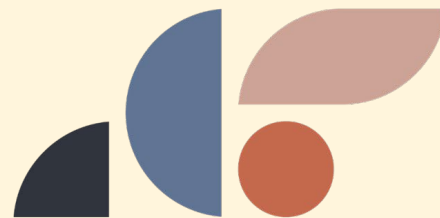


CONFIDENTIAL



ASIAN
AMERICAN
FUTURES

AANHPI Audience Research Community Briefing



ASIAN AMERICAN FUTURES

Asian American Futures (AAF) was founded in 2020 to ensure that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are an essential part of the American narrative. The mission of AAF is to ensure AAPI communities are SEEN, HEARD, EMPOWERED and UNITED.

Our Initiatives



Purple Mai'a Foundation

Strengthen movement
organizations and
leaders



AAPI Stories Within

Build narrative power
rooted in pride, love
and solidarity



Hmong Innovating Politics

Create a political
home to engage new
voices in AAPI
communities





PLAY THE GROUND

'You Have to Give Us Respect': How Asian Americans Fueled the San Francisco Recall

The landslide vote to remove three school board members cut across ethnicities and income levels. But Chinese American voters and volunteers were crucial to victory, organizers say.

Give this article 131



Anna Hsu, a Beijing-born entrepreneur, helped organize the San Francisco recall. She has two teenage boys in the public school district. Jia Wilson/The New York Times

BROOKINGS



HOW WE RISE

Are Asian Americans people of color or the next in line to become white?

Jennifer Lee · Tuesday, October 11, 2022



aapiforceef

SOLIDARITY STORIES

Interrogating the Asian American Pacific Islander Umbrella Identity



TAVIA SAMUELS

How well we know we've gotten to freedom if we haven't been there before?



jamaicaosorio



"Hawaiian land wasn't just stolen 100+ years ago. Hawaiian land is stolen EVERY SINGLE DAY. Being precise and direct about ongoing violence is not a victim mentality. It's a conscious one."
-Jamaica Hoelimeleikalani Osorio

STOP AAPI HATE



50+ years of "Asian American" - Has this term hurt or helped more?

Questions & Discussion

Asian "American" was coined as a term to unite for political power. "Oriental" and "API" was the 1960s. The term "Asian American" was born of the civil rights movement.

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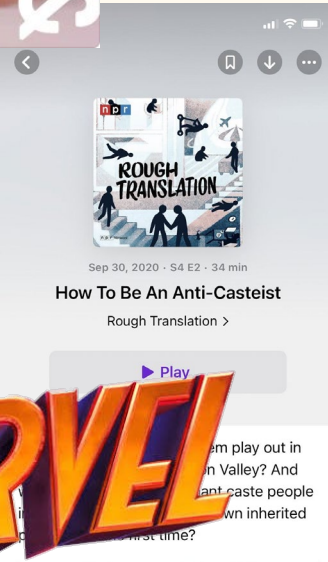
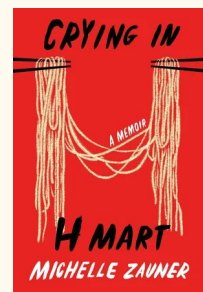
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The New York Times

Photo: The New York Times

'You Have to Give Us Respect': How Asian Americans Fueled the San Francisco Recall

The landslide vote to remove three school board members cut across ethnicities and income levels. But Chinese American voters and volunteers were crucial to victory, organizers say.

Share this article



Asian Americans in Berkeley... have been targeted by...

THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE IS BY TAKING CARE OF ONE ANOTHER



forceef

SOLIDARITY STORIES
Integrating the Asian American Pacific Islander Umbrella Identity



YAYAY SANGJITO

How will we know we've gotten to freedom if we haven't been there before?

Jamaicaosorio

TRANS REPRESENTATION:

Filipina American actress, Ivory Aquino joins Batgirl as DC's first trans character

HOW WE RISE

Are Asian Americans people of color or the next in line to become white?

Jennifer Lee · Tuesday, October 11, 2022

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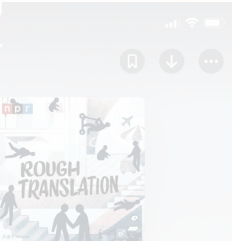
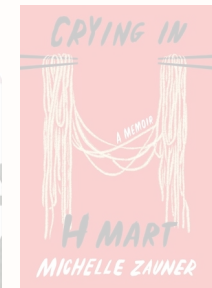
Jennifer Lee · Tuesday, October 11, 2022

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Jennifer Lee · Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Jennifer Lee · Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Jennifer Lee · Tuesday, October 11, 2022



Sep 30, 2020 · S4 E2 · 34 min

How To Be An Anti-Casteist

Rough Translation >

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Rough Translation >

Rough Translation >

Rough Translation >

Rough Translation >

Rough Translation >

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We're building narrative *power* for an
AAPI majority

We're not just building public support for one policy or shifting one narrative. We're working to change the status quo and create a new normal for AANHPI communities—for the long term.



A deep narrative ecosystem for the world we want to see

Dominant Narratives

Perpetual Foreigner: Xenophobia, White Supremacy

No matter what, Asian Americans will be considered foreign in the US. They don't deserve the attention, support or safety that White Americans receive.

Scarcity

There isn't enough room on the ladder of American meritocracy for Asian Americans and other minorities to ascend together.

Assimilation

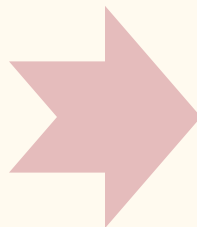
Living up to the "model minority" stereotype will guarantee Asian Americans success, power and security in America.

Authenticity

"Authentic" Asian Americans are East Asians who maintain ties to their traditions, language and culture and fit within idealized standards of beauty and achievement.

Invisibility

Many parts of the Asian American community, and NHPI communities, especially, are rarely considered.



Aspirational Narratives

Interdependence

AANHPIs look out for each other. We work to ensure people and the environment are safe, healthy and thriving.

Solidarity

AANHPIs can connect to the struggles and experiences of people within & outside our community. We are stronger and more powerful when we act in solidarity with others.

Pride

AANHPIs are not a monolith. We can be proud of our diversity in language, culture, ethnicity and experience. How we unite and build strength in numbers may depend on the issue at hand.

Belonging

AANHPIs deserve to be included, with intersectionality in mind, in politics, pop culture, news, social justice & more.

Self-Determination

AANHPI communities deserve to govern and define themselves beyond war, imperialism & violence.



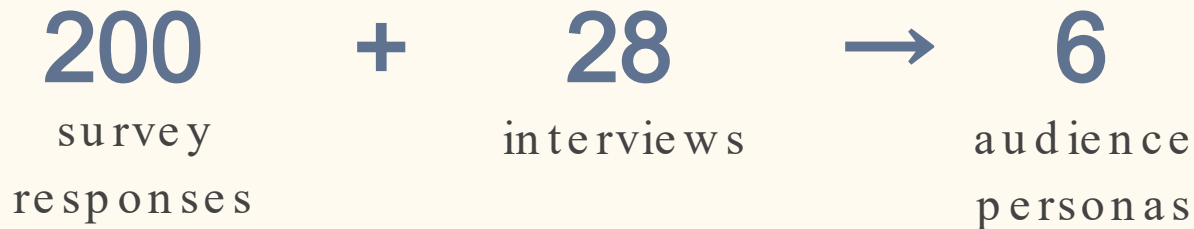
Change starts from within our community



But we needed to find out more...



...so we spoke directly to our audience



..with (mostly second generation) Millennial & Gen Z AANHPIs across the US, of many genders, ethnicities, class backgrounds, attitudes and more.

Participants also took the Narrative Observatory audience quiz to ground findings in expanded cultural consumption, values and demographic data



We were supported by experts in narrative, research and organizing

Nadia Belkin

Executive Director, Asian American Power Network

Jeff Chang

Senior Advisor, Race Forward
Butterfly Lab for Immigrant Narrative Strategy

Peter De Guzman

Associate Researcher, Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement
CIRCLE

Dora Guo

Lead Volunteer
Xin Sheng Project

Tiffany Huang

Provost's Postdoctoral Fellow
Department of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania

Timmy Lu

Executive Director, AAPIs for Civic Empowerment Education Fund
AAPIFORCE-EF

Karthick Ramakrishnan

Professor of Public Policy, University of California, Riverside & Executive Director, California 100





Our personas show our audience with depth & complexity



Pragmatic Strivers



Compassionate
Peacekeepers



Independent Skeptics



Inclusive Optimists



Cultural
Experimentalists



Rooted in Heritage





Who has room to GROW INTO aspirational narratives?



Pragmatic Strivers

Hard workers who lean into immigrant sacrifice and want representation



scarcity, perpetual foreigner, belonging



Compassionate Peacekeepers

Big-hearted helpers who yearn for belonging in dominant culture



assimilation, belonging



Independent Skeptics

Young people seeking validation of their unique identities & experiences



authenticity, interdependence & community care



Who is ALREADY SHARING aspirational narratives?



Inclusive Optimists

Proud AANHPIs who strive for inclusion and equity for all people, AANHPI or not



authenticity, inclusion & pride



Cultural Experimentalists

Progressives shaping an inclusive AANHPI culture in the diaspora

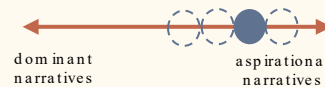


authenticity, community care, solidarity, belonging



Rooted in Heritage

People reconnecting to their heritage and keeping culture alive



scarcity, authenticity, pride

Inclusive Optimists

We are proud to be AANHPI when we can connect over shared experience, try each other's food and support each other's causes and communities, even even if there is not a 100% overlap. We do our best to include people of all ethnicities, sizes, sexualities, religions, etc. We have been on our own journeys to feel pride in our heritage and want others to feel that pride, too. Having pan-AA/NHPI spaces is more important than sharing everything.

← Dom in ant narratives Aspirational narratives →

Most-susceptible dom in ant narrative: **authenticity**

Most-developed aspirational narrative: **inclusion & pride**

Orientation to AANHPI:

we

hope

mixed group

← Conservative Progressive →

Dem o: **minority and/or experienced discrimination**

OBI audience: **people power**

Values: **part of a group, security, stimulation**

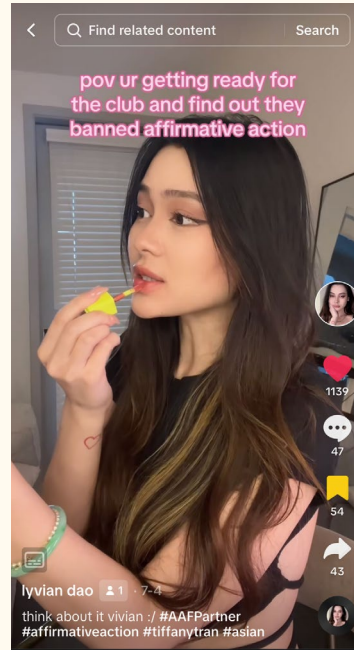
Aspirational AANHPI future: everyone in the AANHPI umbrella is included and celebrated with equal value. We band together when it matters to use our power in numbers.

Our strengths: We welcome everyone and will go out of our way to make sure a broad range of people are not just invited, but included.

What will alienate us from AANHPI work: emphasizing difference and individuality at the expense of unity.

Attitude toward issues: We are excited to help build a progressive future. We may not be exposed to every progressive idea, but we tend to get excited about the possibility of a more inclusive, equitable future for all communities. Help us elevate diversity without alienating those who are skeptical of pan-AANHPI.

Real -world application: education equity

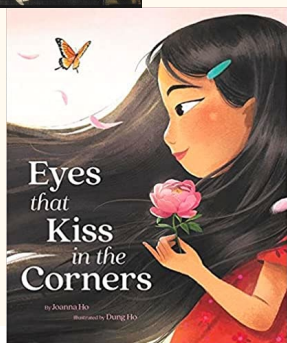


100k
views

curren.t.

<https://tinyurl.com/AAF-CAA-XSP-toolkit>

Narrative investment can accelerate the Asian American culture -shaping that is already happening





Personas and narrative insights have many applications



electoral

Apply personas to
develop audience-centric
campaigns



narrative

Use personas and
aspirational narratives to
build a majority through
innovation and
experimentation



policy

Strengthen narrative
capacity for organizations
engaged in policy work

We're looking for collaborators: <https://bit.ly/AAFPersonaCollab>
kana@asianamericanfutures.org



Q&A

APPENDIX

Detailed Personas

Pragmatic Strivers

We show our pride in being AANHPI by honoring our parents' sacrifices through hard work and achievement. We feel disconnected from our culture or heritage and instead bond over shared experiences of immigrant sacrifice. We are skeptical of pan-AANHPI unity but value AANHPI representation. We are still working through the difficulties of not belonging and deeply feel the pain of anti-Asian violence.

← ● →
Dominant narratives Aspirational narratives

Most-susceptible dominant narrative: **scarcity, perpetual foreigner**

Most-developed aspirational narrative: **representation & belonging**

Orientation to AANHPI:

me

pain

in-group

← ● →
Conservative Progressive

Dem o: **skew male** , late 20s+

OBI audience: **if you say so, don't tread on me**

Values: **security, achievement, hedonism, stimulation**

Aspirational AANHPI future: AANHPI people have equal opportunity to achieve whatever they wish. Their effort and accomplishments are celebrated and recognized.

Our strengths: we work hard to meet our goals, no matter how big. We are protective of those close to us and never lose sight of how far we've come.

What will alienate us from AANHPI work: prioritizing other communities or issues over our own.

Attitude toward issues: For those of us who lean liberal, progressive ideas could be appealing, but they just aren't realistic in today's climate. The issues facing our community aren't getting the attention they deserve, especially anti-Asian violence. Addressing this gap in attention is a big priority. We may have room to move if our basic need for security and validation are addressed.

Compassionate Peacekeepers

We are proud of being AANHPI when we show-off the best parts of our community. We love sharing our culture and being good role models for others--in our community and externally--so that we can be accepted and seen in a positive light. We see a path to prosperity and belonging through individual effort and treating one another with kindness.

← ● →
Dom in ant
narratives Aspirational
narratives

Most-susceptible dom in ant
narrative: **assimilation**

Most-developed aspirational
narrative: **belonging**

Orientation to AANHPI:

we

hope

mixed
group

← ● →
Conservative Progressive

Dem o: **late 20s+, suburban**

OBI audience: **tough cookie,
people power**

Values: **part of a group,
power, stimulation, helping
others**

Aspirational AANHPI future: AANHPI people fully belong in dominant culture, free of stereotypes or the pressures of being an immigrant in America.

Our strengths: we have big hearts and live to help others, especially individuals with whom we can build strong relationships or serve as mentors.

What will alienate us from AANHPI work: dismissing our good intentions to support our community.

Attitude toward issues: inequality and racism are real, and have painful consequences. Things would be better if we all had an open mind, love for one another and a willingness to listen and celebrate our cultures. It's unfortunate how divided politics have become. We care about issues and prefer to get involved where interpersonal relationships and individual actions shine, like volunteering.

Independent Skeptics

Being AANHPI means being disconnected from our heritage *and* from people who share our unique experience. We *want* to feel proud and celebrate diversity but we never quite feel like we belong, because belonging is still dictated by people in dominant White and/or AANHPI culture. We may feel more comfortable with people with another one of our intersectional identities.

←————●————→
Dominant narratives Aspirational narratives

Most-susceptible dominant narrative: **authenticity**

Most-developed aspirational narrative: **interdependence & community care**

Orientation to AANHPI:

me

pain

mixed group

←————●————→
Conservative Progressive

Demo: **teens - mid 20's**

OBI audiences: **If You Say So**

Values: **part of a group, hedonism, stimulation, helping others**

Aspirational AANHPI future: validation and inclusion of our unique, specific, intersectional identities.

Our strengths: we are empathetic, sensitive and unafraid to be vulnerable. We can connect powerfully with others when we feel recognized.

What will alienate us from AANHPI work: feeling excluded for being different. Help us connect with others who share our experience or identity.

Attitude toward issues: systemic injustice is REAL and a huge problem in our society. We're skeptical that things can really change. That doesn't stop us from *trying* --by working in the social sector, organizing at work or spending our free time learning about social problems. We prefer to spend our energy where we find synergy and recognition from those around us.

Inclusive Optimists

We are proud to be AANHPI when we can connect over shared experience, try each other's food and support each other's causes and communities, even even if there is not a 100% overlap. We do our best to include people of all ethnicities, sizes, sexualities, religions, etc. We have been on our own journeys to feel pride in our heritage and want others to feel that pride, too. Having pan-AA/NHPI spaces is more important than sharing everything.

← Dom in ant narratives Aspirational narratives →

Most-susceptible dom in ant narrative: **authenticity**

Most-developed aspirational narrative: **inclusion & pride**

Orientation to AANHPI:

we

hope

mixed group

← Conservative Progressive →

Dem o: **minority and/or experienced discrimination**

OBI audience: **people power**

Values: **part of a group, security, stimulation**

Aspirational AANHPI future: everyone in the AANHPI umbrella is included and celebrated with equal value. We band together when it matters to use our power in numbers.

Our strengths: We welcome everyone and will go out of our way to make sure a broad range of people are not just invited, but included.

What will alienate us from AANHPI work: emphasizing difference and individuality at the expense of unity.

Attitude toward issues: We are excited to help build a progressive future. We may not be exposed to every progressive idea, but we tend to get excited about the possibility of a more inclusive, equitable future for all communities. Help us elevate diversity without alienating those who are skeptical of pan-AANHPI.

Cultural Experimentalists

We are proud to be AANHPI when we build on the practices, values and ideas in the Inclusive Optimists persona to create the culture and identity we want to see. All cultures have room to evolve and grow. We're leading the way by choosing meaningful parts of our heritage to share with our children, aligning our careers with our values, standing in solidarity with other groups and finding alternatives to the problematic aspects of our culture or narratives.

← ————— ● ————— →
Dominant narratives Aspirational narratives

Most-susceptible dominant narrative: **authenticity**

Most-developed aspirational narrative: **interdependence & community care, solidarity, inclusion & pride**

Orientation to AANHPI:

we

pain

mixed group

← ————— ● ————— →
Conservative Progressive

Dem o: **minority and/or experienced discrimination**

OBI audience: **people power**

Values: **part of a group, universalism, hedonism, stimulation**

Aspirational AANHPI future: a cohesive AANHPI community intentionally practicing the best parts of AANHPI cultures, building political power and acting in solidarity with others while respectfully evolving away from harmful behaviors and attitudes.

Our strengths: We navigate tensions in our lives with intention and experimentation.

What will alienate us from AANHPI work: emphasizing authenticity or confusing trauma with culture. Many of us are evolving *because* of negative experiences and could be prone to gatekeeping.

Attitude toward issues: We do our best to live our values. Many of us are involved in social justice in some way. We show others the wide range of ways one could get involved, from local politics to working for a social justice organization to leading mutual aid groups.

Rooted in Heritage

We are proud to be AANHPI when we feel connected to our cultural roots. We feel comfortable in our present-day ancestral communities and we're learning or are proficient in our heritage language. We've sought out additional opportunities to strengthen those connections on our own, through work, education, with our children or from our parents.

← ● →
Dominant narratives Aspirational narratives

Most-susceptible dominant narrative: **scarcity, authenticity**

Most-developed aspirational narrative: **pride**

Orientation to AANHPI:

we

pain

in-group

← ● →
Conservative Progressive

Demo: **late 20's, early 30's**

OBI audience: **people power**

Values: **tradition**

Aspirational AANHPI future: all AANHPI people can intentionally (re)connect to their cultural or heritage practices whether or not they grew up with them.

Our strengths: We transform our pain into action and go to great lengths to achieve our goals.

What will alienate us from AANHPI work: authentic expression of culture is a goal, not a reason to judge or exclude others.

Attitude toward issues: We care deeply about issues that impact the communities we are part of. This makes us more knowledgeable about politics and issues than other personas, but it may not extend beyond our community. Help us see how our personal journey to reclaim our roots is one example of cultural evolution.

Screeners Survey Notes

Screening survey ran May - June 2022

- **Demographics:** age, gender, location, race, ethnicity, urban/suburban/rural, immigration generation, education, sexuality,
- **Politics:** ideology, vote history, impact of political process on family, racial group, community involvement (e.g. giving money, volunteering)
- **Religion:** religion, importance of religion, evangelism
- **Identity:** importance of racial, ethnic, descendant-of-immigrant identity
- **Linked fate:** AAPIs, ethnicity, race
- **Experiences of discrimination**
- **Economic status:** class background, mobility
- **Issues:** affirmative action, #StopAAPIHate, abortion, policing, distinct Asian American & PI cultures, immigration reform, climate change,
- **Values & goals**
- **Free response**
 - Self-identification (e.g. AAPI, Asian American, Korean American)
 - Additional identities that are important
 - Occupation
 - Pride in AAPI/ racial/ ethnic identity
 - Connection/solidarity with other groups
 - What is shared across AAPI umbrella
 - Other topics or concerns on your mind



A screenshot of the activate.ca website. The main heading is "Shape the AAPI narrative" in a large, bold font. Below it, it says "Participants must:" followed by two bullet points: "Identify as AAPI" and "Be between 15-40 years old". A yellow button contains the URL "https://bit.ly/AAPISurvey2022". At the bottom, there are logos for "ACTIVATECA" and "ASIAN AMERICAN FUTURES", along with a "View insights" link and a "Boost Again" button. A speech bubble on the right says "You can win a \$100 gift card!". A curved banner on the right edge says "Deadline is June 30th".

[Full question list here](#)



Interview Demographics

interviewees

Ethnicity

SE Asian	28 %
Chinese	28 %
East Asian	14 %
South Asian	10 %
Mixed	7 %
NHPI	10 %

Gender

Female	59 %
Male	28 %
Non-binary	7 %
Other	3 %

Age

15-18	7 %
19-22	14 %
23-29	34 %
30-40	31 %

Region

CA	34 %
West	10 %
South	7 %
Midwest	17 %
AK	7 %
HI	10 %
Southwest	3 %

Class (childhood)

Poor	21 %
Working-class	21 %
Middle class	41 %
Upper middle class	14 %

Religious

Yes	41 %
No	51 %

Politics

Strong Democrat	14 %
Democrat	48 %
Independent	31 %
Republican	3 %

