

Asian Pacific Islanders
and the “Glass Ceiling”—
New Era of Civil Rights Activism?
Affirmative Action Policy

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Through education and the path laid down by the 1960s black civil rights movement, Asian Pacific Islanders have achieved entry-level employment in a broad range of businesses, occupations, and professions—telecommunications, finance, insurance, protective services, skilled construction, health care, the law—that had been traditionally closed to racial minorities. Now, three decades after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and federal enforcement of affirmative action regulations, Asian Pacific Islanders are in a position to carry the civil rights employment struggle into its next phase: challenging the racial make-up of corporate and public sector management.

The “glass ceiling”—promotional barriers against racial minorities and women—has stirred a sense of injustice and inequality among Asian Pacific Islanders. Numerous studies by scholars, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations have documented the sparse representation of racial minorities and women in management positions. In its *Asian American Civil Rights Issues of the 1990s Report*, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights cites the “glass ceiling” as one of five prevalent types of employment discrimination experienced by Asian Americans.¹ Reports have found that, among all racial groups including Whites, Asian Pacific Islander professionals

face the worst chance of being advanced into management positions.² In its 1991 study of nine Fortune 500 corporations, the U.S. Department of Labor found that, "if there is not a glass ceiling, there certainly is a point beyond which racial minorities and women have not advanced in some companies."³

Frustrated and, at times, angry that they are not receiving promotional opportunities commensurate with their educational background and accomplishments in the workplace, some Asian Pacific Islanders argue that cracking the "glass ceiling" is the civil rights issue of the 1990s. They are shedding the image of the "silent" racial minority and openly aspiring for advancement into management and leadership roles. Asian Pacific Islanders have formed employee organizations, in part, to create a vehicle to voice their concerns about the lack of promotional opportunities.⁴ Their impatience with cracking the "glass ceiling" suggests that the 1990s and beyond may constitute a new era of civil rights activism on the part of Asian Pacific Islanders.

Unlike their integration into entry-level employment, cracking the "glass ceiling" will not be an easy or simple task for Asian Pacific Islanders. Harsh criticism against race-based, affirmative action strategies remains unabated.⁵ Notwithstanding the all-too-familiar pronouncement of equal employment policies, many corporate leaders have failed to take ownership or affirm the appointment of racial minority managers and administrators as an organizational responsibility.⁶ Socioeconomic differences within Asian Pacific Islander groups and between racial minorities underscore some of the limitations of affirmative action strategies. Racial minorities, women, and white males are all locked in a battle over a shrinking number of management and administrative jobs.

In order to understand and assess the likelihood of Asian Pacific Islander success to crack the "glass ceiling," I will examine some social and economic constraints that make the establishment and implementation of affirmative action promotional policies for Asian Pacific Islanders a challenging task. Specifically, I will discuss (1) socioeconomic differentials between Asian Pacific Islanders and black Americans that reinforce distrust of affirmative action policies favoring "advantaged" racial minorities over economically disadvantaged individuals; (2) population growth leading to possible fragmentation of Asian Pacific Islanders as a racial minority group; (3) higher tolerance level by Asian Pacific Islanders to endure racial discrimination, instead of pressing ahead for remedies. Then I will

suggest strategies to enable Asian Pacific Islanders to more effectively crack the “glass ceiling.”

More Help for the “Advantaged”?

Executive Order 11246 and its implementing regulations, issued by President Johnson in 1965, require federal contractors to provide equal employment opportunities through the implementation of affirmative action programs to recruit, hire, retain, and promote qualified racial minorities at every level of an employer’s workforce. But for racial discrimination, qualified racial minorities would be represented at every level of a workforce in proportion to their respective representation in the labor force. Controlling for non-racial factors like education and geography, racial minorities should achieve roughly the same earnings level as their white male counterparts. Lower earnings and underrepresentation of racial minorities in the workforce signal the presence of discriminatory barriers.

In general, affirmative action has been an effective strategy for racial minorities to gain entry-level employment. Two-thirds of all Asian Pacific Islanders working full-time hold employment in largely white-collar occupations—professionals, technicians, managers, sales, and administrative support—compared to 57 percent Whites in the same occupations.⁷ Between 1973 and 1982, the number of Blacks in professional, technical, managerial, and administrative positions increased by 57 percent, from 974,000 to 1,533,000, while the number of Whites in such positions increased by only 36 percent.⁸

William J. Wilson, Thomas Sowell, and Daniel C. Thompson observe, though, that significant civil rights employment gains made since the 1960s have benefitted mostly college-educated racial minorities.⁹ Wilson argues that governmental efforts to eliminate traditional racial barriers through affirmative action have had the unintentional effect of contributing to the growing economic class divisions in the black community. These scholars view affirmative action programs as having aided only the already-advantaged or most advantaged of traditionally disadvantaged groups.

Though not direct targets of their criticism against affirmative action, many college-educated Asian Pacific Islanders, including the foreign born, have also taken advantage of affirmative action opportunities in the workplace. Thirty-nine percent of all Asian Pacific Islanders aged 25 and

over have completed at least four years of college, almost double the rate of Whites.¹⁰ To the extent that high educational attainment is equated with an “advantaged” status, Asian Pacific Islanders are popularly perceived as having leapfrogged over disadvantaged Blacks in the workplace.

In response to being labelled a “model minority,” Asian Pacific Islanders point out that they still lag behind Whites economically.¹¹ The per capita income of Asian Pacific Islanders is lower than that of Whites; the poverty and unemployment rates of Asian Pacific Islanders are persistently higher.¹² In addition to the “glass ceiling,” Asian Pacific Islanders consistently experience a lower earning return on education than white males at every educational attainment level. Such socioeconomic indicators reinforce the effects of past discrimination against Asian Pacific Islanders and the rationale for their inclusion in affirmative action employment programs. However, such comparisons with Whites have generally failed to dispel the perception that Asian Pacific Islanders are “advantaged.”

The term “model minority” has been used implicitly, and at times explicitly, to chide black Americans and other racial minorities for alleged failures to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. Racial minority community representatives have been understandably reluctant to draw socioeconomic comparisons among themselves. However, such comparisons are inevitable because, consciously or not, the economic plight of black Americans remains the standard by which America judges itself on achieving racial equality for its citizens.

If we reject outright the implicit and explicit value judgments associated with the use of “model minority,” an objective comparison of Asian Pacific Islander and black socioeconomic characteristics indicate that, on average, Asian Pacific Islanders are better off than black Americans, in terms of higher individual and family median income, poverty and teenage unemployment rates that are respectively almost two-thirds and one-half lower, higher percentage of two or more earners per household, higher percentage of minority-owned businesses and doubling of the dollar amount of business receipts per firm.¹³ The socioeconomic differentials between Asian Pacific Islanders and black Americans are almost as wide as the gap between white and black Americans. Relative to Whites, Asian Pacific Islanders are “disadvantaged”; but relative to black Americans, they are “advantaged.”

The socioeconomic differentials between “advantaged” and “disadvantaged” racial minorities and within specific racial groups have led to

calls for the reformulation of race-based affirmative action strategies. Dinesh D'Souza advocates the establishment of non-racial or socioeconomic affirmative action.¹⁴ L. Ling-chi Wang insists that affirmative action programs must take into consideration race and class oppression, but also supports specific race-based remedies for black Americans.¹⁵ Attributing the demise of black employment to the change of the American economy from being an industrial to a service- and information-oriented one, Wilson calls for the establishment of universal reform programs to promote economic growth and full employment so as to provide a larger number of job opportunities for the truly disadvantaged—the economic underclass and the least educated.

It is questionable whether any of these reforms will be any more effective than race-based affirmative action remedies in helping the truly disadvantaged.¹⁶ Because today's economic competition and information-based society demands the employment of workers with high educational attainment levels and occupational skills, it is highly unlikely that employers will hire poorly educated individuals, especially racial minorities who lack certain occupational skills. Out of self-interest, employers will distribute affirmative action benefits only to those racial minorities who are educated and qualified. Wang's proposal is highly consistent with the freshman admission diversity policies at some highly selective universities, but would be perplexing, if not difficult, for an employer to implement, in terms of granting employment preferences based on an individual's current or past low-income status.

Race-based affirmative action employment policy, then, keeps the door open for educated racial minorities at the entry level and sets incentives for others to acquire more education. But it has not been used consistently or effectively to advance Asian Pacific Islanders into promotional positions.

The perception that Asian Pacific Islanders are "advantaged" does not accurately reflect their employment status. The strong work experience and educational background of Asian Pacific Islanders make them the true test case of how well the notion of meritocracy works in America. Proponents of meritocracy assert that, when compared to Whites, there are equal payoffs for qualified and educated racial minorities; education and other social factors, but not race, determine earnings.¹⁷ The underrepresentation in management positions and lower median incomes of Asian Pacific Islanders, when compared to their white male counterparts,

indicate that the payoff has not materialized for members of this racial minority group.

Yet, what is the likelihood that Asian Pacific Islanders can garner public sympathy and action to remedy this unequal employment condition? Employed, disillusioned, college-educated Asian Pacific Islanders may be stymied by promotional barriers in the workplace, but, in the public arena of competing social needs, their plight pales, in contrast to the social condition of chronically unemployed, economically disadvantaged racial minorities. Nationwide, there are slightly under one million poor Asian Pacific Islanders, but there are approximately ten million poor Blacks and 22 million poor Whites.¹⁸ The growing number of poor and homeless people has had a greater impact on the American psyche than the comparative percentage of poor by racial group. Whereas there was an emotional edge in the early years of the civil rights movement to support racial minorities crossing and breaking the "color line" to achieve social justice, the "glass ceiling" problem has not evoked the same visceral response among the public, especially as it relates to Asian Pacific Islanders.

Race-based affirmative action strategies are also weak in adjudicating other competing social needs. Asian Pacific Islander women earn lower median incomes than both their Asian and white male counterparts, controlling for education. However, controlling for educational and occupational status when compared to white women, Asian Pacific Islander women do as well if not slightly better, in terms of earned median income.¹⁹ Should Asian Pacific Islander women receive employment preferences over their male counterparts, but defer to white females? Unlike the normally larger numbers of jobs available at the entry level, both male and female Asian Pacific Islanders, other racial minorities, and white women find themselves at odds with each other over a shrinking number of administrative and managerial positions.²⁰ It is not clear who should be helped first.

Fragmentation of Asian Pacific Islanders

At the beginning of the 1960s civil rights movement, Asian Pacific Islanders were an inchoate racial minority group. An Asian Pacific Islander political consciousness had yet to be born. Immigrants from Asia came to America as Chinese, Filipinos, or Koreans. They did not bring with

them an Asian Pacific Islander identity. They had little in common with Pacific Islanders, most of whom are native born. Language and cultural differences among all of these groups inhibited social or political interaction across ethnic lines. It would take the unfolding of the modern-day civil rights movement, enforcement of federal affirmative action regulations, and publicly funded social programs to help forge what has become a politically constructed racial minority group called "Asian Pacific Islanders."

The political advantages gained by a unified "Asian Pacific Islander" classification are tempered, however, by the complexities and potential difficulties in establishing employment policies to meet the needs of diverse Asian and Pacific Islander groups. Community representatives and scholars have reacted cautiously, if not negatively, toward certain "average" or "median" socioeconomic characteristics, attributed to Asian Pacific Islanders as a whole. They argue that, when compared to the socioeconomic characteristics of other racial minority groups, these "averages" and "medians" compromise public recognition of the social needs of economically disadvantaged Asian Pacific Islanders, thereby exacerbating the myth of the "model minority." They also fear that misinterpretation and misunderstanding of these "averages" and "medians" may lead to the demise of affirmative action remedies to benefit Asian Pacific Islanders.²¹

In addition to distinct social stratification within a specific Asian or Pacific Islander group, Asian Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and Koreans tend to be employed largely as white collar professionals, technicians, and administrative support workers. Employment barriers created by the "glass ceiling" are major challenges to members of these ethnic groups. They are more likely on average to earn higher wages, be better educated, and experience a lower poverty rate than other Asian Pacific Islander groups.²²

In contrast, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Hmong, Hawaiians, Samoans, and other Pacific Islanders are more likely to be employed as blue-collar laborers, operators, service workers, and technicians. Low wages and substandard working conditions are dominant aspects of their employment. The acquisition of basic English, technological, and other occupational skills is vital to improve their economic status.

Established Asian groups—Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Asian Indi-

ans, and Koreans—constitute three-fourths of today's national Asian Pacific Islander population. The dominance and population percentage of these established Asian groups will diminish as more Southeast Asian and other Asian families become reunited in the U.S. The proliferation of language minority press and social institutions to serve the needs of these new immigrants will reinforce ethnic distinctiveness among these Asian and Pacific Islander groups, in contrast to the fostering of an inclusive Asian Pacific Islander identity. As some Asian Pacific Islander groups achieve a critical population mass, especially at the state and regional levels, they may seek to fragment and establish distinct affirmative action employment categories, separate from the unified Asian Pacific Islander category.²³

Under federal law, employers are obligated to meet the employment needs of Asian Pacific Islanders, without making distinctions among the specific Asian and Pacific Islander groups. Mere compliance with the law may not satisfy the employment needs of these emerging groups. In occupational categories where Asian Pacific Islanders are well-represented, members of some established Asian groups—Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos—generally dominate the level of Asian Pacific Islander representation. To what extent should employers be required to outreach, recruit, and give special consideration to members of non-established Asian and Pacific Islander groups? Will members of established Asian groups be tolerant of these preferential efforts for emerging groups?

Fundamentally, there have always been doubts about the inclusion of Asian Pacific Islanders as a protected group in affirmative action programs. Some scholars consider black Americans to be the quintessential minority group, better able than any other ethnic group with the exception of American Indians, to justify a claim for preferential treatment in employment.²⁴ The recent immigrant or refugee status of emerging Asian group members seemingly contradicts the historic oppression rationale for affirmative action inclusion.

Affirmative action proponents have always characterized race-based remedies and strategies as temporary interventions to overcome the effects of historic discrimination. Asian Pacific Islanders (or distinct subgroups) are likely to be the first racial minority group to demonstrate that affirmative action remedies are, in fact, temporary in nature. There is precedence for a

specific Asian group, or Asian Pacific Islanders as a whole, to be excluded from affirmative action programs.²⁵

With their strong representation in certain occupational categories, some may argue that Asian groups appear to have outgrown the need for affirmative action remedies. At what point should we state that some Asian groups have achieved equality in the workplace, while others have not? Should affirmative action coverage for Asian Pacific Islanders be withdrawn from some occupational categories but retained for others like management and administration?

Asian Pacific Islanders have historically spent much time to argue for their inclusion into affirmative action programs, but have not adequately assessed improvements in their socioeconomic status that are attributable to race-based affirmative action strategies. If Asian Pacific Islanders have transitioned out of affirmative action protection, it becomes critical to understand and acknowledge under what conditions equality has been achieved and to ask whether the same can be replicated to benefit Asian Pacific Islanders at the management level.

Temporary Tolerance of Discrimination: Lack of Action

One human resources expert has described the “glass ceiling” as the result of two cultures clashing: the Asian work style as contextual, indirect, inner-directed, and self-reliant; and the white male style as hierarchical, controlling, aggressive, and oriented toward win-lose outcomes.²⁶ It is not uncommon for Asian Pacific Islanders to describe themselves as being “non-aggressive” or “deferential.”

Consequently, the lack of initiative to understand the demands of being a manager or desire to be promoted on the part of Asian Pacific Islanders has often been cited as a self-initiated barrier to advancement in the workplace, not the result of institutional barriers.²⁷

Over the years, the number of race and national origin employment discrimination complaints filed by Asian Pacific Islanders with federal and state enforcement agencies has increased. Yet, these complaints barely constitute 1 percent of all complaints filed, proportionately less than the representation of Asian Pacific Islanders among racial minority groups protected by anti-discriminatory laws.²⁸ *Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Antonio* and *Wong v. Hampton* have been notable Asian Pacific Islander

employment cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.²⁹ But, there has been a paucity of class action employment discrimination lawsuits filed by Asian Pacific Islanders in the last 28 years.³⁰ Notwithstanding some celebrated university tenure cases filed individually by Asian American faculty members, there has been no class action lawsuit in recent years involving an Asian Pacific Islander lead plaintiff who has sought to oppose promotional barriers in the workplace.³¹

As the national Asian Pacific Islander population continues to grow at a faster rate than all other racial groups, a critical mass of Asian Pacific Islanders willing to pursue legal complaints against discriminatory employment practices including the “glass ceiling” could emerge, but it is unlikely for a couple of reasons. First, there are greater personal risks involved, including retaliation, whenever a racial minority employee files a complaint alleging discriminatory promotional practices than when a non-employee files. Second, many public interest law firms impose income guidelines that preclude legal representation of employed racial minorities, especially those who earn salaries well above the poverty-level. The legal costs involved in pursuing time-consuming class action lawsuits have discouraged both potential clients and private attorneys from doing so. Third, paradoxically, the increase in the size of the Asian Pacific Islander workforce, due to the steady immigration of professionals, reinforces differences in how Asian Pacific Islanders and other racial minorities experience and react to racial discrimination.

Charles Hamilton and John Ogbu observe that ethnic immigrant groups, including Asians, come to America under three general circumstances: (1) they came voluntarily or by choice; (2) they perceive socioeconomic conditions in America to be an improvement over what they left behind; (3) while they may be oppressed and discriminated against, immigrant groups have not been dehumanized like black Americans.³² In contrast, black Americans compare their social condition to that of Whites and find racism to be endemic and permanent.³³

Immigrants expect to face racial discrimination in America. Within the context of survival in a new country, they strategically, and not culturally, resign themselves to tolerate temporarily unequal treatment and not to expect necessary government intervention to facilitate their transition into a higher socioeconomic status. According to Hamilton, whereas black Americans have had to engage in a continuous political struggle to

demonstrate their humanity through the pursuit of anti-discriminatory remedies, immigrants have engaged themselves in an economic struggle first. Some reject the notion that Asian Pacific Islanders are "victims" and assert that members of this racial minority group have been successful in overcoming racism without government aid or affirmative action remedies.³⁴

In contrast to black defiance toward racial discrimination, Asian Pacific Islanders, especially immigrants, hope that racial discrimination can be minimized by either ignoring it or focusing one's energy in another direction. That hope may be naive and premature. As Asian Pacific Islander employees develop tenure on the job and seek promotion opportunities, the impact of the "glass ceiling" will force a greater number of them than ever before to seek remedial assistance.

Foundation for Action

There has not been a shortage of strategies to crack the "glass ceiling." Seminars, conferences, and workshops on how to do so have become commonplace. Signs of organizational barriers are numerous: little or no acceptance of a multicultural workforce or of management ownership in promoting minorities, lack of management sensitivity, insufficient identification of talented minorities, lack of minority role models, lack of "informal" networks, inadequate performance evaluation system, insufficient opportunities for useful social interaction. The prescriptions to eradicate these barriers include: chief executive officer involvement in programs, establishment of goals and timetables to increase the number of minority managers, evaluation of managers on how well they reach their affirmative action goals, minority inclusion in succession plans, development and implementation of a career path process, establishment of a formal mentor program, creation of greater opportunities for senior managers to get to know talented minorities.³⁵

The fierce competition for promotion opportunities forces Asian Pacific Islanders to explain, justify, and differentiate what unique qualities they as Asian Pacific Islanders may bring to leadership or management positions. Or stated in another way, what difference will they make as leaders or managers because they are Asian Pacific Islanders?

On an individual basis, Asian Pacific Islander employees have exhorted themselves to develop windows of opportunities, cultivate an inventory of skills and determine what needs to be done to market

themselves within organizations, cultivate mentors, and develop informal and formal networks of support. In addition, some Asian Pacific Islander employees have identified the need to quantify their contributions to their employer, and where applicable, to involve themselves as a link in any Pacific Rim-related corporate activity.³⁶ Others simplistically suggest that the acquisition of new skills will help Asian Pacific Islanders vault these “glass ceiling” barriers.³⁷

There are some limitations and pitfalls associated with these strategies. White males have long ago adopted many of these same strategies. Asian Pacific Islander adoption of these strategies does not necessarily propel them to the head of the waiting list for promotions, as white males are not standing still and are constantly honing their occupational skills and networks. Employers may be imposing undue pressure and unrealistic expectations on Asian Pacific Islanders in drawing a relationship between the right of qualified Asian Pacific Islanders to be promoted and their ability to cultivate Pacific Rim concerns. Informally or otherwise, white males do not feel compelled, nor are they expected, to associate themselves with a specific geographic market to demonstrate their worth to the employer or to justify the receipt of promotions. Asian Pacific Islanders face the distinct possibility of being stereotyped as being capable of increasing corporate profitability only through Pacific Rim-related activities.

The social and economic constraints discussed earlier—perception of being an “advantaged” minority, fragmentation among Asian and Pacific Islander groups, and reluctance to pursue legal remedies—motivate the consideration of other strategies. Asian Pacific Islander employees may want to consider strategies that more effectively enhance the realization of affirmative action promotional goals, increase public awareness of the different forms of discrimination against diverse Asian and Pacific Islander groups, and strengthen their role as managers who are capable of leading culturally diverse workforces.

First, Asian Pacific Islanders should develop strong employee organizations with clear goals to guide and monitor on a regular basis the implementation of affirmative action goals and timetables and to negotiate and secure a reasonably retaliatory-free framework in which to give direct feedback and advice on employer progress of achieving affirmative action goals. The presence of strong Asian Pacific Islander employee organizations

constantly reinforces the need for employers to embrace and implement institution-wide practices and policies that eradicate the "glass ceiling."

Opponents of affirmative action frequently decry the competition and conflicts among racial minority groups over promotion opportunities. These critics perceive racial minority group members to be more interested in race than individual merit as the basis for promotional decisions. Such perceptions ignore the intense competition that occurs regularly among white males for promotions, much of which is not necessarily based on merit. Whether between racial minorities or between racial minorities and Whites, competition over a diminishing number of management positions is a reality in a rapidly changing workplace environment. In addition to ongoing efforts to emphasize their positive contributions to the workplace in a non-adversarial manner, Asian Pacific Islanders would benefit immensely from an organizational structure and support to focus and articulate objectively their employment aspirations. Otherwise, Asian Pacific Islander concerns become lost in the competition for promotions. These employee organizations should establish evaluation measures to assess the effectiveness of their monitoring, advisory, and advocacy role.

Second, Asian Pacific Islander employees in the workplace should seek out opportunities to inform and educate appropriate federal and state anti-discrimination officials about the different forms of promotion bias against members of this racial minority group. Enforcement officials also need to be sensitized about the employment needs of established and emerging Asian Pacific Islander groups.

The idiosyncratic nature of many managerial positions provides employers tremendous latitude in defining what is meant by leadership, communications, and interpersonal skills. Asian Pacific Islanders have reported that they have been assessed as lacking these skills, even though they may carry substantial workloads, communicate intelligibly, routinely train newly assigned management personnel, and are responsible for presentations before corporate executives or public bodies. Asian Pacific Islanders need to sensitize anti-discrimination officials to go beyond mere statistical analysis of racial minority representation in management positions and to achieve an understanding of how seemingly objective criteria are applied in a subjective manner, to the detriment of Asian Pacific Islander promotional aspirations.

Third, Asian Pacific Islanders should cultivate a heightened sense of social responsibility, interest, and ability to manage a culturally diverse workforce. Based on one's own experiences in coping with and overcoming racial discrimination, lessons learned need to be shared not just with fellow Asian Pacific Islander colleagues, but also with other racial minorities and disadvantaged group members so that respect for pluralism thrives in the workplace.

In the aftermath of the 1992 Los Angeles riots, middle-class Blacks became the target of introspection and self-criticism for possibly not doing enough to help all those left behind in the ghetto. Opposition to the U.S. Supreme Court nomination of Clarence Thomas strongly signalled a willingness on the part of racial minorities to look beyond race and scrutinize what an individual does with an opportunity. A similar challenge confronts educated Asian Pacific Islanders: how will Asian Pacific Islanders who achieve advancement through affirmative action programs aid and empower other racial minorities and the disadvantaged in the broadest sense? Asian Pacific Islanders in the workplace have the exciting challenge to define for themselves what they mean by "Asian Pacific Islander leadership." Clearly, such leadership means much more than fulfilling an affirmative action goal that results in self-gain. The civil rights movement envisioned affirmative action beneficiaries sharing skills, knowledge and experiences to enhance the public good and to assist all those who continue to experience racial discrimination.

The Next Phase of the Civil Rights Movement

Asian Pacific Islanders possess the educational and occupational background to carry the civil rights movement into its next phase of achieving the full integration of leadership positions in the workplace. I have discussed social and economic constraints that may prevent or delay Asian Pacific Islanders from fulfilling their management potential. Through the adoption of specific strategies that take advantage of organized actions, Asian Pacific Islanders can demonstrate that the utilization of affirmative action remedies benefits the individual recipient and the public good at the same time.

Notes

1. The other types of employment discrimination against Asian Americans, cited by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, include English-Only work rules, certification of foreign-trained professionals, discrimination caused by the Immigration Reform and Control Act, and employment discrimination against Asian American females.
2. Henry Der, Colleen Lye, and Howard Ting, *Broken Ladder: Asian Americans in City Government Reports* (San Francisco: Chinese for Affirmative Action, 1986, 1989, and 1992).
3. U.S. Department of Labor, *Glass Ceiling Initiative Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1991).
4. Asian Pacific Islander employees at Avon Products, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Pacific Bell, Levi Strauss, U.S. Forest Service, Internal Revenue Service, and University of California have formed in-house groups that promote cultural awareness and management sensitivity toward Asian Pacific Islander concerns.
5. Throughout the Reagan Administration, charges of reverse discrimination by white males slowed public employer compliance with court-ordered agreements to integrate police, fire, and other public departments in 51 local jurisdictions through the implementation of specific affirmative action goals and timetables. President Bush vetoed the Civil Rights Act of 1990, alleging repeatedly that affirmative action goals and timetables require the hiring and promotion of minorities and women on a "rigid quota" basis.
6. U.S. Department of Labor, *Pipelines of Progress: A Status Report on the Glass Ceiling* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1992).
7. Claudine Bennett, *The Asian and Pacific Islander Population in the United States: March 1991 and 1990* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992).
8. U.S. Department of Labor statistics cited in William J. Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
9. William J. Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); see also Thomas Sowell, *Civil Rights: Rhetoric or Reality* (New York: William Morrow, 1984); and Daniel C. Thompson, *A Black Elite* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).
10. Bennett, *The Asian and Pacific Islander Population*.
11. Bob H. Suzuki, "Asian Americans as the 'Model Minority'—Outdoing Whites? or Media Hype?" *Change*, American Association for Higher Education, Washington, D.C. (November–December 1989); and U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Issues Facing Asian Americans in the 1990s* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1992).
12. Bennett, *The Asian and Pacific Islander Population*.
13. *Ibid.*; see also U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Statistics Administration, U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1987 Survey of Minority-Owned*

- Business Enterprises* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1991); and Ramon G. McLeod and Tim Schreiner, "Racial Economic Gap Remained Wide in '80s: Census Reveals Two-tiered Society in State," *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 11, 1992).
14. Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991).
 15. Ling-chi Wang, "The Vision of the Civil Rights Movement since the 1960s: A Reappraisal from an Asian American Perspective," paper presented at Annual Association of Asian American Studies Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii, May 31, 1991.
 16. Gertrude Ezorsky, *Racism and Justice: The Case for Affirmative Action* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991).
 17. Gary Becker, *Human Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).
 18. Robert Pear, "Number of Poor in U.S. Is the Highest since 1964: Census Bureau Also Finds Drop in Buying Power," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 4, 1992).
 19. Bennett, *The Asian and Pacific Islander Population*.
 20. Howard Gleckman et al., "Race in the Workplace: Is Affirmative Action Working?" *Business Week* (July 8, 1991); see also, America Assembly of Collegiate School of Business, *Minorities in Management: The Program to Increase Minorities in Business* (St. Louis, Missouri: America Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, August 1988).
 21. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Civil Rights Issuing Facing Asian Americans in the 1990s*.
 22. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *We, the Asian Pacific Islander Americans* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1988).
 23. Since the early 1970s, the State of California has recognized Filipinos as a distinct racial group, separate from all other Asian and Pacific Islander groups.
 24. Seymour M. Lipset, "Equal Chances versus Equal Results," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 523 (September 1992); Nathan Glazer, *Affirmative Discrimination* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).
 25. Japanese Americans and Asian Indians are excluded from University of California's Boalt Hall student affirmative action program; other Asian Americans are included. All Asian Americans, including Filipinos, are excluded from the UC Berkeley's undergraduate student affirmative action admission program.
 26. Keynote speech comments by Rebecca Chou in Chinese for Affirmative Action, *Report of CAA 3rd Upward Mobility Conference* (San Francisco: Chinese for Affirmative Action, 1992).
 27. America Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, *Minorities in Management*.
 28. Raj Gupta, Special Assistant/Senior Attorney to EEOC Commissioner Joy Cherian, telephone interview, November 2, 1991. In FY 1991, approximately 1 percent of the 62,806 employment discrimination

complaints filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission involved allegations of race and/or national origin discrimination against Asian Pacific Islanders.

29. The Native Alaskan and Asian American cannery worker plaintiffs in *Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Antonio* have charged the Wards Cove cannery with overt racial discrimination, including segregated jobs, housing, and mess halls. The plaintiffs in *Wong v. Hamptom* prevailed in their attempt to enjoin the former U.S. Commission on Civil Service from imposing citizenship as a requirement for federal employment.
30. For example, in 1973 a group of Filipino employees filed a Title VII class action employment discrimination lawsuit against a health insurance company, charging promotional bias. Settlement in the case included promotional goals, backpay, and supervisory training. In 1974, a group of Asian American accountants filed a class action employment discrimination complaint against one of the Big Eight CPA firms for alleged entry-level discriminatory practices and then decided to withdraw the lawsuit.
31. Asian Americans have been co-plaintiffs in class action lawsuits initiated by other racial minority groups. In *Officers for Justice v. S.F. Civil Service Commission*, a black police officer organization, with S.F. NOW, Chinese for Affirmative Action and LULAC as co-plaintiffs, took the lead to challenge both entry-level and promotional practices at the San Francisco Police Department. In *Davis v. City and County of San Francisco*, Chinese for Affirmative Action joined as an intervenor to challenge discriminatory entry-level and promotional practices in the San Francisco Fire Department.
32. Charles Hamilton, "Affirmative Action and the Clash of Experiential Realities," in *The Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science* 523 (September 1992); and John Ogbu, *The Next Generation: An Ethnography of Education in an Urban Neighborhood* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).
33. Derrick Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* (New York: Basic, 1992); see also book review by Patricia Holt, *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 13, 1992).
34. Julian Ku, "Asians as Victims," *Diversity and Division* 2:1 (Fall 1992). Throughout the debate over the Civil Rights Act of 1990 and 1991, former Deputy Undersecretary of Transportation Elaine Chao touted the concept of merit, traditional family values and hard work as preferable alternatives to affirmative action remedies. See also Bill Wong, *Asian Week* (July 19, 1991 and March 27, 1992).
35. America Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, *Minorities in Management*.
36. Chinese for Affirmative Action, *Report of 3rd CAA Upward Mobility Conference*.
37. Stanley Karnow and Nancy Yoshihara, *Asian Americans in Transition* (New York: Asia Society, 1992).