role of class inequality movement. It pronounces not only Los Angeles but also the Impossible Dream: Illgno Press, 1999.

4.1

The Affirmative Action Divide

Paul M. Ong

Over the past decade affirmative action has emerged as the defining wedge issue on race, and Asian Pacific Americans occupy a unique position in this heated political debate. Asian Pacific Americans are materially and ideologically on both sides of the political divide, with some adamantly supporting and other vehemently opposing the policy. Understanding the Asian Pacific American position is important for several reasons. The socioeconomic diversity of Asian Pacific Americans poses troubling questions regarding the underlying purpose and coverage of race-based programs. Just as the other chapters in this book demonstrate, Asian Pacific Americans do not fit easily into the prevailing black-white conceptualization of race, specifically in this case into remedial policies predicated largely on the black experience. Asian Pacific Americans remain significantly disadvantaged in some arenas, thus have a plausible claim for inclusion in group-based programs, but they are not disadvantaged in other arenas.

The socioeconomic status of Asian Pacific Americans points to a complex hierarchy rather than a simple dichotomous order. The simplicity of a black-white paradigm lies in the absolute and interlocking of the group ordering across disparate arenas, from education to work to capital accumulation. The inequality is so pervasive, glaring, and systematic that it is self-evident. In a simple bipolar structure, policies to correct racial inequality are simpler to design and implement, although still controversial with the disputes revolving around the specific causes and solutions. The status of Asian Pacific Americans moves us away from this duality to a more nuanced paradigm with Asian Pacific Americans occupying a middle position between blacks and whites. Even this ordinal depiction fails to capture the complexity. The material standing of Asian Pacific Americans varies significantly from one dimension to another so that the juxtaposition is not fixed. This inconsistency undermines the validity of the prevailing notion about the logical flaw is a necessary step to reconceptualizing race.
The presence of Asian Pacific Americans has also complicated the political debate. In a few geographic locations, Asian Pacific Americans are sufficiently large enough to affect ballot outcomes; consequently, they are courted by proponents and opponents for votes. (For examples, see the chapter by Saito and Park in this book.) The importance of Asian Pacific Americans, however, extends well beyond narrow electoral politics. The ideological position held by Asian Pacific Americans is important symbolically. The affirmative action debate is about the extent of society's obligation to address racial inequality and about the mechanisms that ought to be used. As a minority group with a long history of racial victimization, but also one that has overcome many (albeit not all) racial barriers, the position taken by Asian Pacific Americans is powerful fodder for political polemics. Coming to grips with the Asian Pacific American political position, however, is not easy due to the heterogeneity of the population.

This chapter examines the unique position of Asian Pacific Americans, starting with an overview of the evolution of affirmative action, an important and divisive policy emerging from the Civil Rights Movement. Affirmative action is the contested boundary defining how aggressive government ought to be to redress racial inequality. Unlike the strong public and judicial support for anti-discrimination laws, support for race-based strategies to attenuate group disparity is ambiguous and conditional. The heated debate revolves around programs governing the internal operation of the public sector, government hiring and contracting, and admission to state-supported schools. The next section, "The Socioeconomic Status of Asian Pacific Americans," examines the material positions of Asian Pacific Americans in the three major arenas: education, employment, and business. The statistical evidence reveals a mixed picture of high achievement and under-representation. The variation in socioeconomic status translates to differences in the nature of Asian Pacific American participation in the major affirmative action programs, which is discussed in "The Affirmative Action—Asian Pacific American Nexus." The available information shows that Asian Pacific Americans bear the cost and reap the benefits. Because of this spread, Asian Pacific Americans have taken varying political positions within the affirmative action debate in pursuit of both self-interest and broader principles. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the challenges posed by Asian Pacific Americans for affirmative action.

THE EVOLUTION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Affirmative action must be understood as a part of a political movement by blacks and their allies to fight racism and promote socioeconomic justice. The decades leading up to this policy were ones of historic changes. Starting with the integration of the military during World War II, the Civil Rights Movement went on to transform other parts of society, with much of the gains coming in the 1960s. State-supported segregation in public schools ended with the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling. President Kennedy used executive power in 1961 to require federal contractors to end any discriminatory employment practices and to establish the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination by privately owned facilities open to the public, by federally funded programs, and by both private and public employers. The 1965 Voting Rights Act added force behind the drive to protect the rights of minorities to participate in elections.

Presidents played key roles in setting the pace. Despite campaign promises and inspiring public pronouncement, President Kennedy moved slowly and cautiously, staving away from fully utilizing his discretionary powers and delaying politically risky legislation. Lyndon B. Johnson's view
evolved over his career, initially siding with segregationists as a congressman, then accepting the necessity of addressing civil rights issues as Senate Majority Leader, and later pressing for legislation as vice president. As president, he pushed his "Great Society" agenda to attack racial inequality. President Nixon proved enigmatic for initially supporting and then opposing key elements in the civil rights agenda, and his contradictory actions may be best understood as calculated political actions to weaken enemies and garner support.

The enactment of these laws was facilitated by a robust and growing economy, which minimized intergroup conflicts over resources. Paying for the cost of social change from an expanding economic pie enabled this nation to avoid the difficulty of reallocating in a zero-sum game. Even with a favorable economy, the Civil Rights Movement faced obstacles. Some white males, who were vested in the old racial order, fought to preserve the status quo, thus preserving their power and privileges. Opposition, however, was not just limited to overt racists. Most Americans found racial discrimination and prejudice objectionable, but were reluctant to accept the demands of the Civil Rights Movement. The majority felt that the Civil Rights Movement was "moving too fast."

Despite only conditional support from whites, or because of it, the demand for change escalated as the social movement behind the Civil Rights Movement evolved. The initial struggles focused on integrating schools and public facilities, and voter registration drives in the South. Later, the efforts moved north. Despite measurable economic gains, particularly by better-educated minorities, black expectations rose faster than actual progress and fueled frustration. A growing impatience over slow progress, persistent and pervasive poverty, and the lack of economic opportunity gave rise to devastating urban unrest between 1964 to 1968. Black protest shifted the demands from political rights and integration to economic rights, and the cutting edge of the movement moved from established nonviolent organizations to more militant ones espousing black nationalism and group rights.

Affirmative action evolved as a pragmatic and politically motivated strategy to combat racial (and later gender) inequality. During the early stage of the Civil Rights Movement, the dominant strategy centered on ending blatant racism. When the term "affirmative action" was introduced into policy in President Kennedy's 1961 Executive Order 10952, the proposed remedy was strictly anti-discrimination in nature, promoting hiring and terms of employment "without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin." President Johnson's 1965 Executive Order 11246 expanded the notion, requiring federal contractors to develop plans to increase the number of underrepresented minority workers. This expansion transformed the goal from equal opportunity to equal results, that is, to ensure "not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact and as a result." Even after the Democrats lost the White House, affirmative action continued to gain teeth. The 1970 "Philadelphia Plan," devised during the Nixon administration, required federal contractors to establish hiring timetables and goals. Underutilization was defined as a lack of parity, when a firm employed a labor force that did not mirror the racial and gender composition of the larger labor force. Some private firms and universities also adopted this parity approach, but its application was most pronounced in the public sector, in government hiring and procurement, and admission to state colleges and universities.

The adoption of affirmative action, as a policy, pushed the envelope of what the government ought to do to address racial inequality. Anti-discrimination laws were designed to protect people against individual acts of discrimination, and their enforcement was predicated on responding after the fact. Unfortunately, this approach failed to address systemic and institutionalized factors that disadvantaged minorities as a group. In other words, racial inequality was maintained and reproduced through
forces and structures beyond individual acts of discrimination. For many blacks and their supporters, attacking this problem required a radically different strategy operating at the group level. Programs, such as those associated with the "War on Poverty," targeted disadvantaged populations by channeling resources to impoverished neighborhoods, which were highly correlated with race. Affirmative action took an explicit approach by embracing race-conscious tactics, including the minority groups protected by voting rights and anti-discrimination laws.

Most affirmative action programs were not strictly a quota system, but the policy had certainly emerged as a race-based program. It required a redistribution of opportunities, although this often occurred at the margin. Such a reallocation was justified because the existing system of racial privileges was inherently unfair to the oppressed. Nonetheless, affirmative action required some segments to forego some opportunities, not a simple process even if the privileges were unwarranted. This shifting of opportunities, with real and perceived winners and losers, proved to be an extremely controversial policy, raising opposition from white males and also from former supporters of the Civil Rights Movement.

Opponents of affirmative action seized on the policy's race-based nature to challenge its constitutionality, arguing that granting special status to any racial group violates the "due process of law" protected by the Fourteenth Amendment, and anti-discrimination clause of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Starting in 1970, affirmative action programs came under attack in the courts. The first major setback came in 1978 in Regents of the University of California v. Bakke. In this case, the Supreme Court decided that the medical school at the University of California, Davis, through its affirmative action program, violated Title VI of the 1965 Civil Rights Act and the Fourteenth Amendment when it denied admission to Allan Bakke. The Court, however, left open the door for the use of race as one flexible factor in the admissions process, with Justice Powell arguing that the state has a legitimate interest in promoting diversity in the student body. In the 1980s, the Court upheld the voluntary use of affirmative action programs, but it also ruled against preferential protection for minorities in layoffs and imposed a greater burden of proof to justify affirmative action. Further restrictions came in the early 1990s in cases involving contract set-aside programs for minorities. Although the Supreme Court earlier had sanctioned the use of race-conscious contracting programs to remedy past societal discrimination, the Court started imposing the burden of "strict scrutiny" into all cases.

In the 1996 Hopwood v. Texas, the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit placed similar limits on admissions programs in higher education, restricting the use of race only when it is necessary to remedy past discrimination by the school itself. Moreover, the court stated that promoting diversity is no longer a compelling state interest, thus making it more difficult to correct any racial imbalance in higher education. While the courts have not outlawed all forms of affirmative action, its application has been severely restricted.

Affirmative action also came under attack from the executive branch. Presidential power proved to be a double-edged sword. Its use had been instrumental in establishing several civil rights policies, programs and agencies, but this approach exposed such actions to changing political winds. This was evident when President Reagan ushered in a neo-conservative era based on an ideology of smaller government, devolution, and supply-side economics.
Republican administrations placed individuals opposed to affirmative action in the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice and the Department of Education, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. These appointees in turn weakened affirmative action [and the enforcement of anti-discrimination employment and housing laws]. A common theme was to move civil rights away from race-conscious policies to "color-blind" ones.

The new mantra was that the government should never use race (or gender) for any public programs, even ones to remedy past discrimination. As anti-affirmative action efforts at the federal level waned with the Democrats recapturing the White House in 1992, the debate shifted to other arenas. In California, for example, Republican Governor Pete Wilson and his appointees on the Board of Regents of the University of California pushed through two resolutions in 1995 directing the university to end the use of race, religion, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in its admission process, contracting, and employment.

Opponents of affirmative action have made direct appeal to the voting public through referenda, some successful and others not: In 1996, the voters in California passed Proposition 209, the "Civil Rights Initiative," whose practical implication is to prohibit the state and local jurisdictions from using most affirmative action programs. One year later, the voters in the City of Houston defeated Proposition A, which would have ended affirmative action. In 1998, voters in Washington State passed Initiative 200, forcing the state and its local jurisdictions to stop using affirmative action. Similar initiative and legislative efforts are being pursued in other states, including Colorado, Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, and Texas. Some backers, such as those in Florida, have attempted to soften the impact of abandoning affirmative action with class-based programs designed to assist individuals from disadvantaged neighborhoods and schools, but those are not perfect substitutes.

Despite the victories by opponents of race-conscious policies, the public has no decisive position. A reason for the mixed results on initiatives is that voters are neither totally for nor totally against affirmative action. Race-based policies create a quandrum over how far this nation ought to go to address racial inequality. Most people accept the fact that racial discrimination has not been eliminated, and many believe that something should be done. At the same time, a growing number find that affirmative action goes too far by forcing white men to bear a burden to remedy a societal problem not of their making. In other words, there is support for anti-discrimination policies, but resistance to giving unjustified preferential treatment.

This does not mean that the government should not take an active role in eliminating racial inequality. A large majority support "increase recruitment" and a "sincere effort to hire" fully qualified blacks.

There is then a nuance in the support and opposition to affirmative action, and how people vote depends on how the debate is worded. This can be seen in a survey of Houston voters prior to the 1997 election. A large majority would support a proposition stating "The City of Houston shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment and public contracting." On the other hand, less than a majority would support a proposition stating "Shall the Charter of the City of Houston be amended to end the use of affirmative action for women and minorities in the operation of City of Houston employment and public contracting, including the current program and any similar programs in the future?" In the end, a majority of the voters opposed Proposition A, which stated "Shall the Charter of the City of Houston be amended to end the use of affirmative action?" If Houston's Proposition A had been worded differently, the outcome could have been different.

The debate over affirmative action has cooled, due in part to a robust economy.
that has eliminated fears of a zero-sum game, but the future of this policy is very much in the air. Race-based programs to correct racial inequality are not illegal, but the courts have severely limited their application. Political support has waned but not vanished. President Clinton has declared that affirmative action should be "mended, not ended," but this task does not appear to be a priority. The discussion on affirmative action in the report from the Advisory Board to the President's Initiative on Race is largely descriptive and noncommittal. What we have currently is not a coherent policy, and perhaps there never was such a creature.

THE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

To understand how Asian Pacific Americans are situated within affirmative action programs, it is important to first establish the overall material position of Asian Pacific Americans in three areas: education, the labor market, and business. Material position refers to measurable outcomes that define the relative standing of Asian Pacific Americans in the racial hierarchy discussed earlier. This section provides a broad assessment, saving the discussion on the status of Asian Pacific Americans within the public sector to the next section, "The Affirmative Action—Asian Pacific American Nexus." The data indicate that Asian Pacific Americans fare better than other minority groups, and in some areas better than whites. This is not the same, however, as an absence of problems. In education, Asian Pacific Americans are above parity relative to whites by traditional measures but suffer from restrictive quotas. In employment, Asian Pacific Americans are near parity but encounter barriers to selected occupations, particularly in management positions. Asian Pacific American businesses are below parity, experiencing difficulties competing in size and return. It is this dramatic variation in relative standing of Asian Pacific Americans across the three arenas that adds to the complexity of the racial hierarchy.

The one area where Asian Pacific Americans have experienced a high level of achievement is in education. This phenomenon starts early, as seen in the top panel of table 4.1a, which reports the racial/ethnic distribution of California schools ranked by performance on standardized tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Asian Pacific American</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 10%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75–90%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–75%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–50%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–25%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom 10%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 10%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75–90%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–75%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–50%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–25%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom 10%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by author from data from California Department of Education.
The data clearly show that African Americans and Hispanics are disproportionately overrepresented in poorly performing elementary schools, and disproportionately underrepresented in highly ranked schools. The opposite is true for Asian Pacific Americans. While Asian Pacific Americans comprise 8 percent of all elementary students, they comprise 17 percent of those in schools in the top 10 percent but only 4 percent in schools in the bottom 10 percent. A similar pattern is apparent at the high-school level. African Americans and Hispanics are concentrated in the worst schools, while Asian Pacific Americans and whites are disproportionately enrolled in the best schools.

There are also racial differences in high-school dropout and completion rates as documented in Table 4.1b. Dropout rates were estimated from school enrollment status for those without high-school degrees and between the ages sixteen to nineteen. African American and Hispanic youths are disproportionately more likely not to dropout relative to whites, while Asian Pacific Americans are disproportionately more likely to be enrolled, although the white–Asian Pacific American difference is small. A large number of recent immigrants contributes to the high rate for Hispanics. To minimize this bias, a second set of estimates is made by excluding those who immigrated after the age of thirteen. Even among this restricted population, the dropout rate for Hispanics is the highest among the four racial groups. Of course, some of the dropouts may eventually earn a high school degree or GED. An alternative measure of high school dropout is the percent of young adults (twenty to twenty-four) without a high school degree. The statistics for this measure also show a parallel racial hierarchy, with blacks and Hispanics faring far worse than whites and Asian Pacific Americans. The pattern also holds after excluding those who immigrated after the age of thirteen.

Along with a high rate of completing high school, Asian Pacific Americans are better qualified to compete for entry into institutions of higher learning. This can be seen in the SAT scores, which are widely used by colleges and universities to evaluate applicants. Asian Pacific Americans do not perform as well as whites in the verbal section (1998 average score of 498 out of 800 versus 526), but they more than make up the difference on math (562 versus 528). One of the reasons for the lower Asian Pacific American verbal score is that only 28 percent of the Asian Pacific American test-takers speak English as their sole language, compared to 94 percent of white test-takers. In other words, a disproportionate number of Asian Pacific Americans do not have English as a first language. One can argue that SAT scores are not perfect predictors of performance as undergraduates and that the test is culturally biased, but colleges and universities do use the results in admissions. To the extent that these

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1b</th>
<th>Drop-Out Statistics by Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Pacific American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in school, 16-19</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W/o high school degree, 20-24</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excluding teenage immigrants</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in School, 16-19</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W/o high school degree, 20-24</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

scores are weighted, Asian Pacific Americans are competitive by this criterion. The relative competitiveness of Asian Pacific Americans can also be seen in the 1996 data from the California Postsecondary Education Commission, which calculates the proportion of high school graduates fulfilling the minimum criteria for admission to the University of California. The Asian Pacific American rate for 1996 (30 percent) is several times higher than that for African Americans (3 percent) and Hispanics (4 percent). More surprisingly, the Asian Pacific American rate is more than twice as high as the rate for white students (13 percent).

Several factors account for the educational achievements of Asian Pacific Americans. Cultural values and parental beliefs in the centrality of education for success in this country provide a powerful push for children to succeed. Asian Pacific American achievement is also the product of lower residential segregation of Asian Pacific Americans than other minorities, which is discussed in the chapter by Hum and Zonta in this book. The College Board reports that 37 percent of Asian Pacific American students taking the college entrance examination are in suburbs, which is equal to whites and higher than blacks (22 percent) and Hispanics (25 percent). This translates into Asian Pacific Americans being more likely to reside in better school districts and neighborhoods with the better schools. At the same time, Asian Pacific Americans are more likely to be in largest cities than whites, 37 percent versus 14 percent. This spatial correlation may be influenced by self-selection, where the quality of education becomes relatively more important for Asian Pacific Americans in deciding residential location. This can be seen in the disproportionate number of Asian Pacific Americans moving to two of the best school districts in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, Cerritos and San Marino.

The accomplishments of Asian Pacific Americans at the high school level carry over to the college and university level. The rate of school enrollment for college-age students (between twenty and twenty-four years old) varies considerably by race: 36 percent for whites, 30 percent for blacks, 22 percent for Hispanics, and 55 percent for Asian Pacific Americans. (If the population excludes immigrants who entered the country after the age of 13, then the enrollment rate for Hispanics is slightly higher, 25 percent.) Asian Pacific Americans are not only attending colleges and universities at a disproportionately higher rate, but they also have a strong presence in the elite universities. This can be seen in table 4.1c, which lists the distribution of the undergraduate student body by ethnicity. The reported percentage for each ethnic group is based on “domestic” students, which does not include foreign students of that ethnic-

| Table 4.1c 1998 Fall Enrollment in Elite Universities by Race/Ethnicity |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Asian Pacific American | White | Hispanic | Black |
| Private        |       |       |  |
| Harvard        | 19%   | 46%   | 8%   | 9%           |
| MIT            | 28%   | 46%   | 10%  | 6%           |
| Stanford       | 22%   | 49%   | 11%  | 8%           |
| Yale           | 17%   | 57%   | 6%   | 7%           |
| Public         |       |       |  |
| Berkeley       | 39%   | 30%   | 11%  | 5%           |
| UCLA           | 38%   | 34%   | 16%  | 6%           |
| Michigan       | 11%   | 71%   | 4%   | 9%           |
| Virginia       | 10%   | 71%   | 2%   | 10%          |

Source: Compiled by author from university web pages.
Among the top private universities listed, Asian Pacific Americans comprise 17 percent to 28 percent of the student population. The range for the top public universities is wider, from 10 percent to 39 percent, with the higher percentage in schools located in states with large concentrations of Asian Pacific Americans. By any reasonable measures, Asian Pacific Americans have had remarkable success in accessing higher education.

Despite the educational achievements of Asian Pacific Americans students, there are problems. There are still significant segments of Asian Pacific American youths who are struggling because they have a limited command of the English language. This partly accounts for lower Asian Pacific American scores on the verbal parts of standardized tests relative to whites. The push for academic success comes with an emotional cost. The parental pressure to succeed creates tremendous anxiety among Asian Pacific American youths and contributes to intergenerational conflicts. Moreover, access to the elite institutions of higher education is not an unqualified success. Since the 1980s, many prestigious colleges and universities have been accused of reacting to the "overrepresentation" of Asian Pacific American by establishing ceilings, a maximum quota, on Asian Pacific American admission. Audits of some elite schools discovered that the admissions rate for Asian Pacific American applicants was lower than that for white applicants, and among those admitted, Asian Pacific Americans had stronger academic qualifications than other groups. One statistical study found that with similar qualifications, Asian Pacific American had a lower probability of being admitted. A lower admissions rate, by itself, is not prima facie evidence of discrimination. In some cases, admission processes used nonracial criteria beyond those based on standard academic performance, and these had a disproportionate impact on some groups. For example, private universities gave extra preferences to sons and daughters of alumni, who happened to be predominantly white. One could argue that this policy merely reproduced the racial inequality of previous generations, but the universities countered that they have legitimate and nonracial reasons for these preferences. In other cases, the evidence pointed to a biased admissions process and prejudicial admission officers. Many schools that had such a potential problem have corrected both intended and unintended biases, but Asian Pacific America suspicion has not entirely disappeared. We will return to the quota issue in the next section of this chapter when the discussion focuses on public education.

In the labor market, Asian Pacific Americans have an advantage because of higher educational attainment, but do not always receive the same remuneration or occupational status as whites. Table 4.1d reports the educational attainment of those in the prime-working age category, twenty-five to sixty-four years old. Among the four reported racial groups, Asian Pacific American have the highest proportion with four or more years of higher education. The relative difference is even greater for the category that includes advanced degrees (master's, professional degrees, and doctorates). The odds of an Asian Pacific American holding an advanced degree are more than one-and-half times greater than for whites, and four to five times greater than for African Americans and Hispanics. These higher Asian Pacific American rates of educational attainment are the product of two factors. The first is the phenomenon discussed above, that Asian Pacific Americans who are educated in the United States (both native-born and immigrants who come here as children or students) tend to complete more years of education. The second factor is that immigration laws since 1965 have favored those with higher education, particularly those in the professional, scientific, medical, and engineering fields. Moreover, the highly educated immigrant who initially entered through occupational preferences became a sponsor for highly educated relatives for slots reserved for family reunification, thus adding to the supply of highly educated immigrants.
### Table 4.1d Education Attainment by Race, Ages 25–64

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian Pacific American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Despite the high level of education, Asian Pacific Americans have not been fully able to translate their credentials into commensurate earnings and occupational status. Table 4.1e contains basic statistics for full-time (thirty-five or more hours per week) and year-round (fifty or more weeks per year) workers between the ages twenty-five and sixty-four. Roughly three-quarters of the labor force for each racial group work full-time and year-round (77 percent for whites, 76 percent for blacks, 74 percent for Hispanics, and 77 percent for Asian Pacific Americans).24 Despite the higher education attainment reported earlier, Asian Pacific Americans lag behind whites in remuneration. In terms of annual earnings, the median for Asian Pacific Americans is slightly lower than for white males ($33,200 versus $32,000). Another measure indicates that Asian Pacific Americans are doing marginally better, 23 percent of whites are among the top one-fifth of all earners compared to 24 percent for Asian Pacific Americans. However, this is surprisingly close given the considerable higher levels of education for Asian Pacific Americans. Another way of viewing the statistics is to consider what is required to win a place in the top tier: 61 percent of whites in this earnings group have at least a bachelor’s degree, while 80 percent of Asian Pacific Americans do. Much of the difference is among those with advanced degrees, 26 percent for whites and 40 percent for Asian Pacific Americans.

The disparity in earnings is associated with the problems faced by Asian Pacific American immigrants, and highly-educated male immigrants in particular.25 Among males with at least a bachelor’s degree, recent Asian Pacific American immigrants earn about 22 percent less than U.S.-born whites, after accounting for differences in age and educational credentials. Assimilation as proxied by long-term residency in this country helps, but even established Asian Pacific American immigrants earn 7 percent less than U.S.-born whites. U.S.-born Asian Pacific American males, on the other hand, earn roughly the same amount as U.S.-born white males. Among females [that is, within gender analysis], the earnings show a different inter-group pattern.

### Table 4.1e Employment Outcomes by Race, Full-Time, Year-Round Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian Pacific American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median earnings</td>
<td>$33.2k</td>
<td>$25.4k</td>
<td>$22.0k</td>
<td>$32.0k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the top 20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In management</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In professions</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recent Asian Pacific American immigrants earn 10 percent less than U.S.-born whites, and established Asian Pacific American immigrants reach parity with U.S.-born whites. Interestingly, U.S.-born Asian Pacific American females earn 7 percent more than U.S.-born white females. On the other hand, it is important to note that this “advantage” is far from closing the gender gap, for white females earn 27 percent less than white males. U.S.-born Asian Pacific American females close some of that gap, but their earnings are much closer to that of U.S.-born white females than to U.S.-born white males. In other words, the gender gap remains a dominant factor.

Some of the labor-market disadvantages experienced by Asian Pacific American male and female workers can be attributed to a “glass ceiling,” a barrier preventing many from moving into higher management positions. Although qualified and competent for higher management positions, many Asian Pacific Americans are stereotyped as nonassertive, inarticulate, and too technical. The glass ceiling is certainly a major concern within the Asian Pacific American community. A majority of the respondents to a survey of Asian Pacific Americans by Asian Week agreed with the statement: “There exists a ‘glass ceiling’ such that many Asian Americans are unfairly prevented from reaching upper management positions in many companies.”

The lower probability of being a manager is centered around the highly educated immigrant population. Among males with at least a bachelor’s degree, recent Asian Pacific American immigrants have only half the odds of being in management compared with U.S.-born whites, after accounting for differences in age and credentials. Assimilation has no effect because established Asian Pacific American immigrants face the same low odds. The analysis shows that U.S.-born Asian Pacific American males have lower odds of moving into management than U.S.-born whites, but the estimate is not statistically significant because of the small sample size. Among highly educated females, recent Asian Pacific American immigrants have only about half the chance as U.S.-born whites to being in management, controlling for other factors. Assimilation closes much, but not the entire gap. The odds for established Asian Pacific American immigrants approach that of U.S.-born whites, with the remaining difference being statistically insignificant. There is essentially no difference between U.S.-born whites and U.S.-born Asian Pacific American females. While Asian Pacific American females may be able to close the racial gap within their own gender, they still face the glass ceiling encountered by U.S.-born white females.

By limiting access to managerial position, the glass ceiling has a trickle-down effect on other occupations. An analysis of highly educated workers of both genders shows that U.S.-born Asian Pacific Americans, established immigrants, and recent immigrants have the same odds of being a professional as U.S.-born whites. Asian Pacific American males, regardless of subgroup, have higher odds of being in this occupational layer, indicating that overrepresentation in the professions absorbs the underrepresentation in management. In other words, there appears to be a glass ceiling that keeps them from moving from the professions into management. For females, this phenomenon is not present, a finding that points to the additional complexity imposed by a gender-related glass ceiling.

The lack of parity is most apparent for Asian Pacific Americans in the business world. While Asian Pacific Americans, and immigrants in particular, have a reputation of being entrepreneurs, the self-employment rate (including family members working for no pay) for Asian Pacific Americans is no higher than that for whites, and this is true even when comparing Asian Pacific American immigrants with white immigrants. Table 4.1f provides two sets of self-employment rates for the economically active population between the ages of twenty-five and sixty-four. The first estimate is based on whether the person reported his or her main class of employment as self-employed.
to this measure, Asian Pacific Americans and whites have the same rate. The second set of estimates includes both the self-employed and those working for others, but also receiving some income from self-employment. The latter captures people who operate a business on the side. While the second estimate for whites is slightly higher than for Asian Pacific Americans, for practical purposes, the levels of self-employment are identical. On the other hand, the economic returns to self-employment are not identical. The data for those working year-round indicate that median total earnings for Asian Pacific Americans is lower than for whites. The economic disparity is even greater since self-employed Asian Pacific Americans have more years of schooling than whites.

Data from the most recent survey of the characteristics of business owners (1992) show a similar picture. By two measures, Asian Pacific Americans are doing well. Among minorities, Asian Pacific Americans accounted for 31 percent of all firms and received 48 percent of all revenues. While Asian Pacific Americans were faring better than blacks and Hispanics, Asian Pacific Americans were not overrepresented among all owners. Asian Pacific Americans owned 3.5 percent of all businesses and received 2.9 percent of all revenues, which is slightly lower than the Asian Pacific Americans share of the total population (4 percent in 1998). The picture is even less rosy when compared with white owners. Average [mean] revenue for Asian Pacific American firms was only 64 percent of that for white firms. The average Asian Pacific American firm had fewer employees and paid lower wages per worker than white firms. Only 14 percent of white owners worked sixty or more hours a week, but 21 percent of Asian Pacific American owners did. Asian Pacific Americans had smaller markets, with 42 percent serving a neighborhood market compared to only 26 percent for whites. Moreover, 81 percent of Asian Pacific American firms serve a minority-dominated clientele, about four times the level for whites. These facts, alone with those presented above, show that Asian Pacific Americans in business still lag far behind whites.

The above analysis of the socioeconomic status of Asian Pacific Americans demonstrates the complex position of Asian Pacific Americans in this nation’s racial structure (see table 4.1g). The unique material position of Asian Pacific Americans poses three challenges to a bipolar racial model. The first is that the relative standing of Asian Pacific Americans varies across socioeconomic dimensions. The achievements [vis-à-vis whites and other minorities] in one area are not replicated in other areas. This can be seen in the extreme variation in the simplistic Asian Pacific American—white parity indices for education, employment, and business. The second challenge is that the nature of the disadvantages faced by Asian Pacific Americans is not absolute [lower achievements than whites], but relative to what they could achieve if given the same opportunities as whites. For example, Asian Pacific Americans are close to parity with whites in the labor market, but would fare even better if

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian Pacific American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Earnings</td>
<td>$32.3k</td>
<td>$24.9k</td>
<td>$21.8k</td>
<td>$30.4k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment (1)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment (2)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With at least a bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

employees and paid fewer than white firms. White owners worked a week, but 21 percent served a neighborhood and were 21 percent served a clientele, about four whites. These facts, presented above, show that white firms are disadvantaged in business whites.

sis of the socioeconomics of Asian Pacific Americans complex position of Asian Americans in this nation's see Table 4.1g). The position of Asian Pacific Americans challenges to a large. The first is that the Asian Pacific American socioeconomic dimension (vis-a-vis whites) in one arena are not whites. This can be a variation in the simple-Asian American–white par- ticipation, employment, core challenge is that the disadvantages faced by Asian Pacific Americans is not absolute but relative, but the level of individual achievement can still achieve if given whites as whites. For example, whites are h whites in the labor force even better if they

could fully translate educational credentials into employment outcomes. The final challenge is that many of the barriers faced by Asian Pacific Americans are not race-based, or at least not in the way they have been commonly understood. These obstacles are associated with the immigrant experience, where cultural differences and slow acculturation prevent full incorporation. For some, this observation explains away the inequality, however, the explanation does not answer whether the criteria are economically appropriate or based on unwarranted prejudices. Some evidence points to a racializing of the foreign-born, thus blurring the line between racial processes and immigrant processes. Race, after all, is part of social construction, and this nation has a long history of racializing Asian Pacific American immigrants.

Clearly, Asian Pacific Americans cannot be simply forced into a dichotomous paradigm by defining them as equivalent to other disadvantage minorities or as identical to the advantaged white population. Moreover, the relative standing of Asian Pacific Americans varies across arenas, precluding the possibility of collapsing outcomes into a single, consistent measure of racial inequality. These facts force us to reconsider race relations as a multigroup and multidimensional hierarchy. The complexity introduced by the material position of Asian Pacific Americans presents both a theoretical and a policy challenge.

THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION--ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN NEXUS

This section examines the link between Asian Pacific Americans and affirmative action programs in three areas at the center of the political debate, public schools, government employment, and government contracting. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of systematic, consistent, and detailed data across all three sectors; nonetheless, the available information provides intriguing insights. The variation in material position discussed in “The Socioeconomic Status of Asian Pacific Americans” maps into a similar variation within race-based programs. The diversity in socioeconomic outcomes discussed above is accompanied by a parallel diversity in the nexus between Asian Pacific Americans and affirmative action. They both benefit from and bear the cost of the policy. In the field of education, where Asian Pacific Americans have been successful, the issue is whether Asian Pacific Americans should forego a disproportionate share of privileges in publicly supported schools. In the labor market, where Asian Pacific Americans have had conditional success, the issue is whether occupational niche is appropriate for Asian Pacific American participation. Finally, in the world of business, where Asian Pacific Americans trail whites, Asian Pacific Americans are more likely to be unconditionally included in affirmative action.

Table 4.1g  Business Characteristics by Race/Ethnicity (1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Revenues per firm</th>
<th>Employees per firm</th>
<th>Payroll per employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All businesses</td>
<td>$192.7k</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>$19.1k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All minorities</td>
<td>$102.8k</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>$15.2k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>$94.4k</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>$15.6k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>$51.9k</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>$13.9k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Pacific American</td>
<td>$159.1k</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>$15.5k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White females</td>
<td>$114.6k</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>$17.0k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White males</td>
<td>$249.8k</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>$20.3k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by author from Bureau of the Census data on business owners.
Given the high levels of academic achievement, it is not surprising that Asian Pacific Americans have been largely excluded from affirmative action in public education. Of course, there have been exceptions, most notably when the University of California had included Filipinos. It was felt that Filipinos constituted a highly disadvantaged population, uniquely different from the other two major Asian Pacific American groups at that time (Japanese and Chinese), but Filipinos were dropped from the program in the mid-1980s. Although there have been other efforts to include high-poverty Asian Pacific American ethnic groups, it is difficult to make a case because a relatively higher number of students from these groups go onto colleges and universities compared to blacks and Hispanics. Not being included as a target population, however, is not the same as having no relationship to affirmative action.

The prevailing relationship between Asian Pacific Americans and race-based admissions programs is both controversial and troubling. A part of that relationship is indirect and equivalent to that for whites. The number of admission slots available to those not included in affirmative action (whites and Asian Pacific Americans) is tied inversely to the degree that special admission procedures are successful in increasing admissions from targeted populations. Clearly, the policy and program alter the racial distribution, but in practice, the changes are at the margin and small in relative size. Moreover, in situations where past discrimination and institutionalized racism unfairly disadvantages the targeted groups, the reallocation achieves a greater social goal of promoting racial equality. Ideally, the opportunities foregone by whites and Asian Pacific Americans are the unearned privileges; that is, the opportunities that would not have been available to these two groups in the absence of systemic and institutional racism. For those opposed to affirmative action, this shifting of admission slots smacks of unconstitutional reverse discrimination. To increase the moral legitimacy of this objection, some conservatives have argued that racial preferences hurt not only whites but also Asian Pacific Americans. This appeal, however, has not won over the majority of Asian Pacific Americans. According to one survey, a majority of Asian Pacific Americans are willing to accept "giving preferences to underrepresented minorities in college admissions and scholarships."

The situation is more explosive when restrictive quotas enter the picture, that is, when Asian Pacific Americans suffer a double burden, one from any reallocation generated by affirmative action and the other from an enrollment cap to limit "overrepresentation." It is important to note that the latter practice, to the degree it exists, reallocates some admission slots from Asian Pacific Americans to whites. Unlike affirmative action, restrictive quotas do not correct any past discrimination or institutional racism directed at whites. The one plausible argument is promoting diversity that mirrors the population, but it is doubtful that diversity in the abstract and devoid of the other race-related issues is sufficient to impose restrictive quotas.

As discussed earlier, imposing caps on Asian Pacific American admission has been an issue in institutes of higher learning, and much of the controversy of the 1980s centered around the practices at the two flagship campuses of the University of California, Los Angeles and Berkeley. Both campuses had lower admission rates for Asian Pacific American applicants than for other major groups, precipitating protest from Asian Pacific American activists and parents. When asked about access to the University of California, an overwhelming majority believed Asian Pacific American applicants should be admitted at a rate commensurate with their achievements. While private universities used a policy of providing "legacy" preference to children of alumni (who happen to be predominantly white) to explain and justify a lower admission rate for Asian Pacific American applicants relative to white applicants, the public universities had no such rationale. The concerns were sufficiently strong that the federal go
eriment launched an investigation, and the conflict was eventually resolved explicitly at Berkeley and tacitly at UCLA. The controversy in the public universities has subsided, but what remains unresolved is the problematic link between restrictive quotas and affirmative action. That issue reemerged in a different arena, in the public schools of San Francisco.

In the City by the Bay, the link between race-based efforts to correct past discrimination and glaring racial inequality was explicitly tied to restrictive quotas. Although the caps did not explicitly single out any one group, Chinese students eventually were affected by its implementation. Like in other urban school districts, blacks were highly segregated into low-performing schools within the San Francisco Unified School District. The local NAACP won a lawsuit in 1971 to desegregate the district and a consent decree in 1983 to strengthen the efforts, with the state providing millions of dollars to implement an integration plan. To produce a more balanced enrollment, the decree required each school to have students from at least four of the nine named groups (American Indian, black, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Spanish-surnamed, other white, and other nonwhite). Furthermore, the agreement established caps on the number for any one group, a maximum of 45 percent on most schools and 40 percent on magnet schools, and these restrictions proved to be lightning rods.

At the heart of the eventual controversy is Lowell High School, the oldest high school west of the Mississippi, the most selective school within the district, and one of the most prestigious high schools in the nation. Its alumni include two Nobel Prize winners, a co-founder of Hewlett-Packard, a former governor, a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, and a former president of Yale University. Since the 1960s, Lowell operated as a system-wide academic school with competitive admission. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Lowell won state and national honors for its academic excellence. Lowell itself was the target of a 1971 discrimination suit against SFUSD for operating a city-wide academic high school that had a disproportionate low number of minorities, but the district won the right to maintain such a program. Lowell, however, was subject to the 1983 consent decree.

Despite the desegregation effort, non-Asian Pacific American minorities continued to be underrepresented. During the mid-1990s, blacks comprised about 18 percent of the students in the district but only 5 percent of Lowell’s students, and the comparable statistics for Latinos are 20 percent district wide and only 10 percent for Lowell. Whites were above parity (16 percent of Lowell while only 13 percent of the district but not affected by the 40-percent ceiling. Only one group was affected by the enrollment limit. In the mid-1990s, Chinese comprised slightly over 40 percent of Lowell’s student body. To keep within the maximum, the admission criterion for Chinese was raised above other groups. Both the restriction and the higher admission standards were not well received by many Chinese parents, eventually leading to a lawsuit against the district to end what was termed discriminatory quotas. In 1999, the court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, forcing the district to abandon the cap for Lowell and to develop “race-neutral” criteria to maintain diversity.

While the immediate outcome of the lawsuit is discernible, the motivation for the actions taken by the complainants and the long-term implications are much more difficult to pinpoint. Conservatives such as Governor Pete Wilson and University of California Regent Ward Connerly, who were major supporters of Proposition 209, seized on the efforts by the Chinese against the restrictive quotas. They used those efforts to attack affirmative action, accusing the policy as the source of the “reverse” cap on Chinese enrollment and on a system of merit. Some supporters of the suit, however, took exception to this interpretation, stating that they are against discrimination against Chinese, but are for affirmative action. On the other hand, other supporters stated that they are
against the use of race under any condition.

The reaction from the Left was harsh, with some activists chastising the Chinese for allowing themselves to be used by conservatives.

In the end, the Left argued, the ruling would eventually come back to hurt Asian Pacific Americans because it weakens the society's ability to redress racism. These varying interpretations point to a division within the Chinese public itself as evident in a 1998 CAVEC [Chinese American Voter Education Committee] survey of Chinese surname voters in San Francisco. When asked about their opinions on admission quotas for Lowell High School, 45 percent of the immigrant respondents thought it was a "bad idea," 32 percent thought it was a "good idea," while 23 percent expressed no opinion. The opposition is not surprising, but there is a surprising level of support from one-third of those interviewed. The long-term implication of the Lowell case is not known, but this controversy underscores the difficulty in decoupling Asian Pacific American concerns about restricted quotas from affirmative action.

The issues in the area of employment are far less controversial. Two types of affirmative-action programs are relevant, direct government hiring and indirect hiring by firms with government contracts. The indirect hiring is not the focus of this chapter, but the effects are worth noting. Firms with federal contractors are under an obligation to develop and implement recruitment and hiring plans when minorities are underrepresented in their labor force, and this obligation also applies to many firms with state and local contracts. Existing econometric analysis, which controls for observable firm characteristics, finds that this requirement has a statistically measurable impact.

African Americans have benefited, with their share of employment increasing by a tenth more in the federal contracts. Interestingly, the governmental requirement has the same impact on Asian Pacific Americans, with federal contracting increasing their share by a tenth. While the magnitude of the impacts is small, the findings indicate that affirmative action does open up employment opportunities.

An analysis of direct hiring by the public sector reveals several potential problems for Asian Pacific Americans. Table 4.1h reports the number of full-time workers based on EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission] data for firms with at least 100 employees, and for state and local gov-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All occupations</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian Pacific American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal executive branch</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials/management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal executive branch</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal executive branch</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 indirect hiring by
tricts. The indi-
is of this chapter, c- ting. Firms with
is an obligation
recruitment and
owledgeable firm
es are unrepren-
e and observable firm
,ties are underrepre-
ke this requirement
sizable impact.
; benefited, with
creasing by a
both federal govern-
 the private sector, but are underpre-
 and local government
ment is unclear why the latter
 may be due to state and local gov-
ments being less committed to recruit-
ing and hiring Asian Pacific Americans.
Moreover, there could be a spatial mis-
mismatch between where public sector jobs are
located and where Asian Pacific Americans
reside. Many state capitals are in cities with
relatively few Asian Pacific Americans.

Another problem is an unequal distribu-
tion of Asian Pacific Americans across occu-
pations within the public sector. Particularly troubling is the data indicating a glass
ceiling in government employment. The
underrepresentation is apparent whether the
Asian Pacific American share of all
employees or the Asian Pacific American
share of employees in professional occupations
is used as the benchmark. A parity index
using the former provides a conserva-
tive estimate, while a parity index using the
latter partially accounts for the higher edu-
cational level of Asian Pacific Americans. The
ratio ranges from about .5 to .3 depending
on which benchmark and which level of
government. Moreover, state-specific data
for combined state and local government
employment indicate that the problem is
present in regions with a significant pres-
ence of Asian Pacific Americans: .4 to .6 for
California, .5 to .9 for Florida, .3 to .8 for Illi-
nois, .3 to .6 for Massachusetts, .2 to .6 for
New Jersey, .4 to .8 for New York, .4 to .7 for
Texas, and .5 to .6 for Washington. While a
low index is not conclusive evidence of a
glass ceiling, it does suggest that Asian
Pacific Americans are having difficulties
moving into management.

Underrepresentation is not limited to
management. There are other occupational
niches, and one of the most glaring is pro-
tective services. The statistics in Table 4.11
show that Asian Pacific Americans com-
prise only 1 percent of state and local
employees in protective services, compared to
2.5 percent of the all states and local
employees, a ratio of .4. The lower the
index, the greater the underrepresentation.
The ratio is even lower in the public sector,
where Asian Pacific American profession-
als outnumber the Asian Pacific American
managers by three-to-one. The ratio is
particularly low for firefighters, but even for
police officers, Asian Pacific Americans are
below parity. The problem is present in the
regions with a significant presence of Asian
Pacific Americans, as indicated by the parity
ratio: .4 for California, .4 for Florida, .3
for Illinois, .4 for Massachusetts, .2 for New
Jersey, .2 for New York, .3 for Texas, and .6
for Washington.

The underrepresentation in occupa-
tional niches has been addressed through selective
action, often through court-imposed orders.
This is illustrated by the effort to address the
small number of Chinese in San Fran-
cisco’s fire department. In that city, the
Chinese have comprised an overwhelming
majority of the Asian Pacific American
population. During the mid-1960s when com-
unity leaders first raised the issue of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.11 Employment in Protective Services by Ethnicity, Full-Time</th>
<th>State and Local Employment (1997)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All occupations</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective services</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firefighters</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrections</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
underrepresentation, only six Chinese (and one black) were among approximately 1,600 firefighters, and that number remained essentially same for a decade. Under a 1974 court order to address this problem, the department was expected to increase the number of Asian Pacific American firefighters to nearly 200.

The one area where Asian Pacific Americans have been unambiguously included is in government contracting, particularly when federal funds are involved. This inclusion is based on the fact that Asian Pacific American firms are less likely to receive government contracts. The standard measure is the disparity index, which is a group's relative share of government contracts divided by that group's share of all businesses. For example, if group A has 10 percent of government contracts but comprises 20 percent of all businesses, then the disparity index is .50, indicating that this group is receiving only half of its "fair" share of government business. An analysis of public contracting in California reveals that Asian Pacific American firms are consistently underutilized by local governments. Even in San Francisco, where Asian Pacific Americans are the largest minority group, the disparity index for Asian Pacific American firms is .19. The problem is not unique to California. After reviewing a large number of disparity studies from throughout the nation, the Urban Institute finds that median value for Asian Pacific American-owned businesses is .19, which is lower than that for women-owned businesses (.26), Hispanic-owned businesses (.36), and black-owned businesses (.41). The low disparity index, along with the problems discussed earlier, has been the basis for including Asian Pacific American in government set-aside programs. This inclusion has continued after a review of federal contract set-aside, which is a part of President Clinton's "mend it, not end it" approach to affirmative action. The inclusion of Asian Pacific Americans poses an interesting question of what is the appropriate or desirable goal.

Asian Pacific Americans have taken advantage of this inclusion through participation in programs to promote minority (and women) contracting. At the national level, Asian Pacific American participation can be seen in the federal government's major effort to help minority firms, the 8(a) Program operated by the Small Business Administration. For the decade spanning the late 1980s to the late 1990s, Asian Pacific Americans increased their participation in both absolute and relative terms, as shown in Table 4.1. By the end of the twentieth century, they made up nearly a quarter of all 8(a) firms. Asian Pacific Americans are also participants at the state and local level. This can be seen in California's certification program for minority (and women) businesses, which is required to qualify for set-aside contracts. Both state and local agencies use the certification to determine eligibility. Asian Pacific American firms accounted for 29 percent of the state's certified minority businesses.

Although data are not readily available for other states, a review of the certification programs in the largest states show that Asian Pacific Americans are among the listed groups eligible for enrollment. Inclusion is driven by the fact that states are required to follow federal guidelines on these matters as a condition for receiving federal funds.

Beyond the active participation of Asian Pacific American entrepreneurs in minority set-aside programs, there is strong support within the Asian Pacific American communities for these programs. This can be seen in a survey conducted in Houston prior to the Proposition A vote. When asked if city government should set aside contracts for minority businesses, only a small minority of non-Hispanic whites (37 percent) approved, but a large majority of blacks (71 percent) approved. The percentage for Asian Pacific American approval falls between these two extremes, 61 percent, which is similar to that for Hispanics, 63 percent. Not all Asian Pacific Americans, however, support this type of affirmative action. Edward Chen was a plaintiff in a suit to overturn the results of the election, where a majority voted against the anti-affirmative action initiative.
s to promote minority enagagement. At the national American participation in the federal government's 8(a) minority firms, the 8(a) program by the Small Business for the decade spanning the late 1990s, Asian increased their participation and relative terms, as it. By the end of the two-made up nearly a quarter. Asian Pacific Americans at the state and local level are required to have certification to be eligible. Both state and federal guidelines require participation by Asian American businesses. 

The certification process for Asian Pacific Americans is much more difficult and costly compared to that for majority and minority business. Asian Pacific Americans are among the few who have to obtain a certification. The fact that states are required to certify Asian Pacific American firms at the federal level reduces the number of businesses that can participate in minority business programs. When asked if the city government was willing to support the certification process, only a small minority of Asian Pacific businesses (37 percent) approved of the process. 

The one event we can gauge to measure where most Asian Pacific Americans stand on affirmative action is the vote on the single most important initiative so far, California's 1996 Proposition 209, the so-called California Civil Rights Initiative. The result from a statewide exit poll conducted by the Los Angeles Times shows considerable racial variance. The strongest support came from whites (63 percent for), and strong opposition came from blacks (74 percent against). What is surprising is that three-quarters of Hispanics (76 percent) also were against the proposition. 

The poll also found that a majority of Asian Pacific Americans (61 percent) voted against the proposition; however, the estimate is based on a small number of responses. Two more specialized exit polls in neighborhoods with high concentrations of Asian Pacific Americans also found that a majority, and in fact a large majority, of Asian Pacific Americans voted against the proposition. In Southern California, 76 percent of Asian Pacific Americans voted against 209, and this opposition crossed party lines (78 percent of Asian Pacific American Democrats and 73 percent of Asian Pacific American Republicans). In the San Francisco Bay Area, a similar percentage of Asian Pacific Americans voted against 209 (80 percent), and again the opposition crossed party lines (86 percent of Asian Pacific American Democrats and 63 percent of Asian Pacific American Republicans).

Analyzing one election, however, is not sufficient to discern the dominant Asian Pacific American political position. The Asian Pacific American population is very heterogeneous, and competing factors come into play. The extreme economic and ethnic diversity of this population is very well documented. The Asian Pacific American population is also diverse in its politics, as indicated by party registration data. The emergence of naturalized immigrants as a majority of Asian Pacific American voters further complicates the picture. Many of these new voters are still in the process of formulating opinions on domestic issues such as affirmative action. Their attitudes are fluid, as continued exposure to American society shapes and reshapes their opinions.

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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Pacific American</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>All others</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>N=</td>
<td>14,234</td>
<td>20,756</td>
<td>23,461</td>
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Source: Unpublished data provided by Small Business Administration.
The Asian Pacific American political position remains elusive and is up for grabs.

CONCLUSION—WHAT NEXT?

This nation is at a crucial juncture in addressing racial inequality, with affirmative action as the primary battleground. In a larger political and historical context, the heated and nasty debate marks a dramatic reversal in the search for a solution. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s transformed the state from one either supporting or turning a blind eye to racism to one attacking racial injustice, at least in its most blatant forms. Legislation was passed to protect voting rights, desegregate housing and employment discrimination, integrate schools and other public facilities, and fight inner-city poverty. One can cynically point out that the elected officials had to be pressured into enacting these laws, that programs were efforts to prevent escalating social unrest, and that implementation was half-hearted. Such a dismissive view, however, too easily denies the hard-earned victories, the progressive policies and programs. The accomplishments should not be judged by a failure to achieve utopia, but gains made in the face of resistance. At the close of the twentieth century, racial politics in America has taken a turn against race-based policies. Those opposed to the civil rights agenda have found an effective weapon by hijacking the principle of fairness to attack the most controversial policy, affirmative action. This counterinsurgency has mobilized the mainstream by arguing that the policy is contrary to civil rights principles and constitutional protections. Of course, the idea that race-based laws and programs violate the rights of some (particularly white males) by giving “unfair” preferences to others (primarily minorities) is not new. That assertion has been at the heart of numerous court cases. What is different is an acceptance of this argument by many mainstream politicians and a significant share of the voting public. The battle, however, is far from over.

Asian Pacific Americans occupy a unique position in the political debate because they occupy an ambiguous position within the racial structure. Their presence complicates issues regarding the application of and fundamental justification for affirmative action. On the other hand, resolving these complications can help reformulate a sounder policy. Asian Pacific American concerns cannot be easily pushed aside or folded into a simple black and white framework. Their educational and economic successes preclude them from being classified simply as another disadvantaged minority equivalent to blacks. At the same time, the Asian Pacific American population cannot be simply lumped in with the dominant white population. The social construction of this population as a racial minority is rooted in a long history of anti-Asian racism and reproduced by contemporary anti-Asian prejudices. Some may want to ignore Asian Pacific Americans by asserting that they are a small population. This was true for most of the century, but less so today. Asian Pacific Americans now constitute about 4 percent of the population, and will constitute about 6 percent within a generation. While it is important to note that Asian Pacific Americans cannot be dismissed numerically, it is at least as important to note that the impact of Asian Pacific Americans on race-related policies has not rested on population size. Historically, this group profoundly shaped race relations through the laws enacted against them and the legislative and court victories won by them. Within the contemporary battle over affirmative action, Asian Pacific Americans make two important contributions.

The first is in the realm of symbolic politics. There are those who point to Asian Pacific Americans as a minority group that has experienced historic discrimination, but nonetheless have been able to overcome obstacles without governmental intervention. This “model minority myth” is used to shift the responsibility of closing the racial gap from the larger society to minorities. If one group can do it, so can the others. Some want Asian Pacific Americans...
to go beyond being a passive model to being spokespersons against affirmative action to fight reverse discrimination against Asian Pacific Americans. This political strategy rests too much on appealing to self-interest and fails to recognize that many Asian Pacific Americans accept the necessity to collectively address racial inequality. As the chapter by Taeku Lee shows, the majority of Asian Pacific Americans believe that blacks, and Hispanics to a lesser degree, suffer from discrimination. This translates into support for some race-based policies. In a 1996 national survey, a majority of Asian Pacific American respondents agreed with the following statement: “White Americans have benefited from past and present discrimination against African Americans, so they should be willing to make up for these wrongs.” According to a 1996 survey sponsored by *Asian Week*, slightly more than half of the respondents supported affirmative action and a third opposed it. This shows that many Asian Pacific Americans are driven by a broader sense of this country’s obligation.

On the other hand, proponents of race-based programs believe that Asian Pacific Americans can take an equally powerful stance. Liberals want Asian Pacific Americans to be a role model in accepting the sacrifices needed to achieve racial justice. An example of this is the statement by several law professors who support affirmative action. They argue that “Asian Pacific Americans can play an extraordinarily powerful role in the debate because they can declare their support for the programs even when they are not directly-benefited by them. I am willing to share this burden to help us get beyond racism, to reach a fairer society. I am willing to go beyond my self-interest in order to strive for a community of justice.” This call for noble and principled action has great moral appeal, but it minimizes Asian Pacific Americans’ legitimate self-interest in the affirmative-action debate. Indeed, within our society, where the pursuit of self-interest is the norm, acknowledging the special needs of Asian Pacific Americans can move the debate forward, if for no other reason than to challenge prevailing ideas.

There are three challenges. The first questions the notions of the primacy of race.

Asian Pacific Americans are a racial minority, but they are not automatically included in affirmative action programs. As we have seen, inclusion into any particular program (covering higher education, public employment, or government contracting) is predicated on whether Asian Pacific Americans are demonstrably disadvantaged. This practice shows that affirmative action as an institution is flexible and reasonable in its application to Asian Pacific Americans. The policy is not, as opponents suggest, blindly wedded to a simplistic application of race. Unfortunately, the treatment of Asian Pacific Americans has been ad hoc rather than based on a well-articulated principle. Such a principle does not preclude a single race from being included in all affirmative action programs when the evidence justifies such a decision, but this result is the product of applying the principle rather than an a priori categorization. Even if the final outcome of starting with this principle may not differ much from what currently exists, the exercise is politically important because it provides the justification that many voters want before they support affirmative action.

The second challenge centers on the types of race-related problems that government should correct. Affirmative action was developed to counter the racism experienced by African Americans in the 1960s; however, the problems confronting other minorities are not of the same nature. This chapter has documented that the disadvantages faced by Asian Pacific Americans are different, with many of the problems rooted in the immigrant experience. Hispanics and Native Americans also face hardships that are generated by disparate historic and contemporary forces. While socioeconomic injustice is a necessary common denominator for governmental action, programs should be tailored to address the underlying race-specific causes.
The final challenge is to debate openly the sacrifices that must be made to achieve racial justice. Proponents of affirmative action are uncomfortable with such a discussion because it shifts the discussion away from the disadvantaged and potentially legitimizes the claim that whites must give up some opportunities. Yet, as we have seen, this point has been and will be an unavoidable element in the debate. An enlightened and socially productive debate requires that both sides engage the issues rather than having one side frame the issue through polemics. For better or worse, Asian Pacific Americans are a part of the debate on the cost of affirmative action, as well as the broader debate on race-based policies.

NOTES


5. This was a part of his famous 1965 speech at Howard University, where he argued for affirmative action: "You do not take a person who has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him up to the starting gate of a race and then say, "You are free to compete with all the others,' and still justly believe you have been completely fair . . . . It is not enough to open the gates of opportunity. All of our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates . . . . Men and women of all races are born with the same range of abilities. But ability is not just the product of birth. Ability is stretched or stunted by the family you live with, the neighborhood . . . the school . . . and the poverty or richness of your surroundings. It is the product of a hundred unseen forces playing upon the infant, the child, and the man." (Stephanopoulos and Edley, Affirmative Action Review, 115).


7. Most of the early rulings reaffirmed the legality of anti-discriminatory laws in employment. The Supreme Court ruled that firms could not use employment tests that are not job related and have a disparate impact on protected groups, and that employers must have some legitimate nondiscriminatory business reason for rejecting minority applicants. Griggs v. Duke Power Co. (1971), McDonnell Douglas v. Green (1973), Albermarle Paper Co. v. Moody (1975), and Washington v. Davis (1976).
t of his famous 1965

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13. "The state shall not discriminate against,
or grant preferential treatment to, any individual
or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity,
or national origin in the operation of pub-

14. American Civil Rights Coalition, "Con-
erly Welcomes John Carlson to Washington
State Civil Rights Initiative," October 9, 1997,
www.aocr.com/pr100997.html.

15. Franklin Foer, "Brother Jeb's Move to
End Affirmative Action, Florida's Bush Says
Class Rank Works Better," U.S. News and
World Report, November 22, 1999: 31;
William March, "Affirmative Action Battle
Rears Back to Life," The Tampa Tribune,
November 16, 1999; http://tampatrib.com/
fr111613.htm. For a discussion on the limits
of class-based programs, see Cecilia A. Conrad,
"Affirmative Action and Admission to the Uni-
versity of California," in Paul M. Ong, ed.,
Impacts of Affirmative Action: Policies and
Consequences in California (Walnut Creek,
Calif.: AltaMira Press, 1999) 171-96.

16. Tom Smith, "Intergroup Relations in
Contemporary America: An Overview of Survey
Research," in Wayne Winborne and Renee
Cohen, eds. Intergroup Relations in the United
States: Research Perspectives (Bloomington,
Ind.: Hackett, 1998) 151.

17. Lawrence Bobo and Ryan Smith. "Anti-
Poverty Policy, Affirmative Action, and Racial
Attitudes," in S. Danziger, G. Sandefur, and
D. Weinberg, eds. Confronting Poverty: Pre-
scriptions for Change (New York: Russell Sage
Foundation, and Cambridge: Harvard Univer-
sity Press, 1994) 365-95; Dan Morain, "The
Times Poll: 60% of State's Voters Say They Back
Prop. 209," Los Angeles Times, September 19,

18. Tom Smith, "Intergroup Relations in
Contemporary America: An Overview of Survey
Research," in Wayne Winborne and Renee
Cohen, eds. Intergroup Relations in the United
States: Research Perspectives (Bloomington,
Ind.: Hackett, 1998) 144.

19. University of Houston Center for Pub-
lic Policy and Rice University's Baker Institute


21. For this chapter, the term whites refers to the non-Hispanic white population. The broader white category includes a significant number of Hispanics who identify themselves as whites on race questions. However, Hispanic whites occupy a socioeconomic position that is very different than that for non-Hispanic whites; consequently, statistics for all whites differ from those for just non-Hispanic whites. For the purpose of this chapter, non-Hispanic whites are used as a benchmark to determine the relative standing of minority groups. For convenience, the chapter uses the terms whites and non-Hispanic whites interchangeably. This chapter does not include Native Americans because the sample size is too small in many of the data sets; nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that this group is extremely disadvantaged.

22. Data are the 1996 results for the fourth and eleventh grades for the Stanford 9 test as reported by the California Department of Education’s STAR database at http://star.cde.ca.gov. The test data are merged with data on the racial/ethnic composition for each school from the same source. The ranking of elementary schools is based on a combined score using results reading, math, language, and spelling. The eleventh grade ranking is based on scores for reading, math, science, and social science tests. We use the percent of the student body that scored at or above the 75th percentile. The composite score may not accurately represent the true performance level of California students; California elementary students may truly be performing at less than the national average or perhaps the benchmark level is improperly set. Nevertheless, the data does provide a useful way to rank the relative performance of elementary schools. The original eleventh grade study used results from reading, math, science, and social science tests.

23. The statistics for tables 4.1b, 4.1c, and 4.1d come from a tabulation by the author of the March Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a national monthly survey of about 60,000 households, and is used to collect information on labor market conditions, particularly the unemployment rate. The March survey, which produces the Annual Demographic Profile, contains extensive information on current (contemporaneous) status along with work experiences and earnings for the previous year. Since 1989, the CPS has included Asian Pacific Americans as a separate racial category. The surveys for 1997, 1998, and 1999 were pooled to derive a reasonable sample of Asian Pacific Americans. The size of the sample varies according to the needs of a particular analysis. For example, the sample used to calculate wages for the foreign-born, prime-working-age population includes about 3,600 Asian Pacific Americans. The actual number of unique individuals is slightly more than two-thirds of the sample size because the CPS retains a proportion of the March sample over a two-year period. Income data are adjusted to 1998 dollars, and the reported statistics on earnings and hourly wages are the weighted average for the three years (1996, 1997, and 1998). Statistics on the labor market status (e.g., labor force participation rates) are for the survey week.


25. SAT Chart 13: Within racial/ethnic groups, first language is related to SAT Verbal scores.


29. For a discussion of this issue and a summary of the literature on Asian Pacific
THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DIVIDE

monthly survey of about 100 is used to collect market conditions, participation rate. The March
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/senior98/html/sat3.html:
/Within" racial/ethnic
is related to SAT Verbal

Eligibility Rates of 1996
graduates at the University:
http://www.collegeboard
/m/sat3.html.

9: Percentages of
large cities and sub-
title: www.collegeboard
/ml/sat3.html.

, oke.harvard.edu/factbook/
dord/facts/undergraduate-
three; ose.berkeley.edu/pub-
lications/ugug96.html;
www.umich.edu/race.

ion of this issue and a
nature on Asian Paci
American students, see Paul M. Ong and Linda
C. Wong, "The Social Contract to Educate All
Children," in Bill O. Hing and Ronald Le, eds.,
Refining the Immigration Debate (Los Ange-
elas: LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy
Institute and UCLA Asian American Studies


32. It is difficult to document many acts of prejudices because they are not conducted openly; nonetheless, there is certainly indirect evidence. This includes stories passed along by those privy to these closed discussions where Asian Pacific Americans are not present. The author has received information
from white colleagues who were disturbed by discussions among white administrators about their concerns about and desire to minimize the overrepresentation of Asian Pacific Americans.


34. This does not take into account those outside the labor market because they have become discouraged workers. This is a particular problem among black males.

35. Multivariate methods are used to estimate the independent sources of the earnings inequality. Linear regressions are used, with the log of total wages and salaries as the dependent variable. The independent (causal) factors include type of credential (bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees), nativity (U.S.-born and foreign-born), age, and race (Asian Pacific American and white). The sample is restricted to those between the ages of twenty-four and sixty-four, working full-time (thirty-five or more hours a week) and year-round (fifty or more weeks a year), holding at least a bachelor's degree, and classified as an employee (i.e., not self-employed). Moreover, immigrants are divided into recent and established immigrants (those in the country approximately less than twelve years and those in the country approximately twelve years or more). For the analysis, the earnings of U.S.-born white males is the ultimate benchmark. The impact of the independent variables is calculated using the exponential function on the estimated coefficients.


38. To estimate the effects of ethnicity and nativity, logit regressions with the same college/university educated sample are used in the
analysis of the probability of being in management for Asian Pacific Americans and whites working full-time and year-round and between the ages of twenty-four and sixty-four.

39. Total earnings include wages and salaries, self-employment income, and farm income. Wages and salaries are included because many of the firms are incorporated with the owners paid a salary.


41. Even more interesting is the potential impact of alternative schemes to increase disadvantaged groups. For example, giving preference based on class rather than race (that is, giving greater weight to those from low-income families) would increase the admission rate for Asian Pacific Americans but not for other racial minorities. This not only shows the inadequacy of class-based programs to replace race-based programs in promoting admissions for underrepresented minorities, but also reveals the unique position of the Asian Pacific American population, which has a disproportionate number of poor families despite a high average income for the total population.


42. “APA Agenda: Asian Americans on the Issues,” Asian Week, August 23–29, 1996: 14–17. For that specific item, 54 percent of the respondents supported the statement, 34 percent opposed, and 12 percent had no opinion.


44. See the results from the Los Angeles Times Poll #318. Respondents were given this question: “As you may know, Asians make up about 10 percent of California’s population but they comprise about 28 percent of the students in the University of California system. Which of these statements comes closer to your view about that: ‘If Asians are better qualified, more of them should be admitted to college than others’ or ‘Despite qualifications, the racial makeup in colleges should generally mirror the population as a whole.’” 65 percent of Asian Pacific Americans selected the first statement, compared to 42 percent of blacks, 37 percent of Latinos, and 58 percent whites.


form the Los Angeles pondsents were given u may know, Asians ercent of California’s impress about 28 per- the University of Cali- of these statements view about that: ‘If lied, more of them college than others.’ or , the racial makeup in illy mirror the popular- ercent of Asian Pacific a first statement, com- blacks, 37 percent of it whites.


50. In 1996, SFUSD modified the admission process for Lowell: "The new admissions policy prescribes that 80 percent of the freshmen are to be admitted under one cut-off score computed strictly according to their composite score, which is based on their middle school GPA and CTBS percentile ranking. The remaining 20 percent of the freshmen are selected from a pool of "value-added" applicants who are given extra points if they produce evidence that meets additional criteria, e.g., took honors courses in middle school, lived in public housing, were eligible for the federal lunch program, participated in extra curricular activities, had parents who did not graduate from high school, etc." www.sfusd .k12.ca.us/schwww/sch697/about/policy/ admissions.html. This new process, however, did not directly address the issue of a cap on enrollment. The use of race has remained unresolved. Ryan Kim, "Poe Blasts School's New Admission Plan," San Francisco Chronicle, November 25, 1999: A1 and A9.


53. The literature indicates that Asian Pacific Americans in the public sector earn less and hold lower positions than whites after con- trolling for personal characteristics. A summary can be found in M. V. Lee Badgett, "The Impact of Affirmative Action on Public-Sector Employment," in Paul M. Ong, ed., Impacts of Affirmative Action: Policies and Consequences in California (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 1999) 83-102. Her own analysis shows that in 1990 Asian Pacific Americans in government, and male Asian Pacific Americans in particular, are less likely to hold a managerial or professional job than whites; however, the gap is even greater in the private sector.

54. The precise occupational definitions in table 4.1b are not the same as the CPS-based definitions used in the analysis in the previous section of this chapter, which is based on the Current Population Survey. Nonetheless, the relative distributions are similar. For example, both the EEOC and CPS data show that Asian Pacific Americans in the private sector are only half as likely to be in a management position as in a professional occupation.

55. Because Asian Pacific Americans are better educated, one would expect a proportionately higher share of the management position, but the detail data are not available to estimate what the share should be. However, the multivariately the analysis in the previous section indicates that Asian Pacific Americans have reached parity with whites in the professional categories, after accounting for age, educational credentials, and nativity. In other words, the observed Asian Pacific American share of professional jobs is in line with what we expect after taking into account background characteristics. Given that management is also a high-status occupation, we would expect Asian Pacific American share of management position to be roughly equal to that in the professions. In other words, if Asian Pacific Americans hold 7 percent of professional jobs, then we would expect Asian Pacific Americans to hold 7 percent of management jobs given their higher education. The lower the index, the greater the underrepresentation.


59. The extremely low parity index for Asian Pacific Americans is due in part to the higher level of entrepreneurship of Asian Pacific Americans compared to other minority groups. If the population is used as the numerator to construct a parity index, then the results would show that Asian Pacific Americans fare better than other minorities, although still not as well as whites. This change in the rank order reveals the limitations of such simple measures.


61. The purpose and objective of the 8(a) program is to assist socially and economically disadvantaged individuals to participate fully and successfully in the business mainstream of the American economy. This goal is accomplished through the expansion of businesses owned by program participants, which, in turn, generates societal benefits through the creation of jobs and wealth. Program participants receive multiyear business development assistance. Because of the selection rules and the underlying composition of disadvantaged firms, the participants in the 8(a) program are predominantly minority, and this is particularly true in the early years.

62. Tabulation by author of California Certification Information System (Calcert) 1999 database, California Department of Transportation.


65. There is no equivalent exit poll on Asian Pacific Americans for Houston’s Proposition A or Washington State’s Initiative 200, but there is some indirect information. An inspection of the votes by precinct in King County, which includes Seattle, reveals that most of the predominantly Asian Pacific American neighborhoods (by block groups) coincide with precincts where voters overwhelmingly (75 percent or more) voted against the initiative. www.seattletimes.com/news/local/charts/votecd98/1200county.html, and www.seattletimes.com/news/local/charts/chartvote98/1200race.html.


67. A part of the explanation might be that this group had been sensitized to the necessity to fight wedge issues sponsored by conservatives. In 1994, the state passed Proposition 187, an initiative designed to prevent undocumented aliens from public services but also had a strong anti-immigrant undertone. Los Angeles Times, November 10, 1994: B4.


71. Grant Din, “An Analysis of Asian Pacific American Registration and Voting Pat


73. Post/Kaiser/Harvard Race Poll, 1995. Respondents were asked to choose which of the following two statements represents their opinion: "White Americans have benefited from past and present discrimination against African Americans, so they should be willing to make up for these wrongs" or "Most white Americans have not benefited from past and present discrimination against African Americans/Hispanic Americans/Asian Americans, so they have no responsibility to make up for these wrongs." Forty-six percent of Asian Pacific American respondents selected the first statement when applied to Hispanics or Asian Pacific Americans.
