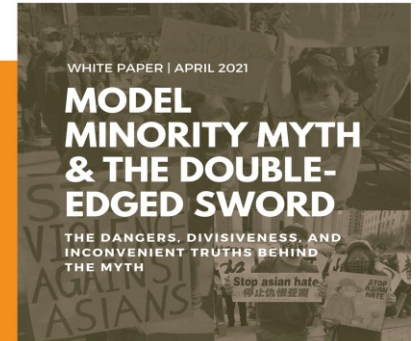


ASCEND WHITE PAPER OVERVIEW:

MODEL MINORITY MYTH & THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD



The Asian American Narrative

Asian Americans have rarely been in control of defining our place in the American story; *rather, it continues to be dictated to us, leaving us vulnerable to shifting political, economic, and social tides*

Chinese Exclusion

Chinese remain the only singled out ethnic group ever to be barred from entering the country by an Act of Congress

8 U.S. Code CHAPTER 7—
EXCLUSION OF CHINESE

Japanese Internment

During World War 2, Italian and German-Americans/ remained free and prominent while Japanese-Americans were interned, since they were politically and socially voiceless

e.g. NY Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, baseball star Joe DiMaggio, US Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz

Cold War Whiplash

US political expediency means frequent, complete reversals in media messaging on who is friend and who is foe
e.g. enemy Imperial Japan > ally post-war Japan > adversary economically ascendant Japan

ally Nationalist China > enemy Communist China > partner Made in China > adversary trade war China

Yellow Peril > Model Minority

The biggest swing of all, Asians went from being reviled and undesirable to being portrayed as the perfect image of assimilation, perpetuated by a self-fulfilling prophecy and the National Narrative.

The Asian community at large was used by others to drive specific agendas in each era.

WHY THE MODEL MINORITY IS A MYTH

1966

ORIGIN OF THE MYTH

The term “Model Minority” was first used in 1966 by sociologist William Peterson in a *New York Times Magazine* article to praise the ability of Japanese Americans to gain success and capital in the United States, solidifying the stereotypes of Asian Americans as “industrious and rule-abiding” as compared to African Americans, who were still struggling against systemic bigotry and poverty. (The discrimination that Japanese Americans faced during WWII, in which they were placed in internment camps, was a key factor in propelling Japanese Americans to assimilate with the dominant culture as a way to ensure both survival and success.)

"The argument is that racial bias does not exist because if it did, how then can “Asian success” be explained?"

NOT A MONOLITH

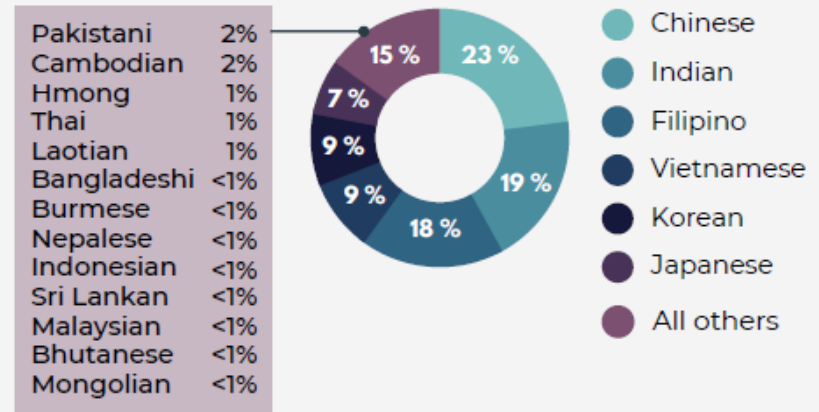
The U.S. Census Bureau defines Asian Americans as a diverse group that includes more than 20 different cultures and religions originating from East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia.

Asian Americans: Diverse Communities

ORIGIN GROUPS

% of Asian American in each origin group

19 largest origin groups together account for 94% of the total Asian population in the U.S.



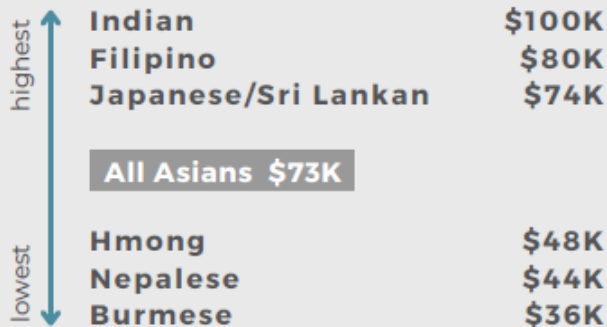
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2015 American Community Survey 1-year estimates (American Fact Finder).

Disparities Among Different Asian American Communities



ASIAN AMERICANS HAVE THE GREATEST DISPARITY IN INCOME OF ALL ETHNIC GROUPS

Median annual household income (2015)



Most U.S. Asian origin groups have household incomes that fall below those of Asian Americans overall.



BIG DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

9% vs 72%
of Bhutanese of Indian

About half of Asians in the U.S. ages 25 and older had a bachelor's degree or more in 2015, a higher share than other races and ethnicities, but this share varies greatly by origin group.



POVERTY RATES VARY WIDELY AMONG ASIANS IN THE U.S.

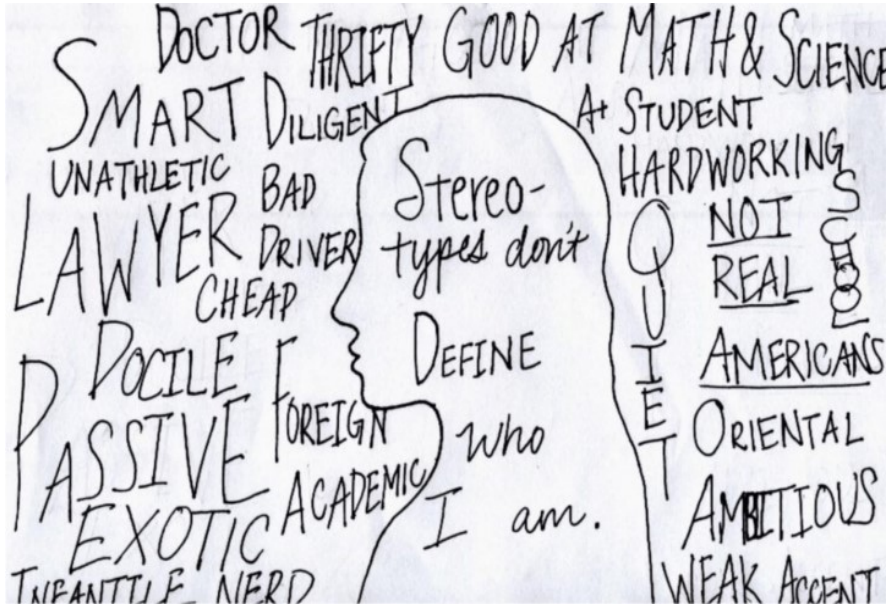
The highest poverty rates among all Asian origin groups

Burmese 35.0%
Bhutanese 33.3%

2x U.S. Average (15.1%)

4x Filipino & Indian (7.5%)

MISLEADING STEREOTYPES



Only

4.4 %

of all Fortune 1000 board seats
are occupied by Asians

1.47 %

by Asian women

"Asian Representation on Fortune 1000 Boards,"
Ascend/KPMG, 2020

THE MYTH AND ITS ADVERSE EFFECTS ON OTHER GROUPS

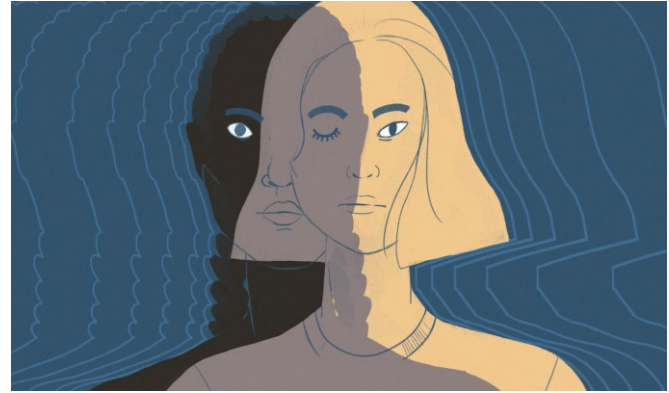
A POLITICAL TOOL USED TO DIVIDE AND INVALIDATE

By casting Asian Americans as the “The Good Minority” and portraying them as less likely to “rock the boat” or challenge the status quo, the Model Minority Myth perpetuates racist attitudes and stereotypes toward other minorities, namely Blacks and Latinx, and has long been used as a political tool to invalidate the struggles of other minorities.

THE MYTH AND ITS ADVERSE EFFECTS ON OTHER GROUPS

THE INCONVENIENT TRUTH

The sad and unspoken truth is that many Asian Americans have worn the badge of the Model Minority proudly to gain acceptance into the dominant culture without realizing that there is a double-edged sword that excludes them from participating in race and equity discussions or ascending to executive ranks.



“On the whole, Asian Americans are wedged in an uncomfortable position as white adjacent on the one hand and as people of color on the other, and the complex set of stereotypes has rendered them invisible in discussions of race and prejudice in America.”

THE ACT DIALOGS AND SURVEY

Revealed that only 57 percent of respondents in corporate felt comfortable speaking up and discussing racism in their workplace.

ASCEND'S MISSION TO DISPEL THE MYTH

- DATA-DRIVEN RESEARCH
- BUILDING LEADERS (professional development, networks and networking, community initiatives, etc.)
- ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC BIAS (CDO Forums, #AscendTogether, ACT Initiative and Allyship Forums, Impact Fund, education, coalition building)