

nielsen

# HOPE AND ACTION

THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF ASIAN AMERICANS



Nielsen Diverse Intelligence Series  
May 2021



## THE RACIAL RECKONING TAKING PLACE IN THE U.S. HAS LED TO AN AWAKENING FOR ASIANS.

# FROM HATE TO HOPE AND ACTION

Open any news feed or article today and you'll likely find a piece about racial injustice. Much of the news focuses on the injustices our Black communities in the U.S. continue to combat, but there has been a parallel narrative gaining visibility: ending the racially motivated hate crimes against the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. The onset of the pandemic and the many references to its origins in China sparked stories and public commentary blaming Chinese people and anyone who looked Asian for the lockdowns, the tense U.S.-China political relationship, America's economic downturn and more. The issue spans well beyond rhetoric, as anti-Asian hate crimes spiked around the U.S.

Enough is enough. The racial reckoning taking place across the country has led to an awakening for Asians. While there may be some truth to the cultural attributes often associated with our AAPI community, such as being non-confrontational and avoiding extra attention, the time has come for the Asian-American community to reclaim our place in this country—as people who are contributing to the growth of the U.S. economy, adding significantly to the richness of American culture and fighting the pandemic and the racism that so many people of color have faced.

Asian-American voices are growing louder and stronger, calling for an end to the hate and bringing hope for a more united future. The passing of the anti-Asian hate crimes bill, the powerful #wassthehate movement and the exponential growth of Asian communities in new centers across the U.S. are signs of the growing influence and consumer power of Asian Americans. More than ever, AAPI consumers are demanding more from brands and businesses. Connecting with this group requires a different level of engagement that shows care about social justice and an understanding of the diversity within our community.

As part of the media industry, Nielsen took an in-depth look this year at how our industry can act to stop anti-Asian hate. Media has the power to shift perception and break stereotypes, and Nielsen has uncovered opportunities to do both—through how we advertise and the way Asians are represented on screen. In the sections that follow, we showcase the growth and power of our community along with the key opportunities for action. As Asian Americans are experiencing their awakening, we welcome America's awakening and action to support our community.



**Patricia Ratulangi**

Vice President, Global Communications,  
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Visit [nielsen.com/asianamerican](https://nielsen.com/asianamerican) to learn more.

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**Editor’s Note**  
 For the purpose of this report, Asian American is defined to include all who identify on the U.S. Census as Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, whether alone or in combination with some other race. Also, in this report, Asian American is only hyphenated when it is used as a compound adjective preceding a noun; Asian Americans, as a noun phrase, is not hyphenated.  
 Nielsen Measurements: As noted in the methodology section of this report, the sample design of our research is not managed in Asian languages; however, as a result of our efforts to accommodate non-English-speaking respondents, our panelists include English- and non-English-speaking populations.



# POPULATION GROWTH & REGIONAL INFLUENCE

The majority of Asian American Pacific Islanders in the U.S. are Chinese, Indian and Filipino; however, this community is incredibly diverse, with countries of origin and home languages spanning three major regions: South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia/Pacific Islands. Each of these regions and the countries within them has its own cultures, traditions and practices.

With more than 55% of Asian Americans in the U.S. born in another country, cultural identity plays a strong role in the Asian-American experience. This community remains an extremely important and influential group, not only as the fastest-growing racial or ethnic group in the country, but as powerful allies for change. The Asian-American community has a population of more than 23.3 million and a growth rate that far outpaces all other racial and ethnic groups.

While Asian Americans have a presence in all major markets in the U.S., the community is actively expanding into new cities, with nearly 13% saying they're planning to move in the next 12 months. Texas, in particular, is a hotspot for Asian-American growth, with five of the state's larger cities experiencing over 50% Asian-American growth from 2010 to 2019. Most notably, the population of Frisco, Texas, within the Dallas-Fort Worth designated market area (DMA) has more than tripled from 2010 to 2019.

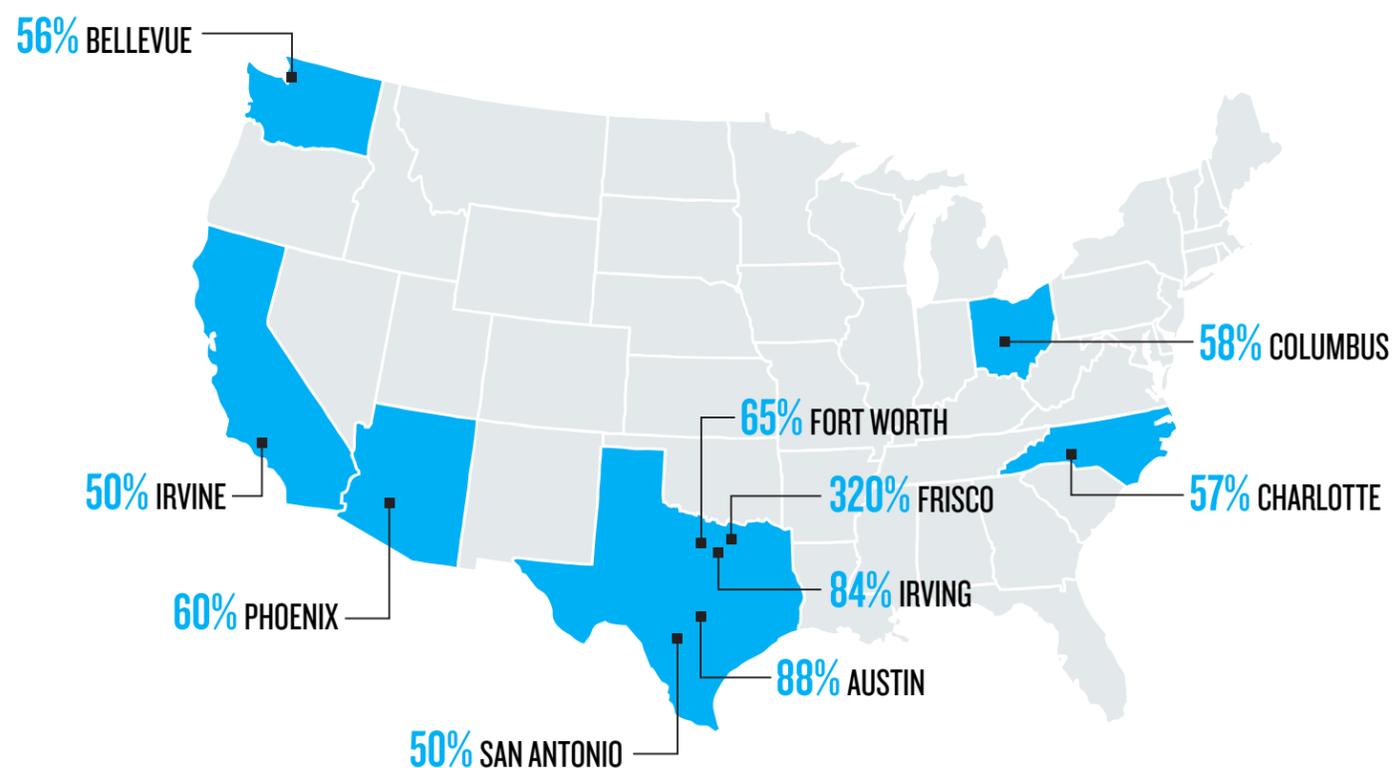


**55% OF ASIAN AMERICANS IN THE U.S. WERE BORN IN ANOTHER COUNTRY.**



**U.S. ASIAN-AMERICAN POPULATION IS UP 30%, WHILE THE NON-ASIAN-AMERICAN POPULATION GREW ONLY 5% OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS.**

## TOP 10 CITIES WITH THE HIGHEST ASIAN-AMERICAN GROWTH FROM 2010-2019



Source: American Community Survey, 2019



# SPOTLIGHT: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

## SAN FRANCISCO AND DALLAS-FT. WORTH

New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco are home to the largest population of Chinese Americans. However, the Dallas designated market area (DMA) saw the largest population growth of Asian Americans in any DMA in the country between 2010 and 2019. As a result, North Texas is a growing Asian cultural center, with resources serving the large and growing local AAPI community. There are more than 100 Korean churches, 40 Chinese churches as well as Buddhist centers and Asian art and cultural museums. A large number of finance, telecom and tech companies are attracting even more Asian Americans to the area. While Dallas is growing and addressing the needs of the Asian American community, local, in-culture content offerings have room to grow.



### ASIANS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO DMA

**2X** AS LIKELY TO WATCH ALTERNATIVE CONTENT COMPARED TO THE POPULATION

#### WHAT THEY WATCH ...

NICHE ALTERNATIVE CONTENT



CONNECTED DEVICE PROGRAMMING



### ASIANS IN THE DALLAS DMA

**45%** GROWTH IN CONNECTED DEVICE USAGE, COMPARED WITH JUST 27% AMONG ALL PEOPLE IN DALLAS-FT. WORTH

#### WHAT THEY WATCH ...

NICHE ALTERNATIVE CONTENT



CONNECTED DEVICE PROGRAMMING



The Asian-American community is on the move and may not find the same programming content tailored to their culture in markets with recent rapid population growth as they do in Asian-American community mainstays like San Francisco. While nationally, Asians over-index for alternative content\* and are 28% more likely to watch it, they under-index for alternative content in Dallas-Fort Worth, compared with all of Dallas-Fort Worth, reflecting the lack of available relevant or in-language content for consumption. When we compare Asian-American media consumption data for San Francisco and Dallas-Fort Worth, we can see that in the absence of broadcast over-the-air content like in San Francisco, Asian-Americans in Dallas have fewer options. As a result, they're increasing consumption on niche alternative content through connected device technology.

\*Alternative content or all other tuning (AOT) is how Nielsen classifies viewing to TV content not yet measured.

Source: Nielsen National TV Panel 12/30/19-11/8/20 vs 12/31/18-11/10/19. P18+. Total US and Dallas-Ft Worth DMA Composite compared to "Asian or Pacific Islander in Dallas-Ft Worth DMA". Total US and San Francisco-Oak-San Jose DMA Composite compared to "Asian or Pacific Islander in San Francisco-Oak-San Jose DMA".

# LEADERS & WEALTH BUILDERS

With 61% of Asian Americans making \$75,000 or more per year, this community has a significant buying power. As a group, Asian Americans spend more annually than the general population on housing, personal insurance and pension, education and food.

 THE ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY HAS A SIGNIFICANT BUYING POWER OF **\$1.3 TRILLION**.

## WHERE ASIAN AMERICANS SPEND MORE VS. TOTAL



## WHERE ASIAN AMERICANS SPEND LESS VS. TOTAL



Source: BLS Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2019



## LEADING IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

When it comes to educational attainment, Asian Americans are focused and driven. More than half (55.4%) of Asian Americans have graduated college, and 26.6% have a postgraduate degree. This is 91% and 103%, respectively, more than the general population. When we look more closely by region, Asian Americans are consistent with a focus on academic achievement.

	EAST ASIA	SOUTH ASIA	SOUTHEAST ASIA / PACIFIC ISLANDS
	28% OF ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION	21% OF ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION	28% OF ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION
	66% FOREIGN BORN	71% FOREIGN BORN	60% FOREIGN BORN
	57% BACHELOR'S +	73% BACHELOR'S +	39% BACHELOR'S +
	47% \$100K+ HH INCOME 27% UNDER \$50K	60% \$100K+ HH INCOME 15% UNDER \$50K	45% \$100K+ HH INCOME 23% UNDER \$50K

\*Represents Asian-Americans of one race alone.

Source: American Community Survey, 2019

# DIGITAL LIVES: STAYING INFORMED

## PODCAST LISTENING



For Asian Americans, podcasts are a convenient, portable and easy way to consume the most desirable and relevant niche content.

From the Asian-American experience to culturally relevant comedy, the availability of content that culturally speaks to Asian Americans is a key reason the number of Asian podcast listeners has grown 5x over the last decade.

Like in television, news is among the top genres, and this is likely to continue as there is still uncertainty about the pandemic and Asian audiences are staying tuned to the latest on the social justice movement. Asian Americans respond to podcast advertising too. Nielsen podcast data show that Asian Americans frequently take action when they hear an ad on a podcast episode, particularly via visiting a website to learn more about a product or service they heard about.

### TOP 5 PODCAST GENRES\*

(Ranked by Index)



**TECHNOLOGY**  
**137**



**SCIENCE**  
**126**



**BUSINESS**  
**123**



**NEWS**  
**110**



**SOCIETY AND CULTURE**  
**110**



## NEWS

Staying informed, safe and in the know are particularly important to Asian-Americans. News consumption for Asian Americans still outpaces all audiences more than a year into the pandemic. When it comes to internet usage, news is still among the top things Asian Americans seek out.

### ASIAN AMERICANS ARE ...



**95% MORE LIKELY TO HAVE USED THE INTERNET FOR TECHNOLOGY NEWS THAN THE GENERAL POPULATION.**



**OVER 2X AS LIKELY TO HAVE STREAMED BUSINESS NEWS AND SPORTS IN THE LAST 30 DAYS.**

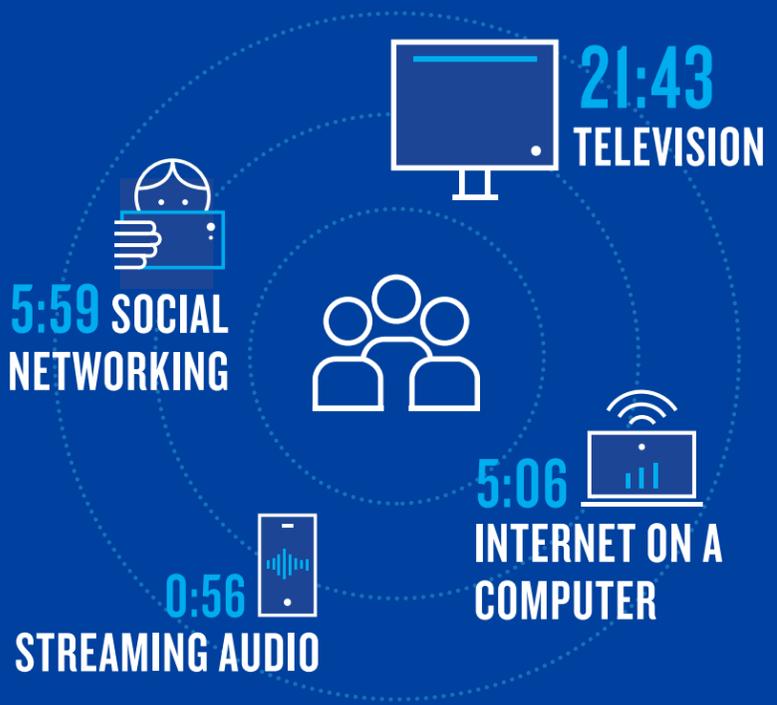
\*How to read: Technology genre podcast listeners are 37% more likely to be Asian—to have a higher concentration in that genre—than among all podcast usage in general when pulling crosstabs by race.

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

Source: Nielsen Scarborough USA+ 2019 Release 2

## TIME SPENT BY PLATFORM

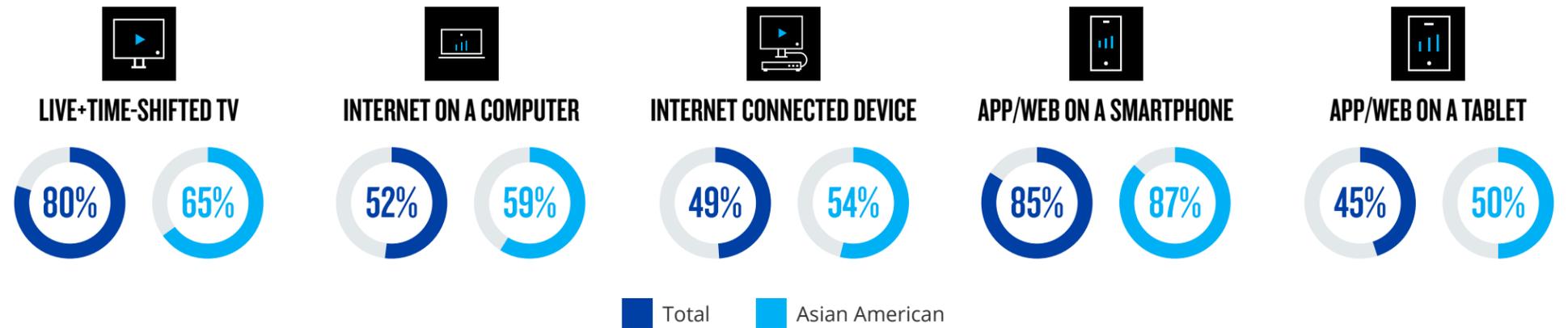
When it comes to programming, Asian Americans prefer their content via ad-supported video on demand (AVOD) and subscription video on demand (SVOD), and they're more likely than the total population to have used Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, HBO NOW and YouTube TV in the last 30 days.



# CONNECTING THROUGH DIGITAL MEDIA

Asian Americans are the most digitally connected ethnic community in the U.S. across more devices.

## WEEKLY REACH ACROSS PLATFORMS



Source: Nielsen Total Audience Report, March 2021



Source: Nielsen Total Audience Report, March 2021

# CULTURAL INFLUENCE

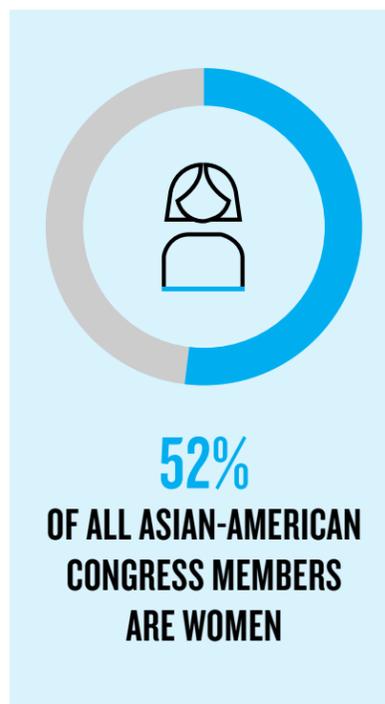
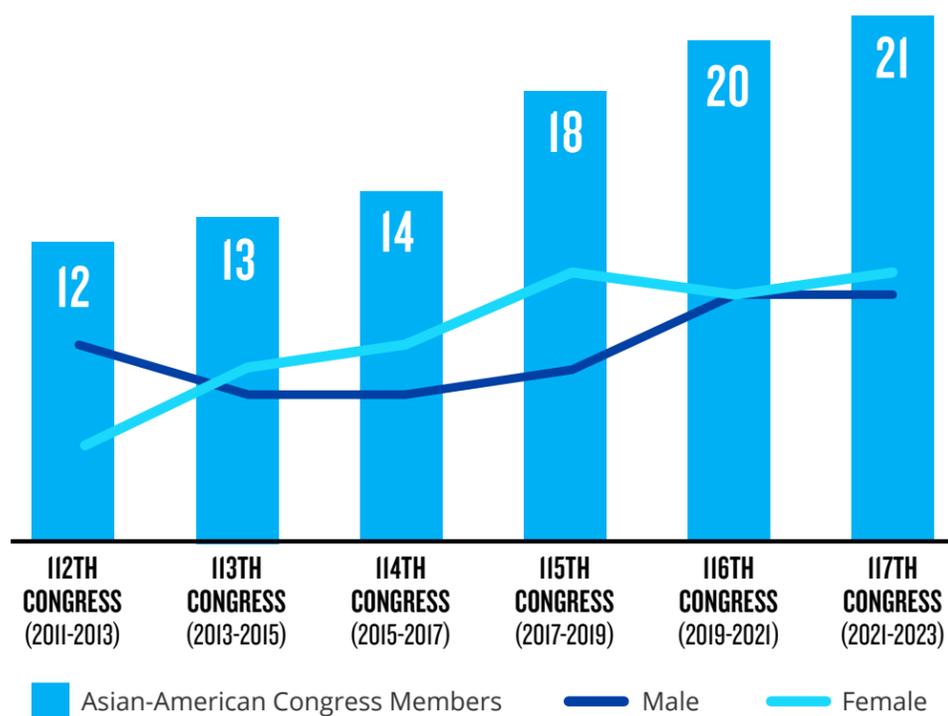


Asian Americans and Asian-American culture are strong bellwethers driving and influencing American culture. From local and regional advocacy groups and organizers to elected officials to Hollywood Best Director winners, Asian-Americans are expanding their influence in the U.S.

## GROWING POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

In the last decade, Asian Americans' political influence has grown, with an increase in congressional leadership. Most recently, the passing of the anti-Asian hate crimes bill and the Andrew Yang's candidacy as New York's next mayor point to the growing voice of the community.

### ASIAN-AMERICAN CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATION



## INFLUENCERS IN MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT



Beijing-born Chloé Zhao is the American-based filmmaker who made headlines globally for being the first Asian woman, and the second woman ever, to win an Academy Award for Best Picture. Earlier this



year, Zhao became the first Asian woman to win a Golden Globe for Best Director for her film *Nomadland*, featuring mesmerizing portraits of the American West. Zhao's win and a subsequent vanishing of her film and her Oscar accomplishments on social and news sites in China highlights the challenges of navigating China's complex political landscape. Zhao's work validates the need for more visibility of and opportunity for Asian women in Hollywood.

## THE POWER OF K-POP

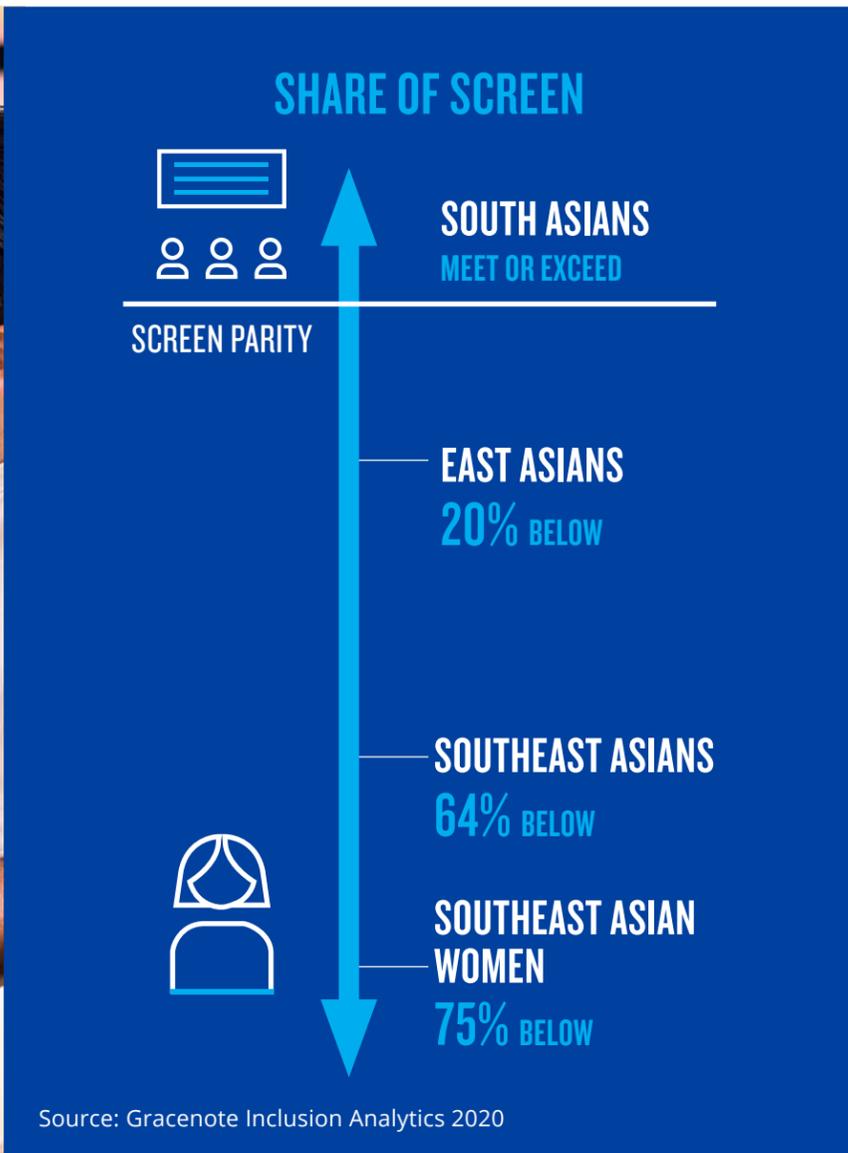


Asian-Americans' influence has also provided opportunities for solidarity and activism. "K-Pop Activism" is one example. As the genre continues to dominate around the world, the passionate fan base used its social media prowess to overtake racist hashtags and apps last year with "fancams" and photos of their favorite bands to drown out anti-Black rhetoric. Fans also matched and surpassed a \$1 million donation from supergroup BTS to Black Lives Matter through online fundraising in just 24 hours.

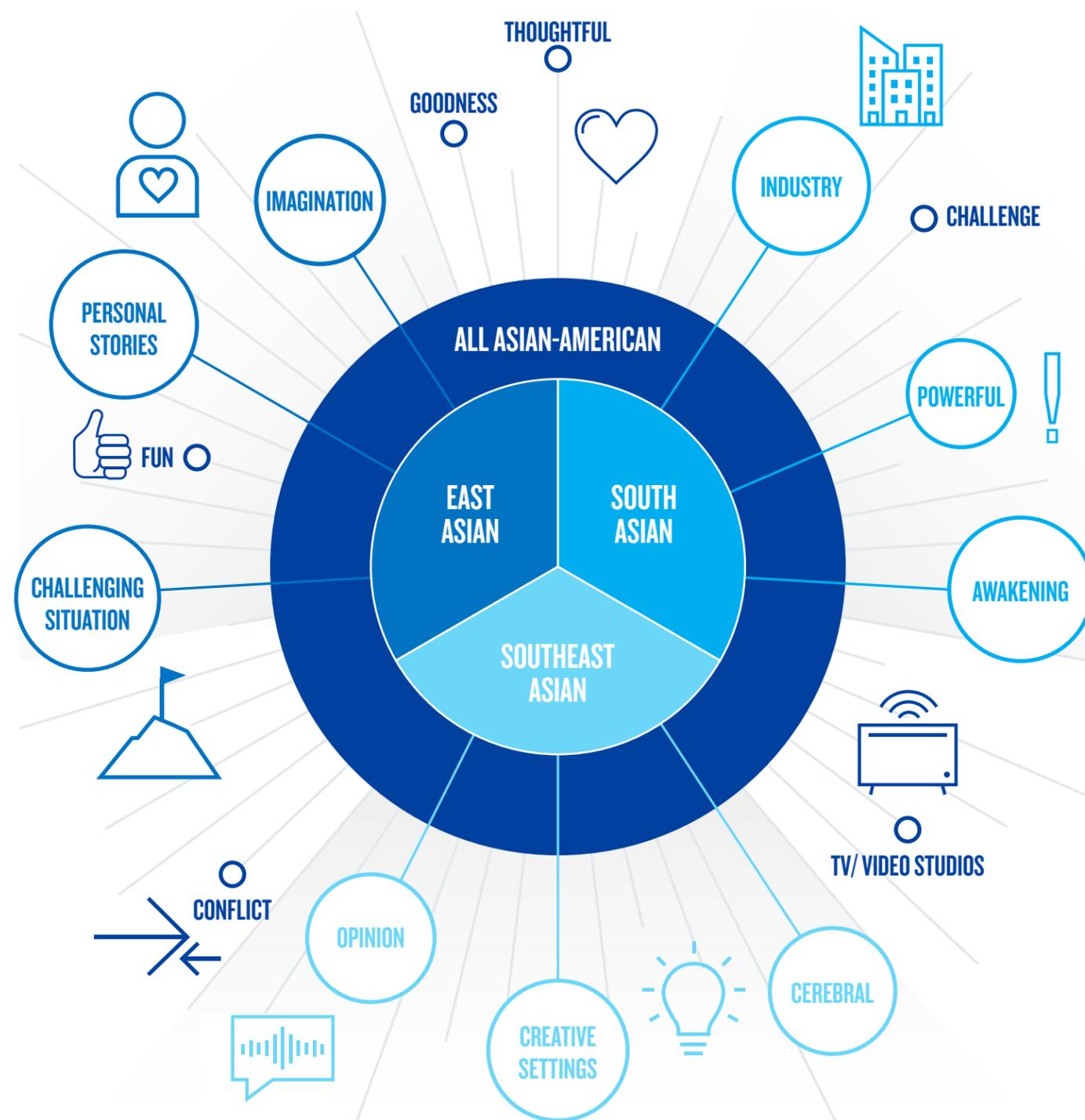
# ON-SCREEN INCLUSION

Being seen on screen is an important part of forming one's identity as well as shaping how identity groups are perceived by others. When Asian Americans are watching programming, how often do they see themselves on screen? Nielsen's latest Gracenote Inclusion Analytics data shows that two-thirds of the top 10 programs on broadcast, cable and SVOD watched by Asian-American viewers have zero Asian-American talent representation. While Asian Americans make up more than 6% of the population, they're underrepresented on cable TV.

Among the top 100 cable programs in 2020, the share of screen (SOS) for Asian Americans was just 2.2%. While broadcast and SVOD showed an unweighted SOS for Asian Americans at parity of above, when we look at more granular identity groups the visibility story becomes clearer.



## TOP THEMES PRESENT IN CONTENT THAT FEATURES ASIAN AMERICANS ON SCREEN



Source: Gracenote Video Descriptors 2020

# HOPE, HEALING AND OPTIMISM

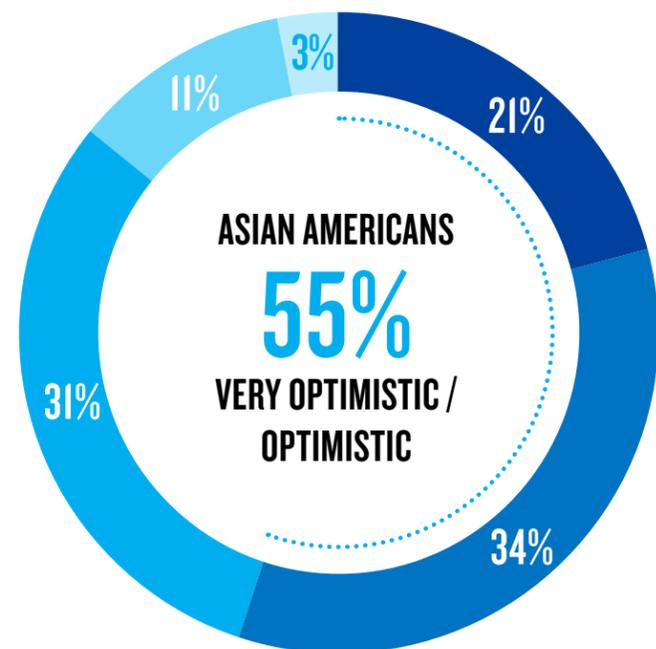
As vaccines become more available, many COVID-related restrictions are easing and the weather is warming up in the U.S. In a recent [Nielsen survey](#), Asian Americans were found to be cautiously optimistic about the months ahead. While there's less fear about COVID-19, there's still fear and fatigue from the anti-Asian hate crimes. Just over half feel that they can resume normal activities this year, and 74% feel that "normal" will take even longer. The lagging optimism is understandable considering the community is dealing with racist hate crimes and working to advance much needed social progress.



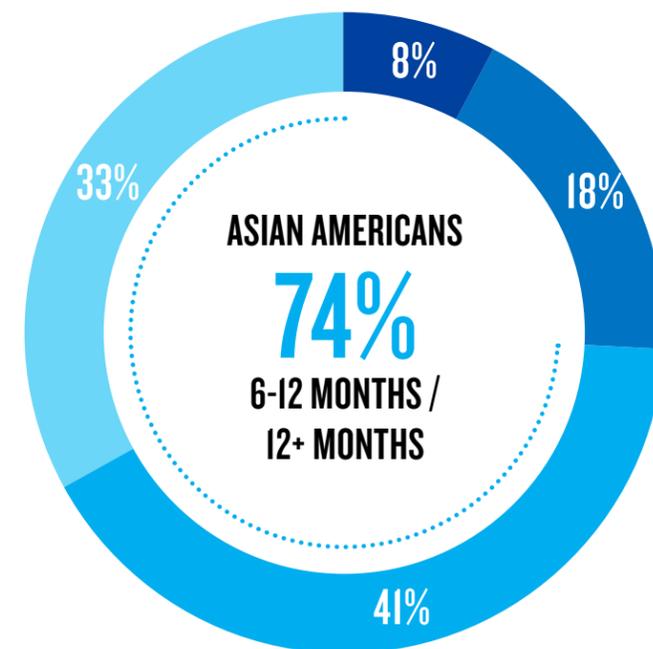
## A SENSE OF CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM



**HOW OPTIMISTIC ARE YOU THAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO RESUME YOUR NORMAL ACTIVITIES DURING 2021?**



**WHEN DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR TYPICAL DAY-TO-DAY LIFE AND ACTIVITIES WILL GET BACK TO NORMAL?**



Very Optimistic Optimistic Neutral Pessimistic Very Pessimistic

0-3 Months 3-6 Months 6-12 Months 12+ Months



**HOW EAGER ARE YOU TO RESUME THESE ACTIVITIES WITHIN 0-3 MONTHS OF COVID RESTRICTIONS BEING LIFTED?**

	<b>75%</b> Go to gym/fitness center
	<b>67%</b> Visit coffee shops/cafes
	<b>65%</b> Attend live concert/performance/event
	<b>63%</b> Dine out at restaurants
	<b>63%</b> Attend religious services in person
	<b>61%</b> Travel via airplane
	<b>59%</b> Go to hair salon/barber/nail salon
	<b>56%</b> Plan or book a vacation
	<b>49%</b> Go to a movie theater
	<b>41%</b> Go to bars

# SPOTLIGHT: TEACHING HOPE—ONE ASIAN-AMERICAN FAMILY'S JOURNEY



*Ronjan Sikdar, Nielsen SVP of Innovation, is South Asian Indian. His wife is Chinese and they have a seven-year-old son, residing in New York City. Like most Asian-Americans this past year, life has changed for their family. Read more about their experience.*

## “ WHAT HAS LIFE BEEN LIKE FOR YOUR FAMILY IN THE PAST YEAR?

I can't help but reflect that the global epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted from China to New York City to India over the course of 16 months. That's three homes that mean something to my family, and a lot of mental weight we'll all be carrying for some time.

The three of us have adjusted differently to pandemic life. I've struggled the most. Losing a year of daily office interactions and weekend hangouts has taken a toll, particularly since I've also struggled to draw boundaries around work. My wife, on the other hand, has adapted reasonably well to a remote work life, and she's taken on home improvement projects like upgrading our balcony furniture and adding plants to our home. Our son has adapted admirably. He did not take well to remote learning, so we were grateful that New York City offered a hybrid in-person learning option for the current school year.

## WHAT'S BEEN THE GREATEST CHALLENGE?

Not feeling safe. I'll never forget the early pandemic weeks, when ambulance sirens were constant here in New York. We truly wondered if the city was going to make it.

Seeing the rise in hate speech and hate crimes against Asians has made it harder. Reclaiming that safety will take time. And recognizing and addressing that many Americans never even had that safety in the first place will take more time.

## HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON TO YOUR SON?

Explaining the pandemic has been easy, since it's lasted for 15% of my son's life and might even represent the majority of what he can consciously remember. For him, this is just a phase—where you have to worry about “corona” and wear a mask or “get a pinch” to be safe. Follow the rules and you're good; everything will go back to the way it looks on TV shows soon.

Talking about racism is much more challenging. He's very aware of race conceptually, as his school is very diverse and he has two parents with very different skin colors. And he knows generally that people of color can be targets, but he doesn't quite understand why.

I'm reticent to expose too much, too soon. I was a little older than him when I saw the video of Rodney King being beaten, and it left me with a fear of police that I still carry today. I want him to be prepared to face the world, but not afraid of it.

## WHERE HAVE YOU SOUGHT REFUGE / FOUND COMFORT/SOLIDARITY?

My happy place is Van Cortlandt Park here in the Bronx. I've tried to take as many long walks as possible, particularly during the work day when I can do walk-and-talk meetings. It's a great way to clear my head when life is heavy.

Beyond that, I've tried to balance my energy between doing things to solve meaningful problems and things that just make me happy. For the former, that meant finding ways to make an impact on diversity, equity and inclusion at work, including prototyping and launching a new product that measures on-screen diversity of TV programs. For the latter, I'll always turn to NBA basketball. And *Animal Crossing* was a way to connect virtually with people who I could not physically be with.



## DESCRIBE THE FUTURE THAT YOU WANT TO SEE FOR YOUR SON.

This is perhaps trite, but I want my son to grow up in a society defined by compassion. A society where we measure success not by the growth of capital, but by the end of hunger and poverty. A society where targeted hate speech is not profitable. And a society that is celebrated for being as diverse as his first grade class is right now. We have a lot of potential, a lot of promise, and I don't want to let him down. All of our little ones deserve better.



# METHODOLOGIES & CONTRIBUTORS

## TELEVISION METHODOLOGY

Television data is derived from Nielsen's National TV Panel that is based on a sample of over 40,000 homes that are selected based on area probability sampling.

Data used in this report is inclusive of multicultural audiences.

## DIGITAL METHODOLOGY (COMPUTER, SMARTPHONE, TABLET)

Digital data is based on Nielsen's Total Media Fusion, which is reflective of both panel and census measurement. It leverages the most granular and comprehensive cross-platform respondent-level data from our panels, along with census data from Nielsen's Total Audience Measurement solutions, to provide the highest quality, representative sample of digital media consumption. Data for this was sourced from Nielsen Media Impact (Nielsen's cross platform planning solution).

## TIME SPENT AMONG U.S. POPULATION, TIME SPENT AMONG USERS, REACH OF USERS, REACH %

Total Use of Television- 06/29/2020 – 09/27/2020 via Nielsen NPOWER/National Panel; Computer, Smartphone, Tablet via Total Media Fusion sourced from Nielsen Media Impact. For digital data, weeks that cross calendar months are not included. Weeks included for digital – 07/06/20, 07/13/20, 07/20/20, 08/03/20, 08/10/20, 08/17/20, 08/24/20, 09/07/20, 09/14/20, 09/21/20. Digital data was produced on 01/28/21 and slight variations in data processed after this point reflect ongoing updates.

## TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION STATUS, DEVICE OWNERSHIP

Based on scaled installed counts for February 1, 2021 via Nielsen NPOWER/National Panel.

## THE NIELSEN ADVERTISING ACROSS MEDIA CONSUMER SURVEY

The Nielsen Advertising Across Media Consumer Survey is a custom Nielsen study conducted in English only from February 2-17, 2021 via an online survey. It's based on a representative sample of 1,500 U.S. adults 18+ who consume media across TV, radio, or digital devices.

## NIELSEN SCARBOROUGH

Nielsen Scarborough USA+ 2019 Release 2: Scarborough measures the unique shopping patterns, product usage, demographics, lifestyles and cross-media behaviors of the American consumer at a local, regional or national level, giving the ability to profile over 2,000 measured categories and brands.

## NPOWER METHODOLOGY

NPOWER is the Nielsen Company's national custom analysis system, is a powerful tool that offers an unparalleled ability to focus on very specific audience characteristics and opens opportunities for detailed analysis of national television media. NPOWER employs a respondent-level data warehouse that subscribers access through a browser-based interface. Audience estimates can be generated, not only for all standard demographics and market breaks, but also for expanded audience characteristics that cannot be accessed anywhere else.

## GRACENOTE INCLUSION ANALYTICS

Designed to accelerate diversity and equity in media, Gracenote Inclusion Analytics illuminates representation of on-screen talent compared with audience diversity. The solution empowers content owners, distributors and brands to make better informed decisions around inclusive content investments. [www.nielsen.com/inclusionanalytics](http://www.nielsen.com/inclusionanalytics)

## GRACENOTE VIDEO DESCRIPTORS

Video Descriptors are a comprehensive set of descriptors bound by a unified hierarchical Video Descriptors Taxonomy. The descriptors are used to comprehensively describe a program across the various Video Descriptors Types like Theme, Character etc. The data set is created by specially trained Gracenote editors using a rigorous tagging process to ensure a high-quality and consistent metadata product. Each video descriptor assigned to a program has a Video Descriptor Weight associated with it. The weights give the degree of importance of the descriptor for the program.

## PODCAST METHODOLOGY

Scarborough podcast recontact study USA + 2020 Release 1, Nov 2020.

## CONTRIBUTORS:

Thank you to all the contributors to this report:

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## ABOUT NIELSEN

Nielsen Holdings plc (NYSE: NLSN) is a leading global data and analytics company that provides a holistic and objective understanding of the media industry. With offerings spanning audience measurement, audience outcomes and content, Nielsen offers its clients and partners simple solutions to complex questions and optimizes the value of their investments and growth strategies. It is the only company that can offer de-duplicated cross-media audience measurement. Audience is Everything™ to Nielsen and its clients, and Nielsen is committed to ensuring that every voice counts.

An S&P 500 company, Nielsen offers measurement and analytics service in nearly 60 countries. Learn more at [www.nielsen.com](http://www.nielsen.com) or [www.nielsen.com/investors](http://www.nielsen.com/investors) and connect with us on [twitter.com/Nielsen](https://twitter.com/Nielsen), [linkedin.com/company/nielsen](https://linkedin.com/company/nielsen), [facebook.com/Nielsen](https://facebook.com/Nielsen) and [instagram.com/lifeatnielsen](https://instagram.com/lifeatnielsen).

