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## COQUAL'S NEW STUDY EXAMINES THE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE AAPI COMMUNITY AND FINDS RACIAL PREJUDICE, STEREOTYPES, MICROAGGRESSIONS, CAREER STALL, AND INEQUITABLE TREATMENT

***Strangers At Home: The Asian and Asian American Professional Experience* Finds 62% of Asian Professionals Say Ongoing Violence Against the A/AA/PI Community Has Negatively Impacted Their Fear of Racial Discrimination**

**NEW YORK, January 19, 2023** — The increase in anti-Asian violence since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on Asian, Asian American and Pacific Islander (A/AA/PI) professionals in and outside of the workplace. **Coqual**, a leading global think tank, published a new report today, *Strangers at Home: The Asian and Asian American Professional Experience*, which documents the daily indignities of racism and microaggressions, addresses a broken career pipeline, and acknowledges the diversity within this large cohort and why it is important to disaggregate data about them. Coqual's study features *The Erasure and Invisibility of Pacific Islander Professionals*, a white paper within the report that spotlights the Pacific Islander professional experience, treating them separately, not as a monolithic group.

Given the ongoing violence against the A/AA/PI community, Coqual finds a large portion of respondents across racial backgrounds strongly believe their companies should take a stand. Nearly half (49%) of Asian and Asian American professionals surveyed say it's very or extremely important to them that their companies address violence against the A/AA/PI community. But only about one in four (26%) Asian and Asian American professionals feel that their company is very vocal on the issue of violence against the community.

"The current climate of anti-Asian hate has forced the community to fear for their psychological and physical safety in the world and the workplace," said Lanaya Irvin, Coqual Chief Executive Officer. "This new report brings visibility to the challenges A/AA/PI employees face and provides concrete solutions for company leaders as they address inequities and support their employees."

The study employed Coqual's rigorous mixed methodology -- the results are from a survey of 2,634 college-educated professionals who were employed full-time in America, 17 focus groups and Insights sessions, and expert interviews. To show the vast differences within this large, diverse community, Coqual featured a variety of intersectional identities. In addition, the report presents data by regional background whenever possible: East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, with precise definitions included for each.

According to the study, nearly two-thirds (63%) of Asian and Asian American respondents say that the ongoing violence against the A/AA/PI community has negatively impacted their mental health and nearly half (45%) say it has negatively affected their physical health. Additionally, 62% say the violence has negatively impacted their feelings of safety commuting and half (50%) say it has negatively impacted their ability to focus at work.

"Solving for the challenges Asian, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities face in the workplace requires dedicated focus," said Melonie Parker, Google's Chief Diversity Officer. "Coqual's latest report, which we are proud to sponsor, presents fresh data and insights that everyone can use to better understand the nuances of their experiences, and builds on the data-driven approach proven to help address equity across communities. It's important work that can light the way to a more informed and inclusive path forward."

Coqual finds more than one in three (36%) of Asian and Asian American professionals say they have experienced racial prejudice at their current or former companies. According to the survey data, Asian and Asian American respondents face several microaggressions more frequently than their peers of other races. Pervasive stereotypes such as being seen as quiet, and hardworking outsiders affect the workplace experiences of Asian and Asian American employees.

Coqual's report examines the two specific types of microaggressions faced by this cohort: the perpetual foreigner and overvalidation. Microaggressions such as colleagues assuming they are not born in the U.S., asking "where are you really from?"

and commenting on their good English-speaking skills maintain the perpetual foreigner concept; while overvalidation assumes that they are good at math and tech skills and labels them as hardworking or smarter because of their race. The study finds that some of these microaggressions seem like compliments, but their effects are harmful, contributing to a wider structural impact such as being pigeon-holed, less visible, having their contributions overlooked or being assigned unfair workloads.

Diversity in executive representation is critical for advancing structural equity, signaling to junior-level employees that a senior-level position is possible. According to the report, Asian and Asian American professionals are the least likely of any racial group surveyed (29%) to say they have role models at their company, the least likely to say they have strong networks (17%), and least likely to have a sponsor (21%). Due to under representation in senior roles, lack of role models, and thin support networks, A/AA/PI employees have few, if any, advocates in powerful positions to help their career advancement.

To avoid contributing to the systemic erasure of Pacific Islanders, Coqual captured the PI professional experiences through focus groups and interviews. A white paper within the report, *The Erasure and Invisibility of Pacific Islander Professionals*, features a detailed breakdown of this cohort and finds that Pacific Islander professionals share some workplace obstacles with Asian and Asian American professionals. But the report reveals that due to their lack of representation, for some, the challenge is not microaggressions or stereotypes, it's invisibility, erasure, and exclusion from DE&I.

To help companies drive sustained, meaningful change, Coqual has developed a framework: *Audit, Awaken, Act* to provide steps for companies, leaders, and DE&I practitioners to use as they develop and execute their DE&I strategies. The full report includes examples, pointers, and pitfalls to avoid in each stage of the framework.

- **Audit:** Assess the current state by engaging in organizational introspection. Identify where systemic inequities exist. Companies should avoid treating A/AA/PI professionals as a monolithic cohort and disaggregate the data and take inventory of missing leadership qualities.
- **Awaken:** Share audit results with leaders and employees and educate them on the structural racism that A/AA/PI professionals face. Build bridges for communication and prioritize solidarity among the cohort.
- **Act:** With the knowledge and understanding developed in the Audit and Awaken phases, companies must engage in a collaborative effort to build solutions, hold employees accountable to contribute and take action to drive systemic change.

**Methodology:** The primary sources of data for this research report consisted of a survey; virtual focus groups; Insights In-Depth® sessions (a proprietary web-based tool used to conduct voice-facilitated virtual focus groups); and one-on-one interviews. Through our qualitative methods, we reached more than 170 professionals, experts, and practitioners who have expertise on A/AA/PI experiences in the U.S. The survey was conducted online in August and September 2022 among 2,634 respondents (824 Asian and Asian American professionals, 612 Hispanic/Latino professionals, 565 Black professionals, 544 White professionals, and 89 multiracial professionals), with the criteria being that they were at least 21 years old, were currently employed full time in professional occupations in the U.S. and had earned at least a bachelor's degree.

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**About Coqual:** Coqual is a leading global, nonprofit think tank dedicated to helping leaders design diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces where every person belongs. Founded in 2004, Coqual provides in-depth research, thought leadership, and data-driven, actionable solutions for companies to address bias and barriers to inclusion for underrepresented populations in the workplace. Coqual's cutting-edge research and advisory services focus on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, veteran status and LGBTQ identities, and others—as well as the intersections among these groups. For more information, visit [www.coqual.org](http://www.coqual.org).