

PREFACE

In 1965, the Asian-American share of the U.S. population stood at less than 1 percent—having been held down by a century’s worth of exclusionary policies explicitly based on race. That was the year—at the height of the civil rights movement and in the heat of a roaring economy—that the U.S. government opened the gates to immigration from all parts of the world, Asia included. The effect has been transformative for the nation and for Asian Americans. Today they make up nearly 6% of the U.S. population. And in an economy that increasingly relies on highly skilled workers, they are the best-educated, highest-income, fastest-growing race group in the country.

This report sets out to draw a comprehensive portrait of Asian Americans. It examines their demographic characteristics; their social, political and family values; their life goals, their economic circumstances and language usage patterns; their sense of identity and belonging; their attitudes about work, education and career; their marriage and parenting norms; their views on intermarriage and filial obligation; their perceptions about discrimination and intergroup relations; their religious beliefs and practices; and the nature of their ties to their countries of origin. It makes comparisons on most of these measures with the attitudes and experiences of the U.S. general public—and, where relevant, with those of other major racial and ethnic groups in this country. It also explores similarities and differences among Asian Americans themselves, a diverse population with distinctive languages, religions, cultures, histories and pathways to the United States. The analysis makes comparisons between Asian immigrants and U.S.-born Asians, as well as among Asian Americans from different countries of origin.

The report is based on a Pew Research Center telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 3,511 Asian Americans conducted from Jan. 3 to March 27, 2012, in English and seven Asian languages. The sample was designed to enable findings to be reported about each of the six largest country of origin subgroups—Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Indian Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Korean Americans and Japanese Americans—as well as about the Asian-American population as a whole. The report combines these survey findings with a detailed analysis of economic and demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other official sources. The report also includes census data on 14 additional Asian origin subgroups living in the U.S., as well as census data on characteristics of nine of these additional groups—Pakistanis, Cambodians, Hmong, Thai, Laotians, Bangladeshis, Indonesians, Sri Lankans and Malaysians; this material, which was added in April 2013, begins on page 66.

Immigration is the engine that makes and remakes America. It is also a riveting personal and societal drama, one that unfolds in a complex interplay of social, economic, religious, political

and cultural transformations—among the immigrants and their descendants, and within the nation as a whole.

At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, Asians have become the largest stream of new immigrants to the U.S.—and, thus, the latest leading actors in this great American drama. The fact that they are coming at a time when a rising Asia is flexing its economic and political muscles on the international stage only adds to the richness of their unique American journey. We hope this research helps to illuminate their story.

Paul Taylor

Executive Vice President, Pew Research Center

About the Authors

This report was edited by Paul Taylor, executive vice president of the Pew Research Center and director of its Social & Demographic Trends project, who also wrote the overview. Senior writer D’Vera Cohn and research associate Wendy Wang co-wrote Chapter 1 with assistance from senior demographer Jeffrey S. Passel, associate director of research Rakesh Kochhar and senior research associate Richard Fry. Associate director Kim Parker wrote Chapters 2 and 5 and supervised copy-editing of the report. Cary Funk, senior researcher, wrote Chapters 3, 6 and 7, and supervised number-checking of the report. Gretchen M. Livingston, senior researcher, wrote Chapter 4. Wang contributed to all aspects of the research project, particularly on the demographic analysis in Chapter 1 and on survey analysis in Chapter 5. Research assistants Eileen Patten and Seth Motel assisted with all aspects of report production, including compiling and checking the topline of findings, preparing charts, number-checking the report and formatting the final report. Research associate Ana Gonzalez-Barrera number-checked Chapter 1. Research associates Jessica Hamar Martinez, Besheer Mohamed and Neha Sahgal, and research analysts Noble Kuriakose and Elizabeth Sciupac contributed to Chapter 7.

The survey questionnaire was drafted by Pew Research staff, with Funk taking the lead on coordinating this aspect of the research project. Janelle Wong, a faculty member and director of the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Maryland, served as a special external adviser and was a source of expertise through all stages of the survey development. Pew Research’s director of survey research, Scott Keeter, and senior researchers Leah Christian, Greg Smith and Funk worked to design the sampling strategy with sampling statisticians from Abt SRBI, particularly Courtney Kennedy, senior methodologist and vice president of the advanced methods group. Christian wrote the methodology report that appears in Appendix 1 with assistance from other Pew Research staff and Abt SRBI. Data collection on the survey was deftly managed by Dean Williams of Abt SRBI. Center Founding

Director Andrew Kohut provided research and editorial guidance throughout all phases of the project, as did Mark Hugo Lopez, associate director of the Pew Hispanic Center, Kochhar and Fry. The report was copy-edited by Marcia Kramer of Kramer Editing Services, with the exception of Chapter 7, which was copy-edited by Pew Research editorial staff.

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The Pew Research Center was fortunate to be able to draw on guidance from advisers from many segments of the Asian-American scholarly community: Wendy Cadge, Hien Duc Do, Diana Eck, Yen Le Espiritu, Joaquin Jay Gonzalez III, Jane Naomi Iwamura, Khatyi Joshi, Rebecca Y. Kim, Pyong Gap Min, Jerry Z. Park, Sharon A. Suh, Fenggang Yang and Min Zhou. (See Appendix 3 for a description of their academic credentials.)

Although the survey was guided by the counsel of our advisers, consultants and contractors, the Pew Research Center is solely responsible for the execution of the research and the analysis and reporting of the findings.

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Roadmap to the Report

Chapter 1, *Portrait of Asian Americans*, includes a detailed demographic analysis of Asian Americans based primarily on U.S. Census Bureau and government economic data—highlighting their socio-economic, educational and household characteristics. The analysis includes comparisons across racial and ethnic groups (Asian American, white, black, Hispanic) as well as comparisons across the six largest U.S. Asian groups. In addition, the chapter provides a profile of each of those six U.S. Asian groups, including a brief history, key demographic characteristics and key attitudinal findings from the survey.

Chapters 2 through 7 draw on the results of the survey of Asian Americans. Chapter 2, *Life in the United States*, looks at how Asian Americans view the country, their lives and their economic progress. It also explores the issues of identity and assimilation. Chapter 3, *Intergroup Relations*, looks at how Asian Americans interact with other racial and ethnic groups and their views on intermarriage. It also looks at their perceptions of and experiences with discrimination. In Chapter 4, *Immigration and Transnational Ties*, Asian Americans assess conditions in the U.S. compared with their countries of origin on issues ranging from economic opportunity to the strength of family ties. It also explores Asian Americans' connections to their countries of origin, including the share sending remittances to family and friends outside of the U.S. Chapter 5, *Family and Personal Values*, looks at the priorities and

life goals of Asian Americans and how they compare with those of the general public. It also explores attitudes about proper parenting styles and how far into adulthood a parent's influence should extend. Chapter 6, *Political and Civic Life*, focuses on the political attitudes, affiliations and ideologies of Asian Americans. It also looks at community involvement and voter participation. Finally, Chapter 7, *Religious Affiliation, Beliefs and Practices*, uses religious affiliation as the primary frame of analysis, focusing on four main groups—Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and the religiously unaffiliated. Chapter 7, which begins on page 169, is an adaptation of the overview of a larger report by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life: "Asian Americans: A Mosaic of Faiths."

Following the survey chapters is a detailed survey methodology, as well as a topline questionnaire that shows each survey question with results for all Asian Americans, the six largest U.S. Asian groups and the general public (where available).

The full report and several interactive resources are available online at <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/asianamericans/>. Interactive components include a [table with data on the 20 largest U.S. Asian population groups by country of origin](#), a [U.S. map with state- and county-level population data](#), a [video of a discussion highlighting some of the report's key findings](#), and three [slideshows with key religion-related findings](#).

About the Survey

The Pew Research Center's 2012 Asian-American Survey is based on telephone interviews conducted by landline and cell phone with a nationally representative sample of 3,511 Asian adults ages 18 and older living in the United States. The survey was conducted in all 50 states, including Alaska and Hawaii, and the District of Columbia. The survey was designed to include representative subsamples of the six largest Asian groups in the U.S. population: Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese. The survey also included Asians from other Asian subgroups.

Respondents who identified as "Asian or Asian American, such as Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese" were eligible to complete the survey interview, including those who identified with more than one race and regardless of Hispanic ethnicity. The question on racial identity also offered the following categories: white, black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

Classification into U.S. Asian groups is based on self-identification of respondent's "specific Asian group." Asian groups named in this open-ended question were "Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, or of some other Asian background." Respondents self-identified with more than 22 specific Asian groups. Those who identified with more than one

Asian group were classified based on the group with which “they identify most.” Respondents who identified their specific Asian group as Taiwanese or Chinese Taipei are classified as Chinese Americans for this report.

The survey was conducted using a probability sample from multiple sources. The data are weighted to produce a final sample that is representative of Asian adults in the United States. Survey interviews were conducted under the direction of Abt SRBI, in English and Cantonese, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog and Vietnamese. For more details on the methodology, see Appendix 1.

- The survey was conducted Jan. 3-March 27, 2012 in all 50 states, including Alaska and Hawaii, and the District of Columbia.
- 3,511 interviews including 728 interviews with Chinese Americans, 504 interviews with Filipino Americans, 580 interviews with Indian Americans, 515 interviews with Japanese Americans, 504 interviews with Korean Americans, 504 interviews with Vietnamese Americans and 176 interviews with Asians of other backgrounds.
- Margin of error is plus or minus 2.4 percentage points for results based on the total sample at the 95% confidence level. Margins of error for results based on subgroups of Asian Americans, ranging from 3.1 to 7.8 percentage points, are included in Appendix 1.

Notes on Terminology

Unless otherwise noted, survey results for “Asian Americans” and “U.S. Asians” refer to adults living in the United States, whether U.S. citizens or not U.S. citizens and regardless of immigration status. Both terms are used interchangeably. Adults refers to those ages 18 and older.

U.S. Asian groups, subgroups, heritage groups and country of origin groups are used interchangeably to reference respondent’s self-classification into “specific Asian groups.” This self-identification may or may not match a respondent’s country of birth or their parent’s country of birth.

Unless otherwise noted, whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Hispanics are of any race. Asians can also be Hispanic.

Poverty is calculated based on the total population. For this and other reasons, the share in poverty in this report is not comparable with the Census Bureau’s official poverty rate. (Note:

The report was revised July 12, 2012, to change “poverty rate” to “% in poverty” or “share in poverty,” and to add a definition to Notes on Terminology.)