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Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/984981w2>

Journal

AAPI Nexus: Policy, Practice and Community, 14(1)

ISSN

1545-0317

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Publication Date

2016

DOI

10.17953/nx.014.01.78

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Practitioners Essay

Asian American Workers and Unions: Current and Future Opportunities for Organizing Asian American and Pacific Islander Workers

Johanna Hester, Kim Geron,
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Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to explore the current and future potential for engaging Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in the labor movement by 2040. Because of the limitations of the data and the scope of the projections, we initially analyze Asian American participation in the labor market, so we can later discuss our vision and trajectory for engaging AAPI workers in the labor movement by 2040.

Introduction

Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial population in America and the fastest-growing racial segment of America's labor market. Asian Americans have played, and will continue to play, an increasingly vital role in the U.S. economy and in organized labor.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Asian American civil labor force grew 61 percent, from 5.5 million to 8.8 million between 1994 and 2014. Over the next decade, it is projected to grow another 23 percent, to 10.8 million, by 2024 and even higher by 2040. By 2024, the Asian American civil labor force will comprise 6.6 percent of America's workforce, up from 4.2 percent in 1994 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). It is anticipated that the proportion of Asian Americans in the labor market will be even higher by 2040.

Overall, Asian American workers appear to be doing relatively well compared to non-Hispanic whites (NHWs). However, ample statistical averages mask significant internal differences. The Asian American labor market is bifurcated—Asian American workers are overrepresented at the lower and the higher ends of the labor market. There has also

been a rise in the distribution of Asian Americans in the labor market. Disparities in human capital (e.g., education and language ability) and the gender gap contribute to the relative earnings inequality.

Unions play a critically important role in giving workers a collective voice when it comes to negotiating compensation, benefits, and employment conditions. Unions are effective in mitigating downward pressure on wages and creating a more leveled playing field. Union membership is attractive to workers who would like an organization to represent, voice, and negotiate their interests.

Throughout the course of history, unions have not always had an amicable relationship with Asian Americans because new Asian immigrants have been hired to break labor strikes as scab labor. Also, anti-Asian union leaders racialized economic fears by white workers.¹ Over time, this relationship has changed because of the growth of Asian Americans in industries targeted by unions. Since the 1990s, Asian Americans played a more significant leadership role, and the absolute and relative size of Asian American union membership has increased, amidst an overall decline in unionism. In fact, between 2003 and 2009, Asian American workers were among the fastest-growing racial group in the union workforce (Rho et al, 2011). The increase is also related to two other factors: first, a shift in AFL-CIO policy to support concerted efforts to organized immigrant labor regardless of legal status and, second, ethnic mobilization and activism within the Asian American and Latino communities.

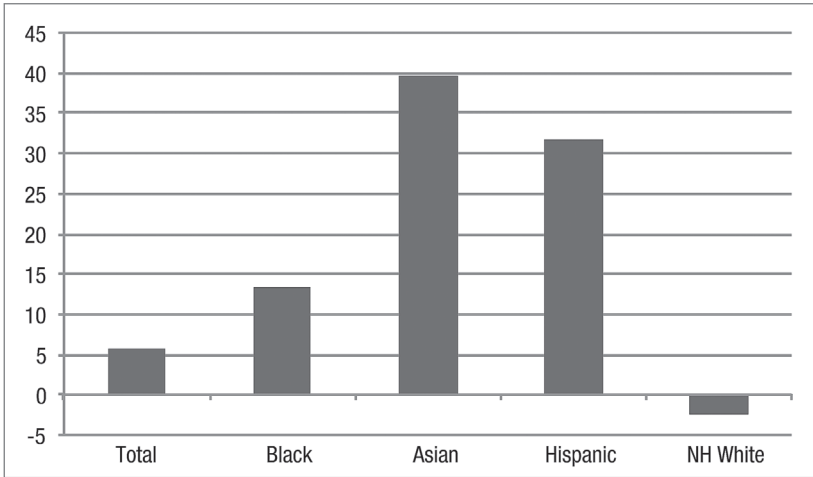
Despite these gains more could be done because, in recent years, the nonunionized segment of the Asian American labor force has grown faster than the unionized segment. As we look toward the future, unions could take a number of actions to increase financial benefits, security, and labor wins that could further increase, empower, and embolden Asian American union participation.

Current Status

Over the last decade, Asian Americans have become an increasingly important component of the U.S. labor force. Just like the overall rapid growth of the Asian American population, the Asian American labor force has grown extremely fast, faster than any other major racial group (see Figure 1). Between 2004 and 2014, the nation's labor force grew by 5.8 percent. While the number of NHW workers declined by 2.5 percent, there was a 13.4 percent growth among African Americans, a 31.6 percent growth among Hispanics, and a 39.7 percent growth among

Asian Americans. Because of the differential growth, Asian Americans increased from 4.3 percent to 5.6 percent of the labor force. Even more remarkable is the fact that Asian Americans accounted for more than a quarter (29 percent) of the net increase in the U.S. labor force.

Figure 1. Growth Rate of Labor Force: 2004–14



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015

Table 1. Labor Market Status of Asian Americans, 2011–13

United States	Asian American	NH White
<i>Labor Market Indicators</i>		
Civilian Labor Force Participation	65.1%	62.9%
Unemployment	7.1%	7.6%
<i>Selected Occupations</i>		
Management, Business, etc.	49.3%	40.4%
Sales, Office, etc.	20.7%	25.0%
<i>FT/FY Earnings</i>		
With FT/FY Employment	71.4%	70.1%
Mean Amount (weighted average)	\$69,265	\$64,077

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2011–13 American Community Survey

Table 1 compares the labor market status of Asian Americans (alone and mixed race) relative to NHWs using standard indicators.² Table 1 suggests that Asian Americans are doing better than their NHW counterparts. It suggests that Asian Americans have higher participa-

tion rates and lower joblessness, and are more likely to be in managerial occupations. It suggests that Asian Americans are more likely to be fully employed and earn more, although this is partly offset by their disproportionate concentration in high-cost, large metropolitan areas (e.g., the San Francisco Bay Area, Southern California, Honolulu, New York City, and Seattle). Many of these labor market outcomes may be due to higher educational attainment (more than half of Asian American adults have at least a bachelor's degree, compared with about a third for NHW adults). In addition, higher education among Asian Americans is rooted in the biases in immigration policies and regulations that favor the highly skilled workers and their relatives.

Economic Disparities

Looking at the aggregate statistics paints a portrait of Asian Americans as a model minority—financially secure and economically mobile. In order to capture the barriers facing this group, as well as vast distinctions among them, it is important to disaggregate the data. Once we do, we find that Asian American workers continue to face discrimination despite their educational achievements. “Asians earn less than white Americans who are similar in terms of education level, work experience, geographical distribution and other characteristics” compared with foreign-born Asians who are more likely to face discrimination and wage gaps because of their race than U.S.-born (Kim, 2011, 63). The existence of a bamboo ceiling for Asian Americans is also well documented. While Asian Americans are able to obtain professional jobs because of their higher education levels, they are less likely than white Americans to advance to higher-level management positions (Kim and Mar, 2007). As one study found, when controlling for field of study, college type, region of residence, and other demographic variables, Asian American “college educated women suffer some kind of disadvantage, regardless of their nativity and immigration status” with Asian immigrants without U.S. educational credentials suffering the most (Kim and Zhao, 2014, p. 642).

The “model minority” stereotype also fails to capture the heterogeneity in employment outcomes, which are driven by differences in human capital and circumstances (see Table 2). Immigrants comprise a large majority of the Asian American working-age population, so employment outcomes are also related to English language ability, cultural barriers, and years in the United States. Many political refugees from war-torn countries also face additional hurdles in the form of posttraumatic stress disorder. Asian Americans are only a third as likely to be

U.S.-born, and, among the foreign-born, Asian Americans are more likely to be newer immigrants. Asian Americans are also twenty times more likely to not speak English well. While Asian Americans are more likely to have a college degree, they are also more likely to not have a high school degree.

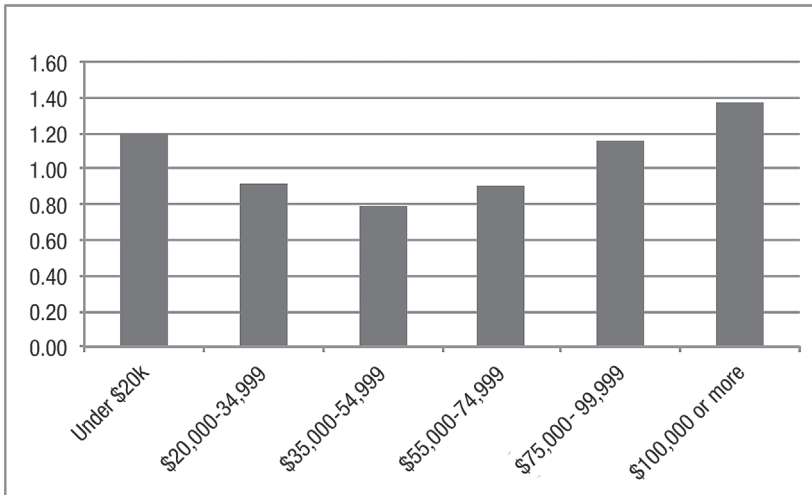
Table 2. Human Capital Indicators

	Asian American	NH White
<i>Nativity</i>		
% U.S.-Born Among Immigrants	33.6%	96.1%
% Established Immigrants (arrived pre-2000)	59.9%	69.2%
% Newer Immigrants (arrived 2000 and after)	40.1%	30.8%
<i>English Language Ability</i>		
% Less Than Well	35.1%	1.6%
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
% with Less Than High School	14.3%	8.6%
% with Bachelor's or Higher	50.7%	32.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2011–13 American Community Survey

There is a relatively higher degree of inequality among Asian American workers relative to NHW men. This can be seen in Figure 2, which compares relative distributions for full-time and full-year (FT / FY) workers.

Figure 2. Asian-to-White Earnings Ratio



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, 2011–13 American Community Survey

The points on the graph are parity indices that report whether Asian Americans are underrepresented (value less than 1) or overrepresented (value greater than 1) for each of the FT/FY earnings categories. Asian Americans are overrepresented among the lowest earners (under \$20,000 per year). Asian American women are underrepresented among those in the two highest earnings ranges. The overall results illustrate that Asian American workers are relatively bifurcated, overrepresented at both the top and bottom end.

Income heterogeneity is correlated with ethnicity. There are systematic differences in human capital and other factors discussed earlier. In 2008–10, 52 percent of Asian Americans who were twenty-five years of age and older had a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to just 29 percent of non-Asians. Of the Asian groups, Asian Indians had the highest rate with 75 percent, followed by Koreans with 56.3 percent, then Chinese with 53.4 percent having achieved a bachelor’s degree or higher (Allard, 2011). In contrast, only about 30 percent of Vietnamese Americans earned this level of education.

Table 3 provides additional information on the ethnic disparities along key factors that affect labor market outcomes. Not surprisingly, immigrants and those with limited English language ability comprise a disproportionately higher share of the groups with less education. The Southeast Asian refugee populations are particularly disadvantaged.

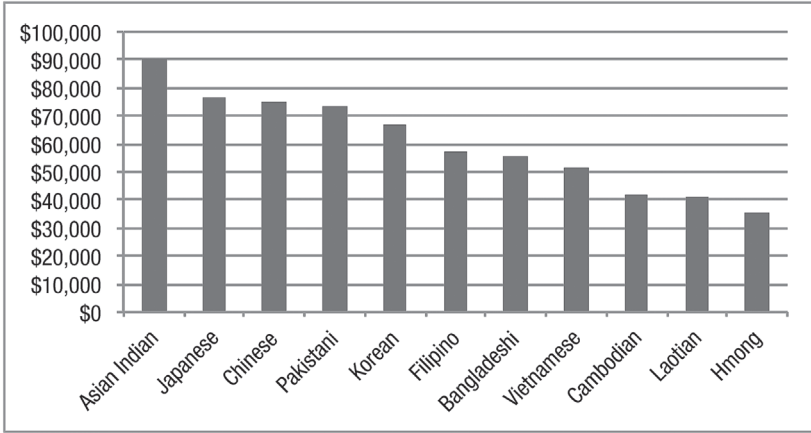
Table 3. Asian Ethnic Differences

	% Foreign-born	% Speak English Less Than “Very Well”	% with Less Than High School Diploma	% with Bachelor’s or Higher
Asian Indian	71.3%	20.9%	8.4%	72.1%
Bangladeshi	73.6%	44.5%	16.8%	48.2%
Cambodian	58.6%	41.3%	35.2%	15.2%
Chinese	69.2%	45.9%	18.4%	52.8%
Filipino	65.8%	22.4%	7.5%	48.0%
Hmong	39.9%	38.1%	32.8%	15.6%
Japanese	39.4%	23.0%	4.9%	48.6%
Korean	73.2%	43.7%	7.7%	53.5%
Laotian	57.3%	39.2%	31.2%	12.3%
Pakistani	65.8%	27.7%	12.9%	54.2%
Vietnamese	67.3%	52.1%	28.9%	26.3%

Source: Compiled by Paul Ong, 2011–13 American Community Survey

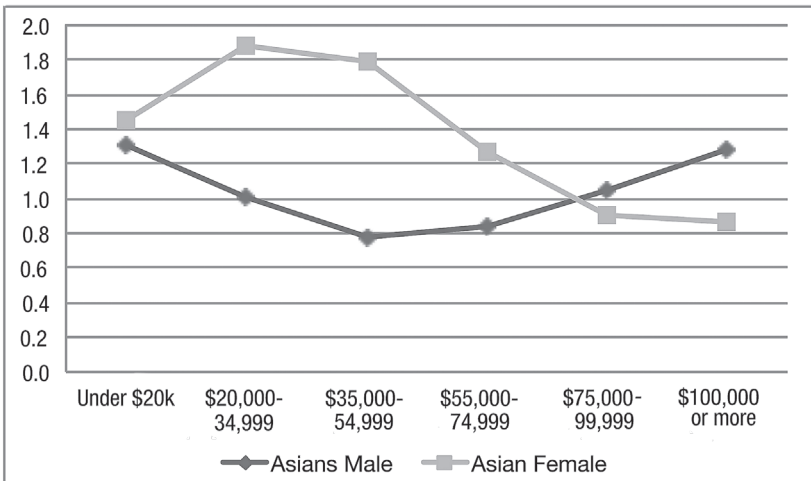
The economic consequences of these systematic ethnic differences are evident in Figure 3. The group with the lowest annual mean FT/FY earnings earned only forty cents for every dollar earned by the group with the highest annual mean earnings.

Figure 3. 2011–13 FT/FY Annual Mean Earnings



Source: Compiled by Paul Ong, 2011–13 American Community Survey

Figure 4. 2011–13 Parity Index, Relative to Non-Hispanic White Men



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011–13

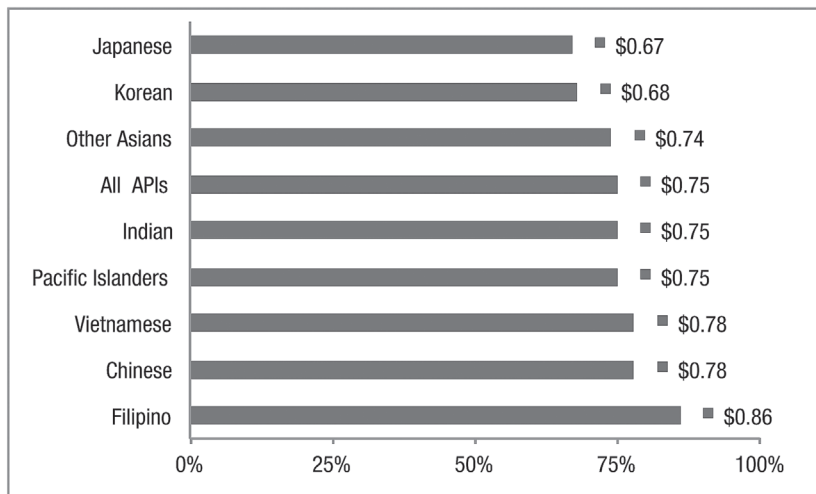
Comparing averages, as noted before, obscures within-group heterogeneity, and this is true in the case of the impact of gender and race.

Figure 4 reanalyzes the parity analysis discussed earlier, this time by gender. Relative to NHW men, both Asian American men and women are overrepresented among the lowest earners (less than \$20,000 per year), as well as the next two categories. In contrast, while Asian men are overrepresented in the two highest earnings ranges, Asian women are underrepresented in these ranges. Overall, the results reveal that Asian American women fare worse than Asian American men, in part due to gender discrimination and inequality. Thus, gender also matters.

Gender

Men have higher labor force participation rates. But, Asian women are twice as likely to work part-time (21 percent vs. 10 percent) (Allard, 2011, 11). Similarly, while Asian men and women have similar rates in the management business occupations and educational attainment, women earn less. The median FT/FY earnings for Asian American women is only 80.4 percent of the median FT/FY earnings for Asian American men. Figure 5 illustrates that Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women earn 75 percent of what AAPI men earn (Shiu, 2014).

Figure 5. Women's Pay Gap by Race and Ethnicity (weekly earnings of women as percent of men of same race)



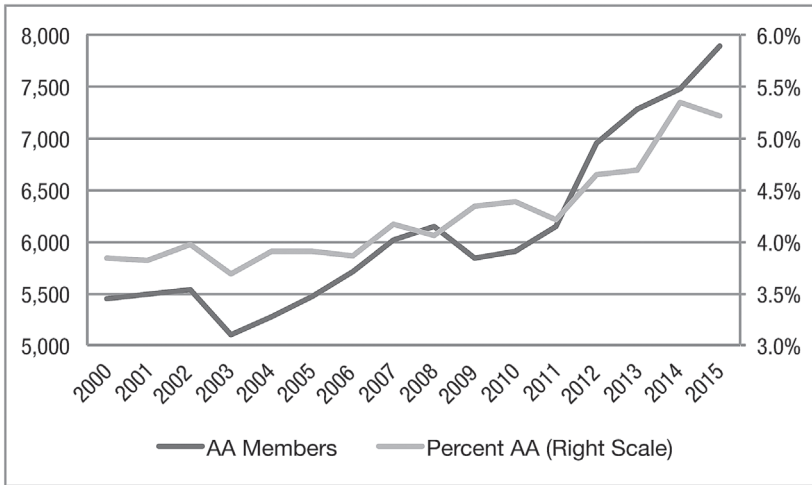
Source: Council of Economic Advisors, calculations from Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Current Population Survey

Asian American Unionism

Over the last fifteen to twenty-five years, the absolute and rela-

tive Asian American union membership has increased, partially offsetting an overall decline in unionism (see Figure 5 and also Schmitt and Warner, 2010; Schmitt, Rho, and Woo, 2011). During this time period, Asian American union membership increased 45 percent from 545,000 in 2000 to 788,000 by 2015, while total union membership declined by 9.4 percent, from 16.3 million to 14.8 million. At the same time, Asian Americans became a growing proportion of unionized workers, rising from 3 percent of all union workers in 1989 to 5 percent in 2009. Asian Americans are concentrated in sectors, such as the public sector, which has a 35.2 percent unionization rate (Buckner, 2016). Also, as illustrated in Figure 6, and as discussed previously, Asian American numbers have grown in the workforce, which has led to a growth in their union density.

Figure 6. Union Membership

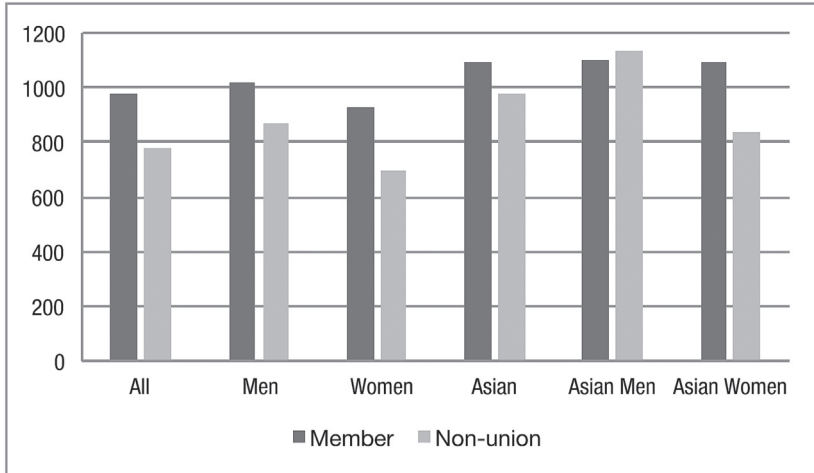


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000–15

Union membership increases wages and benefits. Among Asian American workers with similar age, gender, education, location, and industry, union membership increases wages and benefits, particularly among the lowest paid workers. As illustrated in Figure 7, Asian American wage earners in jobs with union contracts earn 14 percent more than nonunion workers. Among the fifteen lowest paid occupations, unionized workers earned 20 percent more than Asian American workers in similar nonunionized jobs and are more likely to have health insurance benefits and a retirement plan (Schmitt, Rho, and Woo, 2011). Many of these benefits were at risk in 2015 when both public- and private-sector

employers sought to reduce labor costs. That is why it was essential for unionized workers to defend worker's rights and be unified in the effort to raise the minimum wage to \$15 in 2015. Unionized Asian American workers were more likely to have health insurance and a retirement plan than nonunionized workers (*ibid.*).

Figure 7. Union versus Nonunion Wages



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014–15

Union wages are better for all workers and all Asians, and for Asian American women, in particular (but less so for Asian American men). Benefits alone are not all it takes to increase Asian American unionism. It is also about political will. For example, Asian American participation has been due to a number of factors over the past fifteen to twenty-five years. The first is a shift in AFL-CIO policy to support concerted efforts to organized immigrant labor regardless of legal status.³ The AFL-CIO went from virulent antiimmigrant bashing to one of active support for organizing immigrants, after being pushed and prodded by labor and community activists to change its stance during the 1980s and 1990s as they realized that its future viability rested on the shoulders of immigrant workers (Hing, 2004, 182). However, the change in policy took several years; AFL-CIO President John Sweeney ran on a platform in 1995 to remove I-9 sanctions and provide resources to organize immigrant workers. In 1999, at the AFL-CIO National Convention, delegates voted to repeal I-9 sanctions (AFL-CIO Executive Council, 2000). At the following AFL-CIO Executive Council in February 2000, they voted to support a proim-

migrant set of policies that reversed decades of antiimmigrant bashing (Ness, 2005, 42–3). They recognized the important role immigrants have historically played and would continue to play in the workplace and society and believed that immigrants should be entitled to full and fair workplace protections. As stated at the time, they believed the principles adopted in their statement on immigration should form national immigration policy including permanent legal status for undocumented, full workplace rights for immigrant workers (including the right to organize and protections for whistle-blowers), and punishment of business behavior that exploits workers for commercial gain (AFL-CIO, 2001).

By this time, several unions were already organizing and recruiting undocumented and immigrant workers into their ranks, including farm workers, food processing workers, meat packing workers, hotel and restaurant workers, garment workers, hospital workers, laundry workers, and many others. Virtually the entire service industry, meat packing, and light manufacturing rapidly turned over and became predominantly immigrant workers in the Southern California region and other parts of the country as massive Latino immigration and steady Asian American immigrants and refugees arrived seeking work, and unions sought to organize them. The contradictory practice of unions recruiting immigrant workers while labor's official policy was antiimmigrant was a major tipping point that led national labor leaders and labor activists to change AFL-CIO policy in favor of immigrants.

The second reason for Asian American participation in unionism is ethnic activism within the Asian American and Latino communities to mobilize its constituency. Much of the new immigrant labor movement has originated from California, starting in the 1980s with the Justice for Janitors campaign and organizing efforts in the garment and hotel industries. It is here that activists undertook the strenuous effort in "organizing the unorganizable," the vast immigrant labor pool (Bonacich and Gaspin, 2001; Engeman, 2014; Milkman, 2000). The efforts were not always successful, but it did build into a labor-based movement that embraced both work and immigrant issues. Latino militants led much of the effort; they melded community and labor organizing using street protests as much as strikes. Asians both benefited and participated in this social movement (Schneider, 2015; Wong, 2003, 2015). Organizations such as Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), which was founded in 1992, played a key role in connecting Asian American workers and communities to the labor movement. Even before its founding convention, AAPI labor organizations in several cities had been working

with AAPI workers and building their influence in select unions that were open to AAPI voices. After its founding, APALA has continued to hold annual organizing institutes to train rank-and-file members as organizers and leaders. APALA organizing institute graduates were then hired by unions as organizers. From 1992, Asian American organizers grew from a handful to a visible presence at every level of union structures in most of the major unions in the United States.

These efforts to include immigrant workers contributed to the sustained viability of unionism in California. The state's unionization rate is several percentage points higher than for the nation and has not experienced a secular decline (Adler, Tilly, and Thomas, 2015). The Asian American unionization rate in California is also higher than for the nation (14 percent vs. 12 percent). California has the highest density of the nation's AAPI workforce, with about three of ten residing in the state. Also, 40 percent of all AAPIs live in the Pacific region (Woo and Bucknor, 2015). The Northwest region has the best potential for increasing the percentage of AAPIs in unions in the coming decades.

Future Trajectory and Action Plan

The Asian American labor force will continue to grow over the foreseeable future. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the number of Asian American workers will increase by more than 23 percent from 8.8 million in 2014 to 10.8 million by 2024, accounting for a quarter of the total net growth (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). It is likely that this rapid growth rate will continue to 2040, with the Asian American labor force expanding faster than the Asian American population. In other words, Asian American workers will become an even more important component of the economy. Using a rough "back of the envelope" calculation based on the overall population projects and recent trends, Asian American workers will be about a tenth of the entire labor force by the middle of the century, if not earlier.⁴

Future Trends and Trajectory

By the year 2040, where will the jobs be? More so, by the year 2040, where will jobs for AAPIs be? If demographics are telling, there will be growth in caregiving, education, and technology.

Between 2015 and 2040, the number of elderly will increase 72 percent. By 2040, a staggering 22 percent of all Americans will be elderly. There will be a heightened need for caregivers, many of who are already of AAPI descent. Today, approximately 1.8 million people are employed

as domestic workers, most of whom work longer than eight-hour shifts, and make very little in terms of wages with few if any benefits (Burnham and Theodore, 2012; Dresser, 2008). While there are significant challenges to organizing workers who work in individual homes, the National Domestic Workers Alliance has focused on the unique challenges faced by this population of caregivers, who are 95 percent women, majority racial minority, and 45 percent immigrant (Burnham and Theodore, 2012). In many states across the nation, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) have successfully organized home care workers, and these workers have seen their wages and working conditions rise. Community organizations have also organized thousands of domestic workers into domestic worker organizations and networks.

Other populations that will grow are children ages zero through five, K–12 children, and young adults. Given the shift toward lifelong learning, there will be increased demand for pre-K, K–12, higher education, and adult education. At the K–12 level, teacher demographics in public schools have not shifted to match the student population. Currently, more than 5 percent of all students in public K–12 are AAPI, but only 1.4 percent are AAPI teachers (Bristol, 2015). It is believed that AAPI teachers who are culturally and linguistically competent may be better able to address the needs of AAPI students, particularly among new immigrants and refugees. Currently, at the college level, there are more than 1.5 million faculty: 51 percent are full-time and 49 percent are part-time; 10 percent are AAPIs (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). However, 75 percent of all faculty are on temporary contracts and nontenure track (American Association of University Professors, 2016). Today's contingent faculty has depressed wages with one in four forced to survive on public assistance (Jacobs, Perry, MacGillvary, 2015). They have unstable working conditions from term to term and virtually no input in shared governance. This has prompted educated professionals, including AAPIs (adjunct, tenure track, and faculty at both public and private universities) to seek union representation from SEIU, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the American Association of University Professors, and others. This type of sectoral unionization of highly educated professionals is possible by 2040.

The technology sector also employs highly educated professionals. Technology is expected to grow between now and 2040, and given the large proportion of Asian Americans with advanced educational

degrees, it is likely that Asian American and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPIs) will play important roles in an ever-increasing technology-driven economy. The question is whether or not Asian American workers in the tech industry will be employed in less than hospitable work environments and seek organization/union representation to get better working conditions. For example, if wages and benefits are depressed due to global competition, it could create more fertile ground for organizing tech professionals. Currently, more than 50 percent of California's Silicon Valley's workforce is Asian American and number in the tens of thousands (Nakaso, 2012). Many of the Asian American tech workers are immigrants who graduated from California state universities, and have been influenced by California's vibrant social movements. The tech field remains a key nonunion industry that could be impacted by a concerted unionization drive with an appropriate sectoral organizing strategy that addresses job protections and working conditions. There are several unions with the history and connections to tech-sector workers, particularly Asian American workers that could embark on a large-scale organizing drive in the coming period.

There are other sectors where Asian Americans work that are ripe for unionization. AAPIs are already heavily concentrated in the service industry where these opportunities exist and where union density is significant in certain states such as California and Nevada. AAPI women are also concentrated in hospitals and health care clinics; restaurants and other food services including hotels and casinos; and education including K-12 and postsecondary where future unionization efforts are likely to continue to grow (Woo and Buchnor, 2015). The bifurcation of the AAPI workforce that existed in 2015 is likely to continue into 2040 as new immigrants from Asia and the Pacific Islands are drawn to the United States, including professionals and entry-level low-wage workers many of whom will be reuniting with family members. Both segments will be needed in the 2040 economy.

Apprenticeship, Mentorship, and Leadership

The potential for organizing is strong, particularly as AAPI and non-AAPI union members apprentice and mentor other AAPIs to move into better paying union jobs, and move into union leadership. In fact, it is incumbent upon unions to develop a strategic plan to reach at least 10 percent of the 11+ million Asian American and NHPI workers by 2040. This is a realistic goal, given that in 2015, 9 percent or 788,000 of 8.8 million Asian American workers were union workers. With the right mentorship

of young, middle-aged, and older workers, unions can organize across the life span, and improve the quality of life for all Americans by lifting up the pay, benefits, and working conditions of those they represent.

Within the labor movement, it is critical to build sustained efforts to mentor and develop more Asian American leaders in unions. At present, Asian American union leaders at the local, statewide, and national level are still small. Hawaii and California have the highest number of elected Asian American local/national union leaders in their respective unions. Josie Camacho is Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Alameda County Central Labor Council in Northern California. She is the first Pacific Islander head of a local labor council on the mainland. Johanna Puno Hester, APALA National President, works with home care providers in the United Domestic Workers Union in San Diego, and is International Vice-President of the AFSCME union. Bhairavi Desai heads the National Taxi Workers Alliance and serves as the AFL-CIO National Executive Council. Luisa Blue and Maria Castaneda both sit on the SEIU International Executive Board and hold leadership positions at their locals. Maria Somma is the National Organizing Director for the United Steelworkers union. These and other AAPI union leaders are veterans of many organizing campaigns to unionize AAPI workers. They are to be tapped to mentor the next generation of AAPI labor leaders.

Indeed, another important role in the labor movement is to build internal mentorship programs to grow more AAPI leaders to mobilize the growing numbers of AAPIs and other racial minorities. The labor movement must continue to work with AAPI students to participate in organizing efforts, and recruit recent college graduates to join the labor movement as internal/external organizers and researchers. This generation of new AAPI entrants can have an influential role within unions to raise awareness of the importance of organizing AAPIs.

AAPIs also lead worker centers and national networks. The National Domestic Workers Alliance is led by Ai-jen Poo, the National Guestworkers Alliance by Saket Soni, the Restaurant Organizing Committee by Saru Jaramayan, and Jobs with Justice by Sarita Gupta. These organizations, along with the National Taxi Workers Alliance led by Bhairavi Desai, represent tens of thousands of workers, including significant numbers of AAPIs. The potential for AAPI growth in the broader labor movement including the worker center movement is very promising.

Conclusion: The Vision Forward

Asian Americans and NHIPIs are two of the fastest-growing racial

populations in America, and they are also among the fastest-growing racial segments of the U.S. labor market. We believe that AAPIs will continue to play a pivotal role in the U.S. economy and in the labor movement, both in the organized and the not-yet-organized segments.

The goal of this article is to explore the current and future potential for engaging AAPIs in the labor movement by increasing their density in union-organized occupations. Our goal is to engage at least 10 percent of the 11+ million AAPIs in the labor force by 2040. If we did so, we would be 1+ million AAPI unionized workers strong.

We believe that as AAPIs become a greater portion of the labor force, they will benefit from the increased attention by unions, and have the potential to become both the organized and the organizers. In so doing, AAPIs will have the opportunity to enhance the quality of life for all AAPIs, and all Americans, by the year 2040.

Notes

1. The American Federation of Labor under Samuel Gompers's leadership organized to drive Chinese workers out of the United States, resulting in the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the first exclusionary immigration law. Unions also perceived the Chinese and other Asians as cheap and sometimes scab labor.
2. The labor force participation rate is defined as the proportion of the working-age population that is in the labor market (those participating), either employed or actively looking for work. The unemployment rate is the proportion of the labor force that is unemployed (without a job but actively looking for work). One indicator of economic status is occupation, which is correlated with earnings. The table includes one occupation toward the high end (management and business) and low end (sales and office) of the earnings ladder. For many, being employed full-year (at least fifty weeks) and full-time (at least thirty-five hours per week) (FT/FY) is desirable, so the table reports the proportion of the employed that are working FT/FY. Finally, we examine the median earnings of FT/FY workers, which eliminate the confounding effect of differences in level of employment.
3. The history of Asian Americans and unions is rather mixed. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Chinese workers were attacked by white workers and organized labor (Kwong and Miscevic, 2005; Saxton, 1971; Tichenor, 2002). Asian Americans were excluded from joining unions in the early part of the twentieth century even as part of multiracial organizing efforts (Almaguer, 1994). Filipino agricultural workers during the 1920s and 1930s faced strong opposition from white workers, fueled by "long-standing racial animus towards Asiatics" (Ngai, 2004, p. 109). Things changed during the civil rights era. Filipinos were among the leaders who

organized farm workers and consumer boycotts against the grape industry, which lead to the establishment of the United Farm Workers.

4. This is based on the fact that the projected growth is disproportionately concentrated in the working-age segment, and it is likely that the labor force participation rate of women will increase.

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