Ascend®

PAN-ASIAN LEADERS

RACE, GENDER & THE DOUBLE GLASS CEILING:

An Analysis of EEOC National Workforce Data

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FOREWORD

The year 2020 has proven to be both a challenge and an opportunity for businesses to address the widespread call for racial equity against the backdrop of a global pandemic that has disproportionately and adversely affected communities of color. In a concerted effort to become more engaged in the larger national conversation on diversity and inclusion, Ascend formed strategic partnerships with key peer affinity organizations to create a COVID-19 Action Agenda, convened Senior Corporate Executives and Chief Diversity Officers in a series of closed gatherings, and created a safe space for Pan-Asian professionals to discuss race relations in the workplace.

This latest Ascend Foundation research, Race, Gender and the Double Glass Ceiling, affirms that inequities among diverse populations persist and debunks the Model Minority Myth with data that show the overachievement ethos of a Pan-Asian stereotype is not found in the corporate management pipeline. Using the "Executive Parity Index" or EPI, which Ascend Foundation introduced in 2015 to evaluate minority advancement in executive roles in corporations, this report examines the currently available U.S. Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission (EEOC) data sets across industries to analyze representation of each race and gender in Executive vs Professional levels using a numerical comparison of the percentage representation at those levels.

The new EPI analysis of the data from both a racial and a gender perspective finds that since 2015, more needs to be done to address the underlying causes that are limiting advancement for Pan Asians, Blacks and Latinx into executive levels, with Asian and Black women continuing to be the least likely of all cohorts to be executives.

With the focus on diversity and inclusion in the U.S and around the globe today, the insights presented in this report serve as a baseline for companies to re-examine and validate their approach to hiring practices and talent development programs and for future Ascend reports that continue to shed light on progress towards achieving diverse executive representation commensurate with the diverse professional population.

On behalf of the Ascend Foundation and Ascend, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to Tina Kim, Denise Peck, and Buck Gee for their research and analysis of the EEOC data and the important insights derived. I would also like to recognize Ngan Nguyen and the Ascend team and especially thank our corporate partners for their continued guidance and support.

Sincerely,

Anna W. Mok
President & Board Chairman, Ascend Foundation & Ascend

December 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Using the most current national U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) data (2018), we examine senior leadership pipeline in companies in all industries by race and gender. We use the Executive Parity Index (EPI) as a normalized metric to compare representation in executive leadership.

Our findings from this paper echo our main conclusions regarding racial diversity in our previous Ascend research focused on Asians in Silicon Valley. Although we review corporate diversity pipeline data across racial groups, we focus on Asians. Our analysis of national data finds that, compared to their numbers in the U.S. population, Asians are significantly overrepresented as Professionals but are underrepresented as Executives.

INTRODUCTION

Several previous Ascend Foundation papers have focused on understanding the glass ceiling for Asians and other racial minorities through quantifying the representation of US Executives by race and gender based on U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) reports. In Hidden in Plain Sight (2015), we analyzed the leadership pipeline using the 2013 employment data filed with the EEOC by five major Silicon Valley-based companies and introduced the Executive Parity Index as a metric to measure the degree of over- or under- representation of Executives by race and gender. In The Illusion of Asian Success (2017), we analyzed the aggregate EEOC tech workforce 2007-2015 data for Asians, Hispanics and Blacks in the San Francisco Bay Area and found scant progress in improving upward management mobility for minority men and women.

Our earlier focus on the technology sectors in the San Francisco/Silicon Valley area was driven by two factors: 1) technology companies were among the first to publicly disclose their EEO-1 reports, and 2) the tech sector in the Bay Area employs a large number of Asian professionals relative to the local population demographics.

Expanding our research in geographical and industry scope, this paper details the findings from an analysis of the aggregate EEOC database at the national level for all industry sectors using the most recently available EEOC dataset from 2018. As with our earlier work, the analysis includes data for the White, Asian, Black, and Hispanic workforce. Two additional cohorts, Native Americans and Native Hawaiians, are included in EEOC datasets but are not included in this analysis. As each of these cohorts represent less than 0.40% of the national Professional workforce, their numbers are too small to enable the same level of comparison and sensitivity analysis as with the larger minority races.

Our conclusions from this national analysis are entirely consistent with insights from our earlier papers: that all racial minorities are underrepresented at the Executive level relative to their Professional levels, and that Asian men and women continue to be among the most likely to be hired, but least likely to be Executives. Moreover, we continue to find that race generally has a greater effect on the glass ceiling than gender alone.

EEOC DATA

All private employers with 100 or more employees are subject to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and are required to file a confidential EEO-1 report with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on an annual basis. The EEO-1 report provides a racial and gender breakdown of employees by job categories, and aggregated EEO-1 data is published by national, state, and region on the EEOC website. In this report we examine national data for two of the job categories, "Executives and Officials and Managers" and "Professionals" and use the terms "Executives" and "Professionals" to refer to those categories.

Executives are generally defined by the EEOC as "…those individuals within two reporting levels of the CEO, whose responsibilities require frequent interaction with the CEO". Professionals are defined as non-management jobs requiring "… bachelor and graduate degrees, and/or professional certification"; this category is commonly referred to as entry-level or individual contributors.

Our racial terminology in this report uses the major race categories in the EEO-1 reports: White, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian. Consistent with the EEO-1 definition, we use the term "Asians" to refer to Asians and Asian Americans, both foreign-born and U.S.-born, and to include any person having origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent.

Figure 1. National Aggregate

All Industries, Professional Workforce 2018

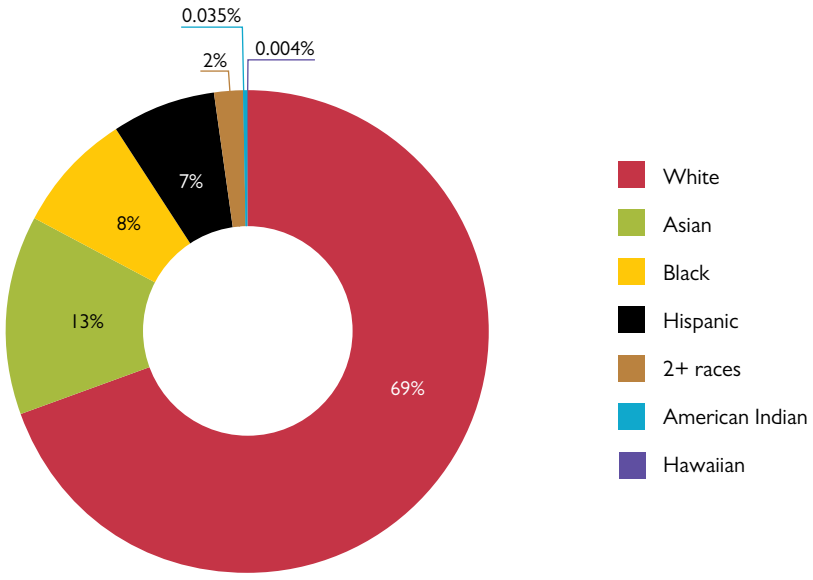


Figure 1 shows the national data for the Professional job category in 2018, a total of 12,275,798 Professionals. Whites made up the majority (69%). Although only 6% of the U.S. population, Asians (13%) were the second largest Professional group. After Asians, Blacks (8%), Hispanics (7%), 2 or more races (2%), American Indians (0.035%), and Hawaiian (0.004%) complete the Professional workforce.

Figure 2. National Aggregate

All Industries, Executive Workforce 2018

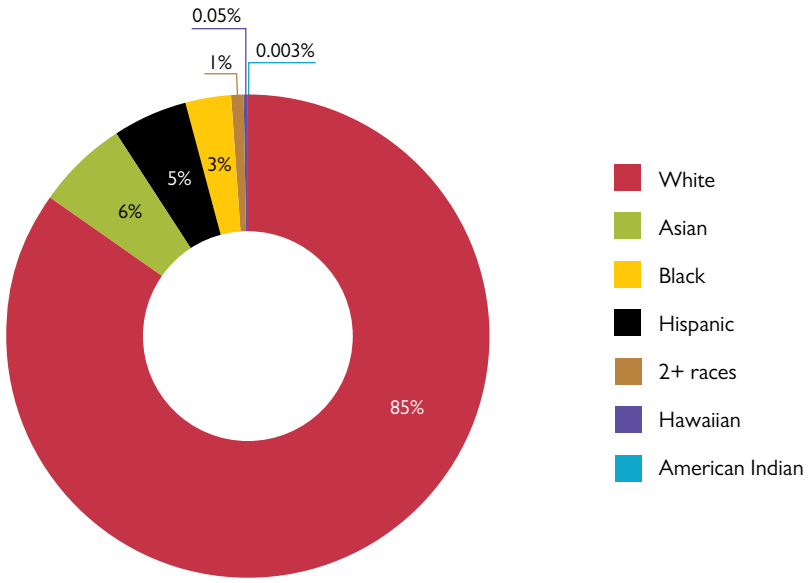


Figure 2 shows the national data for the Executive job category in 2018, a total of 904,220 Executives. Whites (85%) make up the majority of Executives, followed by Asians (6%), Hispanics (5%), Blacks (3%), 2 or more races (1%), Hawaiian (0.05%), and American Indian (0.003%). Comparing racial representation at the job categories in Figures 1 and 2, only Whites have Executive representation higher than at the Professional level. Asian representation as Executives is significantly lower than its representation at the lower Professional level.

DATA ANALYSIS

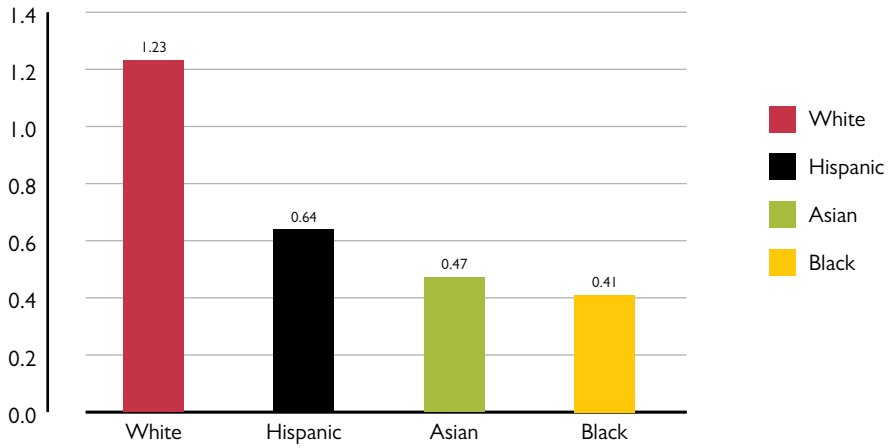
In general, most people would consider it reasonable if the proportion of each race and gender in Executive jobs is similar to racial and gender diversity in its Professional workforce. A simple and intuitive way to analyze reasonable representation is a numerical comparison of the percentage representation at those levels, which we define as "Executive Parity Index" or EPI, where:

$$\text{Executive Parity Index (EPI)} = \frac{\text{Percentage of Executives}}{\text{Percentage of Professionals}}$$

A cohort with an EPI number of 1.0 means that its Executive representation is at parity with its Professional representation. To interpret the index, an EPI of 1.20 means the cohort is 20% above parity, or overrepresented relative to the size of the Professional workforce. An EPI of 0.80 means Executive representation is 20% below parity, or similarly underrepresented.

We will be using the EPI in subsequent charts and analysis. Using data from Figures 1 and 2, we examine Executive Parity Indices for Whites, Hispanics, Asians, and Blacks in 2018.

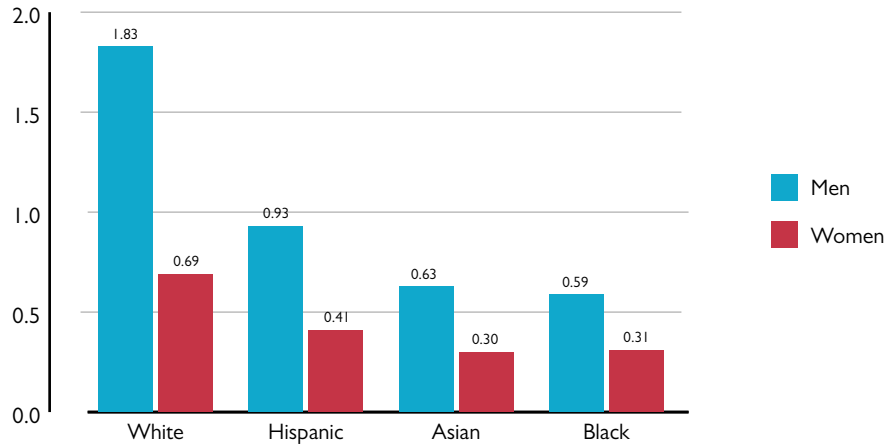
Figure 3. EPI by Race 2018



As shown in Figure 3, the difference between White EPI and the EPI of all other races is significant. Asians and Blacks have the lowest EPI score. The EPI calculation shows that Whites are significantly above parity or overrepresented and, although the Hispanic, Asian, and Black EPI figures have some differences, they are all well below parity and even further below White EPI.

To analyze the issue of gender in the workforce, we calculate EPI for each gender by race, shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. EPI by Race and Gender 2018



In Figure 4, White men are the only group with EPI above parity. However, the EPI for White, Hispanic, Asian, and Black men are significantly higher than their women counterparts and show that, for each race, men are about twice as likely to be Executives than women. Figure 4 also shows that Asian men and Black men are the least likely men to be Executives, and Asian and Black women are the least likely women to be Executives.

To better understand the impact of race vs gender, we can use the EPI figures in Figure 4 to compare EPI gaps between Whites and each racial minority. Figure 5 compares Asian and White EPI. It finds the racial gap for each gender by comparing White EPI against Asian EPI and the gender gap by comparing Men EPI against Women EPI for each race.

Figure 5: EPI by Race and Gender

White and Asian

	Men	Women	GENDER GAP
White	1.834	0.693	165%
Asian	0.629	0.296	112%
RACIAL GAP	192%	134%	

Figure 5 shows that there is a 165% EPI gap between White men and women and a 112% between Asian men and women. In other words, White men are 165% more likely to be Executives than White women; Asian men are 112% more likely to be Executives than Asian women. Figure 5 also shows that White men are 192% more likely to be Executives than Asian men; White women are 134% more likely to be Executives than Asian women.

For both Asian men and women, the racial gap is significantly greater than the gender gap. For Asian women, the racial gap is larger than the gender gap (134% > 112%).

Figures 6 and 7 examine Black and Hispanic racial and gender gaps.

Figure 6: EPI by Race and Gender

White and Black

	Men	Women	GENDER GAP
White	1.834	0.693	165%
Black	0.595	0.314	89%
RACIAL GAP	208%	120%	

The White-vs-Black EPI comparison in Figure 6 shows that for both Black men and women, the racial gap is significantly greater than the gender gap. However, Black women's racial gap is smaller than Asian women's racial gap, while Black men's racial gap is greater than Asian men's racial gap.

Figure 7: EPI by Race and Gender

White and Hispanic

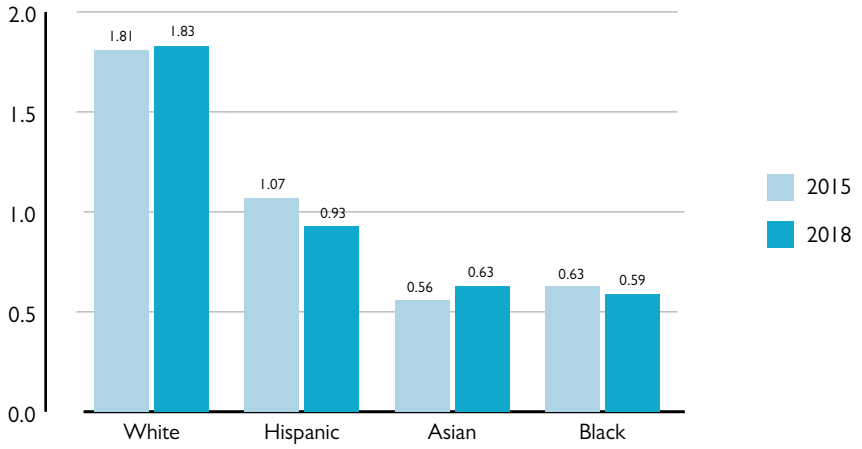
	Men	Women	GENDER GAP
White	1.834	0.693	165%
Hispanic	0.931	0.407	128%
RACIAL GAP	97%	70%	

The White-vs-Hispanic EPI comparison in Figure 7 shows that for Hispanic women, the racial gap is smaller than the gender gap (70% vs. 128%). Note that Hispanics are the only minority group where the racial gap is smaller than the gender gap.

In Figures 5, 6, and 7, we see that the racial gap for Asians and Blacks EPI are almost twice the Hispanics EPI. Hispanic women have the lowest racial gap, while Black men have the highest racial gap. Whites have the highest gender gap, while Blacks have lowest gender gap.

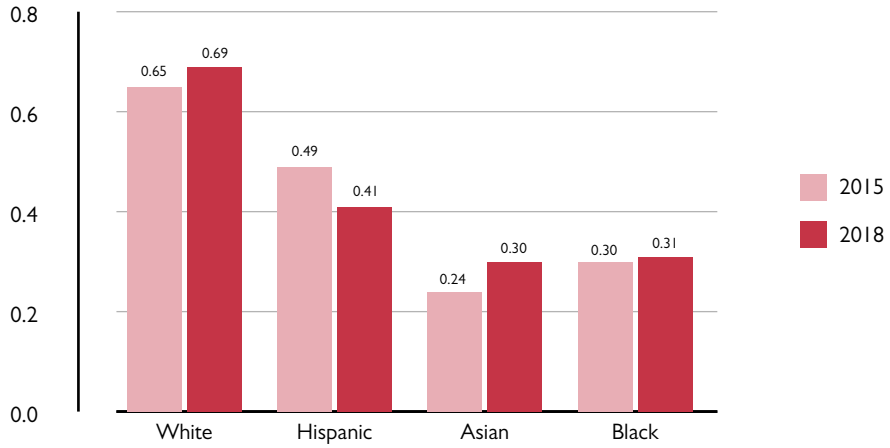
Since a single year analysis does not indicate a trend, we mined the EEOC database for an equivalent 2015 analysis. In a snapshot of two non-consecutive years, Figures 8 shows EPI scores for men in 2015 vs 2018.

Figure 8: EPI Score for Men by Race: 2015 and 2018



Although this only compares data from 2015 and 2018, the EPI comparisons in Figure 8 suggest that Executive representation for Asian men may be improving, while Hispanic and Black men representation may be decreasing.

Figure 9: EPI Score for Women by Race: 2015 and 2018



Comparing 2015 to 2018 EPI for women, Figure 9 suggests that Executive representation for White women may be improving and remain much higher than non-White women by a large margin. It appears that Hispanic women actually fare better than other non-White women. While the EPI of Asian women may be improving, Asian women remain the least likely of all men and women to be Executives.

Overall, though, there were not any major changes in EPI from 2015 to 2018.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we evaluated national 2018 EEOC data for all industry sectors to understand relative representation at Executive vs. Profession levels in the U.S. workforce. As was done in previous Ascend research papers, we used the Executive Parity Index to compare normalized representation by race and gender. Our conclusions from this broader EPI analysis are generally consistent with those found in our previous technology sector-focused research except where noted:

- Asians are the only racial group to have a Professional workforce representation (13%) that significantly exceeds, or roughly doubles, their representation in the underlying population data (6%).
- From a racial perspective, EPI analysis shows that Whites overall are overrepresented in the Executive level, while all minority races are underrepresented at the Executive level, with Asians and Blacks the least likely to be Executives.
- From a gender perspective, EPI analysis shows that Executive representation for men is higher than that of women of their own race, confirming that there is a gender glass ceiling in each race. Moreover, EPI metrics by race show that EPI for men exceed that of women in the same race by about 2x. Asian women and Black women are the least likely of all cohorts to be Executives.
- Black, Hispanic, and Asian women, as well as White women, are below Executive Parity. The strong overall White overrepresentation at Executive level is entirely attributed to 83% overrepresentation by White men. This contrasts sharply with our previous 2017 research on the tech sector in the Bay Area in which both White women and White men had exceeded Executive Parity.
- In evaluating the impact that gender and race play in the underrepresentation of women Executives, EPI analysis shows that for Asian and Black women, racial gaps are significantly larger than gender gaps, with gender and race combined to create a “double whammy” for these minority women. For Hispanic women, the racial gap is smaller than the gender gap.
- In comparing 2015 with 2018 data, it appears that little had changed materially in the three-year interval.

The findings from this paper are generally consistent with our main conclusions regarding racial diversity in our previous research focused on Asians in Silicon Valley. Although we review corporate diversity data for all racial minorities, we focus on Asians; and our analysis of national data finds that Asians are significantly overrepresented as Professionals compared to their numbers in the general population, but much less likely to be Executives. In future papers, we will look at U.S. regional and industry sector differences.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

TINA KIM has worked in education for three years and in tech startups for two years. She received her Bachelor of Arts from University of California Santa Barbara, Master of Arts from California State University Fullerton, and currently pursuing her Master of Business Administration at University of Southern California.

DENISE PECK is an executive advisor to Ascend and develops and facilitates several of its leadership programs for Asian professionals and managers. Denise spent her career in executive positions at Cisco and Sun Microsystems in Silicon Valley while serving in leadership roles for Asian employee networks and diversity councils. She has a BA degree in economics from U.C. Berkeley and an MBA from Stanford University.

BUCK GEE is an executive advisor to Ascend. He retired in 2008 from Cisco Systems, where he was vice president and general manager of the Data Center Business Unit. He served as executive sponsor for Cisco's Asian employee resource network and on Cisco's Inclusion and Diversity Council. He joined Cisco with its 2004 acquisition of Andiamo Systems where he was president and CEO. He holds BS/EE and MS/EE degrees from Stanford University and an MBA from the Harvard Business School.

ABOUT ASCEND FOUNDATION AND ASCEND®

Ascend Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Pan-Asian organization primarily engaged in research with a mission to advocate, provide scholastic excellence and need-based scholarships, and support and assist communities in need. Established in 2005, Ascend (@AscendLeader), the largest, non-profit Pan-Asian membership organization for senior executives, business professionals and students with 60+ chapters in North America, is committed to advancing contributions of Pan-Asians across the career lifecycle to make greater impacts as leaders in the workplace and the community.

Visit www.ascendleadership.org for more information.

APPENDIX

1. EEOC Aggregate Database: https://www.eeoc.gov/statistics/employment/jobpatterns/eeo1/2018
2. "Hidden in Plain Sight", Gee, Peck, Wong, Ascend May 2015, https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ascendleadership.org/resource/resmgr/research/hiddeninplainsight_paper_042.pdf
3. "Lost in Aggregation", Gee, Wong, Ascend September, 2016 https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ascendleadership.org/resource/resmgr/research/lostinaggregation-paper.pdf