

An Overview of
Asian Pacific American Futures:
Shifting Paradigms

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The leadership of the United States depends in many ways on our making a commitment to solving issues of housing, health and the quality of life. That's what people have admired about this nation for decades, and now it is crumbling. I don't think it's possible for us to remain a world leader long into the future if we don't get our domestic house in order.¹

Adele Simmons
President, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

In the 1990s, moving toward the 21st century, the nations of the world are undergoing a monumental transformation—a global political, economic, and social restructuring. The current responses are myriad. They include: a greater political and economic integration of the world community; the emergence of new centers of wealth, particularly in Germany and Japan, challenging the economic predominance of the U.S.; a widespread economic malaise; the rise of ethnic nationalism, religious fundamentalism, and racial hatred; the redrawing of national borders; more reliance on multilateral diplomacy to resolve international crises;

the globalization of a consumer culture; the growth in the transnational migration of workers; an increased awareness of the connection between development and the physical environment; and a recognition that violence and weapons of destruction cannot bring stability and peace.

This global transformation is the outcome of a *paradigm shift*—the end of the Cold War. A paradigm is an example, model, pattern, or prototype. A paradigm shift is a change in the model. No other paradigm has so dominated foreign and domestic policies in the U.S. as the East-West conflict with its strategy of the containment of the U.S.S.R. Containment has shaped the nation's psyche, culture, institutions, and political priorities for half a century. Shifting the Cold War paradigm has yet to result in the formation of an alternative model of structuring American society and its politics and economics. Consequently, in this period of transition, many Americans view the current global restructuring and its domestic implications as a *crisis*, one fraught with dangers. The tendency, then, is to become pessimistic, even fearful, about social change. However, change is a dynamic process. It is also constant and inevitable. The Chinese ideogram for "crisis" is more complex. There is room for optimism and innovation. In combining two parts, one meaning "danger" and the other meaning "opportunity," into a single word to form "crisis," the Chinese remind us that events which appear to be a threat can have positive outcomes.

The development of the United States is a significant phenomenon in world history. It is an *experiment* in bringing together peoples of different cultures, histories, languages, religions, social institutions, and other life experiences from all regions of the globe to live and work together and to form a new nation, society, and common culture. It has offered hope and opportunities for individuals to change themselves and to transform society. However, all communities are not valued equally. Racial minority groups have not and currently do not share in the nation's resources and its decision-making. Nor do they have much say in the direction of the affairs of their communities. Asian Pacific Americans are one such grouping. The gap between America's ideals and its reality remains, as was once entitled in a classic study by Gunnar Myrdal on the nation's relations with African Americans, *An American Dilemma*.

The United States faces many challenges as it prepares for the next

century. It also has many opportunities, one of which can be closing the gap between its ideals and the social reality of inequities and racism. What will the nation look like in 2020? More important, what will the nation be like for its underrepresented populations and the poor? Given its present economic issues, how will it define its domestic agenda, especially the inner cities? How different will America's role in world affairs be in 2020? What will be the nation's goals? What is the United States committed to change or preserve? Who decides? Who will set public policy and determine priorities to be addressed? What is to serve as the data base and who will provide the expertise for defining needs and formulating policies? The demographic, economic, and political imperatives facing the nation, domestically and globally, can be viewed as impediments by those fearful of change. Or, these imperatives can be seen as opportunities for rethinking and planning its future.

Global restructuring involves both a nation's relations with other states and with its own people. International and national reorganization are inseparable. Over the last quarter century, Asian Pacific Americans have been the fastest growing minority group in the United States. Our earliest Asian American communities have deep roots in the building of this nation. We are an integral part of the country's historical development and of its future. As in the past, America's future in 2020 will rely heavily on the ingenuity of all its people and on what its leaders choose for the national agenda.

Asian Pacific Americans and the Necessity of Inclusion

The Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute has initiated a project to forecast the Asian Pacific American population in 2020 and to consider the implications of these demographic changes for public policy. The major forecast is that the dramatic growth of our population over the past three decades will continue during the next three decades. It is estimated that the Asian Pacific American population will be approximately 20 million in 2020 or about 8 percent of the total American population, a substantial increase from that of being less than 1 percent in 1970. *In short, Asian Pacific Americans cannot be dismissed as an insignificant minority group.*

The Institute has also invited experts in a number of fields to identify

issues around which policies can be formulated. Many of our interests and demands are shared by all Americans, such as adequate and affordable health care and housing and attention to our elderly and the education of our youth. Some concerns bring us into common identification with other minority groups. The issues we share include limited access to a wide range of employment opportunities, lack of representation in the political arena, misrepresentation and lack of representation in the media, arts, and general culture, and the increase in racial bias incidents and other violations of civil rights. Other issues are of particular concern to Asian Pacific Americans. These include accent discrimination, more support for the English-limited to acquire proficiency, and the critical need for culturally sensitive and competently trained service providers, especially for refugees and recent immigrants, in a range of areas from education, physical and mental health, to social services. Again, in short, Asian Pacific American issues are not marginal or peripheral to the core of American society.

Asian Pacific American concerns are central to the fulfillment of the mission of this nation. What has occurred in the past is the exclusion of our needs and interests from the public agenda rendering Asian Pacific Americans invisible. For example, at different times, Asian Pacific Americans have been defined as ineligible for a wide range of opportunities including small business loans, graduate fellowships, the right to purchase land and homes, and other entitlements. In a number of areas as wide-ranging as electoral politics, media and the performing arts, and research funds, Asian Pacific Americans are severely underrepresented. Containment from full participation in American society has been the predominant paradigm for Asian Pacific Americans. *In the present and the future, what Asian Pacific Americans seek is a paradigm shift in current public policy from exclusion to inclusion.* This volume speaks to the expectation and necessity of inclusion. By making Asian Pacific Americans visible in public policy, the United States will be taking a large step towards bringing current and future national policy closer to the reality of the population it is to serve.

The Need for New Frameworks

The major emphasis of this overview is to point out the need for shifting paradigms to take advantage of the opportunity for genuine restructuring. Many of the policies that currently exist have not solved

“issues of housing, health and the quality of life” and others as stated by Adele Simmons, President of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and cited in the beginning of this overview. Given the ongoing global restructuring, it is timely as the nation approaches a new century to critically examine the limits of existing paradigms as they relate to domestic policies. The contributors to this volume recognize that we must go beyond simply asking for the inclusion of Asian Pacific Americans in the country’s national agenda. *Inclusion is a first step.* Inclusion alone, within the framework of existing paradigms, will result in public policies with limited impact which will address the well-being of only a few Asian Pacific Americans and would likely generate resentment from other groups and sectors of American society. Throughout the volume, contributors challenge the premises around which policies are presently drawn as being outdated and misconceived. They also conclude that real change will require the *drafting of policies within new frameworks*, those that will more accurately reflect the social reality of the United States, or, what I have termed here as paradigm shifts.

What are some of the existing paradigms and what might some of these paradigm shifts be?

- Shifting the Paradigm of Race Relations in the U.S. as solely consisting of African Americans and European Americans (i.e., Blacks and Whites) to the reality of the nation’s racial complexity. This is the paradigm shift that will *include* Asian Pacific Americans, Latinos/Latinas, American Indians and other groups in American public policy.
- Shifting the Paradigm of Racial Dynamics between the dominant white majority and each of the subordinate minority groups (i.e., White–African American, White–Asian Pacific American, White–Latino/a, White–American Indian) to include the dynamics between and amongst subordinate minority groups. U.S. Race Relations is beyond Majority–Minority Relations and includes Minority–Minority Relations. This will acknowledge the growing significance of interethnic and interracial relations (e.g., African Americans and Jews, African Americans and Koreans, Asians and Latinos, Latinos

and African Americans) in public policy and the increased complexity of American Race Relations today.

- Shifting the Paradigm of Assimilation (defined as Anglo-Conformity) as the only and correct model of successful adaptation to a Paradigm of Cultural Pluralism.
- Shifting the Paradigm of America as a Monocultural Civilization based on the concept of the superiority of European values and institutions to a Paradigm of America as a Multicultural Civilization valuing and incorporating the diversity of all its cultures at all levels of society. Cultural pluralism is the social reality and it will be more so in 2020.
- Shifting the Paradigm of Cultural Diversity as Divisive to Cultural Diversity as Strength. The United States has been culturally diverse from its inception. It is the shared commitment to a common set of principles that has provided consensus and this does not require the suppression of cultural difference. It is the exclusion of racial, ethnic, and other forms of communities from full participation in American society that is disuniting and which promotes and fuels alienation.
- Shifting the Paradigm of American Immigration as consisting of only the poor, needy, and uneducated who, it is argued, take out more than they give to the nation, to an acknowledgment of the ideas, skills, expertise, capital, and other benefits provided to the country.
- Shifting the Paradigm of Ethnic and Language Maintenance as a threat and impediment to one of enrichment and asset to the country.
- Shifting the Paradigm of the United States as Land of Plenty with continuous rates of high growth and economic global supremacy to the current reality of a debtor nation with strong competition from other parts of the world. This recognition suggests that policies for 2020 need to be devised within the

largest framework possible and not limited to sub-contexts, such as health and social welfare and military expenditures, or micro-areas, such as bilingual education.

The above paradigm shifts are merely suggestive. Many are not necessarily new concepts. What is new is that they are yet to be incorporated by decision makers in drafting policy.

Asian Pacific Americans, our contributing authors suggest, also need to consider new frameworks. The vast growth and diversification of our population and the ratio of new immigrants to long-established communities has had a significant impact, not only on the nation, but on older Asian Pacific American groupings. What kinds of paradigm shifts are required by Asian Pacific Americans for 2020?

- Shifting the Paradigm of the Asian Pacific American Population as primarily focused on groups whose history in the United States dates from the 19th century, notably Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans, to encompass the wide range of Asian Pacific American groupings, especially those of the post-1965 period and those to come through 2020. The recognition of the diversification of our communities will require a sharing of power and representation with Filipino Americans, Korean Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Asian Indian Americans and others and a consideration of which policy issues are priorities for the different groupings.
- Shifting the Paradigm of Defining the Asian Pacific American Experience solely by its pre-Civil Rights (i.e., institutionalized legal discrimination) period. An increased understanding of how the post-Civil Rights period has shaped the perspectives and struggles of our communities will help define public policy in the future.
- Shifting the Paradigm of U.S. Race Relations beyond Majority-Minority Relations to include Minority-Minority Relations. We have set an example for coalition building in the creation of pan-Asian Pacific American structures and organizations while nurturing the autonomy of our national groupings. This

needs to be expanded to create pan-minority institutions and organizations that can reduce tensions and conflict and promote cooperation toward shared goals. Critical attention needs to be given to minority-minority relations and to identifying policy issues that are common to other minority groups, especially as demographic changes point to minority populations increasing in greater percentage than the dominant majority through 2020.

Changing Ourselves and Transforming Society

This first publication of the Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute has a number of objectives. Its *primary purpose* is to inform policy-makers and the general public of the significant presence and complexity of the Asian Pacific American population and of the potential effect its continued growth and diversification will have on American society and its institutions by 2020. A *secondary purpose* is to generate discussion within the Asian Pacific American population as to how we also will address the impact of the demographic changes on our communities. A *third purpose* is to demonstrate the importance of having community representatives and experts defining the issues and making policy recommendations.

Readers will be presented with an assessment and in-depth discussion of specific areas of Asian Pacific American life within a range of topics including the arts, cultural preservation, the economically-at-risk, education, immigration, labor, language rights, legal and civil rights, physical and mental health, the media, politics and empowerment, race and interethnic relations, social services, women, and the new communities. Our contributing experts also provide suggestions for addressing concerns toward 2020. This publication seeks to provide a foundation for the drafting of new public policies that will serve the needs of our population and, concomitantly, American society.

The United States is on the brink of a new century. Asian Pacific Americans have a stake in America's future. And, the United States has a commitment to all Americans.

Asian Pacific Americans seek a more direct role in defining the future

of their communities and of the nation as a whole. We seek a greater response to our needs and concerns, in both the public and private sectors, and at all levels, national, regional, and local. We want opportunities for full and active participation in each segment of American society and for defining social policy. The empowerment of all Americans in community life is critical for restructuring. Asian Pacific Americans are prepared to do our share. It is with the hope of bringing the nation's reality with its inequities closer to its ideals that Asian Pacific Americans have prepared this volume.

Notes

1. *New York Times* (February 2, 1992), A11.

The Growth of the Asian Pacific American Population: Twenty Million in 2020

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The fastest growing minority group in the United States today is Asian and Pacific Americans. Although this group only comprised 2.9 percent of the total United States population in 1990, it increased in size by 95 percent from 1980 to 1990 (see table 1). Whites, on the other hand, make up 80.3 percent of the total U.S. population, yet their increase over the 1980s was merely 6 percent. African Americans were 12.1 percent of the total population in 1990 and saw only a 13.2 percent increase in the 1980s. And lastly, Hispanics, who constitute 9 percent of the total population, grew 53 percent from 1980 to 1990.¹ With an extraordinary growth rate, Asian Pacific Americans as a share of the total U.S. population grew from 0.7 percent in 1970 to 2.9 percent in 1990.

The rapid growth of the Asian Pacific American population over the last quarter of the century will likely continue well into the next century, and this increase poses an enormous policy challenge not only to the Asian Pacific American community, but also to the nation as a whole. To take a proactive stance requires us to go beyond reaction to today's pressing problems. We must create a vision for the next quarter century

that will ensure that Asian Pacific Americans will find a just and equitable place in American society and the economy—a position that will also enable Asian Pacific Americans to contribute constructively to the building of a truly multicultural society.

TABLE 1. Asian Pacific Americans
Population by Ethnicity: 1980 and 1990

	1980	1990	Percent Growth
Total Asian Pacific	3,726,440*	7,273,662	95%
Chinese	806,040	1,645,472	104%
Filipino	774,652	1,406,770	82%
Japanese	700,974	847,562	21%
Asian Indian	361,531	815,447	125%
Korean	354,593	798,849	125%
Vietnamese	261,729	614,547	135%
Hawaiian	166,814	211,014	26%
Samoan	41,948	62,964	50%
Guamanian	32,158	49,345	53%
Other Asian Pacific	226,001	821,692	264%

*The 1980 number for Asian Pacific Americans in this table is slightly higher than that used in other published reports because it includes the count for “other” Asian Pacific American groups. Other published census reports include only nine specific Asian Pacific American groups for the 1980 count. Therefore, our calculation of percent growth is 95%, which is lower than the published 108% growth.²

Population projections are a key tool in helping frame a meaningful discussion of the policy issues facing Asian Pacific Americans.³ Understanding current and future demographic patterns and trends provides insights to the struggles and conflicts in the educational, economic, and social service arenas, as well as the broad set of interracial and intereth-

nic relationships that influence and shape public policy. Although the Bureau of the Census does project the white, black, and Hispanic populations, the Bureau unfortunately does not do so for the Asian Pacific American population. At best, we are in the residual "other" category.

This project fills the gap by projecting Asian Pacific Americans to the year 2020. Depending on the underlying assumptions regarding birth rates and net immigration, the Asian Pacific population in 2020 will be from 17.9 million to 20.2 million, a 145 percent to 177 percent increase from 1990.

Population Model

Our population model is an augmented cohort-survival model. Like any other projection model, our estimates are essentially educated guesses based upon reasonable assumptions. There is no guarantee that these will be accurate. Given the changing dynamics of the United States, it would not be surprising if these projections were inaccurate. Nonetheless, these Asian Pacific population projections provide us with valuable information of the changing demographics of the Asian Pacific population.

Following standard practice, the model estimates the population by gender and by age-cohorts in five-year increments. The projection for a given age group is calculated as the sum of the number of surviving persons of the younger age-cohort five years earlier plus net migrations for that group. For example, the 15-to-19-year-old population in 1995 is calculated to be the number of surviving 10-to-14-year-old children in 1990 plus the net migration of teenagers who would be 15 to 19 years old in 1995. This estimation is done for every age-cohort. The new 0-4 group is defined as the number of infants born during the five-year interval. This process is repeated five additional times to derive projections for the year 2020.

The 1980 and 1990 census data and California vital statistics were used to derive net migration, fertility rates, and mortality rates. The base population estimates were taken from the published 1980 Census' detailed population characteristics reports, the published 1980 Asian and Pacific Islanders census report, and the 1990 Census Summary Tape File 1 (STF1). The numbers are based on the racial self-identifier.

Along with the age and gender breakdowns, we project the Asian

Pacific American population by nativity and for two major regions in the United States. It is crucial to estimate the number of foreign-born Asian Pacifics because they face intense cultural and economic barriers that dramatically differ from those of American-born Asian Pacifics. Thus, these foreign-born individuals need special programs and social services to help them adjust to a new society. We also project the Asian Pacific American population for California and a region comprised of three Mid-Atlantic states (New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania).

California has been the primary area for Asian immigration. Initially, large numbers of Chinese immigrants came to California in pursuit of economic prosperity that was created by the Gold Rush. Subsequently, other Asian Pacific ethnic groups, such as the Japanese and Filipinos, settled in this area. As a result, ethnic communities and resources were established, which ultimately attracted more Asian immigrants such as Koreans and Southeast Asians. In 1970 the total number for the Asian Pacific population in California was 0.6 million. This population grew to 1.3 million in 1980, and to 2.8 million in 1990. In 1990, 2.8 million Asian Pacifics comprised 10 percent of the California population and 40 percent of the entire U.S. Asian Pacific American population.

The Mid-Atlantic area has a substantial number of Asian Pacifics. In 1970, there were .22 million, .51 million in 1980, and 1.1 million in 1990. New York has the largest population of Asian Pacifics among the three states. Of the Asian Pacific immigrants who entered the United States between 1982 and 1989, approximately 11 percent (210,000) indicated that New York was their proposed state of residence. Although it could have been extremely useful to have projections by ethnicity (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, etc.), the required data are not yet available, and using the existing data yields inconsistent results. We include as an appendix some information on several major Asian Pacific American ethnic groups.

Fertility and Survival Rates

The annual birth rates and corresponding fertility rates were calculated from California vital statistics.⁴ We matched births in 1990 with the population reported in the Census. In order to minimize the influence of random fluctuations, we used data from three years to adjust 1990 births. The percentage distribution of live births to women (age 15 to 44) by five-

year age groups was calculated for the period from 1988 to 1990, and this distribution was applied to the total number of births for 1990. Next, the estimated number of births per age group was divided by the number of females for the corresponding age group.

The completed fertility rate is defined as five times the sum of the annual birth rate for women in five-year age groups. This imputed fertility rate assumes that the current birth rates, or child-bearing behavior, remain stable over time. This is not a safe assumption. With economic mobility and acculturation, the fertility rates of Asian Pacifics decrease and approach the norm of non-Hispanic Whites.⁵ Our estimated fertility rate is 2.01. This is lower than the 2.3 to 2.4 rate used by others.⁶

Survival rates are also estimated from vital statistics for California. We use the rates developed by California's Center for Health Statistics (1983), which are published as abridged life tables.⁷ Rates are available by race, age-group, and gender.⁸

Immigration Rates

Immigration rates, which are the most important component of Asian Pacific American population growth, are calculated from Census reports, and cross checked with INS data and refugee information. The 1980 Census provides information on the native- and foreign-born populations and persons; however, the data on nativity of individual ethnic groups for 1990 are not yet available. This information will not become public until the year 1993. We estimate the 1990 foreign-born population by projecting the 1980 Asian Pacific population by nativity. The 1980-based projections for 1990 provide an estimate of the 1990 population with the assumption of no (zero) net immigration. Births during the 1980s are based on both the observed 1980 total Asian Pacific population and the 1990 total Asian Pacific population. We then define the net immigration for the 1980s as the difference between the 1990 estimates based on the 1980 population and observed 1990 population. By combining the new immigrants with the surviving immigrants from 1980, we derive a total foreign-born population for 1990. Our estimate (4.6 million) is very close to the number of persons born in Asia recorded in the 1990 Census (4.5 million).

Based on the above analysis, we then developed sets of immigration rates for the population model. In the baseline population projection,

immigration is assumed to continue at the same level as in the 1980s at 210,000 Asian Pacific immigrants per year. The birth rates are also speculated to remain constant since the 1980s at 2.01 Asian Pacific births per female. This linear extrapolation simply assumes a continuance of past trends. The second projection posits a rise in the population of Asian Pacific immigrants, yet at the same time a decrease in the overall birth rates. The projected immigration begins with roughly 210,000 persons per year with an increase of approximately 40,000 over a ten-year period; and the birth starts at the higher 2.3 births per female with a decrease of about 0.1, or 4 percent to 5 percent, every ten years. The final projection surmises that the number of immigrants slowly increases at a rate of 10,000 per ten years. At the same time, the birth rate will also grow from 2.0 at a rate of 0.1, or 4 percent to 5 percent, every ten years. We believe that the second set of assumptions is the most realistic.

These three sets of assumptions are not meant to produce the traditional low, medium, and high projections. We believe that the second set of assumptions leads to the “best” or “most likely” projections. The other two sets of assumptions lead to low projections and provide us with a way of understanding how differences in birth rates and immigration can affect the outcome.

Overall Projections

This section discusses and analyzes our population projections for the year 2020. Table 2 shows the projections for the year 2020 for Asian Pacifics by age. Our second and preferred projection shows that the total population for all Asian Pacific ethnic groups will increase from 7.3 million in 1990 to 20.2 million in the year 2020. This shows a growth of approximately 145 percent. Interestingly, the first and third projections are similar, although when we developed the assumptions, arriving at similar projections was not the intent.

Our projections differ from the projections by U.S. Census Bureau.⁹ Because the Census uses a residual category (i.e., not White and not Black) that is predominantly but not exclusively Asian Pacific American, we compare the absolute growth of the Bureau of the Census populations with ours. Our second projection shows that the Asian Pacific population will grow by 13 million, which is considerably higher than the 9.3 million in the Census’ middle projection series. The major difference is

that the Census assumes an annual net immigration of 176,000, which is significantly lower than the trend in recent years. The Census' high projections series, which is based on an immigration level of 220,000, produces an increase of 12.7 million, which is consistent with our second projection.

TABLE 2. Projections of the Asian Pacifics
in the United States by Age (x1000)

Asian Pacific Americans	1990	2020A	2020B*	2020C
<15	1,749	3,706	4,370	3,439
15-24	1,224	2,509	3,013	2,511
25-44	2,659	5,309	6,160	5,492
45-64	1,187	4,333	4,614	4,392
65+	454	2,057	2,089	2,065
Total	7,274	17,914	20,246	17,904

*preferred projection

Age Group Projections

The number of Asian Pacific children and young adults (age 0 to 24) will increase from approximately three million in 1990 to 6.2 million in 2020. This is an increase of 107 percent for the base projection. However, the number of foreign-born children and young adults shows a slight decrease of 1.2 million to one million, or roughly 16 percent. Our second assumption forecasts that the individuals age 0 to 24 will also increase by 150 percent, from three million in 1990 to 7.4 million in 2020. The foreign-born children and young adults show a growth as well: 1.2 million and 1.4 million, respectively, or 16 percent. And last, our third projection sees

an increase of these individuals from 2.9 million in 1990 to seven million in 2020, or approximately 140 percent. The foreign-born children and young adult population shows a slight decrease from 1.2 million to 1.1 million, roughly 8 percent. In each of these projections, Asian Pacific children and young adults comprise approximately 34 to 38 percent of the total Asian Pacific population. Of this amount, roughly 15 to 18 percent are foreign born.

The growth of working-age Asian Pacifics will have a great impact on the labor force in the United States. Our baseline assumption projects that the working-age adults (age 25 to 64) will increase 151 percent, from 3.8 million in 1990 to 9.6 million in 2020. The second projection sees this age cohort increasing 180 percent, from 3.8 million to 11 million. And last, the third projection assumes that the Asian Pacific working-age group will increase 157 percent to 9.9 million by the year 2020. Of this age group approximately 67 percent were foreign born in 1990, and 71 percent are projected to be foreign born in 2020.

Table 3. Projections of Asian Pacifics in the United States by Nativity (x1000)

	US-Born	F-Born	Total	% F-Born	% US-Born	F-Born Growth	US-Born Growth
1990 Total	2,632	4,633	7,274	64%	36%		
2020A Total	8,211	9,703	17,914	54%	46%	110%	211%
2020B* Total	9,176	11,163	20,246	55%	45%	141%	244%
2020C Total	7,835	10,069	17,904	56%	44%	117%	197%

*preferred projection

The fastest growing age cohort among Asian Pacifics is the elderly (age 65 and older). Our three projections show that the total Asian Pacific elderly population will rise from approximately 450,000 in 1990 to 2.1 million in 2020, an increase of roughly 355 percent. The elderly comprised 6 percent of the total Asian Pacific population in 1990. However, in 2020, the elderly will make up approximately 12 percent of the total

Asian Pacific population. The foreign-born elderly will also see an increase of roughly 510 percent.

Foreign-Born and Regional Projections

The projections show that there will continue to be an increase of the Asian Pacific immigrant population (see table 3). For the baseline assumption (the birth rates and the immigration rates remain constant from 1990 to 2020), the immigrant population will rise from 4.6 million to 9.7 million, a growth of 110 percent over three decades. The second projection, with a decrease in the birth rate and an increase in the immigration flow, indicates the foreign-born population will show a growth of 4.6 million in 1990 to 11.2 million in 2020, or 141 percent. And last, the third assumption, a decreasing birth rate and a growing immigration rate, projects an expansion of the immigrant population of 4.6 million in 1990 to 10.1 million in 2020, an increase of 117 percent over 30 years. As a percent of the total population, the foreign-born population will show a decrease in all three projections. In 1990, the foreign-born population is 64 percent of the total Asian Pacific U.S. population; yet by 2020 this percentage will be between 54 and 56 percent. The majority of the foreign-born population will be the elderly.

Table 4. Asian Pacific Populations by Regions (x1 000)

	1990	2020A	2020B*	2020C
CALIFORNIA	2,850	7,410	8,530	7,520
Net Increase		160%	199%	164%
MID-ATLANTIC (NY, NJ, PA)	1,100	2,920	3,400	2,300
Net Increase		165%	209%	109%
*preferred projection				

The Asian Pacific population projections for California show a substantial increase. Table 4 shows the 1990 Asian Pacific American population was 2.85 million, and by 2020 it will grow to an estimated 7.4 million to 8.5 million. This is a net increase of approximately 160 percent to 199 percent. This growth is substantial to the growth of Asian Pacific

populations in the United States.

Our projections for California are conservative compared to those by Bouvier.¹⁰ His medium projection places the Asian population at 9.4 million, compared to our preferred projection of 8.5 million. A part of the difference can be attributed to Bouvier's inclusion of the residual "other" racial/ethnic group with Asians. Accounting for this factor, we believe that our projections are in line with those by Bouvier.

The Mid-Atlantic states, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, also show a large growth of Asian Pacifics. Although this population was merely 15 percent of the total U.S. Asian Pacific population, the increase of this group was equally dramatic. The Mid-Atlantic Asian Pacific population will increase from 1.1 million in 1990 to between 2.3 million and 3.4 million in 2020. This is a growth of 109 percent to 209 percent. Unfortunately, there is no other independent projection against which we can compare ours.

Our preceding projections provide the readers with a glimpse of future Asian Pacific populations in the United States. In a little more than a quarter century, there will be approximately 20 million Asian Pacific Americans. Although there are uncertainties in our projections, there are even greater uncertainties regarding the social and economic status of this population in the future. Because of this rapidly growing minority group, not only must the Asian Pacific American community be concerned with the challenges and conflicts in the education, employment and public service arenas, but the national community must be prepared to address these issues as well.

Appendix

The following table shows the data on the native- and foreign-born population and the number of persons by place of birth for 1980 and 1990. For place of birth for the Chinese, we used the number of persons born in the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The numbers for the 1980 foreign born and country of birth and 1990 country of birth are taken from published reports from the Bureau of the Census. The total foreign-born population in 1990 is estimated by using a ratio of persons foreign born to persons by country of birth in 1980. This ratio is then applied to the 1990 population of persons by country of birth which

gives the estimate of the 1990 foreign-born population. The estimated new immigration is determined by subtracting the 1980 Asian Pacific American foreign-born survivals from the 1990 foreign-born population. By doing so, the estimated new immigration accounts for the number of foreign-born deaths from 1980 to 1990. The published Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) data report the number of persons that are from the specific country of origin.

<u>Comparison of Immigration Data</u>					
	<u>Chinese</u>	Japanese	Korean	Filipino	Vietnamese
1980 by foreign-born	514,000	203,000	293,000	506,000	222,000
1980 by country of birth	286,000	222,000	290,000	501,000	231,000
1990 by foreign-born	977,000	387,000	670,000	1,006,000	534,000
1990 by country of birth	543,000	422,000	673,000	998,000	556,000
Estimated new immigration	456,000	193,000	382,000	555,000	315,000
Publ. INS report (80-89)	419,000	41,000	337,000	467,000	396,000

The numbers for the Koreans and Filipinos are roughly of the same size and appear quite reasonable. However, some ethnic groups, such as the Chinese, Japanese and the Vietnamese, have some disparity in their numbers.

Due to the complex historical patterns of Chinese migration within the Asian countries, a good portion of the immigrants identified and categorized as racially and ethnically Chinese do not come from the traditional sending sources, such as the People’s Republic of China, Hong

Kong, and Taiwan. Many are Southeast Asian refugees of Chinese descent, who had resided in Vietnam or Laos for many generations, and still consider themselves ethnically Chinese. Consequently, there is considerable variation in the numbers reported by the different sources in the above table.

The estimated Japanese foreign-born numbers also seem quite high. As in the previous table, the estimated new immigration is much greater than the INS reported population. This unusually high number of immigrants may be due to two factors: (1) the native-born Japanese who are born to Japanese-Caucasian couples may not define themselves as Japanese, and therefore may decrease the native-born population of the Japanese; and (2) the high estimation of the new immigration may be due to the number of Japanese nationals who were in the United States temporarily.

Vietnamese population numbers also present problems for the projections. The estimated new immigration for the Vietnamese is less than the reported INS data. This estimate may be underestimated because of the changing ethnic identity of the Southeast Asians of Chinese descent. Unfortunately, the census reports do not have data on Southeast Asians of Chinese descent, therefore making it difficult to determine who are of Chinese descent from the traditional sending sources and who are of Chinese descent from Southeast Asian countries.

Notes

Jane Takahashi provided assistance to this project during its early stage.

1. The Hispanic category includes all persons regardless of race, including a significant number of Latinos who are White. Consequently, the sum total of Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asian Pacific Americans is greater than 100 percent.
2. U.S. Census Bureau, *United States Department of Commerce News*, Washington, D.C., June 1991.
3. Paul M. Ong, "California's Asian Population: Past Trends and Projections for the Year 2000," Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles, May 1989.
4. We also reviewed national statistics but found the national data to be less detailed and complete than California's data.
5. The fertility rates differed considerably by ethnic groups. Among California's Asians, the Vietnamese have the highest birth rate at 2.68 with the Filipinos next at 2.40 births for women between 15 and 44 years of age. The Chinese and Korean population are almost identical

at 1.66 and 1.69 respectively. Similarly, the Asian Indians have a birth rate of 1.83. The lowest birth rate is for the Japanese at 1.57. Presently, the Japanese population consists of primarily U.S.-born second, third, and fourth generation Americans. The economic profile of this ethnic group approximates that of the Whites and they likewise have low fertility rates.

6. Leon F. Bouvier, *Fifty Million Californians?* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Immigration Studies, 1991), 11.
7. California Center for Health Statistics, "Data Matters," Sacramento, July 1983.
8. We used all the published rates except those for the oldest cohort (85+), which we adjusted upward slightly.
9. Gregory Spencer, "Projections of the Population of the United States, by Age, Sex, and Race: 1988 to 2080," U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., January 1989.
10. Bouvier, *Fifty Million Californians?*

Exclusion or Contribution?
Education K-12 Policy

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Our children should not be placed in any position where their youthful impressions may be affected by association with pupils of the Mongolian race.¹

San Francisco School Board, 1905

In response to the challenge of changing demographics more than a century ago, the San Francisco School Board established a segregated Chinese Primary School for Chinese children to attend, including those who were American born. By the turn of the century after Japanese immigrants had settled in the wake of Chinese exclusion, the School Board also applied the Chinese segregation policy to Japanese students. School superintendent Aaron Altmann advised the city's principals: "Any child that may apply for enrollment or at present attends your school who can be designated under the head of 'Mongolian' must be excluded, and in furtherance of this please direct them to apply at the Chinese School for enrollment."²

Throughout their history, Asian Pacific Americans have confronted a long legacy of exclusion and inequity in relation to school policies and

practices, particularly during periods of changing demographics, economic recession, or war. In spite of historic, linguistic, and cultural differences, distinct Asian and Pacific nationalities have been grouped together and treated similarly in schools. Furthermore, Asian Pacific Americans have had little administrative control or political influence over the shaping of educational policies and school practices.

Nevertheless, Asian Pacific Americans have individually and collectively worked to overcome and redefine exclusionary policies. Legal cases brought by Joseph Tape in 1885 and Wong Him in 1902, for example, challenged the Chinese Primary School segregation policies which denied their children the right to attend neighborhood public schools.³ In the process, Asian Pacific Americans have, at times, improved conditions not only for their own communities, but expanded educational opportunities for many disenfranchised groups.

Most notably, the class action suit brought by Kinney Lau and eleven other Chinese American students against Alan Nichols and the San Francisco Board of Education in 1970 led to the historic *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court ruling which provided the foundation for the nation's bilingual education mandates. The court unanimously concluded in 1974:

... there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.⁴

Like *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court's decision in the *Lau* case fundamentally reformed U.S. educational policy. Thanks to the efforts of Chinese American students and parents, the educational rights of limited-English speaking students of all nationalities were formally recognized and protected.

In the two decades since the *Lau* decision, the profile of the Asian Pacific American population has changed dramatically. Demographic projections suggest that Asian Pacific American population growth and diversification will continue at least through the year 2020. What will this mean for schools and K-12 educational policy in light of Asian Pacific Americans' historic legacies of exclusion and contribution?

Demographic Changes into the 21st Century

During the 1980s, the school-age Asian and Pacific Islander population, defined as those between ages 5-19, grew by 90 percent from 929,295 to 1,761,901 in the U.S. In California and the Mid-Atlantic area of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, the Asian Pacific school-age population more than doubled, growing by 111 percent and 102 percent respectively.

In many local school districts, the magnitude of Asian Pacific population growth has been even more dramatic. In Lowell, Massachusetts—a city with fewer than a hundred Cambodian residents in 1980 that now represents the second largest Cambodian community in the country—the influx was so rapid that between 35 and 50 new Cambodian and Lao children were entering the Lowell public schools *each week* during 1987. In Lowell and across the country, the changing demographics of schools and society loom large as critical issues for educational practitioners and policy-makers.⁵

Their concerns, however, have tended to reflect immediate needs and crisis situations, as in the case of Lowell. Yet, educators must prepare to address these demographic trends for a sustained period of time into the next century.

According to projections developed by Paul Ong, the Asian Pacific American school-age population, which doubled between 1980 and 1990, will more than double once again from 1990 to 2020.

Ong's projections suggest that spectacular demographic growth will persist and that current K-12 educational policy issues involving Asian Pacific Americans will continue to be relevant well into the 21st century. According to population projections based on the assumption of increasing immigration, in 2020 there will be 10 percent more Asian Pacific immigrant children below the age of 15 in the U.S. and 25 percent more in California than in 1990. This is cause for serious concern, given that educational policies and practices have been unable to meet the needs of Asian Pacific immigrant students, even at current levels.⁶

Together with the large numbers of foreign-born, immigrant school-age cohorts in 2020, however, a major shift will occur in the demographic profile as the numbers of second-generation, American-born children with immigrant parents will dramatically increase. The implications of these demographic projections for educational policy are discussed below.

ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND LOCALITY

Although Ong's population totals are aggregated for all Asian and Pacific Islander groups and summarized for the U.S., California, and the Mid-Atlantic area, the significance of both ethnic diversity and locality should also be emphasized. Other demographic projections, for example, suggest that between 1980 and 2000, the rankings of the six largest Asian ethnicities will change from Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Asian Indian, Korean, and Vietnamese to Filipino, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Asian Indian, and Japanese.⁷

These changes, driven by immigration and refugee resettlement patterns as well as differential fertility rates, have important ramifications for educational policy because linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic profiles vary widely by ethnicity. Hmong women, for example, maintain a fertility rate of nearly ten children per lifetime compared to Japanese American women whose rate is less than two.⁸ When they become available, disaggregated Asian Pacific Islander data sets from the 1990 U.S. Census will be crucial for policy-makers and community advocates to analyze in detail.

In addition, background factors within each ethnicity, such as refugee wave, generation, and gender also matter. The contrast, for example, between a first-wave Vietnamese daughter of professionals who grew up in the U.S. for most of her life and a third-wave Vietnamese son of rice farmers who came to the U.S. unaccompanied five years ago is obvious and full of implications for educators.

Locality is also important in relation to ethnicity and school policy. Asians comprise 20 percent of the school enrollments in Long Beach and Fresno, California,⁹ although Cambodians comprise the majority in Long Beach while Hmong represent the majority of Asian students in Fresno—each with distinct languages, world views, refugee experiences, and, by extension, educational needs.

Furthermore, the development and implementation of K-12 educational policy typically occurs at the local school district level, albeit within the parameters of state guidelines. The public school districts in Boston and San Francisco, for example, each serve about 62,000 students, of whom roughly eight out of ten are children of color. In Boston, however, African Americans make up 48 percent of the student body compared to

9 percent Asian Pacific Americans. In San Francisco, African Americans comprise 27 percent, while Asian Pacific Americans represent 31 percent of the total student body. The context for developing sound Asian Pacific American educational policies is obviously different in San Francisco compared to Boston, though the needs of Asian Pacific Americans in both cities are compelling.

Policy Implications

The remainder of this paper is organized thematically to focus on specific educational policy areas, including curriculum, school climate, teacher training and recruitment, language issues, assessment, support services, and parent empowerment.

CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

What I have learned has made a difference. Knowledge is responsibility. I have been able to share my knowledge and shed some light on my family members.

an Italian American student

I can relate a lot better to Asian students now.

an African American student

It helps me to revitalize all the memories and hardships I have gone through. . . . It is very helpful emotionally and academically.¹⁰

a Cambodian American student

Given projections that Asian Pacific Americans will continue to be the fastest growing subgroup in the nation well into the 21st century, the most important implication for educational policy is that the K-12 curriculum must provide systematic, in-depth opportunities for all students to learn about the historical experiences and contemporary realities of Asian Pacific Americans and their communities. This transformation of the curriculum differs from curricular emphases on the countries and cultures of Asia, and is imperative to implement, whether or not Asian Pacific students are present in individual classrooms.¹¹

To meet this challenge, one curricular approach may focus on the particular histories and cultural backgrounds of specific nationalities,

such as Koreans, Asian Indians, or Hmong in America. Alternative curricular strategies may focus on specific themes that cut across the experiences of various Asian Pacific nationalities in America, such as immigration, exclusion, settlement and community, labor and contribution, war and international relations, or identity and diversity.¹²

The thematic approach recognizes that various Asian groups share common experiences within the context of U.S. society. In spite of cultural and linguistic differences as well as historical conflicts between Asian and Pacific Islander nations, a distinct *Asian Pacific American* experience is well-documented by scholars.¹³ This shared experience is also reflected, albeit crudely, in comments such as “they all look alike,” or in incidents when Vietnamese are told to go back to China and Cambodians to go back to Vietnam.¹⁴

Using the thematic approach, students can also draw connections and parallels to the experiences of other groups in a multicultural curriculum. Themes such as migration, community, and the search for the American Dream are central, but not unique to Asian Pacific Americans, and can serve as the building blocks of a coherent, integrated curriculum that breaks down barriers between groups. Students learn to recognize the power of social forces such as race or class but also to appreciate various *human* qualities such as having dignity and determination to survive.

The thematic approach also facilitates the process of teaching and learning *across the curriculum* from social studies to language arts to mathematics. Research and practice in curricular reform throughout the country suggest that learning is enhanced when students explore themes in depth and make connections from the combined vantage points of several subject areas. A thematic focus on the Japanese American internment during World War II, for example, readily lends itself to lessons across the curriculum in history, writing, drama, civics, geography, health science, agricultural science, art, poetry, and math. With a common thematic focus, subject areas can reinforce rather than work in isolation from each other, and thereby create powerful learning opportunities for students.

IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE

*We were coming from a meeting of the Asian Club and white students threw oranges at us. Before that we had been standing in the hall and the supervisor kicked us out. So we went outside and they threw oranges. So there is nowhere to go.*¹⁵

a California-born Punjabi girl

People, can we all get along?

Rodney King

In the aftermath of the Los Angeles riots, teachers at the Wilton Place elementary school in Koreatown reported that many of their students had witnessed family businesses being looted or burned. On the first day after school reopened, the school's nurse observed that many Korean American students requested early dismissals due to stomach pains and headaches¹⁶—showing that dynamics in the local area and larger society affect the experiences of students in schools.

During the past decade, as rapid demographic changes have threatened established interests and sharpened historic contradictions in our society, bias-related crimes against African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Jews, and gays have proliferated throughout the country. Hate crimes reported in 1989 grew by 42 percent in Los Angeles, 29 percent in New York City, and 22 percent in Boston.¹⁷

Although often expected to overcome problems that the society as a whole has been unable to resolve, schools typically reflect and reinforce the structural barriers and social conflicts of the environment in which they are situated. For example, a 1990 national study of high school students conducted for Northeastern University and Reebok International revealed that 57 percent of the teenagers had witnessed a racial attack and 47 percent would either join in a racial attack in progress or feel that the group being attacked deserved it. Only 25 percent said they would report a racial incident to school officials.¹⁸ Similarly, a 1991 survey of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 conducted by People for the American Way found that 50 percent of the respondents viewed race relations in the U.S. as generally bad.¹⁹ Furthermore, if these studies had taken place after the acquittal of Los Angeles police officers charged with beating Rodney King, the percentages would have likely been even higher.

In their landmark 1992 study, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights documented numerous cases of anti-Asian violence throughout the country's neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools that were fueled by stereotypes, "Japan-bashing" and a national climate of anti-Asian violence. The report states:

The pervasive anti-Asian climate and the frequent acts of bigotry and violence in our schools not only inflict hidden injuries and lasting damage, but also create barriers to the educational attainment of the Asian American student victims, such as suspension from school and dropping out of school. . . . These consequences forebode a high price that not only the individuals involved but also our society as a whole are bound to pay in the future.²⁰

Even elementary schools are not secure. In December 1988, for example, Patrick Purdy fired over one hundred rounds from an automatic assault rifle into the Cleveland Elementary School yard in Stockton, California—killing five Cambodian and Vietnamese children. Although news reports treated him as a generic mass murderer who fired at random, witnesses said Purdy aimed specifically at Southeast Asian children. The California Attorney General concluded in his investigation that "Purdy attacked Southeast Asian immigrants out of a festering sense of racial resentment and hatred," and that Purdy had often confronted people speaking a foreign language—telling them to speak English in America.²¹

The Stockton massacre, like the racist killings of Vandy Phornng, a 13-year-old Cambodian boy in Lowell, Massachusetts, and 17-year-old Vietnamese high school student Thong Hy Huynh in Davis, California, by schoolmates,²² have been especially tragic, given that Southeast Asian refugees have already survived so much war, death and trauma in their home countries. Their children are not supposed to die here in the U.S.

As the Asian Pacific student population continues to grow rapidly, educational practitioners and policy-makers must not only develop timely, appropriate measures to respond to specific anti-Asian incidents, but more important, must address the underlying causes of violence and establish alternative environments characterized by respect and cooperation. Research has shown, for example, that the process of multicultural curriculum transformation described above not only

strengthens students' knowledge and critical thinking skills, but also improves the climate and learning environment of the school or classroom.²³

TEACHER TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT

*Your voice is one I'd heard only distantly, tokenly, the "model minority" a terrible reality, I realize in my head. . . . I somehow never saw the procession of American Indians to African Americans to Asian Americans. Now I see.*²⁴

a high school English teacher

To meet the challenge of changing demographics and enable these proposed curricular reforms, policies in the areas of teacher education and professional development must facilitate the training of current and future educators in relevant content areas and pedagogical strategies. For example, in recent years, a wide range of Asian American Studies primary source documents, oral histories, and works of historical fiction have been published. If teachers are not familiar with these resources, however, and do not have sufficient background knowledge or training to authorize Asian Pacific American voices in the curriculum, then students mistakenly believe that Asian Pacific Americans have been silent and played no role in U.S. history or society.²⁵

With significantly more Asian Pacific students entering the nation's classrooms each year, teachers and school staff must also be able to enhance student self-esteem and encourage Asian American student voices that may otherwise be silent or silenced. Many Asian students, particularly those whose first language is not English, feel self-conscious about speaking in class because of the language barrier, cultural differences, and racism. A Vietnamese high school student from Boston notes, "when I came here, I don't feel free to speak and I always think that people don't want to hear me."

The urgency for teacher training and professional development to address these issues is also intensified by policies that seek to integrate or mainstream bilingual students as quickly as possible. The impact of these trends in bilingual education (and special education) policy is that all teachers and school personnel, not just the bilingual teachers, are increasingly responsible for establishing a supportive learning environment for immigrant students in school. To do so effectively,

however, they need training.

Although the day-to-day context for addressing these issues of curriculum and pedagogy is the classroom within which individual teachers work, the larger policy issues are relevant to accreditation agencies, teacher education programs, and bodies responsible for teacher certification guidelines.

The Asian Pacific American communities must also take some responsibility, particularly in encouraging more Asian Pacific students to go into the field of education. Fifteen percent of all college students major in education compared to only 6 percent of Asian Pacific students in college.²⁶ While investing heavily in educational institutions, Asian Pacific Americans constitute only 1 percent of the teaching force nationally, and even less of the pool of school administrators, guidance counselors, educational researchers, *and policy-makers*.²⁷ The number of fully certified Asian Pacific bilingual teachers has actually declined between 1985-1990 in California, and the shortage of bilingual teachers, counselors, and aides in school districts throughout the country has reached crisis proportions.²⁸ While schools of education should do a better job of outreach and recruitment, parents and communities must take the lead in addressing this severe underrepresentation of Asian Pacific Americans in the education field.

SERVING ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN STUDENTS

The previous sections on curriculum, school climate, and teacher training focus on school-wide or system-wide policy concerns. The following sections examine policy areas related to meeting the specific needs of Asian Pacific American students.

Underlying these sections is a rejection of the distorted, albeit pervasive, model minority myth or "whiz kid" stereotype commonly associated with Asian American students. Many scholars have challenged the origins, validity, and consequences of the model minority image. Though not reported here, those critical analyses represent baselines for educators and policy-makers to understand and respond in meaningful ways to the realities experienced by Asian Pacific American students.²⁹

DEVELOPING A PROFILE

Few national studies on Asian Pacific American students are available to drive educational policy.³⁰ The most recent is a 1992 report that

examines language characteristics and academic achievement of 1,505 Asian Pacific eighth-graders based on the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88 database) which sampled 25,000 eighth-graders in 1,000 public and private schools in 1988.³¹

Roughly 52 percent of the NELS:88 Asian sample were U.S.-born and 48 percent were foreign-born. Disaggregated by ethnicity, the sample included 20 percent Filipinos, 17 percent Chinese, 13 percent Southeast Asians, 11 percent Korean, 9 percent Pacific Islanders, 9 percent South Asians, 6 percent Japanese, and 15 percent others. Nearly three out of four students in the sample came from bilingual households, although only 12 percent indicated a high proficiency in their home language.

Among a variety of interesting findings, the study determined that socioeconomic status (SES) was associated with English proficiency and with reading and math performance levels. Of the Asian students from bilingual homes, for example, 78 percent of the high SES students had a high English proficiency compared to 50 percent of low SES students. Moreover, nearly 40 percent of the low SES students failed to achieve basic performance levels for both reading *and* math compared with fewer than 15 percent of the high SES students. In addition, when SES was controlled, students with low English proficiency were less confident about graduating from high school compared to those with greater proficiency (60 percent versus 83 percent). Confidence levels differed by ethnic group as well. For example, 86 percent of South Asians, 72 percent of Filipinos and 67 percent of Pacific Islanders were very sure about graduating from high school.

The NELS:88 study is important in empirically refuting the “whiz-kid” image that Asian Pacific students have no problems in school. It also clarifies the significance of background characteristics, including ethnicity, English language proficiency, and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, given that the NELS:88 study excluded students whose English-proficiency was judged by school personnel to be too low to complete the NELS instruments in English,³² the findings, therefore, do not account for the profiles of many recent Asian Pacific immigrant and refugee students who, according to several studies, have the lowest levels of English proficiency and socioeconomic status while facing the greatest needs in school.³³

LANGUAGE NEEDS AND LANGUAGE RIGHTS

*Before I very silenced, afraid to talk to anybody. But now when I want to say something, I say it. . . . I want to have the right to talk, speak, or vote.*³⁴

a Vietnamese student

For limited English proficient (LEP) students, bilingual education has been mandated by law since the *Lau v. Nichols* ruling by the Supreme Court in 1974. In spite of local and national political controversies surrounding language policies,³⁵ there is growing consensus among educators and researchers that a wide variety of bilingual program strategies can be effective and appropriate in promoting cognitive development and academic achievement among LEP students.³⁶ The success of two-way bilingual programs throughout the country is especially encouraging and deserves further development with Asian languages, given the potential benefits not only for large numbers of both foreign-born and American-born Asian Pacific students, but also for non-Asian students in relation to the growing social, cultural, and economic influence of the Pacific Rim nations.

However, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, in its review of educational programs provided for Asian American LEP students, concluded:

Many Asian American immigrant children, particularly those who are limited English proficient (LEP), are deprived of equal access to educational opportunity. These children need to overcome both language and cultural barriers before they can participate meaningfully in the educational programs offered in public schools.

Providing equal educational opportunity to Asian American LEP students requires sound student assessment procedures and programs that can orient them and their parents to American society and American schools. Asian American LEP students need bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs staffed by trained teachers to enable them to learn

English and at the same time to keep up in school. They need professional bilingual/bicultural counseling services to help them in their social adjustment and academic development. Our investigation has revealed that these needs of Asian American LEP students are being drastically underserved. In particular, there is a dire national shortage of trained bilingual/ESL teachers and counselors.³⁷

The Commission's findings are especially troubling in light of Ong's demographic projections which indicate that the numbers of school-age Asian Pacific American immigrants in 2020 will be comparable to or only slightly less than current levels which are "drastically underserved."

Other studies show that some school districts have responded to the needs of Asian Pacific LEP students by incorrectly classifying them as learning disabled instead of providing them with appropriate bilingual instruction as required by law.³⁸ Local research reveals similar findings. For example, school ethnographers, Trueba, Jacobs, and Kirton, in their study on Hmong elementary school students, observe: "Illiteracy in English continues to be the most frequently recorded reason for classifying minority children as 'learning disabled.'"³⁹ At the same time, LEP students, particularly from low SES backgrounds, are also being denied federally mandated Chapter 1 compensatory education services, according to a June 1992 report from the U.S. Department of Education.⁴⁰

ASSESSMENT POLICIES

These examples introduce larger issues of educational assessment that have local and national ramifications. Policies of placement, tracking, promotion, and graduation based on standardized testing, for example, are especially problematic because of linguistic barriers, cultural biases, and other disadvantages experienced by Asian Pacific students due to time pressure and the stress of the test-taking situation.

In principle, the purpose of student assessment and evaluation is to identify areas of weakness that can be strengthened through the targeting of appropriate services and strategies. Once targeted, resources should be mobilized to enable all students to overcome those weaknesses in order to achieve their full potential. In practice, assessment policies, particularly those based on standardized testing, have led to the in-

equitable distribution of educational resources, accompanied by the sorting of students, often according to race, socioeconomic status, gender, and English proficiency.⁴¹

The value and validity of national standards as well as assessment policies on the local level such as the controversial “Certificate of Mastery” proposals in Massachusetts will continue to be debated in the coming years, hopefully with consideration given to the needs of Asian Pacific students. Alternative assessment strategies, such as portfolios of student work collected over time and exhibitions that demonstrate students’ learning and application of knowledge in a variety of domains, offer promise. Nevertheless, even those learner-centered approaches to assessment must attend to the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity in their implementation.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SHIFT

*If you try to teach them you are not American, they will not believe it.
I think if I try to tell about our generation, they will not want to learn.*⁴²

a Vietnamese refugee parent

*I’ve been trying to put my life as a puzzle together but I don’t know if
I will be able to finish my puzzle. But I will do anything to try to finish
my puzzled life.*⁴³

a Vietnamese American student

The most striking shift in the school-age Asian Pacific population according to Ong’s projections is the marked increase in those born in the U.S.—with growth rates ranging from 125 percent to 225 percent, depending on projection assumptions, for the U.S., California, and the Mid-Atlantic area.

The NELS:88 Asian Pacific study may be instructive here. For example, even though three-fourths of the Asian student population came from bilingual families, nearly 60 percent indicated that they have low proficiency in their home language compared to 66 percent who have high proficiency in English. Interestingly, only 6 percent of those students from bilingual families reported attending a bilingual program of instruction during their first two years of school in the U.S. And, although the study noted that 73 percent of the Asian students came from bilingual homes, only 27 percent were identified as such by at least one

of their teachers—suggesting that many linguistic and cultural issues faced by students in moving between their dual worlds of home/family and school are not recognized or addressed.

This profile is consistent with findings by Lily Wong-Fillmore and others in a landmark study providing evidence that as language minority children learn English in the U.S., they lose their native language—the younger the age, the greater the effect—due to the dominant status of English in early childhood education programs and in society.⁴⁴

The researchers further suggest that as the home language is lost in the process of acquiring English, family relations also erode. The following example may well represent the future of parent-child relations in many Asian Pacific American families with immigrant parents and American-born children as projected in the coming decades:

An interviewer told the story of a Korean immigrant family in which the children had all but lost the ability to speak their native language after just a few years in American schools. The parents could speak English only with difficulty, and the grandmother who lived with the family could neither speak or understand it. She felt isolated and unappreciated by her grandchildren. The adults spoke to the children exclusively in Korean. They refused to believe that the children could not understand them. They interpreted the children's unresponsiveness as disrespect and rejection. It was only when the interviewer, a bilingual Korean-English speaker, tried to question the children in both languages that the parents finally realized that the children were no longer able to speak or understand Korean. The father wept as he spoke of not being able to talk to his children. One of the children commented that she did not understand why her parents always seemed to be angry.⁴⁵

It is ironic that the strengths and cultural values of family support which are so often praised as explanations for the academic achievement of Asian Pacific American students⁴⁶ are severely undercut by the lack of programmatic and policy support for broad-based bilingual instruction and native language development, particularly in early childhood education. The unfortunate cost of such policies is the sacrifice of

substantive communication and meaningful relationships across generations within many Asian Pacific American families and the squandering of linguistic and cultural resources within the society.

SUPPORT SERVICES

As students are mainstreamed from a Cambodian bilingual class, or Laotian class. . .they are dropped—thud!—on the floor, because we have sort of an all or nothing thing, where they're in a full-time bilingual program, or they get no support at all.⁴⁷

a state education official

My parents don't like my clothes, my hair, the way I talk. They don't like my future plans. They don't like anything about me.⁴⁸

an Asian American student

As noted in previous sections, large numbers of Asian Pacific immigrant and refugee students have critical needs that are unaddressed because of the lack of bilingual/bicultural school personnel to provide appropriate counseling and guidance services.

While the need for bilingual counselors, advisors, tutors, and other support service personnel is expected to remain at current crisis levels given the population projections for school-age immigrants through 2020, there will also be a dramatic increase in the need for bicultural/multicultural school counselors and for teacher training in culturally appropriate counseling methods to attend to the complex issues of identity and cultural dissonance that will follow from the huge increase in second-generation school-age Asian Pacific Americans with immigrant parents.

The need for targeted support services to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other consequences of the Southeast Asian refugee experience should decline, assuming that no new waves of refugees flee from Asia to the U.S. Given the continuing war within Cambodia as well as the instability of other countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Myanmar (Burma), however, the future of refugee resettlement policy is difficult to predict. Initial research on the children of U.S.–Vietnam combat veterans with PTSD also suggests that there are second-generation effects, such as a higher than average inci-

dence of attention-deficit disorder and other learning disabilities. If so, then the continuing social consequences of the Vietnam War may persist for another generation of American-born children of refugees, and will demand recognition from policy-makers and service-providers.

At the same time, urban youth and schools in the 1990s have faced wars of a different kind here at home. Many Asian Pacific American youth, in spite of the model minority myth, have been profoundly affected by guns and gang violence, drugs, and the AIDS epidemic. Whether these public health crises will gain relief by 2020 is unclear, but the signs so far are pessimistic. In response, urban schools are evolving into multi-service centers, in addition to being institutions of teaching and learning. Local health centers, social service agencies, and other community-based organizations are essential partners for the future development of effective school policy and practice. In areas with significant Asian Pacific populations, the experience and involvement of Asian Pacific community organizations will be invaluable to schools in the coming years.

Furthermore, although the issues of identity, language and culture shift, and intergenerational conflict, as highlighted above, will present major challenges to schools, families, and communities in the coming years, these issues are not new to some Asian Pacific American groups such as Japanese, Chinese and Filipino Americans. Research and counseling methods, outreach strategies, and organizational models from those communities may be transferrable. Therefore, it will be increasingly important to share lessons, expertise, and resources across communities in a coordinated manner in order to provide maximum support for the education and healthy development of new generations.

PARENT EMPOWERMENT

The refugee parents are frustrated. On the one hand, they want to push their children academically, they want them to become someone in this society, to work hard, to study well. On the other hand, they cannot effectively intervene in the education process, they cannot even attend school functions... even school conferences, because of the language, but most often they are not familiar with the process, with... how things get done here.⁴⁹

a Vietnamese community leader
and candidate for elected office

For a variety of reasons, ranging from cultural expectations to long work hours and lack of transportation to the language barrier, Asian Pacific parents play limited roles in direct relation to the schools their children attend. Meanwhile, many schools exclude Asian Pacific American parents from meaningful participation as a result of the language barrier, lack of training and cultural sensitivity, poor outreach and follow-up, and lack of respect.

Yet, parents are the initial, and often most influential “teachers” in their children’s lives. In turn, teachers and administrators who remain unaware of their students’ home environments are neither able to make connections between the curriculum and students’ own experiences nor prepared to provide appropriate support when students confront difficulties.

As policies for reforming school governance increasingly focus on decentralized structures of school-site management that grant greater decision-making authority to stakeholders within schools, such as principals and teachers, parents must also claim their rightful place at the table. Culturally appropriate outreach, training, and follow-up are critical to enable Asian Pacific parents to play significant roles in school reform and governance. Models for Asian Pacific American parent organizing, parent training, and parent/school partnerships need to be identified, refined, and disseminated.

Inevitably, parent organizing and advocacy efforts lead to issues of political representation and empowerment on school boards. Speaking for a coalition of Latino and Southeast Asian parents who sued the Lowell School Committee and the City of Lowell, Massachusetts, for Title VI discrimination, Alex Huertas asserted in 1987: “The lack of Latino and Asian representation has made our struggle harder. In next year’s elections, we need to promote our own candidates.”⁵⁰

Data from the National Association of School Boards shows that only 0.1 percent of the nation’s school board members are Asian Pacific American. In a handful of cases, primarily in California, individuals such as Warren Furutani in Los Angeles, Wilma Chan and Jeanne Quan in Oakland, Leland Yee in San Francisco, and Michael Chang in Cupertino, California, as well as Alan Cheung in Montgomery County, Maryland, have run successfully for election to local school boards and have had significant impact on district policies. Through her election to the St. Paul, Minnesota, school board in 1991, Choua Lee became the first

Hmong American elected public official in the country. In 1992, Won So was appointed as the student representative and became the first Asian Pacific American to serve on the New York City school board.

New York's schools—the largest system in the country—are governed through a decentralized structure of community boards representing each district of the city. Any parent is eligible to vote in community school board elections, regardless of their status as a registered voter. The New York City policy of parent empowerment is especially significant for immigrant Asian Pacific and Latino parents who may not be citizens, but who desire and deserve a voice in school board decision-making.

Given the large numbers of immigrant Asian Pacific parents through 2020, such a structure could have far-reaching impact if adapted in other cities with large Asian Pacific population centers. At the same time, the numbers of American-born Asian Pacifics will also increase dramatically—magnifying the importance of voter registration, leadership development, and other foundations of political empowerment in order to gain greater influence over school board policies.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In addition to recommendations presented in the sections above, more comprehensive research on Asian Pacific Americans—research that is not skewed either by model minority assumptions or by excluding LEP Asian Pacific students from sample populations—is needed to drive national and local educational policy. Quantitative and qualitative educational research studies, disaggregated by ethnicity and conducted in native languages, are especially important to initiate. Given the increases in Asian American poverty during the 1980s,⁵¹ relationships between education and socioeconomic status are also critical to explore.

In light of Ong's population projections, foundations and government agencies along with universities and schools must take greater responsibility for Asian Pacific American research and policy development. However, consistent with conclusions from a recent report on Asian American poverty in Boston,⁵² the capacity must also be developed *within* Asian Pacific American communities to conduct systematic research and policy analysis on educational issues and related concerns.

Conclusion: Recognizing Strengths for the Future

As the nation prepares to move into the 21st century toward the year 2020, it is clear that the economic, cultural, and political influence of Asia will become increasingly decisive in international affairs, and that the Asian Pacific American population will continue to grow at a fantastic pace.

Asian Pacific Americans, particularly the first generation, invest heavily in education. Maintaining deep respect for teachers and holding high expectations for student achievement based on hard work, Asian Pacific Americans have much to contribute to the debate over educational policy and the process of educational reform.

Yet, the strengths offered by Asian Pacific Americans to society are typically not recognized.⁵³ For example, even though educational reports written by everyone from the President and the Secretary of Education to local school boards and chambers of commerce are unanimous in lamenting the low level of U.S. students' foreign-language skills, none of those reports calls for strengthening the educational support for immigrant students who already speak many languages other than English. Why do we fail to embrace our students who are native speakers of languages like Korean, Vietnamese, or Chinese? Why do we not enable them to stay in school and develop their multilingual/multicultural skills in English? Rather than seeing them, at best, as special needs populations outside of the mainstream of our schools or, at worst, as foreigners whose accents are aggravating and who should go back where they came from, we have to learn to see what great contributions they can make to our schools and society because of their multilingual and multicultural backgrounds.

Similarly, a recent trend in management training at leadership academies promotes physical workouts and survival tests designed to develop character, discipline, and stamina. Yet, do we consider the experiences of refugees and immigrants or even those of urban Latinos and African Americans who have come through real-life survival tests, walking hundreds of miles without food or crossing the sea in sinking boats or dealing with gang warfare in the streets? They are real survivors who have already developed and proven their strength of character, discipline, and stamina. They have all the qualities we look for in lead-

ers, but they are never recognized. At best, they are seen as helpless or needy clients; at worst they are resented as a burden to society.

Will K-12 educational policy in the 21st century promote Asian Pacific American exclusion or contribution? If informed by demographic analyses, then the imperative is clear. For if the strengths of Asian Pacific Americans continue to go untapped, especially in the field of education, then we as a society have not progressed very far in the hundred years since the San Francisco school board mandated that the city's children should not associate with or be influenced by their peers "of the Mongolian race."

Notes

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3. Low, *The Unimpressable Race*.
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 16. Peter Schmidt, "L.A. Events Seen Touching Schools 'for Years,'" *Education Week* (May 13, 1992), 1, 12.
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Trends in Admissions for
Asian Americans in Colleges and Universities:
Higher Education Policy

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Gaining access to prestigious institutions of higher education will continue to be a top priority for most Asian American families, even if admissions into such institutions become increasingly competitive and the cost of attending them becomes prohibitive. Less noticeable, but just as important, is the quality of education or the lack of it given to even larger numbers of Asian Americans from immigrant and working class backgrounds in community colleges and state universities and colleges.

This article explores the future trends and emerging issues in these two sectors of higher education for Asian Americans as they look to the 21st century. I shall begin with a historical background and analysis of patterns on Asian enrollments in higher education, setting the stage for a proper understanding of several current controversies over the so-called "over-representation of Asian American students," "model minority," and "reverse discrimination." This will be followed by a discussion on what we can expect in the early decades of the 21st century and what Asian Americans must do to protect their rights and the rights of others.

**Historical Patterns of
Asian American Enrollments**

Historically, two distinctive patterns of Asian enrollment in higher education can be identified. On the one hand, most of the elite, church-

affiliated universities and colleges made a point of recruiting some exceptional students directly from Asian countries partly to enhance the work of American missionaries in Asia and partly to help train leaders knowledgeable and friendly to the U.S. For example, all Ivy League universities and most of the elite liberal arts colleges maintained the presence of a small group of foreign students from Asian countries. Upon graduation these foreign students returned to their countries to become government officials, educators, professors, and church leaders. This explains the high visibility and prestige these institutions enjoy throughout East Asia to this date.

Foreign graduate students from Asian countries increased sharply during the Cold War as higher education expanded rapidly with federal assistance and as U.S. industries, especially the hi-tech industries and research universities, eagerly absorbed them into their work forces. Instead of returning to their home countries after the completion of their training, most of "the best and brightest" settled permanently in the U.S. For example, about 100,000 Chinese graduate students came to the U.S. for advanced degrees between 1950 and 1983 and most of them, about 85 percent, stayed and raised their children in the U.S. In the process, they disproportionately increased the percentage of high achievers among the Asian American population and contributed inadvertently to the stereotype of Asian Americans as a "model" or "super" minority. This explains also the eagerness and determination, including willingness to incur financial sacrifices, with which they send their children to these same institutions.

On the other hand, the American-born Asians were ironically kept out of these same institutions because of overt discriminatory policies against racial minorities and women. In spite of their low socioeconomic status, the children of working class immigrants from Asia in the pre-World War II period were encouraged and motivated to pursue the highest possible education accessible and affordable to them. The hope and sole strategy within the Asian American communities was to use education to overcome poverty and prejudice for the next generation. Unfortunately most institutions of higher education and graduate professional schools maintained policies of either excluding outright Asian American students or limiting their access to a tiny annual quota. The high cost of entering the elite private colleges and universities also effec-

tively prevented the highly motivated, but working class Asian American children from entering these institutions. Historically, about the only institution readily accessible to them before World War II was the tuition-free University of California at Berkeley and Los Angeles. It was this opening that set the precedence and established the patterns for future generations for Asian Americans seeking affordable quality higher education. To most Asian Americans to this date, the University of California still represents their best hope of getting admitted without prejudice and receiving a high quality education their parents can afford to pay.

The most significant increase in Asian American enrollment in higher education began in the mid-1970s. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there were 406,000 Asian Americans in all types of institutions of higher education in 1988. As a percentage of total enrollment in higher education, Asian Americans represented only 3.8 percent in 1988, a very substantial increase from 1.8 percent in 1976. In the same period, the percentage of Whites dropped from 82.6 percent to 78.8 percent and black students declined from 9.4 percent to 8.7 percent while the Hispanic share rose from 3.5 percent to 5.2 percent. (There were 881,000 Blacks and 587,000 Hispanics in colleges and universities in 1988).

It is important to note that the increase occurred across the spectrum of higher education, from the most elite private universities to the small liberal arts colleges, from the top public research universities to the two-year community colleges. Needless to say, the University of California at Berkeley and Los Angeles continue to be among the most popular choices, again, because of their quality, accessibility, and low cost. Other public Ivies, such as Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, for the same reasons, have also seen their Asian American enrollments go up.

Several factors account for the sharp increase which continues to this date. First and foremost, the removal of the restrictive racial quotas allocated to immigrants from Asian countries in 1965 caused a sudden surge in Asian immigrants, many of whom were either child-bearing women or women with young children who reached college-age by the mid-1970s. Second, the African American civil rights movement forced the elite universities and colleges to open their doors for the first time to domestic racial minorities and women through affirmative action programs. Most of these universities and colleges soon discovered a huge reservoir of Asian American applicants, many of whom possessed both

academic qualifications and financial resources. This development allowed Asian American high school graduates for the first time to have more choices of universities and colleges beyond the University of California and a few public universities in metropolitan areas with high concentrations of Asian Americans and caused a steady decline in the matriculation rates at UC Berkeley and UCLA. Third, the U.S.-China detente in 1972 and the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975 precipitated a major geopolitical realignment in East and Southeast Asia and ushered in a new era of political instability for Asian dictatorial regimes sponsored and protected, up until then, by the U.S. As a result, many upper- and middle-class families from South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore decided to move to the U.S. for a more secure and brighter future for their children through education. Most in this group knew the reputation of the elite private universities and pushed their children to gain admissions into them. Lastly, the evacuation of refugees from Vietnam in 1975 and the "Boat People" crisis in 1978 eventually brought over one million refugees from Indochina, many of whom came also with the hope of giving their children a chance to start anew in the U.S. through education.

The above factors led to a rapid increase of Asian American enrollments in several major sectors of higher education in the early 1980s, especially among the most select private universities and colleges in the East Coast and at UC Berkeley and UCLA, the two historically favored institutions for Asian Americans. By about 1983, most of the Ivy League universities, MIT, Cal Tech, Johns Hopkins, Julliard School of Music, and the University of Chicago had at least 10 percent Asian American undergraduates, and by 1990 even the top elite liberal arts colleges were enrolling anywhere from 7 percent to 17 percent (e.g., 8 percent at Amherst, Swarthmore, and Williams; 7 percent at Oberlin; 9 percent at Reed; 14 percent at Pomona and Bryn Mawr; 17 percent at Wellesley and Barnard; and 9 percent at Smith). At UC Berkeley and UCLA, Asian American freshman enrollments increased at such alarming rates that they threatened to outnumber the dominant white student population.

In fact, the rapid rise of Asian American enrollments among these universities led some—for example, Brown, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, MIT, UC Berkeley, and UCLA—to review and revise their respective admission policies in such a way as to cause either an unexpected slowdown or

a decline in the admission of Asian American applicants. Allegations of discrimination and use of illegal means, including alleged quotas for Asian Americans, led to several self-studies by some institutions (Brown, Princeton, MIT, and Stanford) and external investigations by government agencies at the federal and state levels in the late 1980s (audit on UC Berkeley by the California Auditor General and investigation of Harvard and UCLA by the U.S. Office for Civil Rights). Even though these self-studies and investigations have yielded mixed findings, they brought about several far-reaching changes in admission policies, most notably at Stanford, UC Berkeley, and UCLA, and resulted in significant increases in Asian American admissions in most institutions. For example, the freshman class of Harvard, Yale, and Stanford in 1990 had respectively 20 percent, 15 percent, and 24 percent Asian Americans and for the first time in history, Asian American freshmen outnumbered Whites in both UC Berkeley and UCLA in 1990.

Enrollment by Class and National Origin

The national attention given to the Asian American struggle against discriminatory admission policies and their phenomenal success in gaining access to the most prestigious institutions and in fighting against racial discrimination among the top universities and colleges in the United States should not in any way obscure the less publicized struggles by the majority of Asian Americans seeking access to basic and general education necessary to survive and compete in the job market.

As mentioned above, a total of 406,000 Asian Americans were in higher education in 1988. In spite of their smaller population (7.3 million, or 2.9 percent of the total U.S. population in 1990), the enrollment of Asian Americans was equal to Hispanics in private institutions (3.2 percent) and four-year institutions (4.6 percent), but the enrollment of Asian Americans was substantially less than Hispanics in public institutions (4 percent to 5.8 percent) and two-year institutions (4.1 percent to 7.9 percent). In other words, between 1976 and 1988, the representation of Asian American students in higher education more than doubled (1.8 percent to 3.8 percent), and more Asian Americans were enrolled in public institutions (4 percent) and in two-year institutions (4.1 percent), as opposed to private institutions (3.2 percent) and four-year institutions (3.6 percent).

Without doubt, the highly visible presence of Asian Americans in the top private and public universities in the U.S. has overshadowed the vast majority of Asian Americans from working class background, most of whom belong to the immigrant generation. Their numerical presence in the public institutions and in the two-year community colleges represent the values they attach to degrees in higher education, even if they are severely limited by their language background, cultural difference, academic preparation, and financial capability.

Typical of this kind of enrollment are students at California State University at San Francisco and the City College of San Francisco located in a region known for not just its Asian American concentration but also proximity to two of the top universities in the U.S.: UC Berkeley and Stanford University, both of which have high Asian American enrollments. In 1991, CSU San Francisco reported 33 percent Asian Americans out of a total undergraduate student body of 14,672, and the City College of San Francisco had over 40 percent out of 70,000 part-time and full-time students. Students enrolled in these two institutions receive either general education or job-related training programs. In City College, the largest single bloc of Asian American students are enrolled in survival English classes. Through basic English classes and job training programs, they learn to survive in their new, adopted country. Their perennial problems are having to wait for a long time to get into the English classes and getting trained for jobs that hopefully will still exist when they leave school.

In short, the patterns of Asian American enrollment in higher education reflect the bifurcated Asian American population. In general, the children from the middle class are motivated to attend the very top public and private universities and colleges across the nation while the children of the working class pursue higher education on the basis of their needs and academic and financial ability.

However, it would be a mistake to assume all Asian American college-age children attend colleges of different types. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 34.3 percent of all Asian Americans were college graduates in 1980. However, only 2.9 percent among Hmong, 5.6 percent among Laotians, 7.7 percent among Cambodians, and 12.9 percent among Vietnamese were college graduates. In fact, a very significant percentage of college-age Asian Americans is not attending college. They tend to be the poor, non-English-speaking immigrants who invariably

are compelled to do menial jobs with Asian American employers who frequently do not even pay the minimal wage. In spite of their high propensity toward college attendance, not all Asian Americans are high achievers in education and not all Asian Americans are enrolled in the high-prestige universities and colleges, as the popular stereotype of “model minority” implies. In fact, the stereotype has had an adverse impact on Asian American youth.

Even though there are no data collected on the national origins of Asian Americans in higher education, an informal survey of Asian American students in the Ivy League universities and in the University of California show very clearly that Chinese Americans, South Asian Americans, Japanese Americans and Korean Americans are well represented at the undergraduate level, and Chinese Americans and South Asian Americans are best represented at the graduate level. Among the least represented are the Indochinese Americans, and within this group, Vietnamese Americans far outnumber the Hmong, Laotians, and Cambodians.

Therefore, the two major factors that determine college attendance rates and the types of institutions Asian American students attend are socio-economic status and national origin. To achieve a better understanding of Asian Americans in higher education, we need more refined and reliable data collection. Just as important is the need not to make generalizations on Asian American success in higher education. This brief analysis demonstrates the diversity and disparity among Asian Americans in higher education.

Future Trends in Asian American Enrollments

Will the patterns of Asian American enrollment in higher education outlined above persist in the next two decades or so? If these patterns persist, how will different types of institutions of higher education respond to the steady rise of Asian American enrollment? How well will they meet the diverse educational needs of Asian American students? Will the foreign students from Asian countries continue to come to the U.S. for advanced degrees and settle as permanent residents?

Even though the Cold War has ended and many of the immigrant-sending countries in East Asia have become developed countries in recent years, there is no reason to doubt that the well-established patterns of immigration in the past three decades and thus the patterns of Asian

American enrollment in higher education will not persist.

This conclusion is based on the following reasons. First, the Asian immigrants from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Indochina in the last two decades will be eligible to sponsor their relatives to come to the U.S. Unless there is a change in the U.S. immigration law, the influx of Asian immigrants will continue, even though the reasons for emigration may be different from the previous period. Second, the lure of better economic opportunity and a better chance to provide a college education for their children will continue to stimulate additional emigration from Asian countries. Third, the U.S. will remain a main attraction for ambitious students from Asian countries where research universities are either non-existent or too few to meet their demands. In spite of the high cultural value and social prestige assigned to education in most East Asian and Southeast Asian societies, education in most of these countries remains largely inaccessible to most people. Access to education is highly restrictive because of exorbitant tuition and keen competition for access to a small handful of institutions. Several Asian countries are trying to build world-class research universities, but it will be a long time before they can become competitive. Many of these foreign students will eventually establish families in the U.S. and send their children to college.

In other words, the growth rates and enrollment patterns of Asian Americans in higher education established since the mid-1970s will continue in the foreseeable future, indeed, well into the next century. This means that the pool of highly motivated and competitive Asian American applicants to all types of institutions of higher education will continue to swell.

Emerging Issues

This being the case, Asian Americans can expect steeper competition for access into top universities and colleges as university resources shrink and tuition and admission standards are raised. Similarly, the children of working class immigrants will continue to seek access to higher education even though they will find access increasingly difficult as public universities raise their admissions standards and community colleges cut their services for survival English and job training programs.

Four major issues are likely to incite public debates:

First, the debate over the so-called "overrepresentation" of Asian Americans at the top national universities and colleges is likely to continue because the percentage of Asian Americans admitted each year will continue to rise. Among the top public universities, the percentage of Asian American freshmen exceeded Whites at UC Berkeley and UCLA last year. In fact, the gap will continue to widen as the Asian American applicant pools in these two public institutions expand and the white pools shrink. For the first time this year, the pool of Asian American applicants to UCLA surpassed Whites while the number of Asian American applicants at Berkeley closed in on the white applicants. Likewise, although at a slower rate, both in numbers and percentages, the admissions of Asian Americans among the nation's top private universities and colleges are rising steadily. The percentages of Asian Americans in the 1991 freshman class at Harvard, Yale, and Stanford reached 19 percent, 15 percent and 24 percent respectively.

Second, the perceived overrepresentation of Asian American students in these institutions will intensify the ongoing national debate over the usefulness of some of the traditional universal meritocratic criteria that began in the early 1980s when several universities noted the alarming growth rates of Asian American students on their campuses. The debate is likely to center on the proper weight to be assigned to traditional academic criteria (test scores and GPA) and non-academic criteria of infinite variety (extracurricular activities, leadership quality, race, socioeconomic status, geographic location, age, disability, music or athletic talent, veteran status, career choice, children of VIP, "legacy" status, i.e., children of alumni, etc.) Behind this debate is the issue of overrepresentation and how best to achieve a balanced, diverse student body without abandoning these institutions' commitment to the principle of academic excellence. Since the leaders of the U.S. have historically come out of these world-class universities and colleges, the hidden agenda and ultimate issue behind the overrepresentation debate may very well be the future leadership in the U.S. and how we conceive our national identity. This, in fact, was the real issue behind the three-century-old "Jewish Question" until it was finally overcome in the late 1950s.

Third, just as important on the other side of this debate on overrepresentation is whether affirmative action programs designed to correct past injustices against racial minorities are being eroded by rising

Asian American enrollment on the one hand *or* are rapidly becoming an obstacle for more Asian Americans seeking to gain access to these same institutions. At the heart of the debate over the merit, legitimacy, and legality of affirmative action programs is whether the *Bakke* decision (1978) should be left alone or challenged. Under *Bakke*, the U.S. Supreme Court permitted universities to establish temporary affirmative action programs not only to correct past injustices against racial minorities but also to create a diverse student body for reasons, presumably, of pedagogy, as long as race, color, or national origin is not the sole basis for framing such programs. At issue therefore are the fairness and longevity of such programs under *Bakke*. Led by Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds, Gary Curran of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and Congressman Dana Rohrabacher, conservative Whites and some Asian Americans have been using the legitimate complaints of Asian Americans to advance their objective to dismantle affirmative action programs through the Office for Civil Rights since the late 1980s. They consider such programs unfair and no longer necessary. The recent decision by OCR to conduct compliance review at UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UCLA, and UC San Diego is further indication of this line of thinking and attack.

Fourth, the shrinking public and private resources for higher education, the virtually mandatory college degrees for success in the job market, and the anticipated rise in demand for access to higher education in the next decade are forcing institutions of higher education to raise tuition and admission standards as convenient devices to reject applicants. Unfortunately, the net result of this strategy is to force, in mass, middle- and lower-middle-class applicants to seek admission into the less selective and cheaper public universities, compelling these institutions also to raise their fees and admission requirements. The end result is the displacement of large numbers of working class children from these traditionally affordable institutions. For example, the University of California system has nearly doubled its fees in the past two years alone. Many Asian American students from the working class will find it increasingly difficult to gain access to these institutions. They will be compelled to look to community colleges where fees, likewise, have been moving up steadily. Under this bumping process, Asian Americans will probably continue to do well because of their commitment to higher education and their willingness to sacrifice for the sake of education. This means that they will become

more visible and “overrepresented” at all levels of the educational hierarchy, a condition most conducive to multiracial conflict.

Asian American Response to Emerging Issues

Given the scenario outlined above, Asian Americans must chart their course of actions along the following lines:

- Asian Americans must actively monitor and participate in the ongoing debate over the criteria for admissions and be prepared to take action against any unfair targeting of Asian Americans for exclusion;
- As a racial minority who have benefitted and will continue to benefit from affirmative action programs in other sectors of the society, Asian Americans must continue to support legitimate affirmative action programs on the one hand and forcefully oppose efforts by Whites and some Asian Americans to challenge and dismantle such program under *Bakke*;
- Because affirmative action programs are defined legally as transitional programs whose usefulness will eventually expire, Asian Americans must support efforts to gradually shift the predominantly race-based affirmative action programs to class-based affirmative action programs. Such programs in the long run will benefit all races in a society in which the poor are getting poorer and the rich richer; and
- Asian Americans must work with institutions of higher education to develop English language and job training programs that will adequately serve the needs of working class Asian immigrants.