Photo courtesy of Hussam Ayloush

CHAPTER 7

CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCACY

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ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE ORANGE COUNTY

Asian Americans & Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (AA&NHPI) have enhanced the diversity of Orange County and helped to make it a culturally vibrant hub. In addition to their cultural and economic contributions, AA&NHPI in the county have also made visible issues of civil rights, racism, and other social inequities. As the county's fastest-growing population, AA&NHPI voices on these issues are especially critical in a place like Orange County, which has a history of politics that has been hostile toward immigrants. The recent anti-immigrant rhetoric that was at the forefront of the 2016 presidential election indicates this issue will continue to be a major challenge for AA&NHPI communities. Many community leaders expressed a mixture of concern and hope on how they and the communities they serve are attempting to navigate the current political terrain to secure and protect the rights of AA&NHPI and other vulnerable communities during these uncertain times. This concern was expressed across different areas, from health care to employment to education.

Photo courtesy of Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Orange County

ASSETS

Leadership in Fighting Racism and Hate

Asian American civil rights organizations, including Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles, formerly Asian Pacific American Legal Center (Advancing Justice-LA) and the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), have worked with mainstream institutions and local communities to bring attention to incidents of racial profiling and racial violence and raise awareness about other racial discrimination targeting AA&NHPI. In January 2017, Asian Americans Advancing Justice launched an online hate tracker focused on anti-AA&NHPI hate incidents (standagainsthatred.org) to help document and highlight AA&NHPI cases nationally; a number of cases have been documented in Orange County since the fall of 2016.[1]

Over the years, Advancing Justice-LA and other groups have also worked on a number of hate crime cases in the county. In 1996, 24-year-old Vietnamese American Thien Minh Ly was brutally murdered near his Tustin home by two white supremacists who called him a "Jap," a derogatory term for Japanese and Japanese Americans. Advancing Justice-LA and the JACL were able to help prosecute it as a hate crime. That same year, Advancing Justice-LA also worked on an advocacy campaign to ensure that the U.S. attorney general would use hate crime charges in an incident at University of California, Irvine, where 60 Asian Americans received hate email about killing Asians on campus that was signed "Asian-hater." This led to the first U.S. government prosecution and conviction of a federal hate crime in cyberspace.

In 2001, after Taiwanese American teenager Kenny Chiu was murdered by his white supremacist neighbor in Laguna Hills, his family worked with Advancing Justice-LA and U.S. Congresswoman Judy Chu to pass "Kenny's law," which increased protections for hate crime victims and their families. In addition, other cases of racial discrimination have arisen in Orange County, including a high-profile class-action case in 2003 against retailer Abercrombie & Fitch for racially discriminatory employment practices targeting Asian American, Latino, and Black or African American applicants and employees. Along with other civil rights groups, Advancing Justice-LA successfully represented Asian American employees from a store in Costa Mesa who were among the first to question the retailer's employment practices.[2]

AA&NHPI are active leaders in fighting for civil rights and improving the racial climate of Orange County. A number of community leaders recall personal instances of racial discrimination that shaped their advocacy work. Ken Inouye, former chair of the Orange County Human Relations Commission and past president of the national Japanese American Citizens League, the oldest Asian American civil rights organization in the country, has been working to ensure more protection for vulnerable communities. He witnessed how the Japanese American community was unfairly racially profiled and incarcerated during World War II, which has influenced his longtime advocacy work to raise awareness about injustices.

Similarly, Mary Anne Foo, who is of Chinese and Japanese descent and grew up in Marysville, California, recalls how growing up in the 1980s she was harassed because of anti-Asian sentiment: "In high school when I would walk home from school, there would be people trying to—members of the Ku Klux Klan—had tried to run me over. I remember them burning a cross on my front yard, throwing beer bottles at me." Foo's parents taught her about civil rights issues such as racial segregation and cross-racial coalition building, lessons she carried with her into adulthood and her career. Now, as the founder and executive director of the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance, her personal experiences motivate her ongoing advocacy work.

In the mid-1990s, Edwin Tiongson, a San Diego State University undergraduate student, along with his fraternity brothers were wrongfully arrested at an Irvine apartment complex when they were visiting University of California, Irvine, as a part of the college fraternity mixers. During this period, young Asian males were racially profiled by the police in Orange County in their effort to curb gang activities.[3] Although auto theft charges were later dropped, that was a transformative experience: "There was someone that was an eyewitness that said four people of Latin descent were attempting to steal a golf cart. And I'm Filipino. I was with two other Filipinos and a Japanese guy. Lo and behold, [we] end up

getting arrested, went to Irvine city jail. . . . It was my first . . . exposure to being profiled." This experience motivated him to dedicate his career to assisting and advocating for youth. Tiongson is currently working as the project director of project ELEVATE AAPI (Equitable Learning Experience Valuing Achievement, Transfer and Empowering Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders) at Irvine Valley College, where he mentors AA&NHPI community college students.

Photo courtesy of Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Orange County

AA&NHPI Coalition Building

A growing strength of Orange County's AA&NHPI community is the level of collaboration and support across ethnic, racial, and other lines. For example, Jane and Victor Pang share that through Pacific Islander Health Partnership's work with other organizations, Asian American community leaders are also becoming advocates in reminding mainstream institutions to include the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. Jane Pang appreciates how her relationship with Vattana Peong, an immigrant from Cambodia and executive director of The Cambodian Family, has developed over the years, where he now brings up Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander issues: "We just got invited to [the] Orange County Mental Health Multicultural Task Force. There's Asians there, but Vattana said, 'There's no Pacific Islander!' I said, 'See!' And Vattana, who's Cambodian, is saying, 'Where are the Pacific Islanders?' So we got him as an advocate! And that's what it's all about—building that partnership and collaboration." Thus, AA&NHPI coalitions have been beneficial in helping the different ethnic groups learn about each other and become allies to help increase political visibility.

According to Michael Matsuda, superintendent of Anaheim Union High School District, coalition building among different ethnic groups is critical because it provides a stronger voice to policy makers:

> There's a lot of commonality among the API [Asian and Pacific Islander] groups, and the existing groups were more focused on their own specific communities. And I understand, you are kind of in a survival mode, and you need resources for Cambodians. You need resources for Vietnamese. But what was happening is those resources were being put in these [separate] buckets. . . . But when you have [coalitions], you can create synergies because there are common issues across communities. . . . You put the sticks together and you're a lot stronger.

Standing in Solidarity with the Muslim Community

Orange County has a growing Muslim community, with estimates of 25,000 to 120,000 in 2010, and with other estimates of 121,000 to 500,000 in Southern California. Indeed, Orange County is home to the second-largest Muslim American population in the country.[4]

Muslims are often perceived to be only from the Middle East; however, there are extensive Muslim communities around the world, and some have come here as immigrants or refugees. In Orange County, many Muslims are of South Asian ancestry, with one study in Southern California estimating that the ethnic group with the highest regular mosque participation is South Asian at 41%, with a small number of Southeast Asian descent.[5] A particularly strong voice for the diverse Southern California Muslim American community is the Greater Los Angeles chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-LA). Formed in 1997 in Anaheim and led by executive director Hussam Ayloush, who is Syrian American and was born in Lebanon, CAIR-LA has become a strong partner to AA&NHPI and other immigrant communities in Orange County. As an international student at The University of Texas at Austin, Ayloush was active in campus Muslim organizations, which gave him an appreciation for the ethnic diversity of the Muslim community in the United States. After being employed as an aerospace engineer, he decided he could have more meaningful impact working as an advocate.

Since September 11, 2001, the demands on Muslim American organizations like CAIR-LA have multiplied. And since 2015, the anti-Muslim sentiment has grown significantly, driven by global events, domestic policies, and political rhetoric. Last year, CAIR-LA provided services to 500 people through its civic engagement and immigrant rights programs, and educated the general public about Muslims and Islam, correcting misperceptions about their community and faith. With attacks on Muslim Americans and immigrants increasingly intertwined, many AA&NHPI and Muslim American groups and leaders are now working together to support each other, finding strength in numbers. Mary Anne Foo explains:

> There were a lot of hate crimes after 9/11, and if we didn't have the buy-in and the relationships with all these other organizations, having just us stand up there [individually] wouldn't have done anything. But when we get 24 different groups to say 'We're standing together against hate crimes,' 'We're standing together for voting,' 'We're standing together for the rights of everybody, for immigrant rights,' was much more powerful. And I think when we had early success and different types of successes, [this] was key to getting everybody involved.

Foo's sentiments about growing partnerships are echoed by Ayloush:

> Once we shifted away from some of the smaller circles of ethnic politics into a little bit more growing the coalition into the API aspect of things, again great things have happened. Politically we built Muslims. It brought [together] communities that [had] never worked with each other, Chinese and Japanese, . . . Koreans and Chinese, Koreans and Japanese. And then suddenly bringing Indians and Pakistanis, who would've put Indian [and Pakistanis], two nemeses, together? But now they come together and work together because they understand that all of us—our one being, our future, our safety—depends on each other's strength, support, and well-being.

NEEDS

Citizenship, Immigration Status, and Barriers to Accessing Services

Citizenship and immigration have become important issues of advocacy as the current political climate has become increasingly anti-immigrant. U.S. citizenship in particular provides a number of important rights and benefits such as voting rights and health and social benefits. In today's political climate, citizenship status is even more critical as government services for noncitizens, even if they are legal immigrants, are under threat. In addition, immigrants are worried about deportation, and depending on their status, anxious about being able to reenter the country. Currently, 19% of Asian Americans and 12% of Pacific Islanders living in Orange County are not citizens. They make up 25% of the total population in Orange County that are not citizens.[6] There are many barriers to obtaining citizenship such as lacking sufficient fluency in English, being unable to take or pass the citizenship exam, or being unable to afford citizenship application fees.

Photo courtesy of Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Orange County

Even Asian American and Pacific Islander immigrants who are legal residents and have green card status can still be vulnerable for deportation, which is having a devastating impact on families in Orange County.[7] Due to poverty and unstable housing conditions, some Southeast Asian refugees engaged in criminal or gang activities that put them at-risk for both incarceration and deportation.[8] Since 1998, over 16,000 Southeast Asian refugees across the United States have received final orders of deportation, 12,000 of which are based on past criminal acts, the highest number of any immigrant group.[9] As of November 2017, the U.S. government is pressing both Cambodia and Vietnam to repatriate more Cambodian and Vietnamese Americans. Even if they committed the offense in their youth, have already served their prison time and are rehabilitated, are gainfully employed, and are married to U.S. citizens and have children, they can still be detained indefinitely

or forcibly deported. In many of these cases, these individuals were born in refugee camps as their families were escaping political persecution in Vietnam or the genocide in Cambodia; if deported, they are being sent to a country where they have never been, where they may have no relatives, and where they may not even speak the language. Advocates, including Advancing Justice-LA, believe these detentions and deportations are unconstitutional and unjust, and have sued to stop them.[10]

Jane Pang, cofounder of Pacific Islander Health Partnership, points out the unique citizenship issues among the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities since some are citizens by birth, others are U.S. nationals, some are naturalized citizens, and others are immigrants. The lack of U.S. citizenship is often intertwined with issues of poverty:

> [Some Pacific Islanders] can work here without a green card, but if we want them to become citizens and eventually end up voting, we do voter registration. We realized they need a green card to become citizens. And it costs what, 1,600 dollars, some exorbitant amount, to get the green card. But they have to wait [five] years before they get to apply for citizenship. So we're at a catch-22 as we try to advocate for citizenship. They're caught, and many of them can't even afford the initial cost of the green card. So they're barely making it, and economically they're probably the most challenged. And because . . . [their community is] so small, there's really no hard data on where they are socioeconomically because they're so invisible.

Without citizenship status, they are ineligible for many public benefits, which can further exacerbate their socioeconomic conditions. National estimates show that of the 12 million undocumented immigrants nationally, over 1 million are Asian American.[11] The Los Angeles and Orange County area is home to 1 million undocumented immigrants, the second-largest metropolitan area behind New York City.[12] An estimated 52,000 undocumented immigrants in Orange County identify as Asian American.[13] However, these numbers are inexact since this part of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community is largely hidden, out of fear or shame, and lacking access to critical services and programs. Ellen Ahn, executive director of Korean Community Services, observes:

> We have seen the undocumented go even more underground. . . . You have a sizable population of permanent residents, green card holders, and we have seen a rush towards citizenship. There's a lot of fear in the community. There's been talk about cutting benefits for the newly immigrated or going after folks who have [Medicaid benefits]. So there is this hesitancy or fear to reach out to some very-much-needed benefits, and no one knows how far it's going to go. And so there's just a general anxiety with the new presidential administration that we've never seen before around immigration.

"You can create synergies because there are common issues across communities. . . . You put the sticks together and you're a lot stronger."

Jonathan Paik, Orange County director of the Korean Resource Center, notes that the model minority myth and belief in the American dream can make it difficult to address these issues within the community:

> Most folks don't know that one in seven Korean Americans in the United States are undocumented. These are statistics that no one ever talks about 'cause our culture plays to that. Our county right now, and our community, really plays, at least from my personal experience and observation, plays to the idea that folks are trying to reach to the top . . . this like American dream narrative that people are trying to achieve.

Edwin Tiongson of Irvine Valley College also points out that there are undocumented individuals in the Filipino American community who worry about deportation: "I think about my fellow Filipinos—they're TNTs. I don't know if you've heard that [Filipino] term before. It's like *tago ng tago* ['undocumented immigrant in hiding']. And they wander from spot to spot . . . because of fear of being deported." Thus, the reluctance to bring attention to themselves and fear of repercussions from authority figures makes it difficult to track undocumented Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and furthers their invisibility in any conversation about immigration. In addition, unlike Latinos, who are associated with crossing the borders through Mexico, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders usually become undocumented through different means. Many enter the United States legally through work or student visas but have overstayed their visas. This segment of the community does not enter the United States as undocumented immigrants, and this can lead to additional challenges with reaching, educating, and protecting a population that may not identify as "undocumented."

Photo courtesy of Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Orange County

It is especially important for undocumented individuals to be informed of immigration and enforcement policies, which can change quickly depending on the political climate. Under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, which was approved in 2012, over 800,000 undocumented individuals who came to the United States as minors were granted a renewable deferred action from deportation for two years and received a work permit. Other laws, such as AB 60 allowed undocumented people to obtain a driver's license. Mary Anne Foo explains how community organizations have had to be especially aware of the political shifts to help clients who may not always understand the changes and their impact:

> It's that fear and the misinformation or the information that changes on a daily basis. So two weeks ago we're saying, 'Do not travel. Do not leave the country. Do not renew your DACA.' This week is, 'Okay, renew your DACA as soon as possible because it's going to take them another 6 months to decide what to do. Get it renewed now.' Things are changing constantly and people are afraid. . . . What do we tell our folks now? We just told them this; now we're telling them this.

Since these interviews with community leaders, DACA was repealed (in September 2017), which has placed added pressure on local Asian American and Pacific Islander community leaders to provide additional services as well as focusing advocacy efforts for DACA recipients whose future is uncertain. Currently, there is more institutional support for DACA students, with universities helping to serve and advocate for their students. However, for "DACA-mented" immigrants who are no longer in school, the ending of DACA may push many further underground.

Community groups face increasing difficulty in trying to reach impacted populations in order to assist them. Local community organizations have partnered with Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Orange County and other legal aid services to provide more immigrant and citizenship workshops to try to help community members navigate current political policies. These free services include connecting people to mental health or law enforcement resources and assessing their legal options based on their circumstances. However, Michael Matsuda, superintendent of the Anaheim Union High School District, describes how fear in the community is overriding these community efforts:

> It is already having an effect because we've had five forums with our parents. In partnership with OCAPICA [Orange County and Asian Pacific Islander Community Alliance], with ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union], [and] Anaheim Police Department, [we were] trying to get information out. Even though they're well attended, 200 people or so, and a fair amount of Asians that have come to those things, but there's a sense of fear. Because you see the ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] raids and all of that out there, so now they're afraid. And so they're saying 'We don't want to come to those things.' So now we're having smaller ones at the sites where they feel safe, using our community liaisons. And the police are there to assure them, 'Hey we're not ICE.' They're trying to differentiate themselves in a good way.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department has several detention contracts with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement to incarcerate undocumented immigrants, which has created additional feelings of distrust among immigrants toward law enforcement entities.[14]

Despite gaining trust with these communities over the years, nonprofit organizational leaders are seeing how this fear contributes to people refusing to seek out health and social services, even on critical issues. Shikha Bhatnagar, executive director of the South Asian Network, observes that the organization's clients may no longer seek help for critical services such as domestic violence, an issue already seen as difficult to address in the community:

> People aren't applying for public benefits . . . because maybe they're a relative of an undocumented person and they don't want that person to be exposed. And one of the things that we've been told is that . . . your health records are protected, but DHS [Department of Homeland Security] records are a free-for-all. They don't have the same protections, privacy rules, and they can access your records. And so it makes it very difficult for us because people do need services, but we fully understand their concerns in applying for these benefits, and so it's definitely coming into play with our work.

Michael Matsuda also notes that this same fear is impacting low-income K–12 students who face housing instability. Although there are resources available for youth, parents may not want to disclose their undocumented status:

> Here's where it's affecting [children] right now, is free and reduced lunch. I mentioned we have 4,100 homeless. A fair amount are undocumented. They're so afraid; they don't want to sign up for free and reduced lunch, which is going to exacerbate the food deprivation problem. And then you have an issue with FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid]. If you want to apply for financial aid, parents now are afraid that that's it's going to the federal [government]. They might trust us, but they don't trust the federal government. And so you think about that, with the DREAMers [DACA recipients] and all of that, not getting [financial aid]. And that depresses the kid because mom is afraid too. [She will say,] 'We don't want to give our information.' So we're heading into some very murky waters—all the more reason why we need to reach out to our community, take their hand, and [tell them], 'We're in this together.' We've got to do that.

Rising Number of Hate Crimes and Incidents

While currently recognized as a diverse area that welcomes newcomers, Orange County also has a history of anti-Asian and anti-immigrant sentiment, including a number of hate crimes and racial discrimination cases (see chapter 1, Introduction). One of two cofounders of the Minuteman Project, an anti-immigrant group, was from Orange County and gained national notoriety in the mid-2000s for setting up civilian patrols along the U.S.-Mexico border. Currently, there are still pockets in

Orange County that are reportedly a magnet for skinhead, white supremacy, or hate group activities.

These sentiments have become more visible in the current political climate. Hussam Ayloush of the Council on American-Islamic Relations has observed that the political rhetoric promoting racism and targeting undocumented immigrants and Muslims has become acceptable in public settings. He cautions against normalizing and ignoring racist rhetoric as it ultimately leads to physical violence against those who are being verbally attacked:

> The presidential campaigning time has unleashed racism and hatred in America that I have never witnessed in my life. Never. It's almost like it allowed people to come out of the closet with their racism basically, . . . what they kept inside, because it was becoming unpopular, abnormal, unacceptable socially to be so racist. What Trump did, especially Trump, he normalized racism. He made it acceptable again to take the racist talk outside of the dinner table with your kids and family. People used to sit in the living room and maybe make comments about all . . . these Chinese, these Arabs, these Muslims. Suddenly, now it's like, 'Oh, we can go out and make these racist comments or views, express them publicly.' And that is a problem because once you normalize bigotry and racism, . . . it's a slippery slope. It's not just something that just remains stable. It's a negative dynamic thing, meaning it starts with rhetoric, then it becomes action, then it becomes violence.

"Once you normalize bigotry and racism, . . . it's a slippery slope. It's not just something that just remains stable. It's a negative dynamic thing, meaning it starts with rhetoric, then it becomes action, then it becomes violence."

Ken Inouye, former chair of the Orange County Human Relations Commission and past president of the national Japanese American Citizens League, also notices that there is a lack of civility that is leading to a rise in hate crime and discriminatory incidents: "In Orange County, the hate crimes are six times as high as they were from the election until now because people are throwing aside their niceties and really saying things they might not have said otherwise." Since the 2016 elections, hate crimes in Orange County have increased with physical assaults, vandalism of structures, and displays of hate symbols that have targeted Asian Americans as well as other diverse communities.[15] Between November 2016 and February 2017, the Orange County Human Relations Commission reported 14 hate crimes, which is higher than the previous year during this period.[16] The total number of hate incidents reported to the Commission in 2016 was 73, which is almost double the 43 incidents reported the previous year.[17] The 2016 CAIR report found that Orange County had the highest number of anti-Muslim incidents, including hate crimes and other anti-Muslim discrimination, in the state (363 out of 1,556 reports), an increase of 68% from the previous year.[18]

Many of these hate incidents or crimes may be based on mistaken identity or stereotypes. In particular, many South Asians have been the victims of anti-Muslim

attacks. For example, South Asian American practitioners of the Sikh faith who wear beards and a head wrap similar to a turban, or their religious sites, called gurdwaras, are misidentified as Muslim and are the targets of hate crimes and incidents.[19]

Moreover, many Asian Americans of various ethnic backgrounds have reported being the subject of anti-Asian and anti-foreigner incidents. Asian Americans Advancing Justice has tracked more than 300 anti-Asian incidents from late 2016 to fall 2017. Hate crimes can be directed at individuals for their ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, religion, or some other characteristic. For example, AA&NHPI who are LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning) may identify and be targeted for different aspects of their identity. According to the Orange County Human Relations Commission, recent motivations for hate crimes are highest for the target's race, then religion, followed by LGBTQ status,[20] and like other statistics, only use one factor in identifying hate incidents or crimes.

Photo courtesy of Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Orange County

A recent hate incident involved Gloria Lee, a Korean American partner at a prominent law firm and founding cochair of the Executive Advisory Council for Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Orange County. While she was crossing the street in Costa Mesa, Lee was yelled at by a driver to "go back to [expletive] China!", who then narrowly missed hitting her.[21] Born in Chicago and an alum of Stanford University and University of California, Berkeley, she says, "I was shocked. . . . I realized that despite [my] accomplishments or contributions to the community, some people still just see me as a foreigner who doesn't belong."[22] Jonathan Paik of the Korean Resource Center also notes that this is impacting the Korean American community: "In Orange County specifically we've seen an elevation of hate crimes happening, even in the Korean American community. The swastikas being drawn, graffitied over in churches in Buena Park. You're seeing this level of boldness amongst hateful community members against communities like ours." Thus, regardless of how many generations of AA&NHPI have been here, the image of AA&NHPI as "forever foreigners" or "racialized other" who do not belong in America persists and is exacerbated in the current political climate.

These prejudicial attitudes and actions stem from misunderstandings and misguided fears regarding the changing demographics and how it will impact residents in the county, as Hussam Ayloush explains:

> It is a result of a large segment of white Christian America not digesting the rapidly changing demographics of America. It's creating a shock. And all of us, including those who are part of that demographic

> change, have a responsibility to transition people mentally, culturally into it, into the changing America. Again, I'm not saying the onus is on us and racist people are off the hook, but I'm saying many people are not racist. Many people are being manipulated by the racist people. They're creating fear in them of the 'other.' And we all can play a role—the victims, the victimized, the victimizers—in a way where we can kind of open their mind, open their eyes to the changing demographics: what it means, how beautiful it is, how beneficial it is to them, to their future, [and] to the future of their children. You and me are not a threat to their children. You and me are actually . . . going to make things, create more opportunities for their children and our children together . . . and that is the message we can tell people.

Tracking and Responding to Hate Crimes and Incidents

While the Orange County Human Relations Commission reports an overall increase in hate incidents, the actual number is most likely higher as hate incidents are not always reported. However, in order to effectively track or follow up on hate incidents, Ken Inouye remarks that it is necessary for law enforcement and policy makers to classify acts of racial violence as hate crimes, even if it may be a difficult process:

> Once you . . . [name] something as a hate crime, then you've got to prove that in addition to other things to get a conviction. So a lot of times law enforcement doesn't want to go for that 'cause it's higher fruit, [a] higher standard. But from the victim's standpoint, it's kind of a way of saying, 'Okay, let's acknowledge the fact that this was just a senseless act of hate.' . . . It's not necessarily that you want revenge.

There are also various reasons why AA&NHPI underreport hate incidents, which can include the stigma of being known as a victim of discrimination, fear of further violence directed at them, or anxiety regarding the government scrutinizing their immigration status. Hussam Ayloush observes that many may not want to acknowledge hate crimes and discrimination as a systemic problem that can affect them personally: "Most people don't think of themselves as a possible or potential victims of discrimination or hate. . . . When they hear about it, they think it's the 'other,' it's somebody who lacks the intelligence or lacks the connection or maybe they brought it onto themselves. . . . People don't ever think they will ever be victims of [hate]." In some cases, individuals may purposely try to hide their religious affiliation such as wearing a turban or hijab as a way to prevent hate incidents. However, this ultimately infringes on their religious rights even if it may seem like a choice, and it does not resolve the proliferation of these acts.

AA&NHPI community leaders and organizations are actively trying to respond to these issues but face barriers in serving the community due to limited resources.

As mentioned earlier, in 2017, Asian Americans Advancing Justice established the hate-incident-reporting website standagainsthatred.org to help document and track hate incidents nationally. However, organizations have limited resources to increase their capacity for assisting individuals who believe they have been the target of a hate attack. Ayloush describes how CAIR has to prioritize its work given its limited capacity as a community organization:

> We barely scratch the surface of the need in the community. . . . With my staff, I say, 'Cut the fat, like do the essentials. We're not going to be able to help every person who calls our office. . . . We will have to refer others to other places. We will have to empower people to do things, and we might have to say no to certain things. . . . We have to do what is more urgent and what creates more impact.' That's how it is because of the limited resources.

Jonathan Paik of the Korean Resource Center expresses a similar sentiment about the limited resources addressing hate incidents but particularly strategies that are preventive rather than reactionary. This can be a major challenge requiring a community effort to make connections among local-, state-, and federal-level advocacy:

> We can help you with responding, but that's about as much as we can do. What are the systemic changes we're making right now in light of a federal administration that's not willing to pass the most progressive policies right now? What is our role in being able to not only defend but also be on the offensive? What is our role of our everyday community members like teachers and professors and students and home-care workers and like all these employees who are working every day? And what is their role and being able to not only defend but to fight? And to fight and to be able to increase the level of justice in a time when there's little justice to be seen?

The majority of Asian Americans are immigrants or refugees. Therefore, the current anti-immigration and anti-refugee rhetoric and policies create an unwelcoming political climate for them. The types of hate and racism usually directed at Asian Americans are related to myths about the "perpetual foreigner," misperceptions of being an economic threat, or stereotypes about "terrorists." Unfortunately, with ongoing economic, diplomatic, and other tensions with China, Pakistan, North Korea, and other Asia Pacific nations, Asian Americans are likely to continue to experience escalated hate fanned by global events and political rhetoric.

Need for Further Research and Data Disaggregation

Supporting and expanding ongoing data disaggregation efforts is critical in order to provide a complete and nuanced understanding of the diversity of AA&NHPI. As mentioned in other chapters, aggregated data frequently mask significant

disparities affecting specific ethnic groups. For example, in education (see chapter 4, "K–12 and Higher Education"), some Asian ethnic groups perform above average on education indicators, which can hide the challenges faced by other Asian and many Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander groups. Given the growing diversity of the AA&NHPI population, gathering accurate data for each ethnic group is challenging. The U.S. Census now captures some of the most detailed ethnic-specific data available. The first U.S. Census was conducted in 1790, with a Chinese category being added in 1870; Japanese in 1890; Filipino, Korean, and "Hindu" or Asian Indian in 1920; Hawaiian in 1960; and Vietnamese, Samoan, and Guamanian or Chamorro in 1980.[23] In 2000, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were divided into separate racial groupings, and for the first time, multiracial individuals could select more than one racial category.

State and local data collection is unfortunately not as detailed. For many years, California law required some state agencies to collect disaggregated data for Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Laotian, Cambodian, Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, and Samoan ethnic groups. Recent state law changes, including California Senate Bill AB 1726 passed in 2016, applied the data requirements to specific agencies: Department of Fair Employment and Housing, Department of Industrial Relations, and Department of Public Health. It also expanded to include new ethnic or national origin groups such as Bangladeshi, Hmong, Indonesian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Thai, Fijian, and Tongan. Through this law, disaggregated health information for AA&NHPI, including rates of major diseases (such as hepatitis B, cancer, and cardiovascular disease), health risks of each group, leading causes of death, and pregnancy rates, may become available in the near future. However, it will only be implemented successfully if sufficient funds are available on a consistent basis both statewide and at the local county level. Currently, the law does not apply to all state agencies, and the application of this law varies depending on funding and resources, so data may be inconsistently collected and reported.

> "You have to disaggregate data, and you have to look at the different needs by region and by where folks are living, so we have to dispel a lot of myths."

Advocacy for data disaggregation is an ongoing fight and will become more important in the next few years. Most AA&NHPI community leaders and groups, particularly those working on health and education issues, fight ardently for ethnic-specific disaggregation in order to shed light on and address disparities across AA&NHPI ethnic communities. However, there are segments of the AA&NHPI community, particularly in the Chinese immigrant community, that oppose data disaggregation in the educational context, which is connected to their opposition to affirmative action admissions policies, and this minority voice is present in Orange County.[24] Given both federal leadership and funding challenges in implementing the upcoming Census 2020, it will be important to monitor and address this internal community division as well as to strengthen support for AA&NHPI data disaggregation.

Locally, while there are general statistics about Asian Americans in Orange County, there are only limited data that further break down the information into specific AA&NHPI ethnic groups. Mary Anne Foo explains: "People either see them [AA&NHPI] as doing super well, which many are, or super poor, which many are, or all going to college. So we have to spend the time saying, 'No, no, no. We're so diverse!' You have to disaggregate data, and you have to look at the different needs by region and by where folks are living, so we have to dispel a lot of myths."

The homogenization of Asian Americans into one racial category, which in some cases includes Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI), masks many of the nuanced needs and characteristics of the distinctive ethnic groups. Vattana Peong of The Cambodian Family states that for the Cambodian American community, having ethnic-specific data is critical to understanding health issues across generations:

> The advocacy and the increasing of data is important work for our Cambodian Family right now because a lot of our needs has been lumped together with the Asian category. And we know that different Asian ethnic groups have different needs. However, for Cambodians, we have particular needs. We have unique needs. Because first, we are the survivors of genocide. We have suffered a lot of posttraumatic stress disorder and depression. And also we have a community that has 40 years of experience in the U.S., but their health are not really getting better. And now there might be a kind of intergenerational trauma being passed onto the second generation, and that is the work that we want to focus on as well. . . . Having good data will help us build our advocacy effort to advocate for more resources. . . . There have been misperceptions about us, 'That your population is small, there's probably not much need, only close to 10,000 in Orange County.' . . . But we want to change that perception. We have a small population, but our needs are so dire.

He adds that having consistently collected mental health data over time will help community leaders track trends and provide better services: "We have always been using old statistics. For example, . . . 62% of our clients have PTSD [posttraumatic stress disorder], and over 50% have depression. And that data was conducted in 2005 by the RAND Corporation. And now it's 12 years later. We want to know where those numbers are at right now."

NHPI community leaders in Orange County have been critical advocates for data disaggregation, particularly in separating Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders from Asian Americans, and making additional distinctions within the NHPI grouping. Victor Pang recalls how one of the first advocacy efforts for the Pacific Islander Health Partnership was to ensure that Pacific Islander groups were appropriately categorized and counted in the U.S. Census: "They wanted

to disaggregate from the Asians and they [the U.S. Census] called them 'Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders.'" Jane Pang, who cofounded the organization with him, elaborates on the controversy of lumping together those originally from Guam, Tonga, Samoa, the Marshall Islands, Tahiti, Palau, Fiji, etc. into the "Other" category:

> When we talk about advocacy, the first big movement was to get recognized as 'Pacific Islanders.' . . . Victor Pang was on the U.S. Census [Bureau National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic and Other Populations] for about 11 years . . . and tried to fight for fully disaggregated [data], realizing the [federal] Office of Management made a decision. . . . And within our community, all the communities, Pacific Islanders said, 'We don't want to be the *Other*!' . . . We didn't want them to be [the] 'Other' either! So we automatically dropped [the] *O* in *NHOPI* and just started using *NHPI*, and eventually that now has become the trend, and everybody says 'NHPI' and dropped the 'Other.' . . . So now we have 'Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.'

Although the 2010 U.S. Census still used the category Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, individuals themselves use their preferred categorizations. This highlights how ethnic groups continue to change and evolve and the importance of input from community members regarding the accuracy of categories and designations. Community leaders still identify data disaggregation of NHPI as an ongoing need with significant ramifications for health policies and services at the local and state levels.

Strengthening Coalition Building

Coalition building has been critical in increasing the AA&NHPI political voice on many issues, from hate crimes to data disaggregation. While there have been successes in coalition building in Orange County, community leaders express hope in further building and maintaining these relationships to make sure that all the ethnic groups are at the table. However, it can still be difficult for these diverse groups to work together given the unique histories and needs of each community. Tricia Nguyen, CEO of Southland Integrated Services (formerly the Vietnamese Community of Orange County), explains that pan-ethnic coalitions are only possible when there are unifying issues across the groups, which encourages them to mobilize collectively: "We're so diverse. [For example,] for Asian Americans, this topic is dear to us, but it's not for Koreans. So we [have to] find a common goal, common agenda, that we all can go towards. That, I find, is more efficient because we all care for similar, you know, similar topics." Thus, some issues that are important for specific ethnic groups may not be as important for others, making it difficult to build effective partnerships.

The Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA) was one of the first pan-ethnic coalitions to form and be funded in Orange County. Mary Anne Foo, the founding executive director, relates that there are still challenges given the limited resources generally available to AA&NHPI organizations: "The challenge is it's not that people didn't get along. They actually did. And that people said, 'Hey yeah we got to work together. We're stronger together.' But it was the lack of resources that made it hard." In these coalitions, the types of community organizations vary, with varying degrees of staffing and operational capacity, making the distribution of resources difficult across groups as well as the ability of some organizations to fully participate or take on a leadership role. Vattana Peong says "if you ask us [The Cambodian Family], like a small nonprofit like us, to lead the effort, that would be almost impossible for us to do that. So it has to be building the capacity of each nonprofits, Asian nonprofit, to be able to work on that field."

Foo acknowledges the challenges in coalition building and the need to balance resources, which have to be further divided and distributed among the varying groups when coalitions receive funding. This is an ongoing process as funding sources, demographics, and needs change. She explains how OCAPICA had to change its organizational model to ensure that the work of partner organizations, who may represent smaller ethnic groups, was not lost within a broader coalition:

> I started to see that people kept recognizing OCAPICA, and we were getting a lot of money. And I was concerned because the individual organizations were losing their identity in a way because we would get credit, and I never wanted that to happen. I wanted us to work together, but I didn't want all the credit to go to OCAPICA because we were just a convener, a facilitator. And if we were getting money for the Cambodian community, but [The] Cambodian Family doesn't, that's not fair. So, at the time we thought, 'We're really strong as a coalition. We got to stick together.' But at the same time, we got to fight for people to understand just funding us doesn't mean you've funded the Asian community. You got to fund everybody. . . . And we got to spread it around. But everyone's got to get recognized. We can't do this alone.

NHPI communities also face challenges working in coalitions. They have historically been overlooked when lumped with Asian Americans, and there is also significant diversity within the NHPI grouping. Since their populations are smaller, they have often selectively formed coalitions with Asian Americans, which enlarges their numbers, for example, when applying for federal grants. However, their specific needs and voices can get lost in these coalitions, and the inclusion of the NHPI communities may be in name only. Jane Pang, who is ethnically Chinese but grew up in Hawai`i makes a concerted effort to hold these collaborators accountable to Pacific Islanders:

> I take it as an opportunity to share with the Asian Americans. And I've always spoken very loudly. And as I said my first task was to find out how many of the API [Asian and Pacific Islander] organizations in Los Angeles were really taking care of Pacific Islanders. So I've always had that real strong advocacy undertone. And that's why we're always together in that I'm the Asian American. [Victor Pang is] the Pacific Islander. And so they need to be reminded constantly that I'm here. Though I'm Asian American, I speak a very loud Pacific Islander voice. People who know me, or [who] I've worked on committees with know that because sometimes it lies on deaf ears, so I have to hold my community accountable—that if you're going to be Asian Pacific Islander, then please include the Pacific Islanders.

Coalition building beyond the AA&NHPI communities is also critical. In Orange County, Latinos and Asians are the fastest-growing groups and as immigrants often live in close proximity to each other. They sometimes face similar concerns, but linguistic barriers make it challenging for them to communicate with one another. The city of Fullerton is an example of how cross-racial collaboration can have an impact. Along with Vivian Jaramillo, who represented the Latino community, Jonathan Paik successfully sued the city to replace at-large elections with district elections, a city which is 35% Latino and 23% Asian American but has had predominantly White elected leadership. He explains how coalition building with Latinos was critical to the success of the case, but that it also took time to build that trust and develop a shared sense of community:

> Even though our demographic accounts show that we're the majority now, like folks of color are certainly the majority of Orange County. What I learned though is that it's a false statistic to be able to aggregate everyone together and assume that the values are the same, and that folks are in the same place in terms of what kind of change they want to see. It's a good pitch, but at the same time, there's a lot of work to be done to be able to build coalitions not only amongst our staff, which was happening two years ago, but with our base. So it took a year and a half, 18 months, to be able to have Korean monolingual speakers and Latino monolingual speakers to come together in a city council meeting and to be able to say that . . . [elections are] unfair for our representation and to be able to talk about talking points and share stories about what it meant to be able to live in this part of the neighborhood.

Many refugees and immigrants are encountering new ethnic or racial groups for the first time, and these community or organizational leaders have just begun to learn how to work together. Currently, these relationships may be based more on personal relationships and on an ad-hoc basis. Tam Nguyen, former president of

the Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce, stresses that these coalitions ultimately need to be institutionalized:

> The challenge is we have over 30 Asian subgroups, and we build relationships within our own Asian subgroups. We also have to in parallel build relationships with our brothers and sisters from the Hispanic/Latino community, our brothers and sisters in the African American community, and more broadly with the community that's been here the longest, the Caucasian community, to really make it work and to have these collaborations. Those dynamics are very personal right now. It happens in a very individualized basis. It's very personal, but it needs to happen at the more collaborative, more organizational, level in order for things to continue to get to a point where we need to see that impact.

Hussam Ayloush believes that formal coalition building that expands beyond AA&NHPI ethnic groups will become more common with future leadership who have more opportunities for exposure to different groups in schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, and religious sites:

> It's way more accepted and embraced by the younger generation, the young professionals, 40 and under. The older [generation is] . . . still swallowing and digesting it. . . . They're not opposed to it, but I know when I sit with some older Chinese American activists or older Pakistani activists or Arab American activists, for them it's like, 'What's common between me and the others?' They don't see it yet fully. But it's what we've seen so far and it continues. It is a growing scale, meaning we're only going to see a better future. . . . If we're happy with what we've seen so far, wait another 10 years and I think the future holds even way more success, more unity, more positive impact. . . . Because at the end of the day, we're improving the quality of life basically, the quality of life for everyone. It's like the tide, when the tide goes up, all the ships, all the boats go up. And the API [Asian and Pacific Islander] community, the Muslim community, the Jewish community—when we're focusing on making sure everybody's respected, it doesn't just become [that way] for us. When you make sure there's no school bullying, we're protecting everybody.

AA&NHPI need to continue to build cross-racial, cross-ethnic coalitions to achieve broader and deeper impact, which will help to ensure that all communities are being protected and being treated equitably.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advocate for disaggregated data for AA&NHPI for local and state programs to identify disparities on key social indicators (e.g., housing, economic development, poverty, education, health and health care, voting) and to better understand the different assets and needs within each ethnic community.
- Ensure language-accessible legal information and services for AA&NHPI communities so that they can enforce their rights (e.g., enact municipal language access ordinances so that local governments serve all residents equally).
- Help eligible AA&NHPI secure immigration benefits or U.S. citizenship by providing culturally and linguistically accessible outreach, education, and services in immigration and citizenship. In particular, fund organizations that provide free and low-cost legal assistance to AA&NHPI immigrants and related services such as civics and English-language classes.
- Protect undocumented Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders through culturally and linguistically accessible legal services (including deportation defense) and "Know Your Rights" education on immigration enforcement issues.
- Support federal immigration reform that expands opportunities for both high- and less-skilled workers, reunites families, and provides a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented.
- Ensure local implementation of state laws and adopt local ordinances that prohibit discrimination against immigrants in employment, housing, education, and public services, particularly the use of retaliation against undocumented immigrants for asserting their rights. Ensure local implementation of SB 54, which limits state and local police in enforcing federal immigration laws.
- Educate AA&NHPI communities on hate attacks and the importance of reporting hate incidents, including providing culturally and linguistically accessible information.
- Better track and respond to hate attacks against AA&NHPI communities, including ensuring that hate attacks are properly identified and investigated as such and providing disaggregated data on hate incidents.
- Strengthen successful models of intergroup relations programs for youth and adults, including in-school programs and curricula that promote diversity and embrace differences, and community-based programs that prevent hate violence and respond to hate crimes and incidents.

- Support and encourage cross-ethnic and cross-racial coalitions involving diverse AA&NHPI communities, particularly around shared histories and common policy concerns such as education, health care, and immigration.
- Provide more funding and support for AA&NHPI groups who serve and have the trust of AA&NHPI community members, particularly those who protect targeted groups such as Muslim Americans and undocumented immigrants.

INTERVIEWED COMMUNITY LEADERS

Ellen Ahn	Executive director of Korean Community Services
Hussam Ayloush	Executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Greater Los Angeles Area Chapter (CAIR-LA)
Shikha Bhatnagar	Executive director of the South Asian Network
Mary Anne Foo	Founder and executive director of the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA)
Ken Inouye	Former chair of the Orange County Human Relations Commission; past president of the national Japanese American Citizens League
Michael Matsuda	Superintendent of the Anaheim Union High School District; founding member of the Orange County Asian Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA)
Tam Nguyen	Former president of the Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce; owner of Advance Beauty College; former president of the California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) Alumni Association
Tricia Nguyen	CEO of Southland Integrated Services, formerly known as the Vietnamese Community of Orange County (VNCOC)
Jonathan Paik	Orange County director of the Korean Resource Center
Jane Pang	Cofounder and board member of Pacific Islander Health Partnership (PIHP)
Victor Pang	Cofounder of Pacific Islander Health Partnership (PIHP)
Vattana Peong	Executive director of The Cambodian Family
Edwin Tiongson	Project director of ELEVATE AAPI (Equitable Learning Experience Valuing Achievement, Transfer and Empowering Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders) at Irvine Valley College

The quotes from these interviews are represented verbatim in this report, with some shortened for space considerations, shown by an ellipsis. The only other modifications are to help provide context, shown in brackets.

NOTES

1. Bharath, Deepa. 2017. "Rise in Crimes Targeting Asian Americans Leads to New Anti-Hate Website." *Orange County Register*, January 23, 2017, http://www.ocregister.com/2017/01/23/rise-in-crimes-targeting-asian-americans-leads-to-new-anti-hate-website/.

2. Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles. n.d. "From Our Litigation Archives: APALC Sues Abercrombie & Fitch." Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles, accessed October 16, 2017, https://www.advancingjustice-la.org/blog/our-litigation-archives-apalc-sues-abercrombie-fitch#.WeUkUWhSw2x.

3. According to the ACLU, "The Garden Grove (CA) Police Department settled a 'gang' database racial profiling lawsuit by a group of young Asian Americans who said their civil rights were violated when officers photographed them as suspected gang members based merely on their ethnicity and clothing." https://www.aclu.org/other/racial-profiling-definition (accessed October 14, 2017).

4. Mendelson, Aaron. 2015. "SoCal's Muslim Community Geographically, Ethnically Diverse." KPCC, December 22, 2015, http://www.scpr.org/news/2015/12/11/56162/socal-s-muslim-community-geographically-ethnically/; Shyong, Frank. 2017. "Muslims across Southern California Mark the End of Ramadan with Prayers, Celebrations and Food." *Los Angeles Times*, June 25, 2017, http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-muslims-ramadan-celebrate-20170625-story.html.

5. Mendelson, Aaron. 2015. "SoCal's Muslim Community Geographically, Ethnically Diverse." KPCC, December 22, 2015, http://www.scpr.org/news/2015/12/11/56162/socal-s-muslim-community-geographically-ethnically/.

6. U.S. Census Bureau. 2011–2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, Tables B05001, B05003D, and B05003E.

7. This statement refers to the impacted population as Asian American and Pacific Islander instead of AA&NHPI, because Hawai'i statehood classifies Native Hawaiians as U.S. citizens and not immigrants.

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9. Ibid.

10. Shyong, Frank. "ICE Raids Are Targeting Cambodian Immigrants Caught between Two Countries, Advocates Say." *Los Angeles Times*. November 3, 2017, http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-cambodian-deportees-20171103-story.html.

11. Passel, Jeffrey S., and D'veraa Cohn. 2016. "Overall Number of U.S. Unauthorized Immigrants Holds Steady since 2009." Pew Research Center Hispanic Trends, September 20, 2016, http://www.pewhispanic.org/2016/09/20/1-birth-regions-and-nations/.

12. Passel, Jeffrey S., and D'veraa Cohn. 2017. "20 Metro Areas Are Home to Six-in-Ten Unauthorized Immigrants in U.S." Pew Research Factank News in the Numbers, February 9, 2017, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/09/us-metro-areas-unauthorized-immigrants/.

13. Asian Americans Advancing Justice, and Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance. 2014. *A Community of Contrasts: Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in Orange County*. Los Angeles: Asian Americans Advancing Justice.

14. Graham, Jordan. 2017. "ICE Can Jail Up to 120 More Undocumented Immigrants as Orange County Sheriff Contract Expands by $5 Million." *Orange County Register*, May 17, 2017, http://www.ocregister.com/2017/05/09/orange-county-supervisors-expand-federal-immigration-jail-contract-despite-pleas-from-advocates. The Orange County Sheriff's Department is the only local law enforcement agency in the state that permits sheriff's deputies to act as ICE agents. However, the California Legislature recently passed SB 54, which outlaws certain agreements and will limit the ways that the Orange County Sheriff can cooperate with ICE.

15. The Orange County Human Relations Commission separates hate crimes from hate incidents, behavior motivated by bias but not rising to the level of a crime. In California, the law describes hate crimes as those motivated by bias, hatred, or prejudice based on race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, and gender or sexual orientation. It can be harder to prosecute since it is often difficult to prove the specific bias that led to the crime.

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