

Relationship between work patterns and family patterns of asian americans



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In today's world combining family and professional life has become a challenge to the family unit. Even in the wealthier western nations it is evident that a single earned income is insufficient to adequately satisfy the needs of a family. This means that both parents often have to work in order for them to meet the financial obligations of the family. Moreover, with the better levels of education that are available to both men and women, the modern woman is often faced with the dilemma between having a family or building a career. And the case is that often the modern woman does not wish to entirely give up her career to have a family. These pressures on families are experienced across the board irrespective of the ethnic background of the families. Asian Americans, like other minorities in America, are aware that they have to use hard work and employment if they are to achieve socioeconomic mobility in the United States. And coming from a cultural background that encourages hard work (Gladwell 239) it is no surprise that Asian Americans have adapted to and developed innovative strategies to enable them attain the much desired socioeconomic mobility. In America today, Asian Americans have the highest rate of college and university degrees. Many of them have realized impressive occupational successes and are poised to become prominent members of their respective industries. However, it is important to note that the Asian American population within itself is culturally diverse because of their different countries of origin. This diversity is reflected in their employment patterns which range from unskilled service sector workers, to highly-educated and highly-skilled professionals. All the same, even for the later, Asian American workers incomes still lag behind those of their peers who are White. Asian

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Americans lack prestigious occupations due to the glass ceiling barriers within the workplace (Le 20). These glass ceiling mechanisms may arise due to conscious or unconscious bias in the recruitment processes for senior executives, poor networking in many occupational environments and institutional tracking where we find most Asian Americans confined to technical and professional jobs. For example when we look at computer, engineering and other scientific fields we find the Chinese-Americans to be over-represented. Whereas technical and professional jobs pay well up to a certain point, they lack the career tracks that lead up to executive positions. There is also the generalization that Asian Americans lack leadership, language and communication skills necessary for promotion. Some Asian Americans have been able to set up their businesses and being self-employed gives them a sense of personal autonomy. However, for the companies to be to be profitable, many have to work very long hours and use family members as unpaid labor. This may however pose a challenge since in most Asian cultures parents are expected to take care of their children's upbringing and education without them having to contribute or participate. For instance under Chinese culture parents are expected to give financial, physical and moral support to their children up to tertiary levels of education. Parents therefore, have to work extra hard to meet all the family's obligations. Lack of time at home may cause difficulties in the family where children may not fare very well in school thus one parent especially the mother may be required to work part time or less hours so as to ensure that the children and running of the home is not neglected. In future the children are expected to work and take care of their parents needs in old age. In conclusion the Asian American families work hard to ensure that they

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are economically viable and make progress in their occupations but at the same time try to maintain their culture by ensuring that the home is managed well by having one parent work less hours or take up a part time job. Works Cited Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers*. New York: Little Brown & Co, 2008. Print. Le, C. N. "Employment & Occupational Patterns." *Asian-Nation?: The Landscape of Asian America* 17 May 2011. Web. 17 May 2011.