

**Taking a Pulse of Chinese Americans at the Dawn of the 21st Century:
Results from the Multi-Site Asian American Political Survey**

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Introduction

At the dawn of the 21st century, the U.S. Census 2000 shows that there were over 2.43 million Chinese in the United States.¹ Consistent with a population trend since the 1970s, Chinese Americans continue to be the single largest Asian ethnic population. In April 2000, individuals of full Chinese descent accounted for 0.9 percent of the U.S. population or 23.7 percent of the total Asian population in the United States.² The top 10 metropolitan areas of the Chinese American population in 2000 was New York, followed by Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Boston, Chicago, Orange County, Honolulu, and Seattle. These are the sites of some of the nation's most racially and ethnically diverse communities where non-Hispanic whites are often the minorities in the population. This demographic reality has created many aspirations for minority empowerment. This study attempts to systematically assess, from the perspective of mass politics, the political potential of the ethnic community and its relationship to the larger Asian American and the multiracial American community by taking a pulse of the political opinions and preferences of the adult Chinese population with a large-scale political survey of Asian Americans.³

What do Chinese Americans think and act politically? To what extent and in what ways are they becoming socially and politically incorporated into the American mainstream? To what extent can they be conceived as a collective political body? And how do their attitudes and opinions compare to Asian Americans as a whole and as a multiethnic community? In this report, we present findings from the first multi-city,

¹ The number 2,432,585 was reported in Table DP-1 of Census 2000 for persons who reported only of the Chinese descent. According to Table QT-P7, the total number of Chinese for those who reported either only of the Chinese ancestry or in combination with one or more other Asian ethnicities was 2,577,507. When counting also those Chinese who reported having more than one racial origin, the number rose to 2,879,636.

² This calculation is based on the single race and ethnicity data reported in Table DP-1 of Census 2000.

³ The term "Asian Americans" is used interchangeably with "Asians" throughout the report. Except where noted, we also use "Chinese," "Japanese," "Vietnamese," "Koreans," "Filipinos," and "South Asians" to stand for "Chinese Americans," "Japanese Americans," "Vietnamese Americans," "Korean Americans," "Filipino Americans," and "Asian Indian/Pakistani Americans," respectively. We use "immigrants" to refer to those respondents born in Asia.

multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual political survey of Asians in the United States, the Multi-Site Asian American Political Survey (MAAPS). Among the questions that we seek answers are the extent to which Asian immigrants adapt themselves to U.S. society and culture, the forms of ethnic and panethnic identity and consciousness that Asian Americans express, the views that Asian Americans hold about the U.S. political system, and the participatory habits, political partisanship, and policy preferences of Asians in the United States. One of our primary motivations for this study was to collect randomly drawn large sample of Asians in American in order to systematically examine prevailing (mis)conceptions about Asian Americans as a politically apathetic, ethnically fragmented, socially unassimilable group that is unencumbered by social inequities and not in need of government services. As political scientists interested in issues of race and ethnicity, we also wish to fill a void in the study of minority political behavior by addressing the many controversies in political behavior from the perspectives of Asian Americans.

MAAPS is, to our knowledge, the first endeavor of its kind. While studies of African American and Latino politics are enhanced by the availability of surveys that focus exclusively on these communities of color, few opinion surveys exist that allow us to gauge the political attitudes and behavior of Asian Americans.⁴ The studies that do exist and can be accessed publicly, nevertheless, suffer from the following limitations: (1) they are mostly regionally sampled (usually, from Los Angeles or Southern California) and often targeting on surveying a single Asian ethnic group at a time; (2) where samples are drawn from the nation, they contain either a limited number of questions or too few respondents to permit valid and reliable analysis; and (3) except for the single Asian ethnic group surveys, English is the only language used to surveying Asians; this has effectively precluded participation of Asians with poor English proficiency.⁵ MAAPS overcomes these limitations by surveying a broad spectrum of social and political attitudes and activities across six major Asian American groups who reside in the five major population hubs of the Asian American community. Respondents are interviewed

⁴ For a review of the available public opinion surveys, see the Appendix in Lien (2001).

⁵ Although a number of Asian American civil rights organizations have conducted multi-ethnic and multi-lingual exit polls in several urban centers, their datasets are not publicly accessible and are excluded from this discussion.

in English or in Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Korean, and Vietnamese, according to their preferences.⁶

This research focuses on responses from the Chinese American sample. After a general introduction of the survey methodology and its limitations, we present a profile of the Chinese and other Asians who participated in this survey. Then, we report summary findings on seven aspects of their social and political attitudes and opinion: ethnic attachment, racial integration, political and social participation, political orientation, assessment of the U.S. political system, community concerns and issue preferences, and ethnic and panethnic identities. We hope this information can be used as a tool to educate not only community members about who we are as Chinese Americans but opinion leaders and policy makers about the shape of the Chinese American community as a political entity at the dawn of the 21st century.

Description of Survey Methodology

A total of 1,218 adults of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Filipino, and South Asian descent residing in the Los Angeles, New York, Honolulu, San Francisco, and Chicago metropolitan areas were randomly selected and interviewed by phone between November 16, 2000 and January 28, 2001. Telephone households in these five metropolitan areas—chosen for their large Asian ethnic populations, geographic location, and concentration of particular ethnic groups—were sampled using a dual-frame approach consisting of random-digit dialing (RDD) at targeted Asian zipcode densities and listed-surname frames. Only telephone households occupied by adults self-identified as belonging to one of the six major Asian American ancestries were included in this study. For our New York and Chicago samples only the listed-surname approach was used. Within each sampling area, the selection probability for each ethnic sample was to approximate the size of the ethnic population among Asian Americans according to the 1990 Census. However, we over-sampled the Vietnamese and South Asians to generate a sufficiently large sample sizes. Within each contacted household, the interviewer would ask to speak with adult 18 years of age or older who most recently had a birthday. To

⁶ We were unable to offer our South Asian and Filipino respondents a non-English language-of-interview due to limited resources. It is our intention, however, to conduct multi-lingual surveys of these populations in the full version of the National Asian American Political Survey.

increase the response rate, multiple call attempts were made at staggered times of the day and days of the week, with break-offs and refusals re-contacted.

This sampling design yielded a final sample of 308 Chinese, 168 Korean, 137 Vietnamese, 198 Japanese, 266 Filipino, and 141 South Asians or an average of 200 completed interviews from each Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and an additional 217 interviews from the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area. Based on the English proficiency rate of each Asian subgroup and practical cost concerns, English was used to interview respondents of Japanese, Filipino, and South Asian descent; respondents of Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese descent were interviewed in their language of preference. Among the Chinese, 78% chose to be interviewed in Mandarin Chinese, 19% in Cantonese, and 3% in English. Close to 9 out of 10 Koreans (87%) chose to be interviewed in Korean. Nearly all Vietnamese respondents (98.5%) chose to be interviewed in Vietnamese. The average interview length is 27 minutes for interviews conducted in the respondent's non-English language and 20 minutes for interviews conducted in English. The average incidence rate for interviews drawn from the listed surname sample is 41%, with a range from 14.5% for the Filipino sample to 81% for the Chinese sample. The incidence rate for RDD interviews is 15%, which ranges from 4.6% for Korean to 24% for Japanese sample. The average refusal rate is 25%, with 34% in the listed sample and 3.5% in the RDD sample. The margin of sampling error for the entire survey is plus or minus 3%, it is doubled for the Chinese portion of the survey.

In addition to random error innate to a scientific survey, the representativeness of our survey may be limited by our sampling design, which may omit households with unlisted telephone numbers or persons who do not bear identifiable surnames in the targeted study areas. Samples generated with the RDD frame may not allow coverage of households located in zipcodes that rank below the top ten ethnic density areas or with less than 10% ethnic density for a targeted Asian subgroup in each zip code. In addition, because a survey is often a snapshot of the public opinion at the time when the interviews took place, the views expressed may be affected by what happened in the environment. For example, because our survey was fielded right after the 2000 presidential election, respondents' views on their presidential choice may be impacted by events in Florida.⁷

⁷ Because of the uncertainty in the election outcome, an unusually high percentage of our respondents who

More generally, survey response has been known to be susceptible to the specific race and gender of the interviewer and the way a question is worded, ordered, and translated. Moreover, our sample is drawn from five major population centers, which obviously limits our ability to draw inferences about Asians or Chinese in the United States writ large. While every effort has been made to generate data that is as valid and reliable as possible, we acknowledge the likely existence of these imperfections and ask readers to use caution when making inferences about the results.

Who Participated in the Survey? A Profile of Chinese and Other Asian American Respondents.

Birthplace and place of residence. About one-fourth of the total respondents in the survey are of Chinese descent; of them, about seven in ten can trace their ancestral homes to mainland China, about two in ten originated from Taiwan, and about one-tenth were from Hong Kong. Ninety-three Chinese or about one-third of the Chinese interviewed reside in metropolitan Los Angeles. Another 30% (or 94) of them were interviewed in metropolitan San Francisco. Eighty-four Chinese or 27% of the Chinese in the survey were interviewed in metropolitan New York. The numbers of Chinese from Chicago and Honolulu are much smaller—at 24 and 13 respectively.⁸ Over one-fifth of the respondents are of Filipino descent; one-sixth are of Japanese descent, and the rest are of Korean, South Asian, and Vietnamese descents. Most of Korean, Vietnamese, and Filipino respondents are from the Los Angeles area. Close to half of all Japanese respondents reside in Honolulu and 39 percent of South Asians reside in the Chicago area.

Immigration generation, length of residence, age, and sex. Every nine out of ten Chinese adults interviewed were born in Asia. The percent foreign-born is even higher among Koreans (94%) and Vietnamese (98%) in the survey. By contrast, less than one-fourth (22%) of the Japanese respondents were born in Japan and over four out of ten among them are of the third or more generation. The Chinese respondents have lived an

voted in the election were either uncertain (4%) or refused (14%) to state their presidential choice. Among Chinese American voters, 3% were uncertain and 11% refused to reveal their vote.

⁸ Because of the small numbers of Chinese respondents in these two areas, our analysis in this research will focus on comparisons among Chinese in three metropolitan areas as well as between the total Chinese and total Asians in the survey.

average of 11.1 years in their present city or town, but a much higher percentage of residents in New York (17%) and San Francisco (14%) as compared to those in Los Angeles (3%) report having lived there for over the past 20 years. The average length of residence for an Asian respondent is 12.8 years, with 16% lived for longer than 20 years in the current city or town. The average respondent age for Chinese is 46.6, compared to 44 among all Asians. The gender distribution of the entire sample is equally divided between men and women, but a slightly higher proportion of the Chinese sample is female (54%).

Education. Half of the Chinese in the sample have earned a college or an advanced degree. In New York, however, nearly a quarter (24%) of the Chinese respondents do not have a high school diploma. In San Francisco, that percentage is 17%. Fully six out of ten Chinese respondents in Los Angeles possess a college or an advanced degree. In each of these locations, three quarters of the Chinese report having received the majority of their education outside of the United States. The entire Asian sample is equally well-educated. However, a smaller proportion of the respondents (58%) receive education mainly from institutions outside of the United States. The educational achievement among South Asian respondents is especially astonishing with over one-fourth holding a post-graduate degree. Even among the Vietnamese, the ethnic group with the lowest level of educational achievement, a full one-third of the respondents report having received a college degree or more. Over six of every ten South Asians and the Vietnamese in the survey were educated mainly outside of the United States.

Income and employment. A quarter of the respondents were uncertain or reluctant to report their family income. However, among those who reported their income, the results defy an image of overall affluence. For example, the most common category for the Chinese is “between \$10,000 and \$19,999” (14%), but the next frequent categories are “between \$20,000 and \$29,000” and “over \$80,000” (12%). As in the distribution of education, New York and San Francisco Chinese are over-represented in the lower income categories. The most common income category for Asians as a whole is “between \$40,000 and \$59,999” (17%). However, for the Vietnamese, the two most common categories are “between \$10,000 and \$19,999” and “between \$30,000 and

\$39,000". About four out of ten Chinese respondents work full-time, 12% work part-time, and 14% are retired. There are regional differences. For instance, only one-third of Chinese respondents in New York work full-time, while one-fifth are keeping house. In San Francisco, half of the Chinese work full-time. In Los Angeles, 14% are in school, compared to an average of 10% elsewhere.

What Did the Respondents Say? Summary Findings of the MAAPS

Gauging the Degree of Ethnic Attachment

To examine the extent of Chinese Americans' attachment to people and culture in their country or place of origin, we ask the survey respondents to help indicate their opinion regarding the following: news attention to events happened in Asia and to Asian people in the United States, frequency of contact with people in the home country, most recent visit to the home country, and language used at home and to conduct business transactions.

Following news. We assess respondents' ethnic news awareness by asking them to indicate the amount of attention they paid to news stories and other information about what happened in Asia and to Asians in the United States, respectively. Close to seven out of 10 Chinese respondents (68%) report having paid very close or fairly close attention to news events that happened in Asia. This figure does not vary much across our research sites (or regions, hereafter) but it is higher than the average figure for the full Asian sample as a whole (56%). Among other Asian groups, Korean respondents (80%) are the most and Japanese respondents (38%) are the least likely to follow news and current events related to Asia. Compared to their attention paid to Asia news, an even higher percentage of Chinese respondents (78%), especially those in Los Angeles (86%), indicate that they have followed very closely or fairly closely news stories and other information related to Asians in the United States. This observation of Chinese Americans paying greater attention to news on Asian Americans than news from Asia can be made among respondents of other Asian groups except the Vietnamese and Filipinos.

Maintaining contact. Most of the Chinese and Asian Americans who were born in Asia have maintained strong social ties with people in their countries of origin. For example, between 22 percent (Chinese) to 25 percent (Asian) of the immigrant sample

would contact people in their country or place of origin (by mail, phone, or in person) at least once a week. Among the Chinese, that frequency is particularly high among those in Los Angeles (31%). Those Chinese surveyed in New York and San Francisco are less able to maintain very frequent contact. In fact, over a quarter of the respondents from these two regions have maintained either no contact or fewer contacts than once a year. Among other Asians, immigrants from India and Pakistan report the highest rate of most frequent contacts; 44 percent would make contacts with homeland people at least once a week. Immigrants from Japan, on the other hand, report the highest rate of no contact.

Language usage. Only 4% among the Chinese surveyed use no other language than English to communicate at home. Over eight out of ten Chinese use Mandarin or Cantonese or some other Asian language at home. This rate of language use does not vary across regions. However, a much higher percentage (26%) of Asian respondents in general use only English at home; another quarter of them use both English and some Asian language or languages to communicate with family members. Outside of the home, English use is much higher among the Chinese. A third of Chinese respondents (33%) rely solely on English to conduct personal business and financial transactions; another 29% use both English and some other language(s). Those surveyed in New York report the highest rate of English use in business transactions (40%) among the Chinese; they also report the lowest rate of using a mixture of languages (17%) among the population. Nevertheless, other Asian groups, including 59% among the Vietnamese and 71% among Koreans, report a much higher percentage of using English as the only language to conduct personal business and financial transactions. Overall, almost two-thirds (71%) among Asians used only English to conduct businesses.

Levels and Nature of Racial Integration

We examine Chinese Americans' adaptation to American life by their degree of integration into the American multiracial social network through close friendship, shared neighborhood, attitudes toward interracial marriage, their interracial marriage patterns, and their experiences of hate crimes and discrimination.

Cross-racial friendship. We ask our respondents if they know any person of other racial or ethnic origin(s) than their own whom they consider a close personal friend. About one-third of Chinese respondents (33%) report having a close personal friend who

is white. Less than two out of ten Chinese report having a close personal friend who is either Black (17%) or Latino (18%). Over half of the Chinese surveyed, however, list another Asian as a close friend (56%). Over two out of ten Chinese surveyed report not having a close friend; this percentage is highest in New York (27%) and lowest in Los Angeles (17%). Respondents of other Asian origins such as Japanese, Filipino, and South Asian report a much higher percentage of cross-racial friendship with Blacks and Latinos. For example, 44 percent of Japanese report having a close Black friend and 32 percent of South Asians report having a close Latino friend. However, neither of the respondents in these groups report a significantly higher percentage of close friendship with Whites than that among the Chinese. Also, none of the respondents in other Asian groups report as high a level of close friendship with another Asian than the Chinese.

Intermarriage. We ask respondents if they would approve someone in their family married a person of a different ethnic background than their own. Most Chinese respondents (46%) express neither approval nor disapproval of having someone in the family marrying a non-Chinese. Over half of Chinese in New York (51%) hold this neutral attitude, compared to 44 percent in Los Angeles. Close to four out of ten Chinese in Los Angeles (36%), but less than a quarter of Chinese in San Francisco (22%), would approve of someone in the family marrying a non-Chinese. Nevertheless, the percentage of disapproval or strong disapproval is no higher than the 19 percent found among the Chinese in San Francisco. The rate of approval or strong approval of intermarriage is much higher among Asians as a whole (54%). In particular, over seven out of ten respondents of Japanese, Vietnamese, and Filipino origins would either approve or strongly approve of having someone in the family marrying outside of one's ethnicity. Korean respondents, however, express the highest disapproval rate of 24 percent. When we ask the married respondents the ethnic origin of their spouse, 96 percent among the Chinese and 90 percent among all Asians report having an Asian spouse. No more than 80 percent among the married Japanese and Filipino respondents, however, report having an Asian spouse. Although only 2 percent of the Chinese married a Caucasian, 14 percent of the Japanese and 12 percent of Filipino respondents in the sample report having a Caucasian spouse.

Residential context. We ask respondents to describe the ethnic makeup of the neighborhood where they live. Close to four in ten Chinese in the survey report having mostly Asian neighbors (37%). However, only 24 percent of Chinese respondents in New York, but 50 percent of Chinese respondents in Los Angeles, report living in such neighborhood. In contrast, as high as 43 percent of Chinese in New York, and as low as 20 percent of Chinese in Los Angeles, report living in White majority neighborhood. Only one-fifth of Chinese reported living in pretty evenly mixed neighborhood, compared to the Asian average of 45 percent. For Asians in general, only a quarter of the respondents reported having mostly White neighbors and one-fifth with mostly Asian neighbors. Significant variation exists across ethnic groups in terms of the racial makeup of their neighborhood. However, only a tiny percentage of Chinese and other Asian respondents reported having resided in mostly Black or mostly Latino neighborhood.

Experiences of hate crimes and discrimination. We ask our respondents if they have been verbally or physically abused or have properties damaged due to racial- and ethnic-based discrimination. A total of 14 percent Chinese give an affirmative response. Those in San Francisco are more likely to report being a hate crime victim (20%) than those in Los Angeles (8%). The percentage of reported victimization among Asians is about the same as among the Chinese. That percentage is highest among the Japanese (19%) and lowest among the Vietnamese (9%). When our respondents are asked if they ever personally experienced discrimination in the United States, an average of four in ten Chinese report having such negative experiences (39%). Chinese in Los Angeles report lower rates of discrimination than Chinese elsewhere. The percentage of discrimination experience among Asians (36%) is similar to the Chinese average. It is also remarkably consistent across Asian ethnic groups except for the Vietnamese, who report a much lower rate of discriminatory experiences.

When asked to identify the sources of their experience with discrimination, 92 percent of Chinese and Asian respondents single out their ethnic background as the most important source. Again, the percentage is significantly lower for Chinese in Los Angeles (77%). Every six out of ten Chinese mention accent as a source of discrimination. Those in Los Angeles report a higher level at 71 percent. Close to half (48%) among Asians mention their accent or perceived accent, but only 20 percent of Japanese respondents

attribute their experience of discrimination to this. Roughly one out of five Chinese and Asian respondents also identify gender as a basis for discrimination. That percentage for Chinese in New York is much lower (10%). The reported percentage of gender-based discrimination among Asians is higher among South Asians, Filipinos, and the Vietnamese and lowest among Koreans.

When inquired about the context in which the reported discrimination took place, the most frequently mentioned context for Chinese is when dealing with strangers in a public place (58%), followed by getting jobs or promotion (55%), and by dealing with a business or retail establishment (40%). However, the most likely place for Chinese in San Francisco is in getting jobs or promotion. Among Asians, the most common place for discrimination to take place also deals with strangers in a public place (55%), followed by dealing with business or retail establishment (42%), and by getting jobs and promotion (40%). Dealing with neighbors, however, is the second most common context for Koreans and the Vietnamese.

Types and Extent of Political and Social Participation

How much are Chinese Americans able to participate in the U.S. mainstream electoral and non-electoral politics and in social institutions? We examine Chinese Americans' adaptation to the pluralistic U.S. political system by their levels of political interest, rates of U.S. citizenship, voting turnout, participation in activities beyond voting, and participation in ethnic group-based and faith-based activities.

Citizenship. Over six out of ten Chinese respondents are U.S. citizens (62%). About the same percentage share of non-citizens expect to become citizens in the future (63%). These figures are six to nine percentage points lower than the average percentages for Asians. The Chinese in Los Angeles, in particular, are on the low end in terms of citizenship rate and expected citizenship rate (56%). Non-citizens of Chinese descent in Los Angeles are also more uncertain about their future plan than their counterparts in San Francisco where as high as 80 percent plan to become naturalized soon. Asian American groups differ widely in their inclination to become U.S. citizens. For instance, just 31 percent of Japanese immigrants who were not citizens at the time of the survey plan to become U.S. citizens compared to, say, 83 percent of Filipino and 91

percent of Vietnamese non-citizens. It should be noted, however, that Japanese respondents have the highest rate of citizenship (86%) among all Asian American groups.

Voting and nonvoting. Only 41 percent of the Chinese respondents cast their votes in the November 2000 presidential election. Those in San Francisco report a higher rate (47%) than those in Los Angeles or New York (38%). The average rate for Asians is equally low (44%), but Japanese respondents report a high rate of 63 percent while Korean respondents report a low rate of 34 percent. Non-citizenship is the most commonly cited reason for nonvoting. About two-thirds of Chinese respondents attribute their nonvoting to this reason, compared to 58 percent among Asians. Not having registered to vote is the second most commonly cited reason, mentioned by nearly a quarter of Chinese non-voters. When voting rates are calculated only among eligible voters (citizens who are registered), over eight out of ten Chinese have turned out to vote (84%). In Los Angeles, the turnout rate is an impressive 90 percent among the Chinese. For Asians as a whole, the turnout rate among the registered is an average of 82 percent. It varies from 71 percent among Koreans to 93 percent among South Asians.

Participation beyond voting. In addition to participation in the formal political process, a small segment of Chinese respondents also participated in other political activities. The most common form is working with others in the community to solve a problem (16%), followed by signing a petition for a political cause (10%), donating money to a political campaign (8%), attending a public meeting, political rally, or fundraiser (7%), and contacting government officials (6%). Characteristics in a region may determine the opportunities to participate. Thus, the second common act for Chinese in San Francisco is petition signing (14%); it is writing or phoning a government official for those in New York (11%); for those in Los Angeles, it is attending meetings or rallies. Compared to the Asian average, the level of participation among Chinese in each of the act beyond voting is uniformly lower by 3 to 7 percentage points, except serving on any governmental board or commission. Among those Chinese who report ever having participated in any of the activities, their participation may not always involve Asian American candidates or issues. For example, no more than four in ten Chinese who report having worked with others to solve a community problem or contacted news media or government officials indicate that those were related to Asian

American affairs. However, around six out of 10 Chinese who report having signed a petition for a political cause or attended a public meeting, political rally, or fundraiser mention that their participation is related to Asian Americans. Moreover, 100% of the Chinese who made campaign donations in Los Angeles as well as those who signed a political petition in New York indicate that these actions are related to Asian American candidates and issues. Compared to Asian participants in general, a higher percentage of the activities participated by Chinese involved Asian American issues or candidates.

Participation in group- and faith-based activities. We ask respondents if they belong to any organization or take part in any activities that represent the interests and viewpoints of their respective ethnic group or of Asian Americans in general. Only 5% of Chinese Americans, but 15% of Asian Americans overall, reported having been a member or attended activities of one of these organizations. In fact, respondents in every other Asian group than the Chinese report a higher level of participation in ethnic organizations. The level of group participation is especially high among respondents of South Asian, Japanese, and Filipino descent where close to a quarter in each participated. We measure respondents' level of participation in faith-based activities by checking their frequency of attending religious services. Among the Chinese, 13 percent report attending on a weekly basis, 11 percent several times a month, 19 percent a few times a year, and 51 percent never attended services. The levels of religious participation among the Chinese, again, are much lower than those among other Asian groups. Among Asians, three in ten report having attended religious services on a weekly basis (29%). Koreans are on the high end with 51 percent, and Vietnamese and Japanese are second to last on the low end with 20 percent, reporting weekly participation. Conversely, less than a quarter of total Asians (22%) report nonparticipation; with Japanese next to the Chinese on the high end of nonparticipation and Filipinos and South Asians on the low end.

Strength and Direction of Political Orientations

How interested are Chinese Americans in politics and government affairs in general? To what extent are they able to identify with mainstream political institutions and ideologies? And what are their views of U.S. government officials? We examine these questions in terms of the respondents' political interest, ideology, party identification, and candidate choice.

Political interest. We ask participants in the MAAPS to indicate their level of interest in politics in general and in what goes on in government. Among the Chinese, nearly two-thirds express either a very high or somewhat high interest in politics and the running of government (64%); a quarter show slight interest; and only one-ten show no interest at all. Political interest is higher in San Francisco than in Los Angeles or New York. Compared to Asians as a whole, a higher proportion of Asians show strong interest and a lower proportion show moderate interest. Overall, 61 percent of Asians interviewed indicate they are either very interested or somewhat interested in what goes on in government. The proportion reporting that they are very interested or somewhat interested ranges from 52 percent among Vietnamese respondents to 72 percent among South Asians.

Political ideology. How do respondents describe their views on most matters having to do with politics? Do they consider themselves to be liberal, middle-of-the-road, or conservative? Overall, 15 percent of Chinese are not sure of how to describe their political views in the terminology provided. The majority of those who are able or willing to classify themselves in political ideological terms describe themselves as middle-of-the-road (42%). Thirty percent describe themselves as somewhat liberal or very liberal; 13 percent call themselves somewhat or very conservative. However, a higher percentage of Chinese in New York describe themselves as somewhat or very conservative (22%) and a higher percentage of those in Los Angeles describe themselves as very or somewhat liberal (35%). In comparison, a smaller percentage of Asians would fall under the middle category (32%), whereas a higher percentage would self-identity either as very or somewhat liberal (36%) or very or somewhat conservative (22%). The Vietnamese are most likely to self-identity as being middle-of-the-road (47%). South Asians are most likely to identify themselves as being very or somewhat liberal (61%). And a higher percentage of Filipinos than other Asian groups would identify themselves as somewhat or very conservative (34%).

Party identification. In American political science literature, political party identification is the most reliable and important measure of one's political orientation. However, when asked about their party affiliations, one-third of the Chinese respondents indicate that they do not usually think in these terms (33%); nearly a quarter of the

respondents are unsure how to answer the question. The share of respondents not being able to identify with a political party is particularly high among Chinese in Los Angeles (65%), as compared to Chinese in New York (44%). Among the Chinese who report a partisan identification, three quarters would identify with the Democratic party (76%); one-fifth would identify with the Republican party (19%). Among Chinese in Los Angeles, the percentage point difference between the Democratic and the Republican identifiers (22% vs. 12%) is much smaller than that found among Chinese in San Francisco (40% vs. 3%). For Asians as a whole, one-fifth do not usually think of their political orientation in partisan terms; 16 percent are not sure of their partisan identification. South Asians are least likely (16%) and the Vietnamese in the survey are most likely (58%) to express discomfort or uncertainty of expressing themselves in American partisan terms. Overall, thirty-six percent of Asians identify themselves as Democrat, 14 percent as Republican, and 13 percent as Independent. Only Vietnamese would identify more frequently as Republican than as Democrat and the difference is close (15% vs. 12%). Among Independents, a higher percentage lean toward the Democratic party (32%) than the Republican party (21%); again, close to half refuse to think in partisan terms.

Presidential vote choice. We assess the direction of candidate choice with two questions. First, presidential vote choice among voters in the November 2000 election. In this historic election, 64 percent eligible Chinese voted for Al Gore, 21 percent for George Bush, while 14 percent either refused to report or were unsure of their vote. Support for Gore was especially high in San Francisco (73%). In Los Angeles, less than six out of ten Chinese voted for Gore (57%), but every three out of ten Chinese voters favored Bush (31%). Compared to the Chinese vote, the level of vote for Gore is lower among Asians as a whole (55%); their level of vote for Bush is higher (26%), while the share of refusal or uncertainty is also higher (18%). The unusual situation in Florida following the election may account for the 18% of respondents who either refused to report or were uncertain about the vote they cast for. Gore receives a higher proportion of the presidential vote than Bush in every ethnic group. Vietnamese voters give a higher percentage of support for Bush (35%) than other Asian voters, but it is almost 20 percentage points below the group's support for Gore (54%).

Support for Asian American candidate. We also assess respondents' vote choice by their support for Asian American candidates. All the respondents, voters or not, are asked of this hypothetical question: "If you have an opportunity to decide on two candidates for political office, one of which is Asian American. Would you be more likely to vote for the Asian American candidate, if the two are equally qualified?" An overwhelming majority of Chinese respondents (71%) would vote for an Asian, even though 22% are not certain of their choice. The percentage distribution does not vary much across metropolitan areas. The level of vote for an Asian is lower among Asians as a whole (60%). Support is highest among the Vietnamese (75%) and lowest among Japanese (22%) and South Asians (24%). These supporters are asked if they would vote for an Asian American even if he or she is less qualified. More than one-third of Chinese (36%), but only a quarter among all Asians (24%) answer affirmatively to this; support is particularly low among the Vietnamese. This suggests that, more so for Chinese than for other Asian Americans, ethnicity is a more important concern than candidate quality in deciding the vote.

Assessing the Performance of the U.S. Government

Since the mid-1960s, U.S. national surveys have found low levels of trust in government generally and in public officials among U.S. residents. We are interested in knowing if Chinese and other Asian Americans share a similar pattern of political distrust. The MAAPS also contains items to help us assess their general attitudes toward the U.S. political system. The items we use as indicators are their expressed trust and self-efficacy, both before and after immigration, as well as perceived government responsiveness. We also gauge their opinion toward the need to reform the electoral system at the presidential level.

Political trust. When queried about the extent to which they trust local government officials in the U.S., 2 percent of Chinese indicate that local government officials can be trusted just about always, 28 percent most of the time, 35 percent some of the time, 10 percent indicate that they cannot be trusted at all, and a full 25 percent of the Chinese respondents are unsure of the answer. The Chinese respondents in Los Angeles express a higher tendency to be more trusting most or all of the time (36%), but they also register the highest level of distrust (14%) than Chinese elsewhere. Compared to Asians

in general, Chinese show lower levels of trust and a higher level of uncertainty. Seven percent of Asians indicate they can trust local officials just about always, 30 percent most of the time, 44 percent some of the time, 8 percent none at all, and 11 percent of Asians are not sure of their answers to this question. Levels of trust vary among Asian American groups, with Koreans (43%), Filipinos (41%) and South Asians (41%) indicating local officials can be trusted just about always or most of the time; members of other groups report lower levels of trust.

An interesting comparison is the extent to which Chinese immigrants feel they can generally trust more of U.S. government officials compared to government officials in their place of origin. Four in ten Chinese believe they can trust the U. S. government officials more, one-third perceive no difference between officials in the two governments, 7 percent would trust less of U.S. officials, and one-fifth are not sure. Los Angeles Chinese show a higher level of comparative trust in U.S. officials than New York Chinese (46% to 32%). Chinese immigrants show lower levels of comparative trust in U.S officials than Asian immigrants as a whole. Over half of Asian immigrants (55%) indicate having more trust in U.S. than homeland officials, 26 percent see no difference, 6 percent express less trust, and 13 percent are unsure. The reported level of having more trust in U.S. officials is especially high among those born in Korea (72%) or Vietnam (39%) and especially low among those born in Japan (39%).

Government responsiveness. The study also measures perceptions of government officials' responsiveness to citizen complaints. Survey participants are asked if they took a complaint to a local public official, whether the local official would pay a lot of attention, some attention, very little attention, or no attention to that complaint. Thirty-one percent Chinese think the local officials would pay a lot of or some attention to their complaints, 38 percent think they would be paid very little or no attention, and 31 percent are not certain of their opinion. Los Angeles Chinese perceive a higher level of responsiveness (41%) than their counterparts in San Francisco (29%) or New York (25%). Over four in ten among Asians think local officials would pay a lot or some attention (42%), but an equal share of Asians think they would pay very little or no attention (41%). Perceptions of government responsiveness (paying a lot of attention or some attention) are highest among South Asians (55%) and Filipinos (54%). Perceptions

of government unresponsiveness (paying very little or no attention) are extremely high among Koreans (63%).

Self efficacy. We also assess an individual's perception of his or her own influence over local government decisions. Among Chinese, almost none believe they could exert a lot of influence, a tenth believe they could exert some influence, but a halting 80 percent believe they had very little or no influence at all. San Francisco Chinese express a somewhat higher level of self efficacy in their ability to exert at least some influence over local government decisions (14%) than their counterparts in Los Angeles (10%) or New York (7%). Comparatively, a much larger share of Asians (26%) are efficacious in their ability to exercise a lot or some influence, even though a two-thirds majority express very low or no ability to influence local government decisions. Feelings of self efficacy are higher among Filipinos (36%) and South Asians (32%) and lowest among Chinese (11%).

As in perceived political trust, respondents born in Asia are asked if they feel they could generally influence decisions made by U.S. government officials more, about the same, or less than those made by government officials in their home country. Overall, 19 percent Chinese immigrants believe they have more influence over decisions made by U.S. government officials, 24 percent perceive not much difference in their level of influence, 25 percent perceive less influence, and 32 percent are uncertain of their opinion on this. The patterns of response are nearly identical across regions. Among Asian immigrants as a whole, 39 percent feel they could exercise more influence on U.S. than on homeland officials, 24 percent see no difference, 17 percent see less influence, and 19 percent are unsure. Feelings of more ability to influence over U.S. government than homeland officials are particularly high among Korean and Vietnamese immigrants (59% and 56% respectively). Again, the level of comparative self efficacy is extremely low among immigrant Chinese.

Attitudes toward the electoral system. Do Chinese Americans support change in the electoral system? The 2000 Florida election debacle gives us a unique opportunity to examine this question. We ask our respondents first about their familiarity with the process of electing the U.S. president. Three in four Chinese (73%) report being either very or somewhat familiar with the process. Of these respondents, a majority (59%)

favor seeing a change in the system to award the presidency only to the candidate who receive the highest number of votes, a fifth (20%) oppose to the proposed change. These figures are rather consistent across metropolitan areas and are no more than six percentage point difference from the Asian average.

Concerns over Community Affairs and Public Policy Issues

One way to assess the level of political cohesiveness among Chinese Americans and their ability to form coalitions with other Asian Americans is to consider their opinion toward community affairs and general public policy issues affecting racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. We identify respondents' issue concerns by asking them to name the most important problems facing their ethnic community. We also inquire about their knowledge of and opinion toward two important political events at the time of the survey. Then we gather their public policy opinion with a battery of six questions on language, immigration, campaign finance, and affirmative action.

Community problems. When respondents are asked to name the most important problems facing Chinese people in the United States today, the most common problem mentioned by nearly half of all Chinese surveyed is that they didn't speak English or become acculturated (46%). The other commonly mentioned problems among Chinese include racial and ethnic relations (27%), unemployment or inadequate job opportunities (16%), government insensitivity or lack of political representation (12%), and lack of community spirit or too much infighting (8%). A sixth of the respondents think there are no problems facing Chinese Americans (16%). Another sixth are unsure if there were problems facing the ethnic community (17%). There are differences across geographic regions. For example, Los Angeles Chinese are more likely to report no community problems (20%); New York Chinese are more likely to report problems with race and ethnic relations (36%); and San Francisco Chinese are more likely to complain about the lack of political representation (15%).

Comparatively, 28 percent Asians report no problem facing their respective ethnic community. In fact, over four out of ten respondents from Japanese, South Asian, and Filipino communities mention no community problem at all. Moreover, over one-third of Japanese respondents are unsure if there were community problems. Overall, one-fifth of Asians are unsure of any community problem. When problems are reported, issues

important to Chinese Americans such as language barriers, racial and ethnic relations, and job opportunities also score high as affecting other Asian American communities. Over one-fifth of Vietnamese respondents, however, mention gangs and drugs as the top two community problems.

Dr. Wen Ho Lee. We ask our respondents if they have heard of Dr. Wen Ho Lee, the nuclear scientist charged with downloading classified data and spent nine months in jail. An overwhelming 84 percent of Chinese indicate yes. The percentage is quite consistent across regions. Among Asians, the percentage of news awareness is lower (57%). Only one-third among Filipinos and the Vietnamese are aware of the case. Among those who heard of the case, the percentage of strong disapproval of U.S. government's handling of the case is much higher among Chinese (43%) than among Asians in general (29%). By contrast, a higher percentage of Asians (19%) than Chinese (8%) expresses approval of government's actions. We also find that the percentage of strong disapproval is highest for Chinese in San Francisco (49%), followed by those in New York (42%), and by those in Los Angeles (36%). Still, about two in ten Chinese (and Asians) are not able to express an opinion on this.

The 80-20 Initiative. In striking contrast to the highly publicized Wen Ho Lee case, only about four in ten Chinese report having heard of the 80-20 Initiative to organize an Asian American voting bloc in the 2000 presidential election. The awareness level is lowest for Chinese in New York (30%) and highest for Chinese in Los Angeles (48%). Among Asians, less than two in ten report having heard of the case. The awareness level is in single digits for Asians of Japanese, Filipino, and South Asian descent. Close to two-thirds of Chinese who heard of the 80-20 Initiative would approve of the effort. Support is particularly strong among the Chinese in New York where almost half express strong approval. Among other Asians who are aware of the Initiative, the level of approval ranges from 40 percent among Japanese to 83 percent among Filipinos.

Language policy. We ask respondents to indicate if the U.S. government should provide public information and services important to the immigrant community in English as well as in the immigrants' native languages. Over half of the Chinese respondents express strong support for such a proposition; another 20 percent also

expressed support but to a lesser extent. The levels of support are quite similar across regions. An overwhelming proportion of Asians (73%) also support this policy position. Japanese and South Asians are least likely to support bi-lingual materials, but even here, more than two-thirds are supportive. Close to 90 percent of Vietnamese support such bi-lingual materials.

Legal immigration quota. Should U.S. Congress pass laws limiting the number of legal immigrants admitted each year into this country? Half of the Chinese respondents indicate support for this proposition, a fifth would neither approve nor disapprove, 18 percent indicate disapproval, and 13 percent do not express an opinion. Chinese in Los Angeles are 10 percentage points higher than those in San Francisco to approve setting limits on legal immigration. Asians in general show a higher level of disapproval (25%) and a slightly lower level of approval (45%) of this proposition than the Chinese. Koreans and South Asians show higher levels of disapproval than other Asians, but the differences are not sharp.

Campaign contributions for permanent residents. In light of the campaign finance controversies targeting immigrant Chinese Americans in recent elections, we ask respondents whether or not legal permanent residents (non-U.S. citizens) should be allowed to make monetary contributions to political campaigns. Over half of Chinese surveyed indicate support for this policy position, 14 percent oppose, and 18 percent have no opinion. Support is strongest among Chinese in Los Angeles (60%). About half of Asians surveyed also support permitting campaign donations to permanent residents, but 21 percent oppose to granting this participatory role for permanent residents. Among Asian groups, support is highest among South Asians (62%) and lowest among the Vietnamese (41%).

Affirmative action. Respondents are asked three questions about affirmative action policy: one's general views on affirmative action, support for targeted job training and educational assistance programs, and support for race-based hiring and promotion. Preceding the questions, we provide a definition of affirmation action as "any measure, policy, or law used to increase diversity or rectify discrimination so that qualified individuals have equal access to employment, education, business, and contracting opportunities." In the most general formulation, two-thirds of Chinese and Asian

Americans are supportive of affirmative action and consider it “a good thing” for Asian Americans, less than two in ten believe it does not affect Asian Americans much, 15 percent among Chinese and 11 percent among Asians are not sure of their opinion. Opinion patterns among Chinese on the general notion of affirmative action are virtually the same across regions. However, there are significant variations between Chinese and other Asian groups. Both Korean (74%) and Vietnamese (86%) respondents are more supportive, whereas Japanese (44%), Filipino (59%), and South Asian (52%) respondents are less supportive.

When we ask in specific languages the type of affirmative action programs and services one is willing to lend support, six in ten Chinese express strong or very strong support for the government to provide “special job training and educational assistance” to Asian Americans. Close to four in ten New York Chinese (36%) strongly favor but only two in ten of Los Angeles Chinese (20%) express such support for this policy position. The opinion pattern among Asians for providing job training and educational assistance mirrors that among the Chinese: 62 percent favor it, 14 percent oppose it, and 18 percent neither favor nor oppose it. The level of strong support is exceptionally high among the Vietnamese (65%) and low among the Japanese (12%), compared to an average of 26 percent among Asians. When we define affirmative action as giving “special preferences in hiring and promotion,” support for employment decision is drastically lower. Less than three in ten Chinese (27%) would favor this position, even though those in Los Angeles express a higher level of support (34%) than the Chinese in San Francisco (23%). Close to a third of Chinese are neutral on this proposition (31%). A similar but a more moderate decline of support is found among Asians in general. Close to four in ten would favor giving “special preferences” (37%), while 32 percent oppose them and 22 percent neither favor nor oppose. Here again, the level of strong support among the Vietnamese (55%) is starkly distinct from other Asian groups. However, every group except for the Japanese gave a much higher level of support for providing “special preferences” in employment decisions than the Chinese.

Ethnic and panethnic identities

One of the thorniest questions in the studying of an ethnic-based community is whether such a thing as a common ethnic identity exists. In the report so far, we see that

there are differences in the experiences and opinions not only between Chinese and other Asians but also among Chinese in different regions. How much are Chinese Americans able to think alike with each other and with other Asian Americans in ethnic terms? The MAAPS gives us some striking new insights into this question by asking a set of questions on (pan)ethnic self-identity, perceived shared culture, and (pan)ethnic shared fate.

Ethnic self-identities. We first ask our respondents to describe under which ethnic label they prefer to think of themselves. Given a choice between identifying oneself as American, Asian American, Asian, ethnic American (e.g., as Chinese American), or simply in terms of one's ethnic origin (e.g., as Chinese), respondents are most apt to indicate an ethnic-specific identity. Among Chinese, over four in ten (43%) prefer to call themselves "Chinese", a third "Chinese American", 12 percent "Asian American", 4 percent "Asian", and only 1 percent "American". This distribution of the opinion pattern is generally consistent across regions, except that New York Chinese are less likely to call themselves "Chinese American" and more as "Chinese" than the average Chinese. Comparatively, the percentage of self-identification as "American" is 11 percentage points higher and that as "ethnic Asian" is 13 percentage points lower among Asians. In particular, every four in ten Japanese respondents identified themselves as "American" while only 12 percent identified themselves as "Japanese". Among Korean and Vietnamese respondents, however, their levels of self-identification as "Korean" or "Vietnamese" mirror the proportion of Chinese respondents who call themselves "Chinese". The percentages of self-identification as "Asian American", "ethnic American", or "Asian" among Asians are about the same as those reported by the Chinese. However, a much higher percentage of South Asians (23%) identified themselves as "Asian American" and Filipinos registered the highest percentage of self-identification as "ethnic American" (40%) than other Asian groups.

Pan Asian American self-identity (as both primary and secondary preference). When respondents who did not choose "Asian American" were asked to indicate if they *ever* thought of themselves as Asian American, more than four in ten Chinese responded affirmatively (43%) and more than three quarters of these people did so frequently or very frequently (77%). A higher percentage of Chinese in New York (42%) more than

elsewhere (33%) would very often think of themselves as Asian American. In contrast, a higher percentage of Chinese in San Francisco (22%) than elsewhere (16%) would not think that often of themselves as Asian American. Compared to the Chinese average, a larger share of Asians (49%) report having thought of themselves as Asian American. Identification with this panethnic consciousness is most strongly felt among Filipinos (58%) and Vietnamese (56%) and lowest among Koreans (41%) and Chinese. However, among these identifiers, both Chinese and South Asian respondents are more likely to think very often of themselves as Asian American (28% and 31% respectively). Japanese respondents are distinctively high (66%) in their lack of frequency to think of themselves as Asian American, when compared to the 37 percent Asian average.

Perceived common culture. We also examine the notion of panethnicity or cross Asian group identity as a sense of shared culture. We ask our respondents if they think groups of Asians in America are culturally very similar, somewhat similar, somewhat different, or very different. More than half of the Chinese sample (54%) perceive a high or moderate level of cultural similarity among Asians; only a tenth believe that Asian groups are very different culturally. A higher percentage of Chinese in Los Angeles (17%) than elsewhere (9%) perceive a high level of commonality in culture. In the full Asian sample, just half of the respondents perceive that different Asian groups in America are very or somewhat similar in culture (50%); a sixth perceived a very different culture among Asian groups (16%). There is a remarkable uniformity across all ethnic groups on this question. Nevertheless, a significantly higher percentage of Koreans (59%) and South Asians (53%) than the Chinese (40%) believed that groups of Asians differ somewhat or very much in cultural outlook.

Panethnic shared fate. A third window into pan Asian American ethnic identity is a sense of a common destiny. Among Chinese, 44 percent believe that “what happens generally to other groups of Asians in this country will affect what happens in your life”; only less than one-fifth of them think that their life would not be very much influenced by what happened to other Asians. There is not much difference in opinion patterns across regions. However, among the Chinese who perceive a sense of linked fate with other Asians, those in New York (25%) are more likely than those in Los Angeles (15%) to believe that their life would be impacted a lot by what happened to other Asians. Among

Asians, a slightly higher share of respondents believe in a linked fate with other Asians (49%). Specifically, a higher percentage of Koreans (61%), Filipinos (54%), and South Asians (53%) than the Chinese perceive a panethnic linked fate. Less than half of Japanese and only 36% of Vietnamese respondents view Asians as sharing a common destiny. Groups also differ in how strongly this sense of shared panethnic destiny is felt. For example, a third of Vietnamese, but only 4 percent of Koreans, who believe that they share the same fate with other Asians think that they are not very much affected by issues and events happening to other Asians.

Ethnic shared fate. We are also interested in how much our respondents think what happened to their own ethnic people in America will affect what happens in their life. Over half of Chinese surveyed (54%) believe that what happened to Chinese people in the United States would impact their personal life; only 11% of the believers of ethnic linked fate think that the impact would be fairly small. These response patterns are very similar regardless of one's region of residence. They also do not differ much from the patterns found in the full Asian sample. Generally, Asians feel somewhat more strongly about *ethnic shared fate* (55%) than about *panethnic shared fate*. However, both Koreans and South Asians are more likely to perceive a common ethnic identity (76% and 57% respectively) than the Chinese. When respondents who perceive an ethnic linked fate are asked about the degree of impact on their life, less than three in ten Chinese (27%) believe that there would a whole lot impact. However, those in New York (36%) are more likely than those in Los Angeles (23%) or San Francisco (18%) to believe that their life would be impacted a lot by what happened to other Chinese Americans. Just about three in ten Asians (31%) perceive that their life would be impacted a lot by what happened to their co-ethnics. Again, a higher percentage of both Koreans and South Asians than the Chinese think that their life would be impacted a lot or somewhat by issues and events happening to other individuals in their own ethnic group.

Conclusion

The Chinese American community has undergone multiple transformations in its 150 years of presence in the U.S. history. At the dawn of the 21st century, standing at a size of more than 2.4 million and counting, the Chinese American population is a vital

political force to be reckoned with. This report intends to help chart the contours of this force by listening directly from the rank-n-file members of this community and beyond the Southern California region. Among other findings, we highlight the high level of political interest, news attention, and issue awareness of the immigrant-majority population. Contradicting the image of apathy, a large majority of our respondents express moderate to high interest in politics and what's going on in government in general. They report paying close attention to news from Asia and about Asian Americans. They show a higher level of knowledge about current events on Dr. Wen Ho Lee and the 80-20 Initiative than other Asian American groups. Three quarters of them also express familiarity with the U.S. electoral system in electing the President.

Nevertheless, Chinese Americans are also more likely than other Asian American groups to express distrust in, dissatisfaction with, or uncertainty about the performance of local officials who run the U.S. government. Their strong sense of alienation is reflected in their low level of efficacy in influencing local government decisions. Compared to other Asians, Chinese Americans are generally lower in their citizenship, expected citizenship, and voter registration, but not necessarily in their voting turnout, rates. Chinese Americans are also low in their level of participation in political activities other than voting and in community group-based and faith-based activities. In addition, Chinese Americans tend to have higher levels of ethnic-specific identity and lower levels of racial integration. They report a higher incidence of close friendship with Whites or other Asians and a lower incidence of close friendship with Blacks and Latinos. They are much less likely to approve of intermarriage or live in racially mixed neighborhood than Asians in general. Yet, they express the strongest support for the Democratic presidential candidate in election 2000 and for any candidate who is Asian American, regardless of qualification.

Political region matters in that Los Angeles Chinese, who report the most frequent contacts with homeland people and culture, are generally more satisfied with the performance of the U.S. government and report fewer incidences of hate crimes and racial discrimination than Chinese elsewhere. Residents in Los Angeles also tend to be more liberal but have no affiliation with major political parties and have the lowest citizenship and expected citizenship rates. Chinese in San Francisco, on the other hand,

have the highest citizenship rate and are more Democratic in their partisan identification and presidential vote. New York Chinese register the lowest rate of self efficacy in influencing government decisions and knowledge of the 80-20 Initiative but the highest rate of panethnic self identity and sense of panethnic and ethnic consciousness. Some of the regional differences may be explained by sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents. But a fruitful avenue for research may be the factor of regional political culture and the relationship between group political incorporation and individual political attitudes.

Above all, this profile of the political attitudes and behavior of the contemporary Chinese and Asian American communities defies an image of monotony. It certainly does not support any characterization of Chinese Americans as an uninterested, uninformed, non-opinionated, and issue- or problem-free electorate. However, Chinese Americans are not as socially and politically integrated as some other Asian American groups and there are regional differences among the population in political experiences. Although it would be fallacious to assume that it is impossible to conceive of this population as a cohesive political force or to form coalitions with other ethnic and racial groups, any effort in building political coalitions will need to heed the similarities and differences in political opinions across population groups outlined in this baseline survey.

Appendix: Percentage Distribution of Chinese American Opinion in the Multi-site Asian American Political Survey, 2000-2001

Ethnic Attachment

8. How closely have you followed news stories and other information of Asians in the United States--very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Very Closely	41	26	28	32	20
Fairly Closely	45	42	53	46	33
Not Too Closely	11	25	17	18	33
Not At All	2	4	1	2	13
Not Sure	1	4	1	2	2

9. How closely have you followed news stories and other information about what happened in Asia such as a story from Japan, Korea, China, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Very Closely	20	23	18	20	18
Fairly Closely	48	43	48	48	38
Not Too Closely	27	29	29	26	34
Not At All	1	5	3	3	9
Not Sure	3	1	2	3	1

29. How much contact either by phone or by mail or in person do you have with people in [R'S COUNTRY OF ORIGIN] during the past 12 months? Is it at least once a week, 2 or 3 times a month, once a month, once several months, once a year, or none?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Once a Week or More	31	15	19	22	25
2 or 3 times a Month	25	20	13	20	19
Once a Month	20	18	20	19	17
Once a Year	1	14	14	9	9
None	8	13	15	12	14

47. What language do you usually speak, when at home with family?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
English	4	4	2	4	26
Something Else	80	81	86	82	48
Mixed between English and Other	16	14	12	13	24

48. What language do you usually use to conduct personal business and financial transactions?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
English	31	40	26	33	71
Something Else	30	39	37	35	13
Mixed between English and Other	33	17	37	29	12
Not Sure	5	2	-	3	2

Racial Integration

38. Thinking for a moment of blacks, whites, Latinos and other Asians, do you yourself know any person who belongs to these groups whom you consider a close personal friend or not? [IF YES]

What ethnic groups do they belong to? Any others? Any other group? [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
No friend	17	27	23	22	23
Whites	39	33	26	33	31
Blacks	14	17	16	17	27
Latinos	20	18	15	18	26
Other Asian	59	50	56	56	46
Other	1	1	1	1	7

39. How would you feel if someone in your family married a person of a different ethnic background than yours? Would you strongly approve, approve, neither approve nor disapprove, disapprove, or strongly disapprove? [TREAT "DOESN'T MATTER" AS "NEITHER APPROVE NOR DISAPPROVE"]

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Strongly Approve	8	5	3	5	13
Approve	28	24	19	24	41
Neither Approve/Disap.	44	51	47	46	29
Disapprove	11	6	15	11	8
Strongly Disapprove	4	5	4	4	3
Not Sure	5	10	10	8	5
Refused	-	-	2	1	2

40. How would you describe the ethnic makeup of the neighborhood where you live? Would you say it is mostly white, mostly black, mostly Latino, mostly Asian, or would you say the ethnic makeup is pretty evenly mixed?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Mostly White	20	43	27	32	25
Mostly Black	-	5	2	2	2
Mostly Latino	7	1	2	4	5
Mostly Asian	50	24	46	37	20
Pretty Evenly Mixed	22	25	20	21	45
Not Sure/Refused	1	2	3	2	2

41. Have you ever been the victim of a 'hate crime,' that is, have you had someone verbally or physically abuse you, or damage your property, specifically because you belong to a certain race or ethnic group?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	8	16	20	14	15
No	91	84	78	84	83
Not Sure/Refused	1	-	1	-	2

42. Have you ever personally experienced discrimination in the Unites States?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	33	45	44	39	36
No	63	55	52	59	61
Not Sure/Refused	3	-	3	2	2

42a [IF YES IN Q42] In your opinion, was it because of your [only yes responses shown]

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Ethnic background	77	97	95	92	92

Gender	23	10	20	18	21
Accent, regardless of whether you have it or not	71	53	58	60	48
Other	3	-	5	2	14

Political and Social Participation

11. Thinking about the November 2000 presidential election when Al Gore ran against George Bush, did you vote in the election?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	38	38	47	41	44
No	62	62	53	59	55

11b. [IF NO IN Q11] For what reason were you not able to vote? Were you not a citizen, citizen but not registered to vote, or something else?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Not a Citizen	71	64	60	64	58
Citizen, not registered [other reasons skipped]	22	23	22	23	25

11c. [IF NOT A CITIZEN IN Q11b] Are you planning to apply for U.S. citizenship or to become a U.S. citizen?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	56	58	80	63	72
No	29	42	20	31	21
Not Sure	15	-	-	6	7

13. During the past 4 years, have you participated in any of the following types of political activity in your community? (ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS) [Yes responses shown]

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
a. Written or phoned a government official	5	11	4	6	11
b. Contacted an editor of a newspaper, magazine, or tv station	6	4	2	4	7
c. Donated money to a political campaign	5	10	7	8	12
d. Attended a public meeting, political rally or fundraiser	10	5	5	7	14
e. Worked with others in your community to solve a problem	18	16	16	16	21
f. Signed a petition for a political cause	6	7	14	10	16
g. Served on any governmental board or commission	3	1	1	2	2
h. Taken part in a protest or demonstration	5	7	3	4	7

5. Do you belong to any organization or take part in any activities that represent the interests and viewpoints of [R'S ETHNIC GROUP] or other Asians in America?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	5	4	3	5	15
No	92	96	96	94	84
Not Sure	2	-	1	1	1

52. How often do you attend religious services? Would you say--every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Every week	19	10	10	13	29
Almost every week	4	2	1	2	8
Once or twice a month	14	8	5	9	12
A few times a year	24	20	16	19	23
Never	36	54	62	51	22
Not Sure	1	4	4	3	2
Refused	2	2	2	3	3

Political Orientations

10. How interested are you in politics and what's going on in government in general? Are you very interested, somewhat interested, only slightly interested, or not at all interested in politics and what goes on in government?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Very Interested	18	14	22	18	24
Somewhat Interested	46	45	46	46	37
Slightly Interested	20	29	22	24	24
Not At All Interested	13	7	8	10	13
Not Sure	2	5	1	2	1

21. How would you describe your views on most matters having to do with politics? Do you generally think of yourself as very liberal, or somewhat liberal, or middle-of-the-road, or somewhat conservative, or very conservative?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Very Liberal	6	4	1	4	8
Somewhat Liberal	29	25	26	26	28
Middle of the Road	42	39	47	42	32
Somewhat Conservative	8	18	11	11	18
Very Conservative	3	4	-	2	4
Not Sure	12	11	16	15	10

22. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or of another political affiliation?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
No, do not think in these terms	38	27	32	33	20
Republican	12	11	3	8	14
Democrat	22	39	40	32	36
Independent	2	6	-	3	13
Not Sure	24	17	24	23	16
Refused	3	-	-	1	2

11a. [IF VOTED IN 2000] Which candidate did you vote for?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Al Gore	57	69	73	64	55
George Bush	31	22	14	21	26
Ralph Nader	-	-	2	-	1
Not Sure	9	-	2	3	4

Refused	3	9	9	11	14
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15. If you have an opportunity to decide on two candidates for political office, one of whom is Asian American. Would you be more likely to vote for the Asian American candidate, if the two are equally qualified?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	74	69	71	71	60
No	6	8	6	7	22
Not Sure	19	23	22	22	18

15a. [IF YES IN Q15] Would you still vote for the Asian American, even if he or she is less qualified?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	39	40	33	36	24
No	44	50	51	49	68
Not Sure	17	10	16	15	8

Assessing the Performance of the U.S. Government

18. Next, I have a few questions concerning your view of U.S. government officials: How much of the time do you think you can trust your local and state government officials to do what is right--just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or none at all?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Just About Always	2	5	-	2	7
Most of the Time	34	27	28	28	30
Some of the Time	29	34	36	35	44
None at all	14	7	7	10	8
Not Sure	20	24	29	25	11

27. Do you feel you can generally trust US government officials more, about the same, or less than government officials in your home country?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
More	46	32	40	39	55
About the Same	34	29	31	33	26
Less	4	13	7	7	6
Not Sure	16	27	22	21	13

19. If you had some complaint about a government activity and you took that complaint to a local public official, do you think that he or she would pay a lot of attention to what you say, some attention, very little attention, or none at all?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
A lot	8	8	3	6	9
Some	33	17	26	25	33
Very Little	18	21	17	20	27
None at all	16	21	15	18	14
Not Sure	25	32	38	31	16

20. How much influence do you think someone like you can have over local government decisions--a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or none at all?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
A lot	2	1	-	1	6
Some	8	6	14	10	20

Very Little	34	38	38	37	41
None at all	44	51	36	43	27
Not Sure	12	4	12	9	7

28. Do you feel you can generally influence decisions made by US government officials more, about the same, or less than those made by government officials in your home country?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
More	19	20	21	19	39
About the Same	21	23	25	24	24
Less	25	27	25	25	17
Not Sure	34	30	28	32	19
Refused	1	-	1	1	1

12a. How familiar are you with the current process of electing the U.S. president? Are you very familiar, somewhat familiar, or not familiar at all?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Very Familiar	14	13	20	17	25
Somewhat Familiar	60	56	53	56	54
Not Familiar	23	30	24	26	18
Not Sure	3	1	2	2	3

12b. [IF VERY OR SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR IN Q12a] Do you support changing the system to award the presidency only to the candidate who received the highest number of votes among those who voted?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	65	60	55	59	65
No	16	24	17	20	21
Not Sure	19	16	28	21	14

Concern Over Community Affairs and Public Policy Issues

6. To your best knowledge, have you heard of Dr. Wen Ho Lee, the nuclear scientist charged with downloading classified data and spent 9 months in jail?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	82	82	89	84	57
No	17	18	10	16	41
Not Sure	1	-	1	-	2

6a. [IF YES IN Q6] Do you strongly approve, or somewhat approve, or somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of the government's handling of the case?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Strongly Approve	3	3	2	2	5
Somewhat Approve	8	7	5	6	14
Somewhat Disapprove	24	25	25	24	24
Strongly Disapprove	36	42	49	43	29
No Opinion	24	20	12	18	21
Not Sure	4	3	6	5	3
Refused	3	-	1	1	4

7. Have you heard of the 80-20 Initiative or a movement to help organize the presidential choice of Asian American voters?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
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Yes	48	30	45	39	18
No	50	69	54	60	80
Not Sure	1	1	1	1	2

7a. [IF YES IN Q7] Would you strongly approve, or somewhat approve, or somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of such an effort?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Strongly Approve	29	48	21	30	29
Somewhat Approve	36	12	40	33	35
Somewhat Disapprove	4	20	7	9	12
Strongly Disapprove	2	-	2	2	3
No Opinion	27	16	21	22	17
Not Sure	2	4	7	4	3

Next, I'm going to read you a list of current issues. For each one, please indicate, in a score from 1 to 7, how much you agree with the statement. You should give a score of 7 if you agree strongly with the statement; you should give a score of 1 if you strongly disagree with the statement. If you neither agree or disagree with the statement, you should give a score of 4. If you do not have an opinion, please tell me so that I can move to the next question. Please remember that you may use any number from 1 to 7.

32. Government should provide public information and services important to the immigrant community in English as well as in the immigrants' native languages.

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
No Opinion	4	7	4	8	6
Strongly Disagree	6	5	4	5	5
2	1	2	2	2	2
3	1	2	5	3	3
Neither Agree/Disagree	15	13	7	12	10
5	10	11	11	10	12
6	12	2	8	8	7
Strongly Agree	50	57	57	53	54

33. Congress should pass laws limiting the number of legal immigrants admitted each year into this country.

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
No Opinion	6	13	15	13	12
Strongly Disagree	14	16	8	12	16
2	5	2	4	4	4
3	-	5	2	2	5
Neither Agree/Disagree	18	16	24	20	18
5	17	6	12	11	12
6	2	5	5	5	6
Strongly Agree	37	38	29	33	27

34. Non-U.S. citizens who are legal permanent residents should be permitted to make donations to political campaigns.

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
No Opinion	17	17	19	18	17
Strongly Disagree	4	10	7	8	12
2	2	2	3	2	4

3	5	6	1	4	5
Neither Agree/Disagree	11	14	21	15	14
5	16	10	14	14	13
6	4	4	6	5	8
Strongly Agree	40	38	28	34	28

35. Affirmative action refers to any measure, policy or law used to increase diversity or rectify discrimination so that qualified individuals have equal access to employment, education, business, and contracting opportunities. Generally speaking, do you think affirmative action is a good thing or a bad thing for Asian Americans, or doesn't it affect Asian Americans much?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
A Good Thing	69	68	69	67	63
A Bad Thing	2	1	3	3	6
Doesn't affect Asian American Much	16	16	15	15	19
Not Sure	13	16	12	15	11
Refused	-	-	1	-	1

36. Some people feel that because of past disadvantages there are some groups in society that should receive special job training and educational assistance. Others say that is unfair. What about you? Do you strongly favor, favor, neither favor nor oppose, oppose, or strongly oppose special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Strongly Favor	20	36	28	25	26
Favor	42	23	36	35	36
Neither Favor/Oppose	24	23	23	22	18
Oppose	8	10	4	8	11
Strongly Oppose	1	1	1	1	3
Not Sure	4	6	7	8	6
Refused	1	2	-	1	1

37. Some people feel that because of past disadvantages, there are some groups in society that should be given preferences in hiring and promotion. Others say that is unfair. What about you? Do you strongly favor, favor, neither favor nor oppose, oppose, or strongly oppose special preferences in hiring and promotion to Asian Americans?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Strongly Favor	11	7	6	8	15
Favor	23	19	17	19	22
Neither Favor/Oppose	27	31	33	31	22
Oppose	27	21	20	22	23
Strongly Oppose	3	10	5	6	9
Not Sure	10	11	17	13	8
Refused	-	1	1	-	1

Ethnic and Panethnic Identities

45. People think of themselves in different ways. In general, do you think of yourself as an American, an Asian American, an Asian, a [R's ETHNIC GROUP] American, or a [R's ETHNIC GROUP]?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
American	2	1	-	1	12
Asian American	13	13	12	12	15

Asian (R's Ethnic Group)	3 37	6 26	4 39	4 34	4 34
American (R's Ethnic Group)	39	49	42	43	30
Not Sure	6	4	2	4	3
Refused	-	1	1	1	2

46. [Asked of those who did not self-identify as an "Asian American" in Q45] Have you ever thought of yourself as an Asian American?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	44	40	48	43	49
No	43	40	41	41	41
Not Sure	5	11	8	9	5
Refused	7	10	2	7	4

46a. [IF YES IN Q46] How often do you think of yourself as an Asian American? Is it very often, often, or not that often?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Very Often	33	42	28	33	25
Often	48	38	49	44	39
Not that Often	13	10	22	16	33
Not Sure	6	8	2	5	3

1. Some say that people of Asian descent in the U.S. have a great deal in common culturally, others disagree. Do you think groups of Asians in America are culturally very similar, somewhat similar, somewhat different, or very different?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Very similar	17	6	4	9	9
Somewhat similar	44	45	48	45	41
Somewhat different	24	33	32	29	29
Very different	10	12	12	11	16
Not Sure	5	4	4	6	5

2. Do you think what happens generally to other groups of Asians in this country will affect what happens in your life? [PROBE, IF ANSWER "IT DEPENDS"]

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	43	43	47	44	49
No	48	50	42	47	42
Not Sure	9	7	12	8	9

2a. [IF YES IN Q2] Will it affect it a lot, some, or not very much?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
A lot	15	25	18	18	22
Some	65	56	66	63	56
Not Very Much	15	19	14	17	18
Not Sure	5	-	2	3	4

3. What about the [R's ETHNIC GROUP] people in America, do you think what happens generally to [R's ETHNIC GROUP] Americans will affect what happens in your life? [PROBE, IF ANSWER "IT DEPENDS"]

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
Yes	52	54	57	54	55
No	38	36	33	36	37
Not Sure	11	11	10	10	8

3a. [IF YES IN Q3] Will it affect it a lot, some or not very much?

	Los Angeles	New York	San Francisco	Chinese Total	Asian Total
A lot	23	36	18	27	31
Some	65	51	63	57	54
Not Very Much	10	11	11	11	11
Not Sure	2	2	7	5	4