from teachers about culturally relevant and effective teaching practices and merged with student surveys and institutional data regarding math and reading achievement in addition to other outcomes. Hierarchical linear modeling techniques were used to conduct multilevel statistical analyses of data collected from public and private schools.

Table 1: Student Characteristics by School Type

	DOE	Private	Public Charter	All Schools
Gender (n = 2,695)				
% Female	56.1	50.8	44.3	52.6
Ethnicity (n = 2,802)				
% Hawaiian	54.1	99.9	83.0	79.7
Social Economic Status (n = 1,425)				
% Free/reduced lunch population	44.6	NA	70.5	NA
Hawai'i Residence (n = 2,969)				
% Five years or less	8.3	2.7	2.7	5.05
N	1,242	1,544	183	2,969

The findings are consistent with prior qualitative studies, indicating that CBE strategies positively impact student outcomes, and especially Native Hawaiian student outcomes. Specifically, the analyses indicate a set of nested relationships linking the use of CBE strategies by teachers and schools to student educational outcomes: first, CBE use positively impacts students' socioemotional well-being (e.g., identity, self-efficacy, and social relationships); second, enhanced socioemotional well-being, in turn, positively affects math and reading test scores; and third, the analyses suggest a smaller, statistically significant relationship between CBE

use and math and reading test scores, most notably when teachers' use of culture-based strategies is supported by overall use of culture-based strategies in the school.

The study also found that students of teachers who often use CBE approaches reported higher Hawaiian cultural affiliation (among Hawaiian students and students of other ethnicities), civic engagement, and school motivation than did students of other teachers. For example, the survey data show that the former group is more likely to have strong community ties, working to protect the local environment and attending public meetings about community affairs. They are also more likely to spend time on their homework every night and reported high levels of trusting relationships with teachers and staff, and a deep sense of belonging at school. Specifically, students of teachers who often use culture-based approaches are significantly more likely to feel that many people at school are like family, they can trust people at their school, and teachers at their school go out of their way to help them.

In addition, 87.9 percent of students of teachers who often used culture-based strategies said they expect to graduate from college compared with 73.5 percent of students whose teachers tended not to use such strategies (*Education Week*, 2010).

Policy Implications for CBE and Its Relationship to Student Outcomes

The findings of this study have several state and local policy implications relevant to CBE and its positive relationship to student achievement:

1. Provide professional development through teacher education and in-service programs to educators and leaders that gives foundational understandings of CBE approaches and strategies. Best practices in achieving relevance and rigor in the classroom are well articulated through CBE, providing positive results for closing gaps in educational outcomes for NHPs. Findings indicate that culture-based environments not only promote academic rigor and relevance for students but also instill self-esteem and emphasize the values of civic engagement through the fostering of community attachment and giveback. Programs at the university and school levels that are designed to instill best-practice teaching methods for new and existing teachers should incorporate culturally relevant approaches and strategies to broaden styles and practices in teaching and learning.

2. Increase federal and state funding for culture- and language-based charter and other schools and supporting organizations. Culture- and language-based schools are highly effective at integrating CBE to the benefit of their students in more ways than one, for instance, attendance, timely completion, and postsecondary aspirations. For example, in the state of Hawai'i, seventeen of the state's thirty-one charter schools are culture-based. Though powerful in application, findings show that CBE is not the normative approach to teaching and learning in Hawai'i. We recommend increased financial and political support for CBE-rich environments, such as Hawaiian-focused charter schools, and to secure their sustainability. Currently, many operate out of substandard tents and buildings, have no facilities support from the state, and have been working to create policy changes around equitable funding, relative to other public school students.

These recommendations are supported by a recent hearing of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, during which expert panelists called for continued federal support for culture-based learning in general and the promising vehicle of charter schools in particular. That support should include encouraging states to strengthen their own culture- and language-based schools, including public charter schools, through matching grant funding and grant award criteria, for example through the "Race-to-the-Top"² and other mechanisms. Support is also needed to establish legislative goals and criteria for states to require equitable funding for culture- and language-based schools, curriculum, and materials, especially those that offer educational environments that support the unique cultures and languages of our indigenous peoples.

In the Native Hawaiian community, there is an old proverb, "ma ka hana ka 'ike"—in doing, one learns. As supported by the findings on NHPI achievement in our public education system, there is an undeniable correlation between cultural relevance in education—through the forms of hands-on, place-based learning that honors students' cultural backgrounds as valuable repositories of knowledge—and how well they perform in the school setting. Stakeholders committed to closing the achievement gap need only point to successful examples of culture-based pedagogy and continue to promote these efforts through advocacy, funding, and policy. The evidence demonstrates that community-based, culturally relevant education benefits not only NHPIs but also all children. Overall, the study results re-

ported here are consistent with other research, showing mounting evidence that promoting federal, state, and private collaborations for innovation and culture-based learning will produce—and has already produced—outstanding student achievement.

Notes

1. For more information, refer to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Web site, complete with full testimonies and video of the hearings. Details can be found at <http://indian.senate.gov/news/pressreleases/2011-05-26.cfm>.
2. Race to the Top (RTTT) is a \$4.35 billion United States Department of Education program designed to spur reforms in state and local district K-12 education. It is funded by the ED Recovery Act as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and was announced by President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan on July 24, 2009 (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_to_the_Top (accessed August 22, 2011)).

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Policy Recommendations to Prevent Youth Violence and Substance Abuse and Foster Positive Youth Development among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Adolescents

Karen Umemoto and Earl S. Hishinuma

Summary

Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders represent diverse groups with unique histories and rich cultural traditions. They also confront significant challenges in health and education, experiencing disproportionately higher rates of violence and substance abuse. Policy recommendations regarding youth delinquency, substance abuse, and positive development include: (1) application of a socio-ecological approach; (2) utilization of a positive youth development and restorative approach; (3) development of culturally based interventions; (4) the building of capacity for youth-serving organizations; (5) development and strengthening of collaborations; (6) juvenile justice reforms; and (7) encouragement of research that disaggregates ethnic groups and gives greater consideration to community perspectives.

Introduction

The United States is projected to have no majority racial group by the year 2042 (Frey, 2008). Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (APIs) constitute one of the most diverse ethnic groups in the United States and is the fastest-growing racial category (Day, 2010). Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders (NHOPIs) (full and part) number 1,225,195 persons or 0.4 percent of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).¹ More than half (55.9%) of those reporting to be NHOPI were of mixed racial background (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Although numerically small relative to other groups, they are among the fastest-growing groups.

The number of NHOPIs (full and part) increased from 874,414 to 1,225,195 between 2000 and 2010, a 40 percent increase throughout the past decade (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001, 2011).

Socio-economic data for NHOPIs are often aggregated with Asian American groups. Subsequently, they suffer from a persistent myth regarding AAPI adolescents—that AAPI youth do not require attention and resources because they are well off in comparison to the other racial adolescent groups. This “model minority” myth is typically perpetuated by using census and other data indicating that AAPIs collectively have comparable rates of educational attainment, employment, and poverty as non-Hispanic whites (Reeves and Bennett, 2003).

Violence and Substance Use among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Youth

When disaggregated from other Asian American groups, NHOPI adolescents are at a much greater risk for negative outcomes than Asian American youth on many educational, psycho-social, and health-related indicators, including violence and drug use. According to the 2009 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS) results, NHOPI youths are at higher risk of violence victimization and perpetration (see Table 1) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). These trends have been consistent for the past decade (Sugimoto-Matsuda, Hishinuma, and Chang, 2011; Wong et al., 2011).

They are also at greater risk of alcohol and other substance abuse. According to the 2009 YBRBS, NHOPI youths begin marijuana use at an earlier age than the general population. They are also at higher risk of substance use for marijuana, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, and ecstasy as well as have greater access to illegal drugs at school (see Table 2) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009).

Cultural considerations are critical when developing and evaluating interventions with NHOPI youth, families, and communities. Factors related to the role of culture include cultural identification, collectivism, interdependence, religion and spirituality, acculturative stress, help-seeking behaviors, and stigma of mental health (Goldston et al., 2008). These factors do not necessarily explain the disparities in risk of violence and substance use, but they are important to understand in formulating effective strength-based interventions.

Table 1. Comparison of U.S. and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Youth Violence

Question	Total U.S. Population	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school on at least 1 day (during the 30 days before the survey)	5.0 (4.3–5.7) 16,371	10.6 (6.2–17.4) 180
Threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times (e.g., a gun, knife, or club during the 12 months before the survey)	7.7 (6.9–8.5) 16,367	12.5 (7.5–20.3) 179
In a physical fight on school property one or more times (during the 12 months before the survey)	11.1 (10.0–12.2) 16,089	14.8 (10.6–20.2) 175
Attempted suicide one or more times (during the 12 months before the survey)	6.3 (5.7–7.0) 14,609	11.9 (8.0–17.3) 155
Carried a gun on at least 1 day (during the 30 days before the survey)	5.9 (5.1–6.9) 15,664	10.4 (5.2–19.9) 145
Injured in a physical fight one or more times (injuries had to be treated by a doctor or nurse during the 12 months before the survey)	3.8 (3.3–4.3) 15,749	7.3 (3.8–13.4) 164
Ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse (when they did not want to)	7.4 (6.7–8.3) 15,735	11.9 (7.3–18.6) 175

Note: Table shows percentages with margins of error followed below by the number of survey respondents. Rows with shading show where NHPs approach or exceed twice the overall U.S. rate.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009.

Policy and Research Recommendations

Recommendations on policy research and policy orientation for issues of violence, substance abuse, and positive youth development are as follows:

1. *Apply a socio-ecological approach to addressing youth violence and substance abuse.*

Research has shown that comprehensive approaches that address multiple domains—the individual, peer and family relations, schools and community organizations, and larger societal influences—have greater promise in reducing negative youth behaviors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Dahlberg and Potter, 2001; Garbarino, 1985; Thornton et

Table 2. Comparison of U.S. and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Youth Alcohol and Other Drug Use

Question	Total U.S. Population	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
Drank alcohol for the first time before age 13 years	21.1 (19.6–22.6) 16,207	23.9 (18.3–30.6) 176
Tried marijuana for the first time before age 13 years	7.5 (6.7–8.3) 16,134	15.0 (10.6–20.8) 173
Used marijuana 1 or more times (during the 30 days before the survey)	20.8 (19.4–22.3) 16,112	24.8 (15.4–37.4) 172
Ever used any form of cocaine 1 or more times during their life (e.g., powder, crack, or freebase)	6.4 (5.7–7.1) 16,204	8.5 (5.2–13.6) 174
Ever used heroin 1 or more times during their life (also called “smack,” “junk,” or “China white”)	2.5 (2.2–2.9) 15,731	6.1 (2.4–14.5) 144
Ever used methamphetamines 1 or more times during their life (also called “speed,” “crystal,” “crank,” or “ice”)	4.1 (3.6–4.6) 16,289	7.7 (4.6–12.5) 175
Ever used ecstasy 1 or more times during their life (also called “MDMA”)	6.7 (5.8–7.6) 15,887	12.0 (6.6–20.8) 161
Offered, sold, or given an illegal drug by someone on school property (during the 12 months before the survey)	22.7 (20.7–24.9) 16,261	27.6 (18.5–38.9) 174

Note: Table shows percentages with margins of error followed by the number survey respondents. Rows with shading show where NHPs approach or exceed twice the overall U.S. rate.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009.

al., 2000). These domains constitute the dynamic social ecology that helps to shape and explain the prevalence and forms of youth delinquency. Research and policy interventions that are most useful are those that address individual challenges such as substance abuse or mental health problems, family issues such as domestic violence or language barriers, negative peer influences, school climate, and societal influences such as mass media in a more comprehensive, integrated manner (Umemoto et al., 2009). As examples in one of the settings—namely

schools—interventions could be related to course curriculum (Strong Makaiau, 2010), school connectedness (Chung-Do, 2010; Wegner et al., 2010), cross-cultural understanding (Strong Makaiau, 2010), and antibullying and anticyberbullying (Goebert et al., 2010). In addition, no national strategy or agenda exists to address youth delinquency and positive youth development. AAPIs need to be “at the table” for such major and necessary efforts.

2. *Utilize a positive youth development and a restorative rather than punitive approach.*

The juvenile justice system has historically alternated between the use of punitive and restorative approaches. Research has shown that harsh, zero-tolerance approaches tend to trap increasing numbers of youth within the juvenile justice system, with high rates of recidivism (Bernard and Kurlychek, 2010). Meanwhile, funding has been increasing throughout the past decade for school security measures while it has decreased for behavioral interventions (Community Matters, 2009). This trend needs to be reversed. Programs incorporating restorative approaches for NHOPI youth are needed to expand opportunities for healing and transformation that may lead to successful livelihood and development. As with other groups, punitive measures may be most useful in delinquency prevention and intervention when selectively used within a carrot-and-stick approach that emphasizes opportunities for pro-social growth and development (Baker, Sigmon, and Nugent, 2001; Umemoto, 2006).

3. *Develop culturally based programs and interventions addressing the unique conditions of NHOPIs.*

Funders have been placing increasing emphasis on “evidence-based” programming, favoring those programs that have been proven through research to be successful (e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). However, few programs serving NHOPI youth have undergone the rigorous study required for designation as “evidence-based” (Irwin, 2008; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2011). This has threatened the development of culturally based programs that, among NHOPI populations, allow for greater engagement of youth and families in youth-development activities. Programs that are culturally grounded in traditional knowledge and practices as well as cultural competence among practitioners are important for youths from NHOPI communities (Fong and Furuto, 2001;

McGregor, Minerbi, and Matsuoka, 1998; Meyer, 1998; Mokuau, 1990, 2002). Policies are needed that encourage the innovation of culturally based programs, including the evaluation of such programs, so that they can be better informed by research as well as become recognized by various national agencies as evidence-based.

4. *Expand funding and organizational capacity for violence and substance abuse prevention and intervention programs serving NHOPI youths.*

AAPI youth-serving organizations constitute the community-based infrastructure of “first responders” who address violence and substance abuse-related problems day to day. They provide counseling, translation, referrals, outreach, gang intervention, recreation, employment and training, tutoring and academic support, mediation, family reconciliation, drug treatment, mental health services, and leadership development, among other vital programs and activities. Major federal funding has decreased throughout the past decade for youth-development programs, including funds for youth-violence prevention (Community Matters, 2009; Department of Education, 2007, 2008). In addition, organizational capacity varies widely, with some stable and established AAPI youth-serving organizations; however, many of these organizations are underfunded, understaffed, and in need of technical assistance and training to increase their organizational capacity in order to meet the challenges they face (Rehuher, Hiramatsu, and Helm, 2008; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2011; Sugimoto-Matsuda and Onoye, 2010). A need also exists for many mainstream youth organizations to develop the capacity to better serve NHOPI clients.

5. *Develop and strengthen collaboration and partnerships that are purposeful, strategic, and systematic across sectors, organizations, and communities.*

Collaboration among community-based organizations, schools, juvenile justice agencies, health and mental health organizations, and civic organizations is critical for a comprehensive approach to positive youth development (Miao et al., 2011; Umemoto et al., 2009). Many AAPI youth are among those who get “tangled” or “lost in the system,” as they confront challenges at school, at home, in their neighborhood, or with the law. We need to manage the provision of services and “handling” of youth within and between systems and sectors better, so that the needed array of available services can be received

in a timely and effective way (Rehuher, Hiramatsu, and Helm, 2008; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2011; Sugimoto-Matsuda and Onoye, 2010). Particularly in times of financial hardship, the ability to coordinate initiatives or to manage services and care for AAPI youth across sectors is vital.

6. *Participate in juvenile justice reforms to decrease youth confinement and disproportionate representation.*

Similar to adults, youths in the United States are involved in the criminal justice system at high rates compared with other industrialized nations and particularly youths of color (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2008; Snyder and Sickmund, 1999). Some AAPI groups are among those that experience disproportionately high rates of contact with the juvenile justice system, such as Native Hawaiians and Samoans in Hawai'i (Bradford and Perrone, 2001; Kassebaum et al., 1995a, 1995b). Research is needed to identify the extent and nature of AAPI involvement in the juvenile justice system and to examine the causes for overrepresentation. Research and policy initiatives to reduce this disproportionate representation in the juvenile justice system while protecting public safety are also critical.

7. *Encourage research that disaggregates ethnic groups and considers community perspectives.*

Research and policies that lump AAPI ethnic groups into combined categories mask important distinctions and variations among them. This has historically led to the neglect of specific needs among the more disenfranchised or marginalized AAPI groups in the United States, such as Filipino, Southeast Asian, and NHOPI youths. Disaggregation of immigrants and nonimmigrants is also important, as many NHOPI groups show a bifurcated socio-economic distribution, with new immigrant youths from throughout the Pacific facing unique, often-harsher conditions compared to their American-born counterparts. Such disaggregation can reveal problems such as overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system or ethnic-specific patterns of youth delinquency as well as reveal new opportunities to address these issues effectively.

Conclusion

Despite the rich cultural traditions of our NHOPI children and adolescents, they are presented with significant challenges to their overall health and well-being in that they experience higher

rates of violence and substance abuse than the overall U.S. population and most other ethnic groups. Policies should incorporate an approach that is comprehensive, positive and strength-based, and culturally appropriate with a strong focus on capacity building, collaboration, and systemic institutional reforms. Accompanying research should be cognizant of the need to disaggregate that data based on substantive factors, including ethnicity.

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Notes

1. The U.S. Census category of "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander" includes persons who indicate their race as "Native Hawaiian," "Guamanian or Chamorro," "Samoaan," and "Other Pacific Islander" or provide other detailed Pacific Islander responses.

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Indigenous Knowledges Driving Technological Innovation

The Hi'iaka Working Group

Summary

This policy brief explores the use and expands the conversation on the ability of geospatial technologies to represent Indigenous cultural knowledge. Indigenous peoples' use of geospatial technologies has already proven to be a critical step for protecting tribal self-determination. However, the ontological frameworks and techniques of Western geospatial technologies differ from those of Indigenous cultures, which inevitably lead to mistranslation and misrepresentation when applied to cultural knowledge. The authors advocate the creation of new technologies that are more conducive to Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies in an effort to break down the barriers to the expression and preservation of cultural heritage and cultural survival.

Introduction

The values and priorities of land use, resource management, and environmental stewardship of the dominant culture often do not mesh well with the indigenous [sic] knowledge and values of a native community.

—Eric Riggs, "Field-based Education and Indigenous Knowledge"

In February 2011 a National Science Foundation-funded workshop about Indigenous ecological knowledges and geographic information sciences (GIS) was held at the Kīlauea Military Camp on the island of Hawai'i in order to explore ontologically compatible techniques and technologies. Attendees consisted of an internationally and interdisciplinary diverse set of Indigenous academics and community scholars interested in exploring those epistemologically compatible geospatial technologies capable of representing Indigenous cultural knowledge.

All attendees recognized that current geospatial techniques and technologies have limited potential to represent Indigenous cultural knowledge and may have detrimental effects because they deemphasize, ignore, or devalue concepts that are of central importance to Indigenous cultures, including the ubiquity of relatedness, value of nonempirical experience, need to control access to all levels of geographical knowledge, and value of ambiguity over binary thought. Attendees also acknowledged the value of ontological pluralism with regard to advancing scientific research and struggling with the limitations of working with spatial knowledge systems, which emphasize dualisms such as mind-body, nature-culture, space-time, and person-environment. Lastly, attendees recognized that the relationship between Indigenous and Western spatial knowledge systems is not dichotomous. They are complementary knowledge systems differing only in their emphasis on what is considered knowledge and how it is structured.

Geospatial techniques and technologies are comprised of a collection of tools, techniques, and technologies including GIS, global positioning systems, and remote sensing for managing spatial information systems. These spatial data infrastructures (SDI) are based on a Western philosophical understanding of the world. Indigenous peoples' engagement with SDI has thus far been to adapt to the Western framework because it was constructed without regard to Indigenous spatial knowledge systems. It does not take into account the way that many Indigenous people relate to the world, nor is it similar to the spatial knowledge systems inextricably intertwined with Indigenous people's cultural principles, practices, and protocols. So although SDI can easily manage environmental concerns from a Western perspective, it does not adequately address Indigenous concerns about environment and resource management. These issues were the central focus of the workshop as attendees were tasked with determining what kinds of new information and/or understandings could be gained by developing an Indigenous GIS.

Analysis

We observe the universe through a limited prism of our senses. Acknowledging the possibility, the very likelihood that there are realities that lie beyond the realm of our senses is not a debate about belief systems, so much as an examination

of alternative methodologies. Holding on to the belief “that science must be provable, verifiable, and repeatable” excludes any and all contradictory assumptions . . . and that IS NOT science that is politics.

—Peter MacNicol as Dr. Larry Fleinhardt
in *Numb3rs*, CBS drama

To ensure that our conversations about the task at hand truly embodied Indigenous epistemologies, we centered ourselves in the Hawaiian process of creation. Workshop attendees began with a multisensory series of Kīpaepae, or setting of the foundation. One of the key aspects of Indigenous epistemologies is that of orienting oneself to the landscape and to each other’s spirit as family. The initial Kīpaepae ceremonies and exchanges are designed to potentiate our capacity as a diverse group of scholars and practitioners to arrive at a shared goal. We were immersed in a didactic curriculum that continuously attempted to anchor our relationship to place and space through *wahi pana* (sacred geographies), *kapa* (bark cloth) making, and *hula* (dance). We began with an intimate introduction to the Hawaiian consciousness by visiting the sacred geographies of Hilo that revealed obvious relationships between elemental phenomenon and ecological knowledge. *Kapa* making challenged our dexterity and patience as we were given an opportunity to “felt” our combined experiences into the fabric and framework of the “creative process.” *Hula* as the embodiment of Hawaiian spatial knowledge engaged our minds and bodies synergistically as a ritualized celebration of a reciprocal relationship with nature.

Participation in these Hawaiian practices was designed for attendees to recall and share cultural practices from their own homelands. These experiential learning sessions became the foundation for our themed discussions. We set out to address four main research questions:

1. What are the characteristics and elements of an Indigenous GIS that is based on Indigenous epistemologies?
2. How do these characteristics differ from conventional Western-based GIS?
3. What kind of data model and structures are best suited to the characteristics of an Indigenous GIS?

4. What standards and protocols can be developed for an Indigenous GIS?

However, we learned fairly quickly that while we prepared our metaphoric minds (Cajete, 2000) for this discussion, our disciplinary engagements with the nature-culture-technology nexus were too disparate to begin with these questions.

Findings

Indigenuity—the ability to solve pressing life issues facing humankind now by situating our solutions in Earth-bound local Indigenous deep spatial knowledges.

—Curtis Kekahbah, Kaw Nation in Wildcat 2009

We learned that before we could identify the characteristic elements of an Indigenous GIS we needed to know what we wanted to represent about our relationship to our homelands. So our discussion initially revolved around the politics of mapping and representation of place. Although geographers and cartographers have already addressed these concepts for more than a decade, anthropologists, biologists, ecologists, intellectual property lawyers, language programmers, linguists, and mathematicians have not discussed these ideas in depth.

We took a session to air concerns about historic misrepresentations due to culturally inadequate translations and about the distrust many of the elders in our homelands felt toward sharing cultural knowledge, including the ecological knowledge that could help people better prepare for sustainable livelihoods. After lively exchanges, we arrived at a point in our workshop at which we could begin addressing our four main research questions.

Throughout the workshop, our four main questions were posted on the wall and attendees were given large sticky notepads to write their ideas down and attach them to the posters. Blank poster-size sticky notepads were available for attendees to write their own questions that they wanted others to answer. Sometimes ideas arrive as a result of movement, so we encouraged attendees to express themselves through art. A walk in the forest proved to be a welcome energizer. By the end of the workshop, almost all of the questions were answered and new ones were addressed.

1. What are the characteristics and elements of an Indigenous GIS that is based on Indigenous epistemologies?

- Connectedness and relationships;
 - Ethical and respectful;
 - Identity, genealogy, and demographics;
 - Dynamic;
 - Ability to move back and forth through time and across space;
 - Reciprocity;
 - Values/beliefs in nonhuman persons in the landscape; and
 - Flexible/adaptable for multiple communities.
2. How do these characteristics differ from conventional Western-based GIS?
 - Pluralistic not monotheistic.
 3. What kind of data model and structures are best suited to the characteristics of an Indigenous GIS?
 - Represent meaning and function versus thing and location; redefine landscape as function versus using maps for ownership.
 - Map the function, process, use, and genealogy. How the land owns us, not how we own the land.
 - Consider a flexible, customizable model, which provides the space for each community to determine the types of knowledge needed to populate it.
 4. What standards and protocols can be developed for an Indigenous GIS?
 - Integrate a conversation about the types of safeguards that are expected by your community into the ad hoc consultation processes associated with the development and implementation of the anticipated GIS model. A menu of options is available, which can be tailored to particular contexts.
 - Be able to represent action as a “layer” (versus just a “thing”).
 - Respect the sacred through ritualized protocols.
 - Time as coincident with space and place.
 5. What would a system based on Indigenous spatial realities, practices, protocols, and presentations look like?
 - From the zenith of the sky to the core of the earth. From the potential being through the long and everlasting night into the world of light. From the morning star and the breath of life through the passion of the warm southern winds, through to the dark home of the thunders into the long night of wisdom. In the center dwells the everlasting spark of spirit that animates our being.

Recommendations

Although the workshop was not geared toward creating clear policy recommendations, it did assist those involved in envisioning a research agenda that will further our aim of representing Indigenous knowledge of particular places and landscapes in new ways that meld Western cartographic techniques with Indigenous cartographic traditions. The creation of such an Indigenous GIS would benefit both ends of the social spectrum from policy makers and scientists to community members and Indigenous practitioners. It would allow for spatial analysis and modeling to be based on Indigenous understandings of the interrelatedness of natural phenomena.

A significant step toward creating these new representational techniques is the creation of protocols for accessing and respecting Indigenous knowledges within our cross-cultural research initiative. Much work has been done throughout the past decade toward creating general research protocols (e.g., Bishop, 1996; Louis, 2007; Kliskey, Alessa, and Barr, 2009; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). This research initiative will require the development of specific protocols related to methods of representing Indigenous knowledge in new and innovative ways that are also respectful and of use to the communities involved. To succeed it will be imperative for agencies, training institutions, and communities to support the training of practitioners versed in science and technology and in Indigenous knowledge and protocol.

Another significant challenge for this research is that very little work has been published at the intersection of Indigenous knowledge and sustainability science. Despite the fact that there is a great deal of interest in the sustainable practices of various Indigenous communities, this interest has not equated with research. We call on those interested in further developing sustainability science to engage in meaningful dialogue with Indigenous communities in which valuable lessons may be learned. More specifically, agencies can engage with Indigenous groups to support these research initiatives through collaborations in which communities are an equal partner and have the ability to influence the direction of the research and set the research questions. For federal agencies to support the research of the sustainability practices of Indigenous groups requires policy makers in those agencies to have interdisciplinary skills, an awareness and understanding of multiple ways

of knowing, and a willingness to work outside of their comfort zone, which may necessitate taking risks.

Conclusion

The workshop process lit a fire within each of us to continue working toward our own individual ventures as we recognized that they are the necessary parts of creating an epistemologically compatible spatial knowledge infrastructure. During the final hours of our workshop, our interdisciplinary group of academics and community scholars committed (to varying degrees) to the formation of a family unit. The primary focus of this international unit is the nurturing of a new Indigenous GIS (IGIS) child-entity that truly embodies Indigenous epistemologies. The birth name of our IGIS child-entity is Hi'iaka. As Hi'iaka matures and transforms, this child-entity will inherit ancestral knowledge from each of the sacred spaces of our family group. At every stage of maturation, each international family member will rename Hi'iaka as we create infrastructure and protocols capable of harnessing the knowledge that we maintain from our ancestors without dilution or mass consumption. Data, in isolation, is not an adequate technological component of Indigenous spatial knowledge sharings. Ancestral knowledge is place-specific and maintained in metaphoric stasis awaiting mythic maturation of enlightened practitioners. *Ola 'o Hi'iaka! Life to all!*

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The name "Hi'iaka" embodies the processes of regeneration, restoration, newness, and growth through a deep sense of social-ecological protocols. The Hi'iaka Working Group intends to generate dynamic, spatial, and multiperceptual ways of viewing the world through Indigenous technologies, such as IGIS. We are a new global family of cultural practitioners, scholars, academics, nonprofits, for-profits, governmental and nongovernmental agencies, and community leaders. We have ancestral ties to the original peoples of Hawai'i, Australia, Aotearoa, Alaska, and America, and we share a passion for traditional wisdom, technology, the health of our peoples, and the health of our earth.

Liberating Data:

Accessing Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Data from National Data Sets

Maile Taulii, Joey Quenga, Raynald Samoa,
Salim Samanani, and Doug Dover

Summary

Using data from the National Center for Health Statistics, an assessment was performed on the quality of death reporting in accordance with standards, a working definition was developed, death counts and rates for several racial categories were analyzed, and data was modeled for use in data structures optimized for analysis and reporting with simple client tools. Most states were still not compliant with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget racial categories by 2005. Comparing the mortality experience of NHOPI to whites revealed many differences. Mortality was higher in NHOPI males and occurred at younger ages for both males and females. The place of death differed between NHOPI and whites, while place of injury (where applicable) was similar. Causes also varied after the top two causes of death.

Introduction

Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (NHOPIs) experience severe health, social, economic, and service access inequities compared to the majority of Americans (Hirokawa et al., 2004; Ingram et al., 2003; Ponce et al., 2009). A variety of independent, nonprofit, culturally linked, community-based organizations work to address disparities faced by NHOPIs. Challenges facing these organizations include decentralized communities, funding shortages, and especially, limited data for monitoring the population's health and the impact of services. Available data on NHOPIs are neither current nor comprehensive. Many NHOPI data sets derive from research studies or focus on a limited geographic area such as the state of Hawai'i (home to approximately half of the NHOPI total population). The majority of federal publications, reports,

and manuscripts do not disaggregate NHOPI from Asians, despite Directive Fifteen issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1997, which states that the former statistical classification of Asian American and Pacific Islander was to be separated into two distinct categories of “Asian Americans” and “Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders” (Spoehr, 2006).

Limited population data results in the inability to advocate, influence policy, and secure resources for intervention. Challenging federal and state agencies to follow the OMB-revised directive is an effort in itself. However, even when NHOPI data are available, subanalyses are limited by sample size. Additionally, institutional barriers prevent data access, analysis, and reporting. Establishment of the Native Hawaiian Epidemiology Center (NH EpiCenter) and the Pacific Islander Epidemiology Center (PI EpiCenter) have improved the governance, credibility, and expertise needed to report on NHOPI. The NH EpiCenter is a subdivision of Papa Ola Lokahi in Honolulu, which is identified in federal law, Section 11705 of 42 U.S.C. 122, as the lead organization to consult with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in regard to Native Hawaiian health and wellness. The PI EpiCenter was established in 2010 within the TOA Institute, whose mission is to help improve the lives of Pacific Islander people through policy analysis, education, research, and programs. The NH EpiCenter and the PI EpiCenter work separately and in collaboration to improve the quality and availability of data on Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders across the United States.

Analysis

Traditional epidemiologic approaches enhanced through the application of business intelligence methods and technologies can significantly improve the accessibility, ease of analysis/reporting, and use of large health-relevant data sets. Using data from the National Center for Health Statistics, the NH Epicenter and the PI EpiCenter assessed the quality of death reporting in accordance with OMB standards, developed a working definition for NHOPI, analyzed death counts and rates for several racial categories, and modeled the data for use in data structures optimized for analysis and reporting (online analytic processing, or OLAP) with simple client tools (Microsoft Excel pivot tables and interactive Web-based dashboards). As a result, mortality data can be rapidly analyzed by

users with limited epidemiologic skills. Death counts and rates can be cross-tabulated, sorted, filtered, and charted along any combination of relevant dimensions, including racial category, age, sex, location, and cause of death. Customized visualizations also allow users to drill down into the data.

Analysis included national mortality data for the years 2003 through 2005. In 2003, only four states reported a full year of OMB-compliant mortality data with an additional three states reporting multiple race data on their death certificates (Hoyert et al., 2006). By 2005, seventeen states reported a full year of OMB-compliant mortality data and five additional states reported multiple race data (Hoyer et al., 2006; Kung, et al., 2008; Miniño, et al., 2007). It is unclear as to why the majority of states are incompliant with the OMB guidelines. No official justification has been publicly reported.

Working Definition of Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders

The five reported aggregations of “Hawaiian (includes Part-Hawaiian),” “Samoan,” “Guamanian,” “Other Asian or Pacific Islander,” and “combined other Asian or Pacific Islander” were used as a working definition (WD) of NHOPI for the purpose of analyzing mortality data. This definition would include certain smaller Asian groups not otherwise specified. The Asians in this definition excluded Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese, which have their own categories. The WD explicitly included Hawaiians, Samoans, and Guamanians.

The validity of the WD was assessed by comparing results to 2005 vital statistics reported by Hawaii (State of Hawaii, 2008). The WD showed a slightly higher percentage of deaths (21%) occurring among NHOPIs compared to that reported in the 2005 Hawaii statistics (17%). This is expected because the WD is slightly broader than a true NHOPI definition. The WD provides an interim method to analyze NHOPI mortality data until the 1997 standard is fully adopted.

Limitations

Limitations for the WD are the inclusion of “other Asians,” as described in the preceding text, and that the race category in death records does not differentiate between Native Hawaiians and part-Native Hawaiians. These limitations are sources of bias because the health of Native Hawaiians is markedly different from both

Asians and part-Native Hawaiians (Braun, Look, and Tsark, 1995). Another limitation is that racial assignment in mortality microdata is partly real data and partly imputed data. When full information was not available, the race variable was imputed based on a model derived from an analysis of the 2000 census (Parker et al., 2004).

The preliminary review of the 2003 through 2005 mortality data utilized simple counts and proportions to quantify the relative magnitude of NHOPI deaths by various descriptive categories. Comparisons were made between the NHOPI WD population and the non-Hispanic white U.S. population, traditionally the healthiest. Only the states of Hawai'i and California, which had the highest numbers of NHOPI deaths, were examined.

Findings

Between 2003 and 2005, 12,398 deaths of NHOPIs occurred in residents of Hawai'i and California: 6,440 or 0.9 percent of all deaths in California, and 5,958 or 21.5 percent of all deaths in Hawai'i. Males represented 55 percent of NHOPI deaths compared to 50 percent of white deaths. The age distribution of deaths in NHOPIs varied between states. Californian NHOPIs died at younger ages than NHOPI residents of Hawai'i. The difference in age distribution was more pronounced comparing NHOPIs to whites, with the former consistently dying at younger ages.

A higher proportion of NHOPI deaths, compared to the white population, occurred in hospital inpatient (46% vs. 36%) and outpatient (13% vs. 7%) settings. Similar proportions of deaths occurred in the home (24% vs. 29%). A lower proportion of NHOPI deaths occurred in long-term care settings (7% vs. 21%), which was consistent with the younger ages at death. When injuries were related to the deaths, the distribution of the place of injury was similar among NHOPI and whites. In both groups, the most frequently recorded place of injury (more than 40%) was at the home.

The five most common causes of death among NHOPI residents of California and Hawai'i, representing more than 80 percent of all deaths, were diseases of the circulatory system (36%), cancers (24%), injury and external causes (10%), diseases of the respiratory system (7%), and endocrine, nutritional, and metabolic diseases (5%). For whites, the top two most common causes of death, diseases of the circulatory system (38%) and cancers (23%), were similar. This is followed by diseases of the respiratory system (10%),

injury and external causes (7%), and diseases of the nervous system (5%).

Conclusion

Although racial reporting of deaths in accordance with the OMB standard improved, most states were still not compliant by 2005. Until compliance is achieved, it will remain difficult to analyze health data specific to NHOPIs.

Mortality analysis was accomplished by using a WD of NHOPI. Comparing the mortality experience of NHOPIs in Hawai'i and California to whites in those states revealed many differences. Mortality was higher in NHOPI males and occurred at younger ages for both males and females. The place of death differed between NHOPIs and whites, while the place of injury (where applicable) was similar. Causes also varied after the top two causes of death.

These results can be used as the starting point for NHOPI health policy decisions, such as prioritizing programs and services for the population or allocating resources. The WD of NHOPI is based on race categories from the bridged race re-coding algorithm. Validation of the working definition found that the NHOPI category included many smaller Asian groups and may not include all NHOPIs, due to underreporting or racial misclassification. Compliance with the OMB standard will address many of these concerns and will greatly assist in the assessment of NHOPI health issues.

Information technology has a role in improving accessibility to data for small populations who bear the largest health disparities in the United States. Data is essential for policy decisions, program planning, evaluation, and health surveillance. A partnership among federal agencies, community organizations, scientists, and information technologists can result in successful liberation of health data. The NH EpiCenter and the PI EpiCenter play a key role in assuring NHOPI data is available to all partners with a vested interest to serve this population. More work is needed to bring to light and address the alarming disparities experienced by this population.

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aapi nexus

Activities of The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (2009–2011)

Throughout the past two years, The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) has conducted numerous roundtables, hosted special events, engaged in direct and indirect outreach to the community, and advised on policy creation and reformulation to fulfill its presidential mandate and increase community usage of programming and resources from various federal agencies. Charged with the mission to improve the quality of life of AAPIs through increased access to and participation in federal programs in which they may be underserved, the initiative has traveled from coast to coast and city to city in order to engage the community and determine what the growing AAPI population needs. Extensive research and outreach and coordinated collaborations with government agencies have allowed the initiative to assess the needs of the population and implement solutions. With the dedication of the commission and the Federal Interagency Working Group, the initiative has made significant progress in connecting the community with needed programs and protections and pushing policy reforms to create stability and remove barriers for AAPIs.

Initiative Key Policy Areas

The initiative has structured its efforts into five “pods,” or areas of focus: civil and immigrant rights, economic growth, educational opportunities, healthy communities, and sustainable neighborhoods. These priorities have played an important role in informing the development of federal agency plans submitted to the initiative and ultimately to the president. As mandated by the executive order, agencies are required to outline specific steps they will take and the measures of success they will use to better serve the AAPI community. In February 2011, these plans were made public for comment in accordance with President Obama’s Open

Government Initiative, and the release of the plans was met with great enthusiasm from community leaders. These federal agency plans, revised to incorporate community feedback, have been the momentum behind the development of AAPI-specific policies and programming, thereby increasing the government's transparency and accountability to the AAPI community. In conjunction with the pod structure, these agency plans have allowed the initiative to effectively channel its efforts in focused, actionable, and measurable ways. We highlight a few examples of our goals, activities, and deliverables below. (See Table 1)

Civil and Immigrant Rights

The civil and immigrant rights pod focuses on efforts to ensure that all AAPIs have equal access to government programs and services. For example, building upon President Obama's campaign to end bullying in our schools and realizing that bullying is a major problem among AAPI students, the initiative is working with the Department of Education (DOE) Office for Civil Rights, the Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division, and community advocates to mitigate the issue by using strategies such as (1) convening roundtables and a national summit to hear from the community on its concerns and inform the community about government efforts to address bullying, (2) providing webinars on filing complaints of bullying and harassment with the federal government, (3) creating public-service announcements on antibullying in multiple languages, and (4) incorporating special populations such as the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) AAPI voice into existing initiatives. The initiative also worked closely with the DOE Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools to develop school curriculum addressing the tenth anniversary of 9/11 and anti-Muslim rhetoric campaigns.

With nearly 60 percent of the community foreign-born (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009), AAPIs comprise nearly one-third of annual legal immigration to the United States (Batalova, 2006). Under the direction of the White House Domestic Policy Council, the initiative is working with other federal agencies to facilitate immigrant integration through the civil, economic, and linguistic integration of new Americans, including the revamping of a comprehensive federal Web site to access federal programs and services. The initiative created the model for roundtables and has hosted immigration

Table 1: The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders—Deliverables and Accomplishments

Pod	Accomplishments
Civil and Immigrant Rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convened stakeholders and federal officials on immigrant integration issues. 2. Brought AAPI stakeholders and federal officials together to stop bullying and harassment. 3. Convened AAPI LGBT youth and stakeholders and federal officials to discuss bullying, comprehensive sex education, and HIV/AIDS prevention. 4. Convened AAPI women’s groups around the country to discuss and relay recommendations to federal agencies. 5. Participated in the first Senior Executive Service Development Program to improve the representation of AAPIs in federal employment.
Economic Growth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helped spur economic growth through AAPI businesses. As of September 2010, AAPI small businesses have secured more than \$1 billion in new government contracts. 2. Promoted safe and secure jobs for AAPI workers. 3. Advised the federal relief effort during the BP oil spill.
Educational Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthened the AANAPISI Program and helped increase the number of AANAPISIs from 23 to 52. 2. Facilitated the creation of the Asian Pacific Islander American Association of Colleges and Universities. 3. Supported English Language Learner programming with the DOE. 4. Helped build the AAPI teacher pipeline.
Healthy Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engaged the AAPI community on the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. 2. Improved data-collection policies for AAPIs. 3. Promoted the prevention of chronic viral hepatitis B infections in AAPI communities. 4. Increased AAPI access to health care services. 5. Encouraged healthy eating and increased physical activity among NHPI youth.
Sustainable Neighborhoods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthened AAPI housing choices by providing fair housing education and certified the first network of AAPI-serving housing counseling organizations. 2. Engaged AAPI communities nationally on sustainable growth 3. Created the first interagency working group on nail salon worker health and safety.

integration conversations with AAPI and other community groups in Honolulu, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Seattle.

In May 2011, the initiative and the White House Office of Public Engagement brought LGBT Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) youth together with representatives from the DOE, DOJ, and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in order to incorporate the specific needs of this community into federal antibullying, comprehensive sex education, and HIV-prevention programs. This pod also addresses the experiences of AAPI women across a broad range of intersecting issues including physical and mental health, domestic violence, and workplace safety. In February 2011, the initiative hosted a women's inter-agency roundtable with the White House Council on Women and Girls and raised issues of language access for victims of sexual and domestic violence and nail salon worker health and safety. Similar events were held in New York, San Francisco/Oakland, Atlanta, Texas, and Minnesota. The initiative is producing a comprehensive set of recommendations for agencies on how to move forward with specific policy issues that affect AAPI women.

Economic Development (Economic Growth and Sustainable Neighborhoods)

The economic growth and sustainable neighborhoods pods together promote the economic development interests of the AAPI community. Economic-growth initiatives have included the promotion of entrepreneurship and small-business growth opportunities, AAPI federal employment opportunities, and the protection of workers' rights. The sustainable neighborhoods pod focuses on promoting sustainability as a channel for AAPI economic development by connecting housing to the generation of new jobs and by the creation and encouragement of green growth.

AAPIs play a critical role in driving economic growth across the United States. A 2005 Census Bureau report identified more than 1.5 million Asian American-owned businesses generating more than \$500 billion in receipts and employing nearly three million people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). However, an overreliance on such figures tends to exaggerate the economic successes of the AAPI community while obscuring serious issues pertaining to their economic/financial well-being, including linguistic and cultural challenges when it comes to accessing federal programs, dif-

ficuity obtaining loans, and unfair or discriminatory treatment in the workplace. AAPIs continue to face discrimination in the workplace; in one Gallup Poll, 30 percent of AAPIs surveyed reported incidents of employment discrimination, the largest of any group, but filed only 2 to 3 percent of the total employment-discrimination complaints received by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission against private employers (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2005).

To expand the AAPI community's access to and utilization of federal resources, in early 2011, the initiative, with the Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Small Business Administration (SBA), hosted the Summit on Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth in Silicon Valley, California. Secretary of Commerce and Initiative Co-Chair Gary Locke, Commissioner Dilawar Syed, and other top advisors from the White House National Economic Council, Council of Economic Advisors, DOC, SBA, Department of Treasury, and the Export-Import Bank provided hands-on advice and counseling to AAPI entrepreneurs and business owners.

In May 2011, the initiative formed the first working group on the health concerns of nail salon workers. Spanning workers' rights and sustainable neighborhoods/healthy communities concerns, the working group brought the White House Council on Women and Girls, the DHHS, the Department of Labor, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the initiative together with the community to address the toxic exposure of AAPI workers to nail salon chemicals (see Table 1). The initiative has collaborated with federal agencies in designing a national green-certification process for nail salons. The certification promotes an eco-friendly, sustainable, and healthy environment for employees and clients through the establishment of standards for waste reduction, water and energy conservation, air quality, and the use of safe, green products.

Finally, acknowledging that AAPIs have an important role to play in promoting sustainability and in benefiting from the growth of green technology, the initiative partners with federal agencies and the community to explore sustainability as a channel for economic development. In July 2011, the initiative hosted a Sustainable Growth Summit in Seattle to examine ways that AAPIs can build neighborhood infrastructure that is environmentally and technologically sustainable while economically beneficial.

Educational Opportunities

The educational opportunities pod focuses on issues impacting education and AAPIs, including access to federal educational opportunities and programs to assist students in reaching their full career potential. Building upon President Obama's prioritization of education under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the initiative's efforts include the promotion of data disaggregation by federal agencies in order to yield more reliable AAPI data, decreasing bullying and student harassment, advising on English language learner education, increasing community outreach to recruit more AAPI educators, increasing the number of AAPIs in federal service through internships and fellowships, and increasing resources for AAPI students.

In collaboration with the DOE, the initiative has played an important role in promoting and strengthening the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) program. This partnership achieved a significant policy victory and clarified that AANAPISIs are minority-serving institutions and including them on the DOE official listing of minority-serving institutions, which will enhance their access to funding and services. The initiative has also worked with the department to host a number of teacher-recruitment events in Los Angeles and Seattle, organized six English language learner stakeholder meetings across the country in collaboration with Office of English Language Acquisition, and partnered with federal agencies in order to increase partnerships with AANAPISIs and the recruitment of AAPIs for federal fellowships and internships.

Healthy Communities

From high rates of childhood obesity in the NHPI¹ community to the high incidence of HIV/AIDS infection in recent years,² health issues impacting the AAPI community are as complex and diverse as the community and require solutions that are collaborative and innovative. The healthy communities pod is focused on policies and initiatives to improve the overall health of AAPIs. These include ensuring that information about the Affordable Care Act is appropriately and effectively communicated to AAPI communities, increasing awareness of and addressing policy issues about the health disparities affecting AAPIs, and increasing

the number of culturally and linguistically appropriate health care access points for the traditionally underserved AAPI community.

In March 2011, the initiative worked with AAPI community leaders to present policy recommendations to DHHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. Following this meeting, the initiative has continued to work with stakeholders on policy recommendations related to data disaggregation, culturally and linguistically competent workforce development, and health disparities, among other issues. It has also hosted events and facilitated collaborative efforts between federal agencies and state, local, and community groups in order to advance specific objectives, including the prevention and treatment of hepatitis B viral infections in the AAPI community and expanding language access to nutrition information. To address the increased need for AAPI-serving health care access points, the initiative is working with community partners and DHHS on innovative strategies to integrate or connect culturally and linguistically relevant services and to provide appropriate technical assistance to community health organizations interested in accessing federal resources.

To engage the AAPI community on health care reform, the initiative has hosted various roundtables and plenary sessions throughout the country in order to provide opportunities for federal, state, and local officials to engage in dialogue with the AAPI community on the benefits of the Affordable Care Act.

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders

Though Native Hawaiians have been formally recognized as a separate group by the U.S. Census Bureau since 1970 and Pacific Islanders (by ethnicity as Samoan or Guamanian) since 1980 (Grieco, 2001), NHPIs have often been overlooked or amalgamated with the larger Asian American community for policy purposes (Ponce et al., 2009). The initiative has prioritized NHPI policy formulations that recognize their unique demographic and sociocultural factors while ensuring that NHPI voices are integral in all efforts.

The initiative works with key NHPI community organizations and federal agencies to ensure that the unique interests and concerns impacting NHPIs are addressed. In October 2010, the initiative hosted a Pacific Policy Forum at the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) convention in Honolulu with more than one hundred community organizations and several agency representatives. The community recommendations were relayed

to federal partners. The initiative also convened a follow-up meeting at the CNHA 2011 gathering on Public-Private Partnerships to help organizations leverage federal resources with private foundation dollars.

On April 2, 2011, the initiative and Commissioners Sefa Aina and Hines Ward hosted the first-ever NHPI Youth Health and Fitness Day in Los Angeles. More than 1,500 NHPI youth and family members attended the event that included appearances by Congresswoman Judy Chu, celebrity fitness trainer Jillian Michaels, and professional athletes Troy Polamalu and Marcus McNeil. With one in five NHPI high school students obese and with high rates of diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease in the community, it is critical to address access, prevention, and treatment of these health concerns for NHPIs (Eaton et al., 2009). The program complemented First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign to battle childhood obesity in America.

These policy areas cover a broad array of issues impacting the everyday lives of AANHPIs. Though certainly not a comprehensive review of all AAPI concerns, this overview provides a window into the initiative's policy priorities and the efforts being made to advance AAPI community interests and improve the quality of life for AAPIs.

For more information on the initiative, please visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/aapi>.

The initiative can also be reached at:

White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Notes

1. Data from the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data indicate that about 1 in 5 of NHPI high school youth (20.4%) were obese (defined as being in the 95th or higher percentile for body mass index), with this percentage being possibly the highest among all racial groups in the United States. Together, about 1 in 3 of all NHPI high school youth (33.5%) were likely to be overweight (defined as being in the 85th percentile or higher, but less than the 95th percentile) or obese. See Eaton et al., 2010 for more information.

2. Despite the relatively low prevalence of HIV/AIDS for AAPIs, between 2001 and 2004, this population had the highest estimated annual percentage increase in HIV/AIDS diagnoses of all races and ethnicities (8.1% for males and 14.3% for females). See Prejean et al., 2006 for more information.

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