



STILL THE “OTHER?” : PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD CHINESE AND ASIAN AMERICANS

SURVEY FACT SHEET

As an update to their 2001 report, the Committee of 100's (C-100) survey – conducted by Harris Interactive among both the U.S. general population and Chinese Americans by telephone from January 5-30, 2009 – reveals current perspectives and obstacles for Chinese and Asian Americans in the United States. A full copy of the report, including C-100's conclusions, recommendations and a full methodology, is available at: www.Committee100.org.

Highlights include:

Key Findings: Lack of Knowledge about Chinese and Asian Americans

- More than a third of the general population say that they rarely or never interact with Chinese Americans at work, in the community, or socially, with at least 28 percent of the general population saying that they rarely or never interact with Asian Americans.
- The majority of the general population cannot make meaningful distinctions between Chinese Americans and Asian Americans in general. This “lumping effect” is the same result as in the 2001 survey.
- A majority of the general population (51 percent) incorrectly believes less than 25 percent of Asian Americans in the United States were born in the country. The actual percentage of native-born Asian Americans is approximately 30 percent.
- A substantial majority of the general population believes there are far more Asians in the United States than in reality: 74 percent say Asians constitute more than 8 percent of the population, with 40 percent saying Asians are 16 percent or more of all Americans (Asian Americans are approximately 5 percent of the U.S. population.)

Key Findings: Loyalty of Asian Americans

- Among the general population, 45 percent believe Asian Americans are more loyal to their countries of ancestry than to the United States, up from 37 percent in the 2001 survey.
- Approximately three in four of the Chinese Americans surveyed say Chinese Americans would support the United States in military or economic conflicts, but only about 56 percent of the general population believes that to be true.
- Forty-four percent of the general population believes that Asian Americans should think in more American ways and 20 percent believe Asian Americans do not care what happens to anyone but their own kind.
- Chinese Americans think of themselves as either equally Chinese and American (48 percent) or more American than Chinese (39 percent). Only 12 percent consider themselves more Chinese than American.

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Key Findings: Political Influence

- Among the general population, 36 percent think that Asian Americans have about the right amount of power and influence in Washington, while only 15 percent of Chinese Americans agree. Forty-seven percent of the general population believes that Asian Americans have too little power in Washington, with 82 percent of Chinese Americans agreeing.
- In reality, there are currently six Asian American members of the House of Representatives from continental U.S. states and two Senators from Hawaii (no Senator from a continental U.S. state). There is only one Governor, Bobby Jindal of Louisiana.

Key Findings: Leadership in Corporate America

- While 50 percent of the general population believes Asian Americans are adequately represented on corporate boards, only 23 percent of Chinese Americans agree. In reality, Asian Americans hold only about 1.5 percent of corporate board seats among Fortune 500 Companies.¹
- Forty-six percent of the general population believes Asian Americans are promoted at the same pace as Caucasian Americans, with only 29 percent of Chinese Americans saying the same.

Key Findings: Representation in Education Institutions

- Sixty-five percent of the general population believes Asian American students are adequately represented on college campuses, with 45 percent of Chinese Americans agreeing and 36 percent arguing that they are underrepresented.
- While Asian Americans are well represented as students (6.4 percent) and faculty (6.2 percent), only 2.4 percent are represented in the positions of president, provost or chancellor.² There are only 33 Asian American college presidents in the United States, out of about 3,200.

Key Findings: Chinese American Perceptions

- A large majority (85 percent) of Chinese Americans are optimistic about the opportunities for themselves in the United States.
- Sixty-three percent of the general population feels Asian Americans face a lot or some discrimination, and 69 percent of Chinese Americans agree that Asian Americans encounter a lot or some prejudice.
- Fifty-eight percent of Chinese Americans report they have been discriminated against because of their race. Most of them experience verbal harassment (39 percent) or disrespect/poor service (27 percent).
- Chinese Americans believe Asian Americans (54 percent) are as vulnerable as Arab Americans (54 percent) in getting arrested by FBI for spying for a foreign country without sufficient evidence.

Key Findings: Fitting into U.S. Culture

- In 2001, 56 percent of the general population believed that Chinese Americans had contributed much to the American culture; the number has now risen to 73 percent.
- A large majority of the general population (87 percent) perceives Asian Americans as fitting well into mainstream U.S. culture, with 79 percent of Chinese Americans agreeing.

¹ "Corporate Board Report Card," Committee of 100, 2007.

² "Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education Report Card," Committee of 100, 2005.