

## Indian v Chinese bosses in America Inc.

In “Breaking the Bamboo Ceiling”, a tome by Jane Hyun published in 2005, Asian-Americans were seen as a model minority. Despite this, they rarely rose to the top of companies. A mix of individual, cultural and organisational barriers seemed to halt their rise.

Fifteen years later Asians are still under-represented. In technology Asians make up over 30% of the workers but less than 15% of bosses.

Some prominent Asians run big companies. Satya Nadella runs Microsoft and Sundar Pichai leads Alphabet. But few other Asians have joined their ranks — and, revealingly, these stars all have Indian roots. There are fewer South Asians in America than East Asians, but they still made up 13 of all 16 Asian S&P 500 CEOs.

Why are there so few Asians among America’s business elite? And if a bamboo ceiling is to blame, why do South Asians break through more easily? These questions are the focus of a study by Jackson Lu of MIT Sloan School of Management and colleagues, who surveyed hundreds of senior executives and business-school students.

The researchers conclude that South Asians tend to be more **assertive** than East Asians in how they communicate at work, which fits Western notions of how a leader should behave. The same **propensity** for confident discourse featured in “The **Argumentative** Indian”, a book by Amartya Sen, a Nobel-prizewinning economist. The researchers attribute East Asians’ **reticence** to **Confucian** values of modesty and respect for hierarchy. Sometimes boldness and **bombast** are needed to break bamboo.

assertive 独断的; 肯定的

propensity 倾向; 偏爱

argumentative 善辩的

reticence 沉默寡言

Confucian 孔子的

bombast 夸大