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[http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2002/01/16/author\\_zoom.jpg](http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2002/01/16/author_zoom.jpg)

# **Chinese Adolescents' Adaptation in New York City**

# Background

Prior studies attributed academic achievement in Chinese American adolescents to:

- a strong sense of family obligation
- parents' value on education
- peer support
- traditional attitudes (eg. respect for elders such as teachers)
- Confucian work ethics

(cf. Fuligni, 1997, 1999, 2002; Gielen & Lei, 2007; Suarez-Orozco, 2007; Tseng, 2004)

# Purpose

- To explore the psychocultural and psychosocial adaptation of male and female Chinese-origin adolescents in NYC.
- To understand the familial, peer-related, cultural, and individual origins of their academic performance.

- To compare 3 groups of adolescents: those that were born in the U.S., those that came to the U.S. before age 1, those that came after age 11.
- To discuss research findings in scientific articles/book chapters and in a book for the general reader.

# Methodology

- **Ethnographic Observations:**
  - Conducted in the major NYC Chinese enclaves
- **Research Instruments:**
  1. Background Information Questionnaire: 14 questions
  2. Sentence Completion Task: 30 questions based on projective technique
  3. Qualitative Interview: 41 semi-structured questions

# Sample Background Questions

- How old were you when you came to the United States?
- What language(s) are spoken at your home?
- What language(s) are spoken among your friends?
- Which language do you feel the most comfortable speaking?
- What is your father's profession here in States?
- What was (is) your mother's profession overseas?
- Do your parents live together? (Still married?)
- Where in New York City do you live?

# Sample Sentence Completion

- I feel happiest when \_\_\_\_\_
- I admire a person who \_\_\_\_\_
- In life the most important thing is \_\_\_\_\_
- Sometimes I worry that \_\_\_\_\_
- When I think of my mother \_\_\_\_\_
- My best friend is a person who \_\_\_\_\_
- Education \_\_\_\_\_
- Making money \_\_\_\_\_
- The most important thing children should learn is that \_\_\_\_\_
- My favorite teacher tells me that \_\_\_\_\_
- When I receive a poor grade I \_\_\_\_\_
- One good thing about Chinese culture is \_\_\_\_\_
- One not so good thing about Chinese culture is \_\_\_\_\_

# Sample Interview Questions

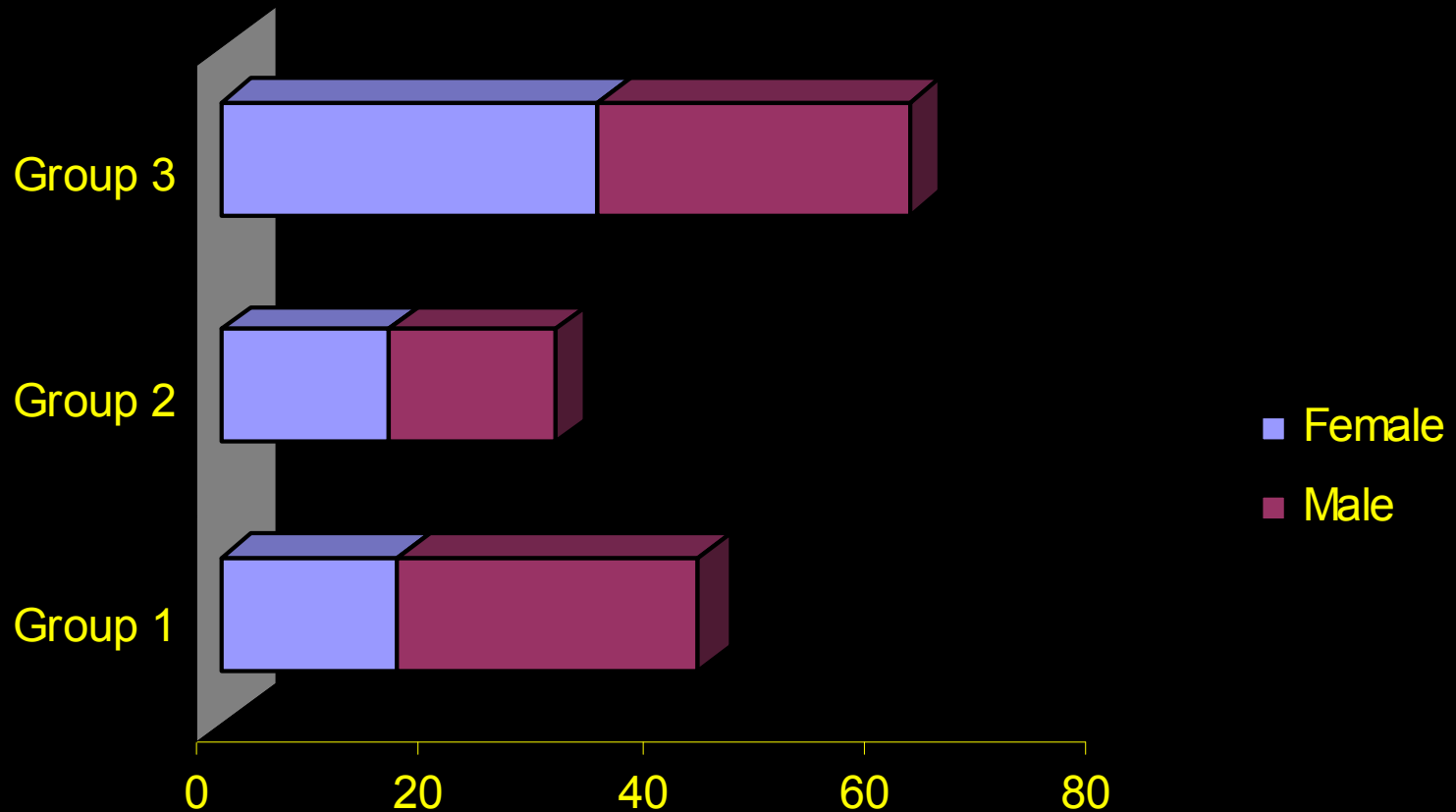
- Why did your family come to the US?
- Do you feel they made a sacrifice when they came here? Do they ever mention making a sacrifice to you?
- What is your religious background? How important is religion in your household?
- Describe your three best friends.
- How were you brought up? What do you think is most important about your upbringing?
- How do your parents react to your accomplishments? Do they often praise or reinforce you?
- Are there displays of affection in your family?
- If you have a personal problem, to whom would you go? Why?

# More Interview Questions

- What are your obligations to your family?
- What are parents' expectations for boys and girls?
- How do you feel about dating? What do your parents tell you about dating?
- Do your parents emphasize school activities? What about extracurricular activities?
- How did your school experience in China differ from school here in the West?
- What is the role of the teacher in both cultures?
- What influences did your teachers have on you in both cultures?
- Do you know what Filial Piety is? Is it evident in your life?

# Population Background

# Gender and Immigration Age



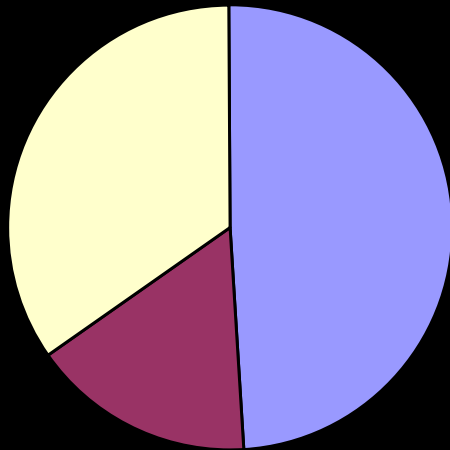
Group 1: Born in USA

Group 2: Came to USA before 11-years-old

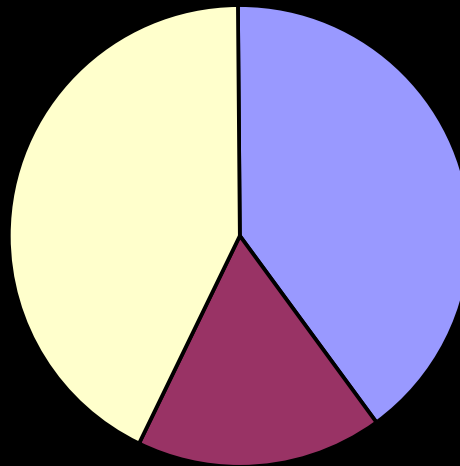
Group 3: Came to USA at or after 11-years-old

# Residence

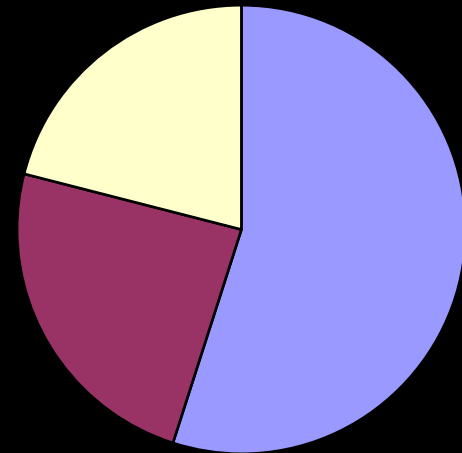
Born in US



Before 11



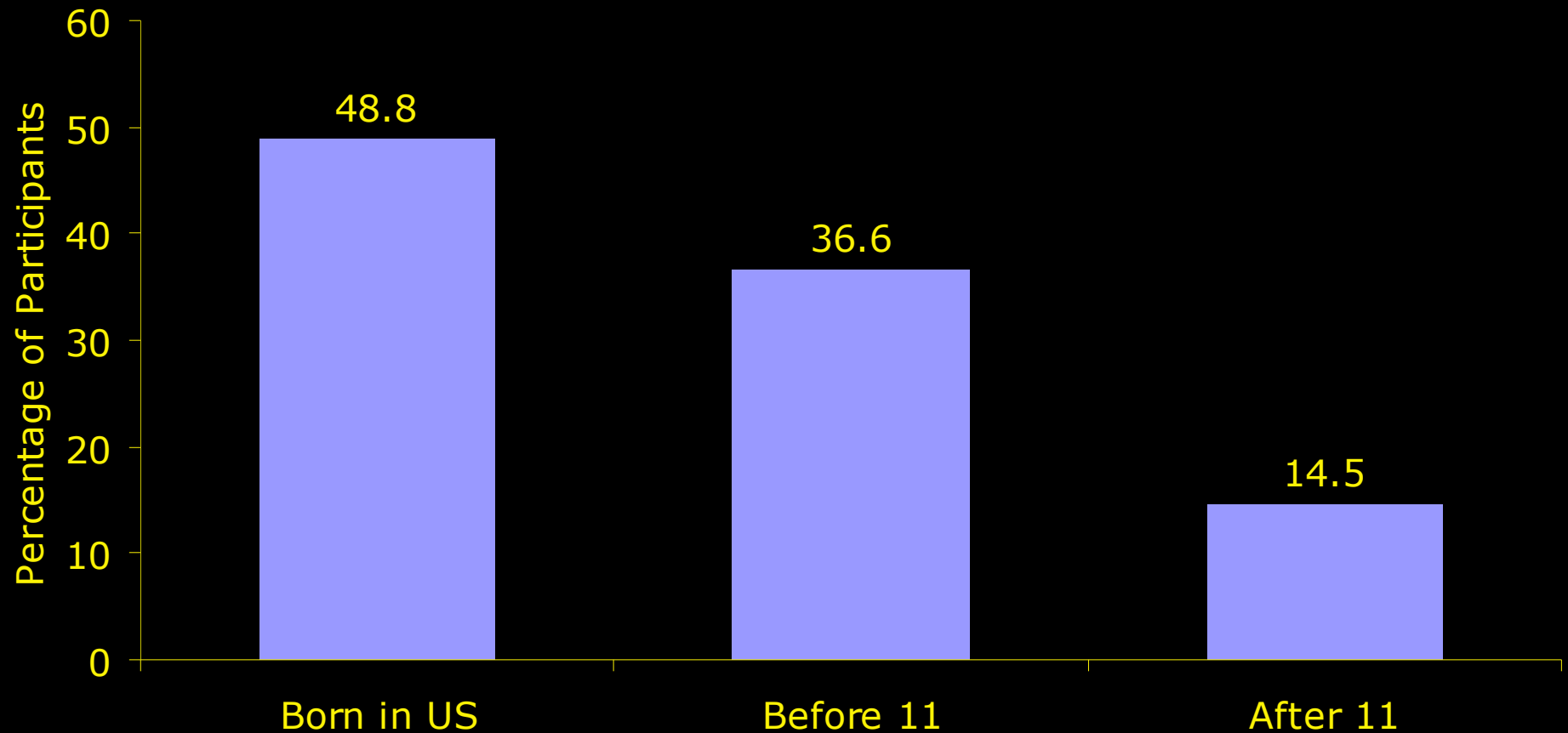
After 11



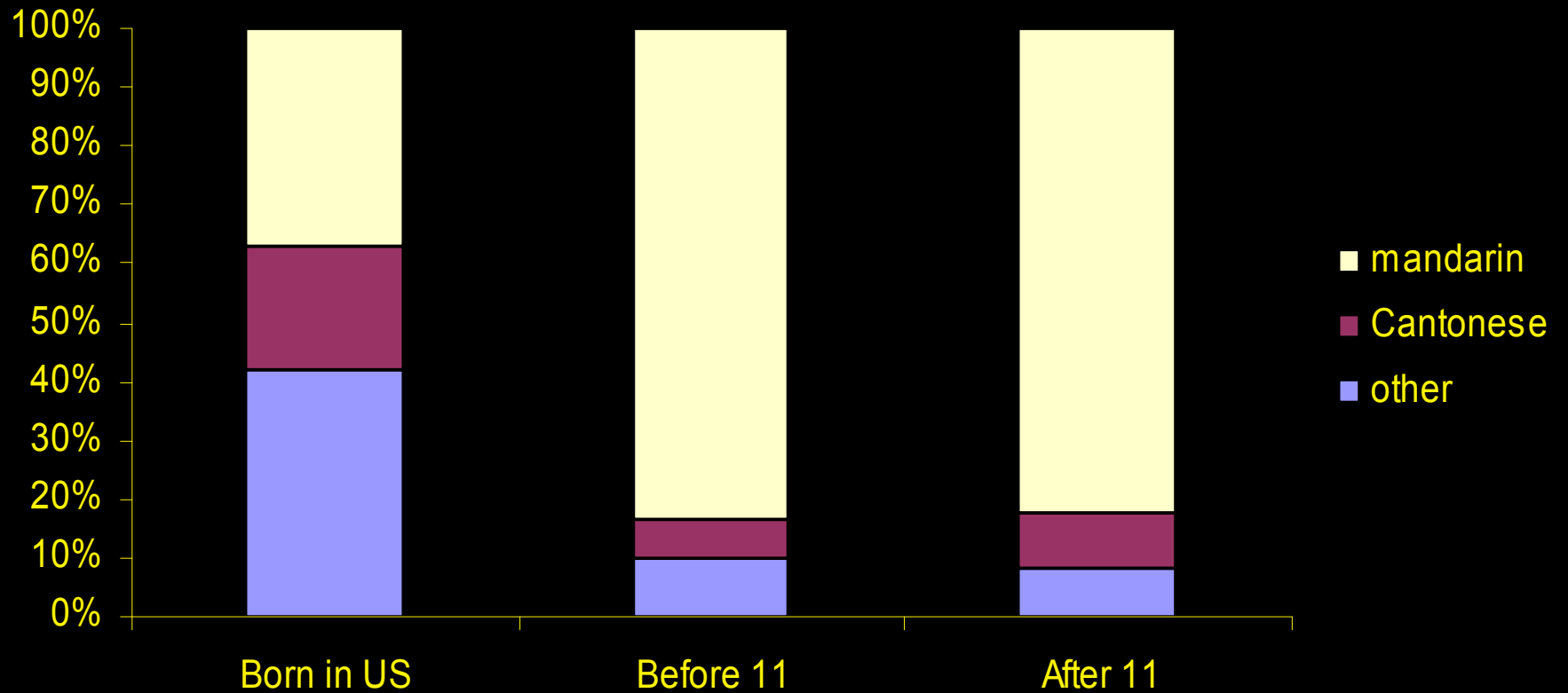
■ Brooklyn ■ Queens ■ Chinatown

# Language Preference

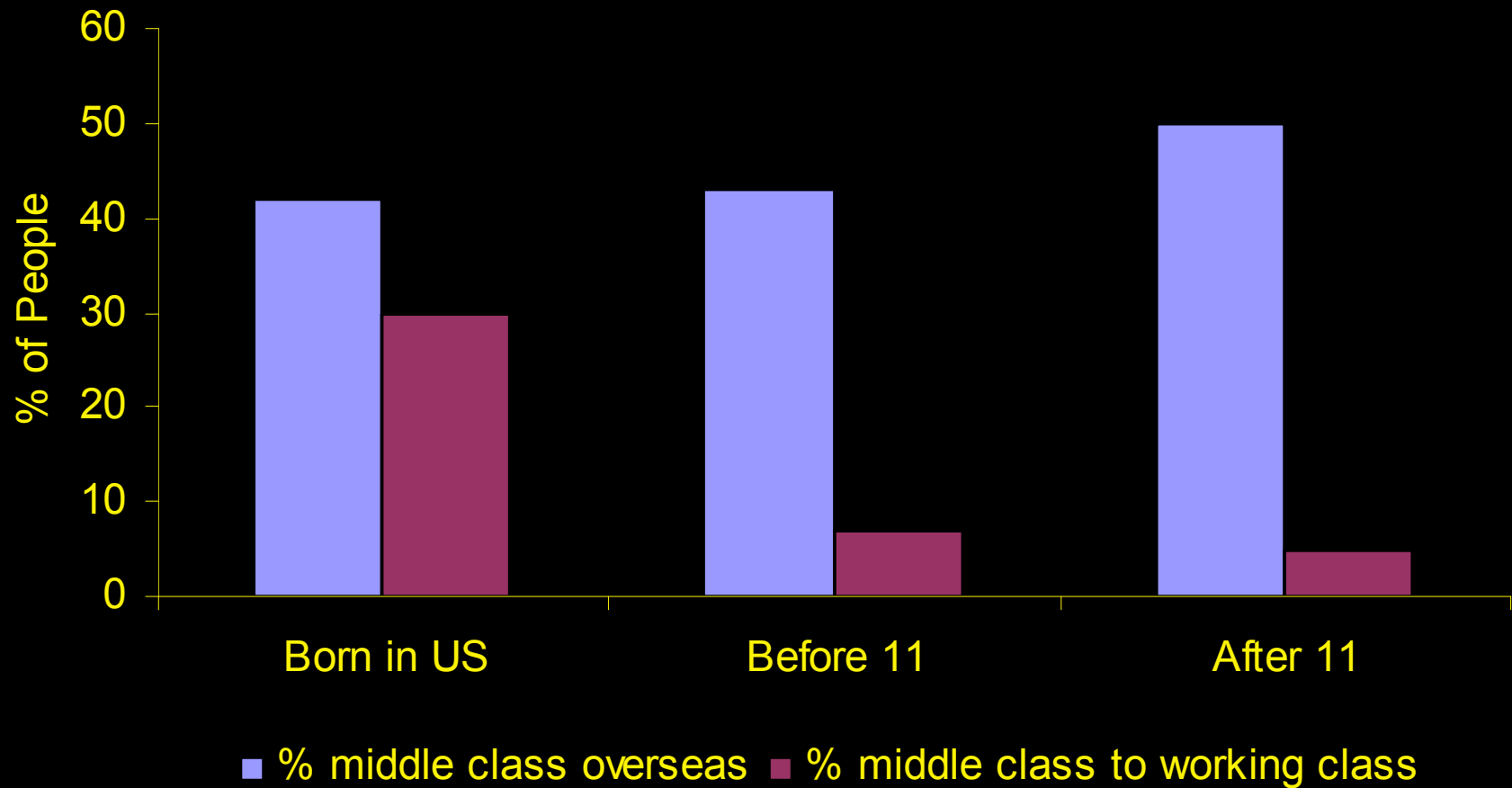
Most Comfortable Language is English



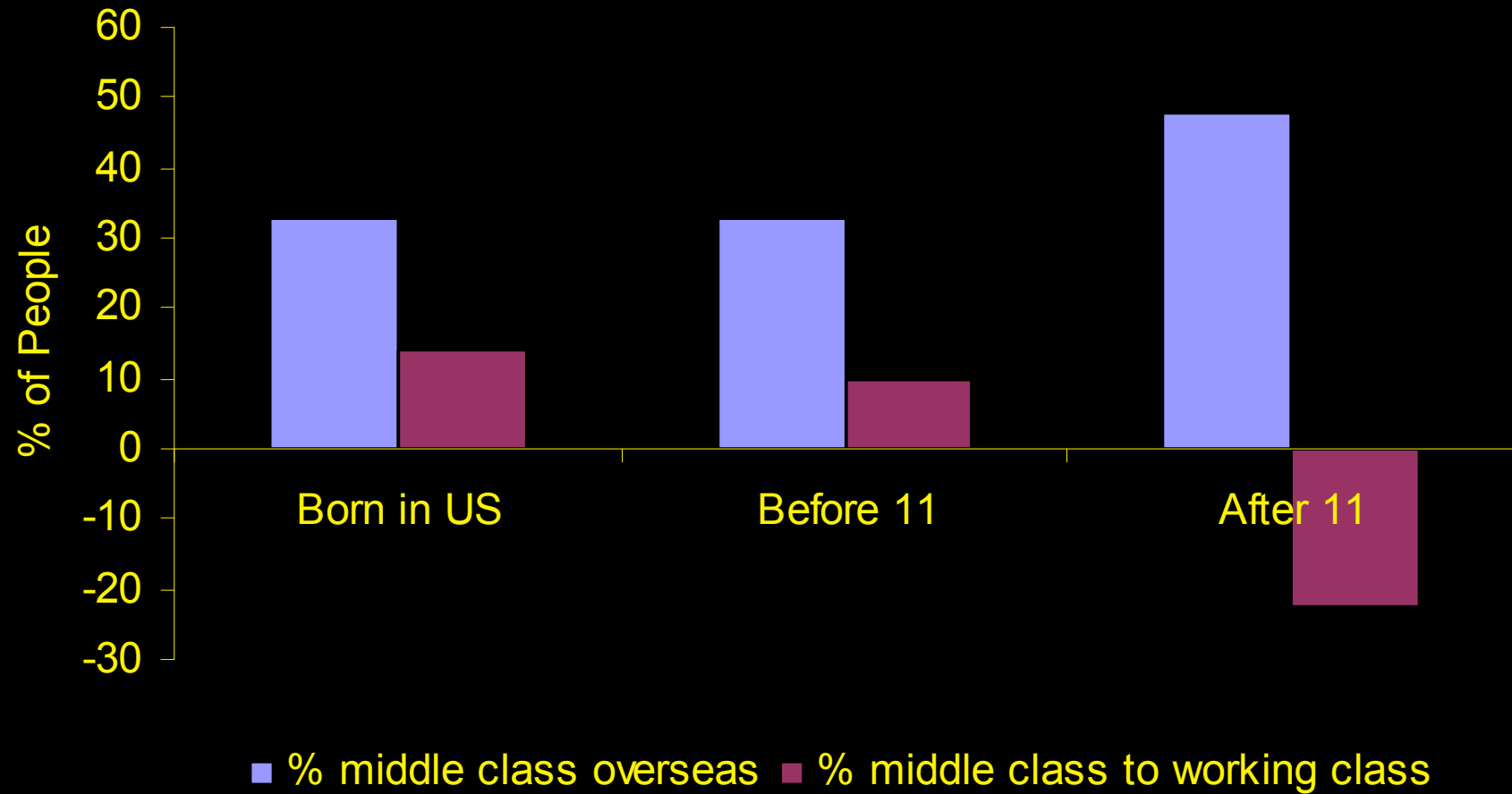
# Language Spoken at Home



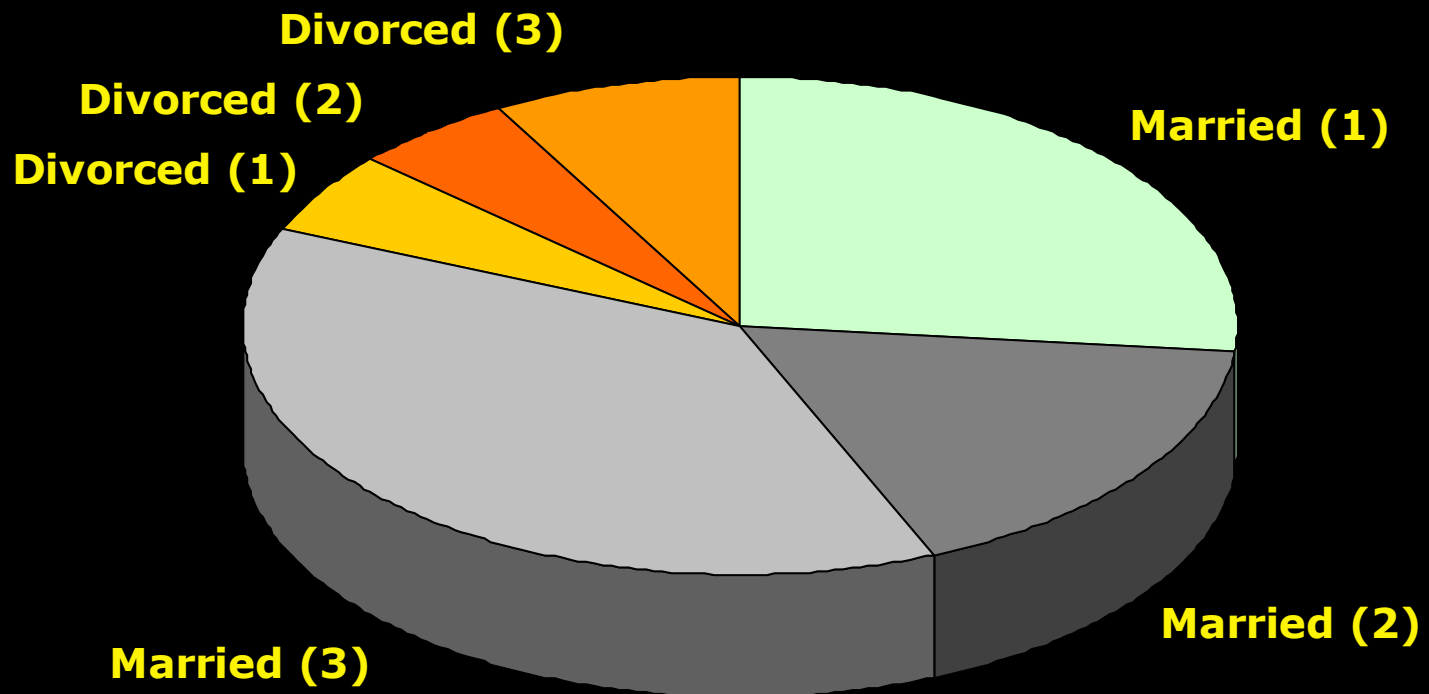
# Fathers' Professions



# Mothers' Professions



# Parents' Marital Status

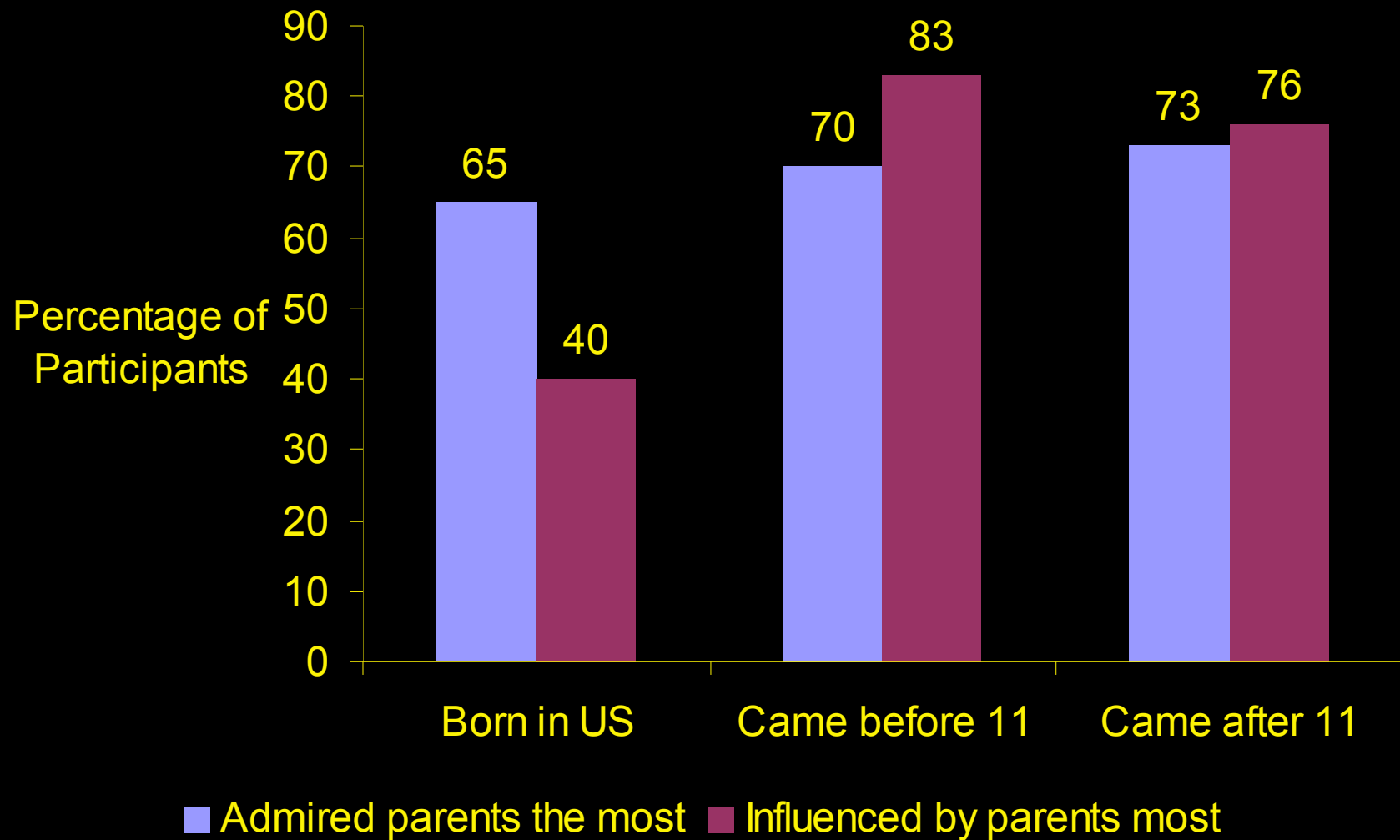


# The Role of Parents

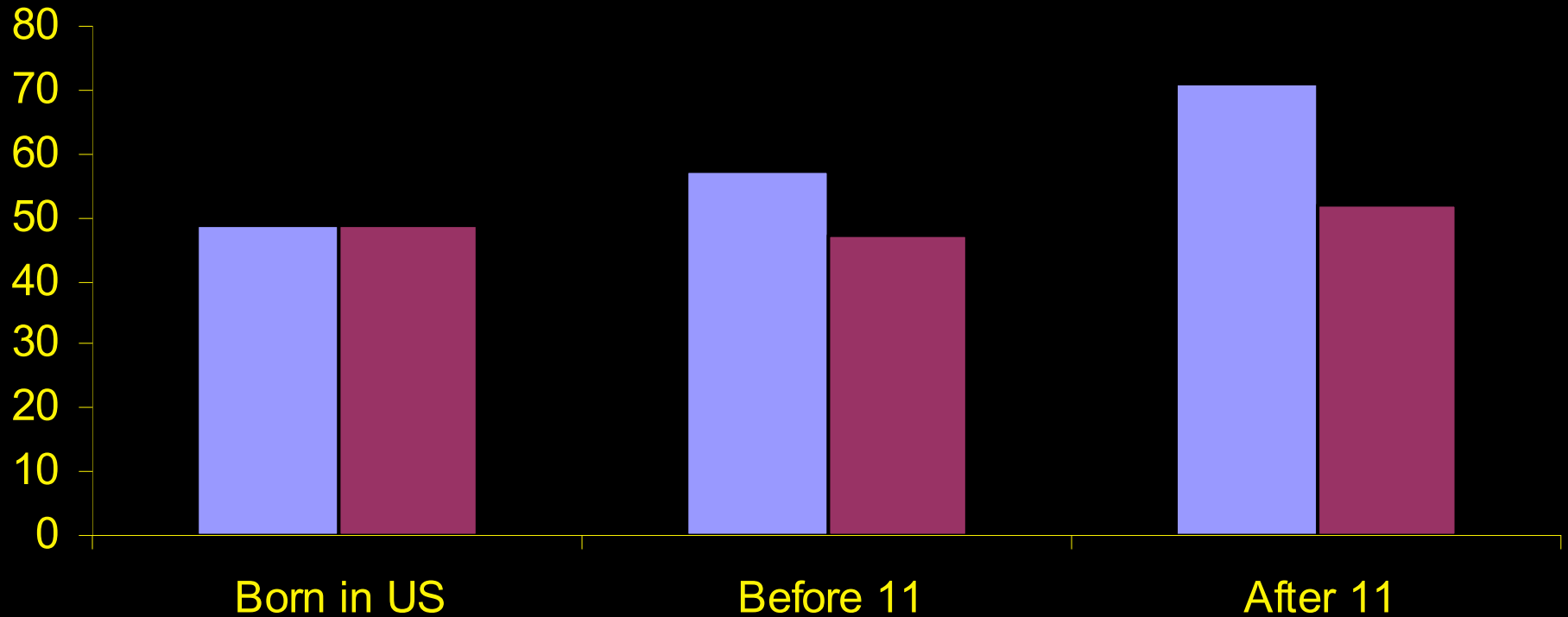
<http://www.bjreview.com.cn/report/images/>



# Perception and Reality



# “Sacrifice”

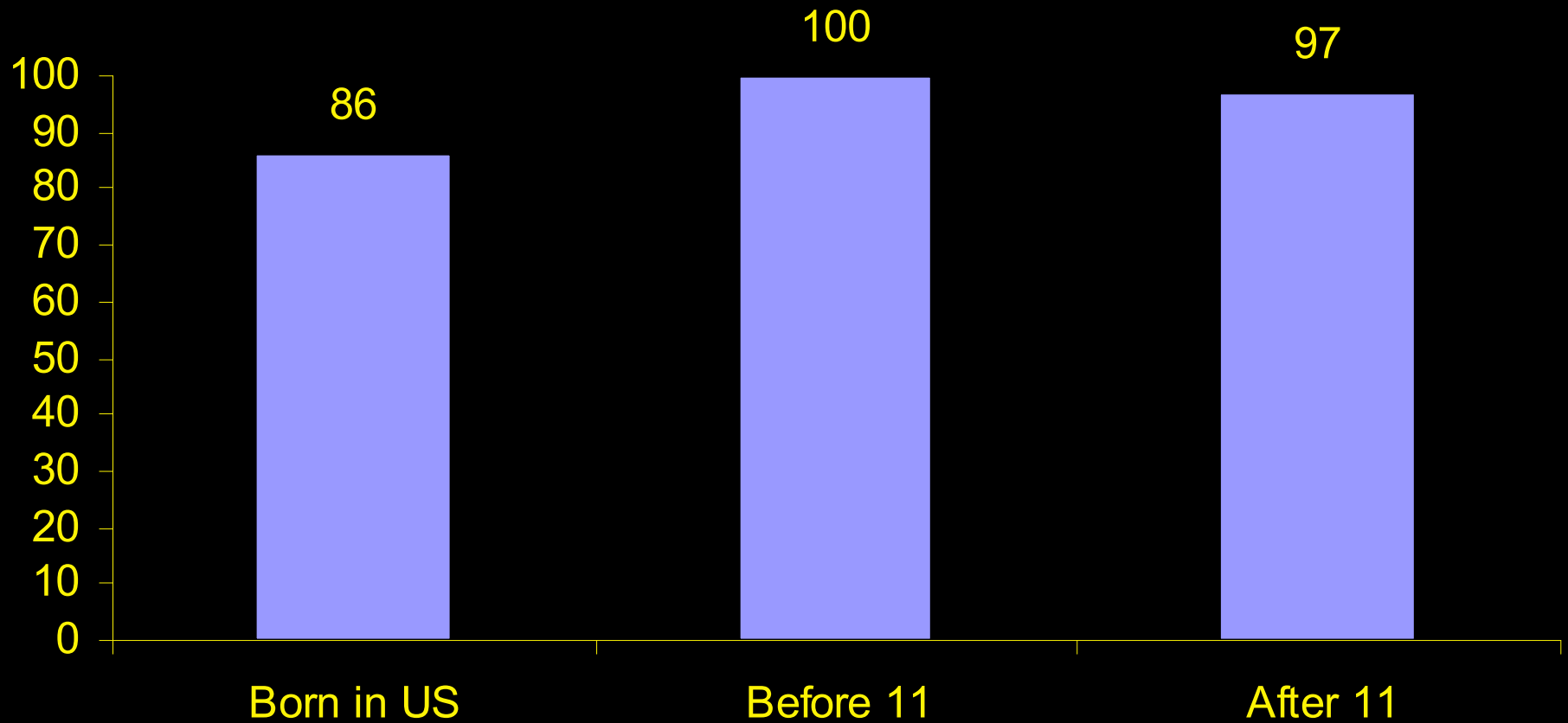


■ % of people who felt parents made a sacrifice

■ % of people whose parents mentioned making a sacrifice

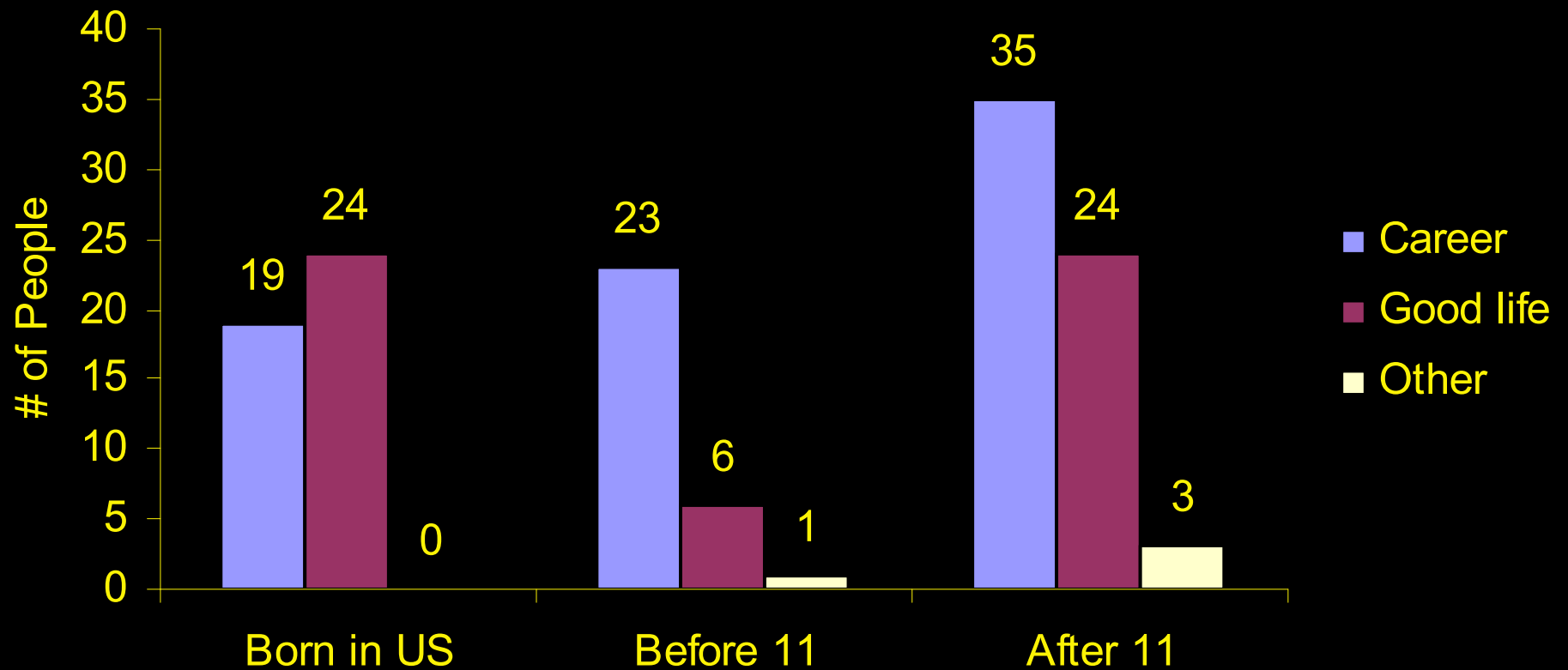
# Traditional Values

Percentage of people who know what filial piety is



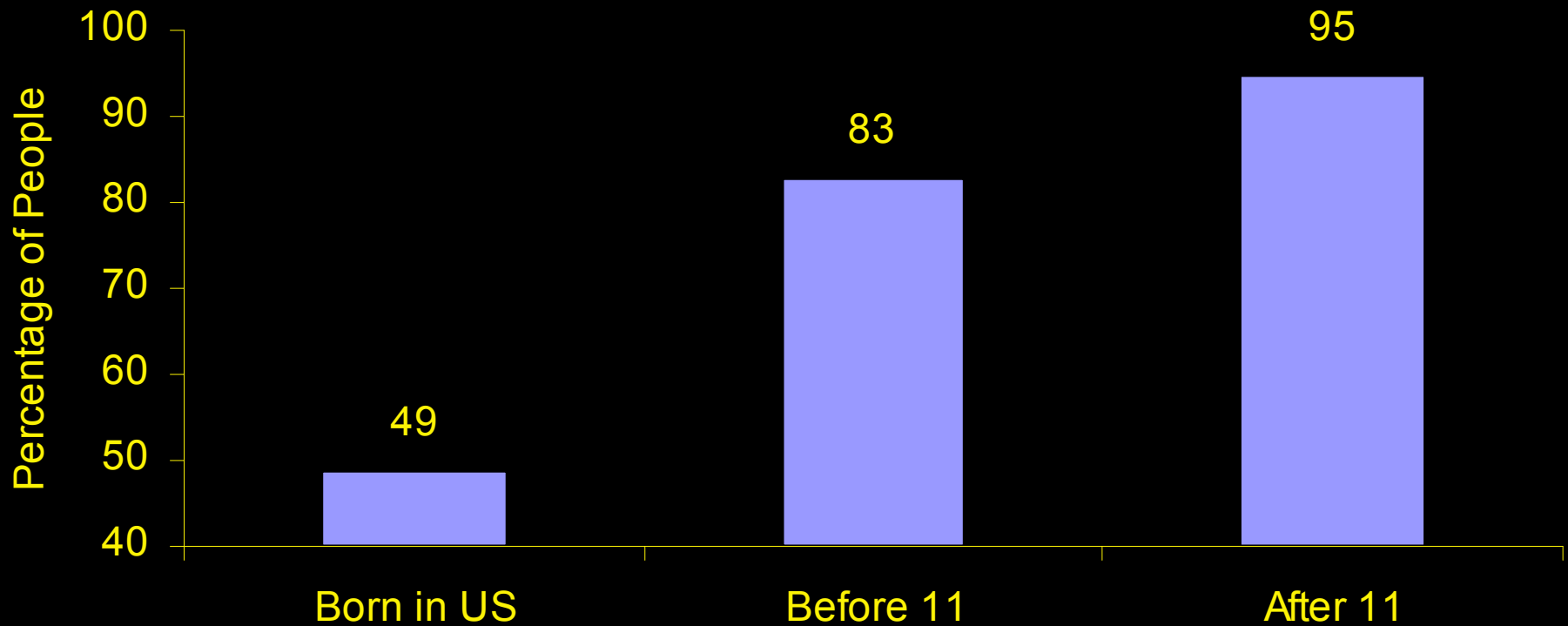
# Great Expectations

## Parents' Expectations



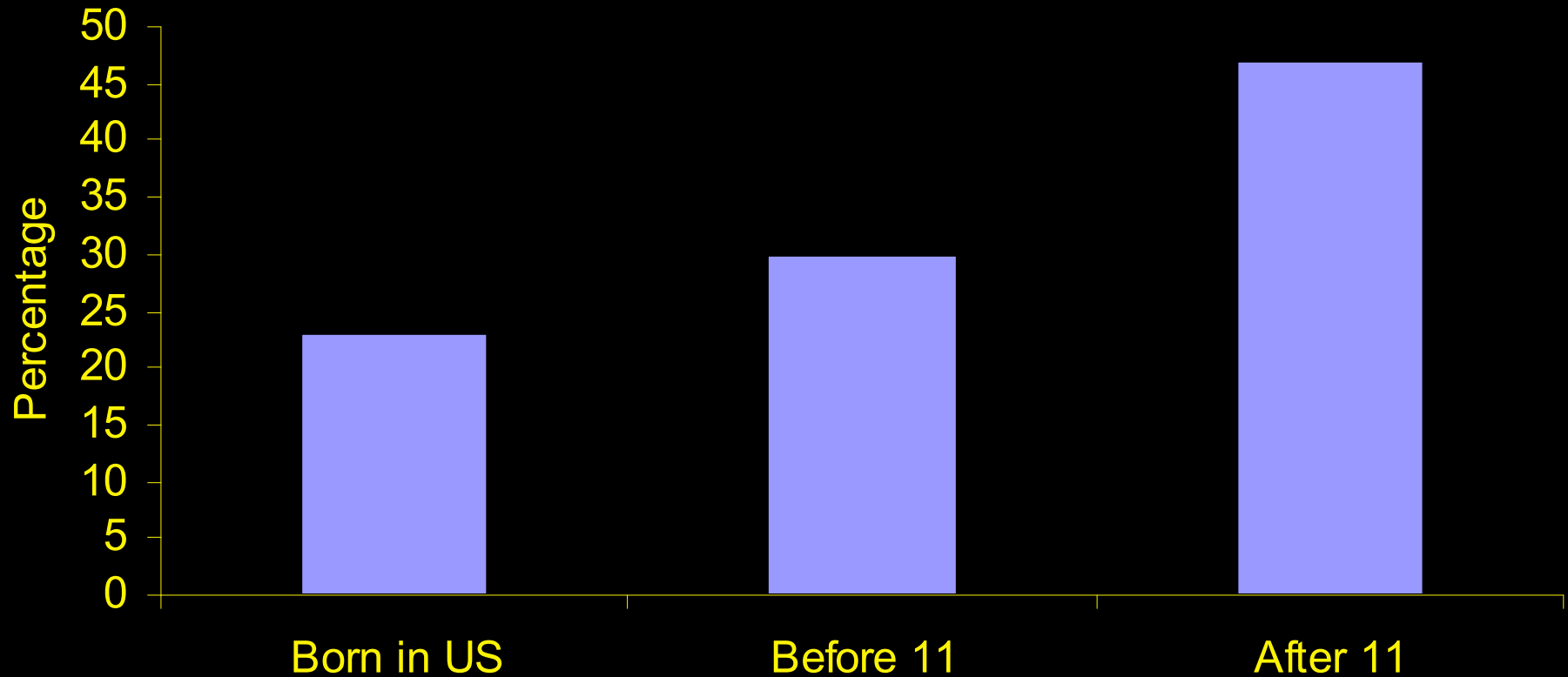
# Raising the Children

% of People Who Felt They Had a Strict Upbringing



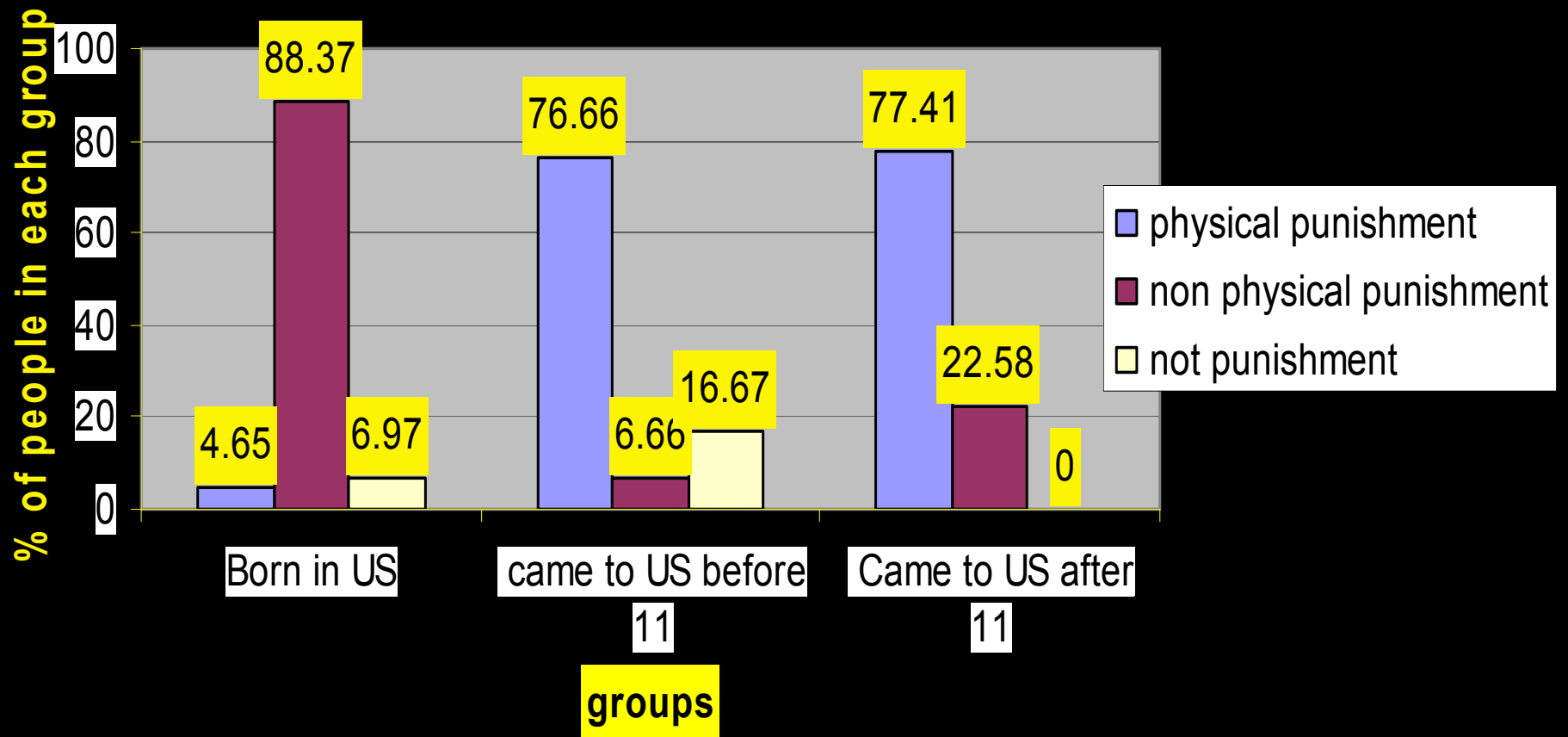
# Family Dynamics

% of People Whose Families Did Not Display Affection



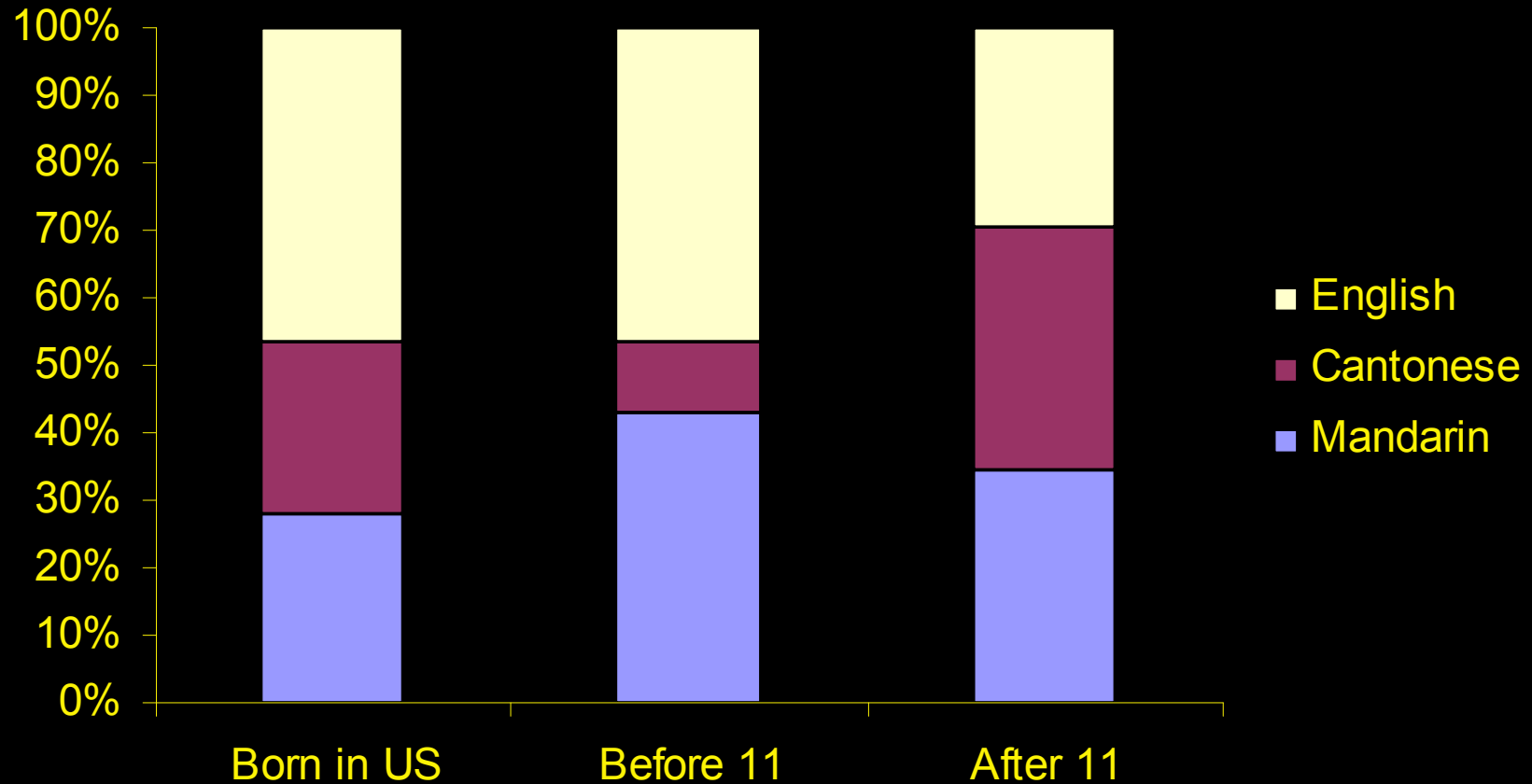
# Punishment for misbehavior

## Misbehaving punishment



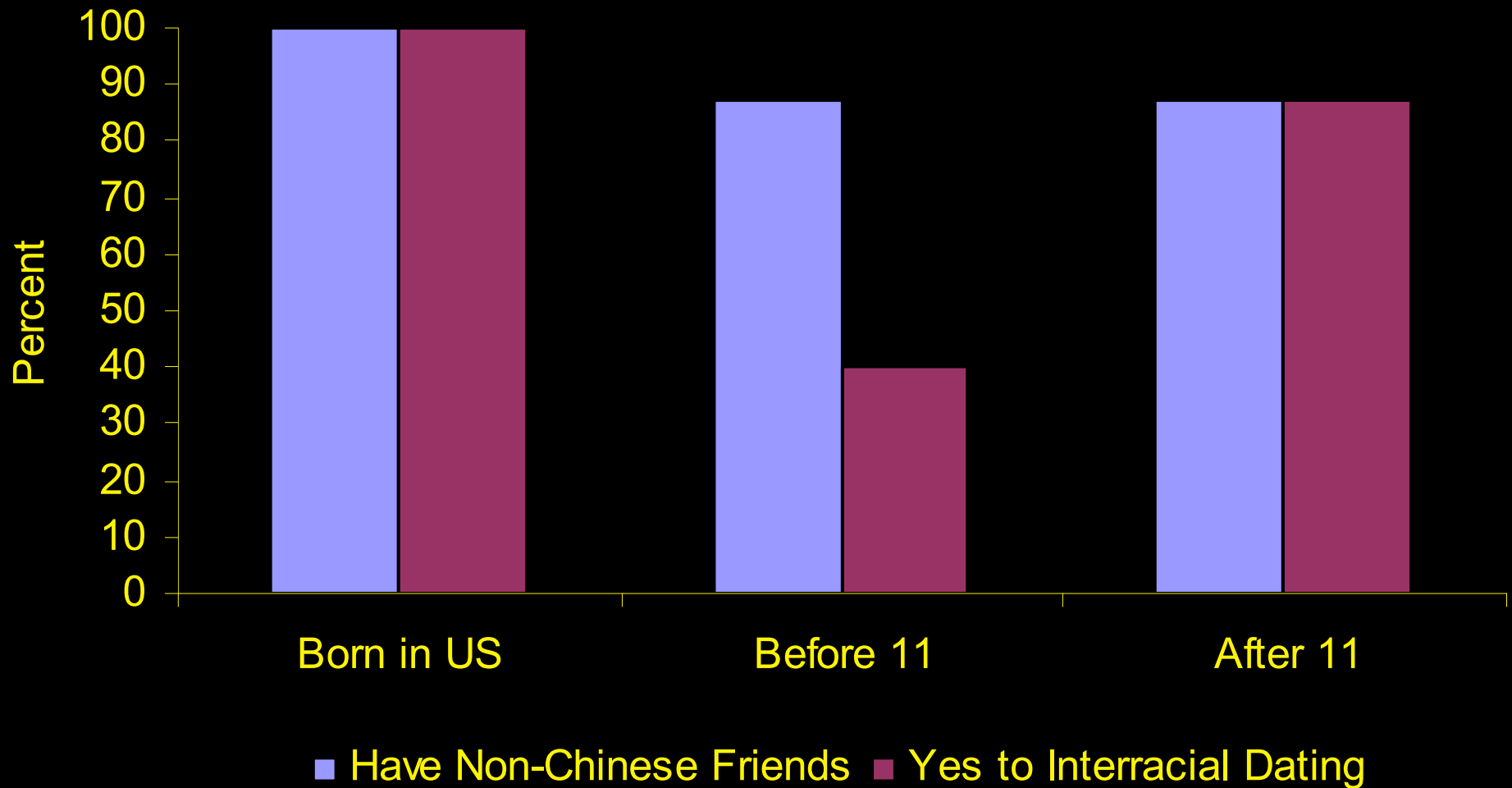
# School and Friends

# Language with Friends\*



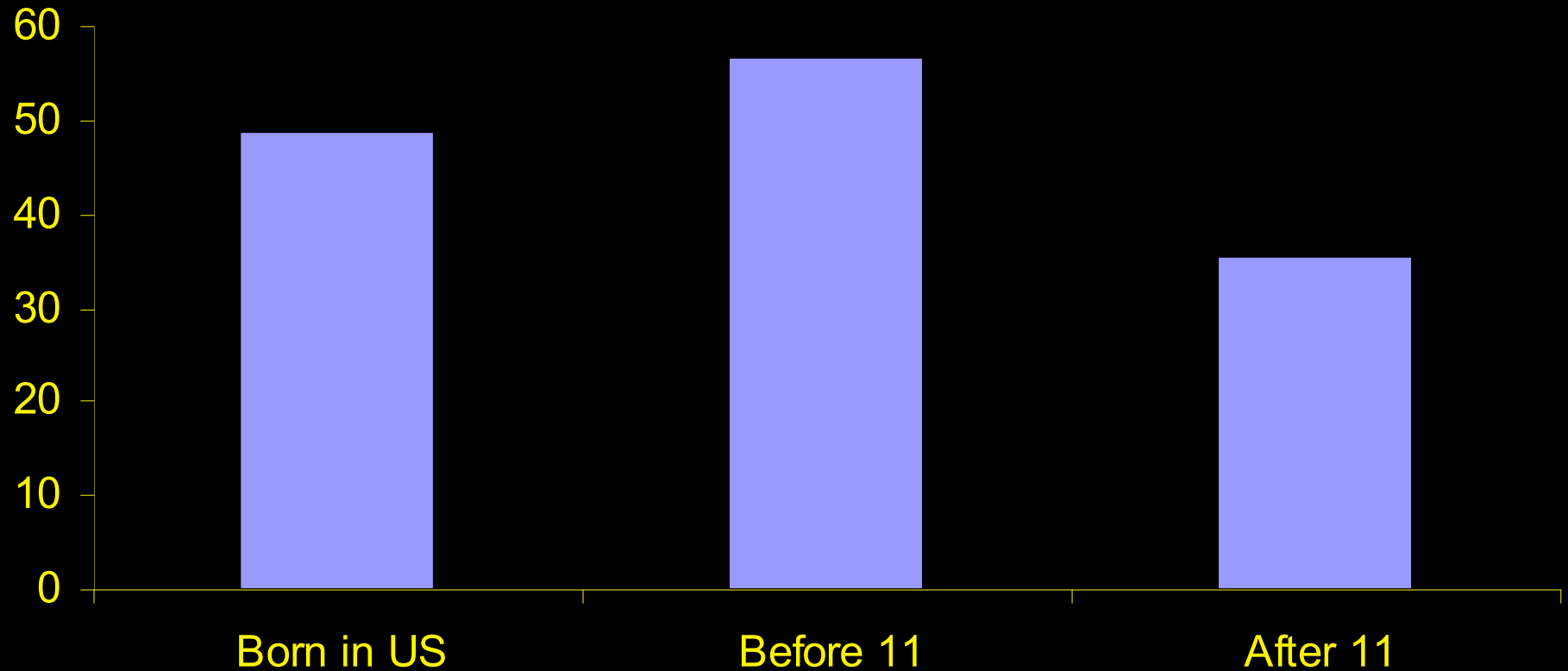
\* Excludes "others" category – 2 in "Before 11" category and 1 in "After 11" category spoke a language other than the three listed here with their friends.

# Love and Friendship

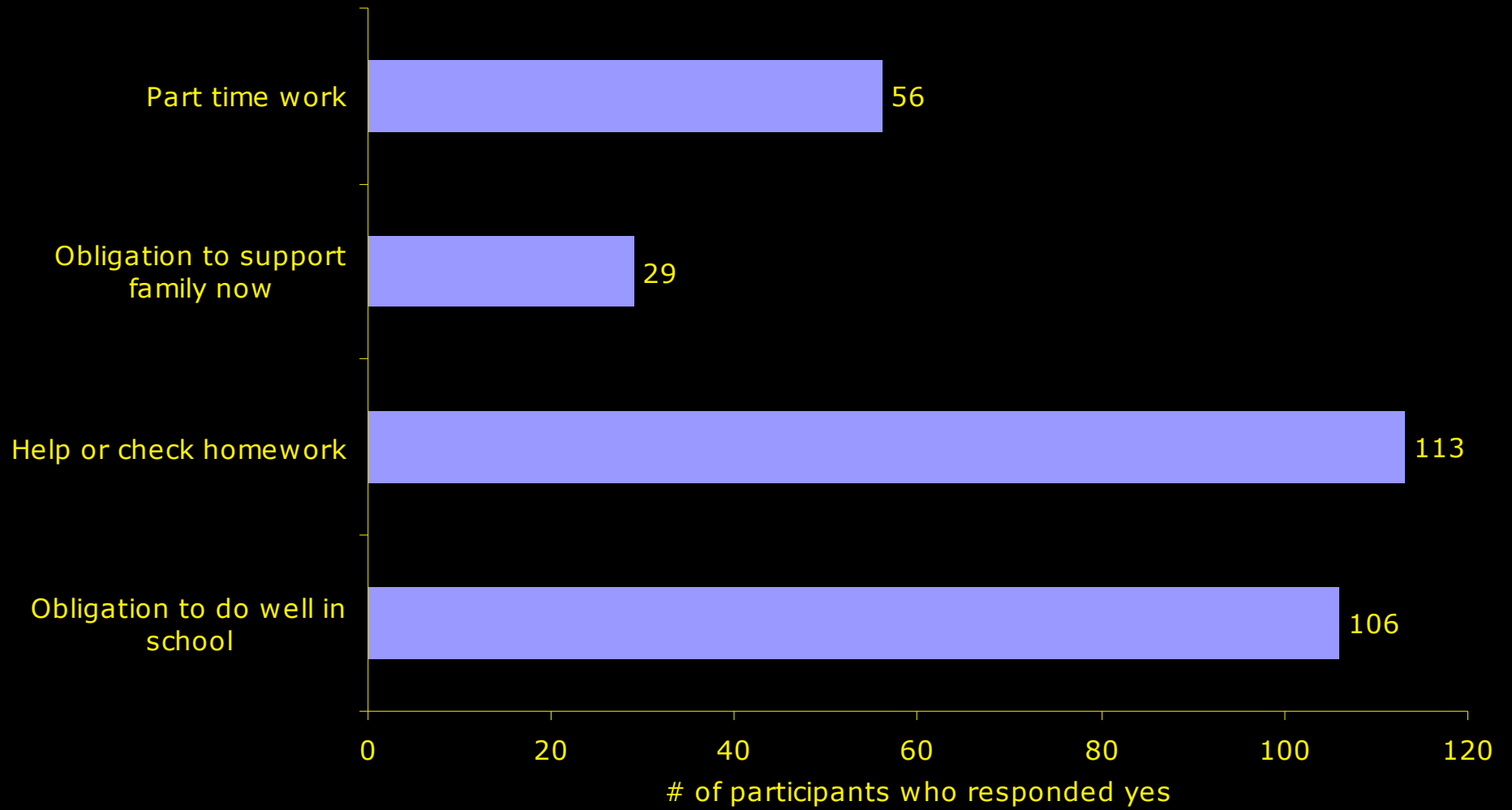


# Extracurricular Activities

% Who Engage in Extracurricular Activities



# School, Work, and Family



# Display o affection

- I was raised in a pretty traditional Chinese family. The way they see things, their point of view is different form mine. Family...the way they treat their family. Maybe they show more discipline and their parents they love you but they don't say it.
- But how do you know? I can feel it like when they talk you can actually feel. Most Chinese people are like that.(21 years old male)

# Parent's expectations

- Why do your parents want you to go to school? They think if I don't go to school I won't find a good paying job, a secure job, that's what they think. But my point of view I don't see that is the necessity of going to school and end up like with no retirement. That's the way I think. Cause recently I encountered this statistic I found mostly 95% of the people after retirement they just got nothing .So I'm afraid because I want to retire myself and my family. My mom and my dad and I'm scared that I wont be able to do that.(21 years old , male)

# Support of parents

- Why? Because I don't want my parents to work after 60...I mean 60 is already late for me. Maybe in a couple of years, I guess hopefully I can retire them maybe in 4 years, 5 years as soon as possible.(21 years old, male )

# School

- Why did your family come to the United States?

I did not really know in the beginning but later on I realized that it was for us, for college. They want us to go to school, so its very obvious. I went to an American Catholic school in Taiwan, it was an international school. So we spoke English throughout. We lived there for 8 years.(22 years old, Female)

# School

- But your parents must be proud of your accomplishments, right? With your school?

You know, one of the reasons why I decided to go to Columbia-not USC .i wanted to apply USC because I wanted to stay in California-but Columbia just sounds like a much better school, not only for networking but it also gives me a chance to see a different level.

- Did your parents prefer for you to go to USC?

No , actually they did not really say it but they want me to go to Columbia. It's pretty obvious .

- Why is that?

It's just that they talk about it. Like when my mom talks on the phone with friends or relatives, you can tell. She has a reason to brag.

# Future Career

- In terms of your future career, your finance or your ability? What is for them is suitable?
- They just find that I should find something better. Instead of going to art school they want me to go to university. Something that will either go into business, accounting or go into a professional field
- What's your major now?
- I major in religion and philosophy. This is more like a stepping stone for me. I am seriously considering graduate school, but I haven't really decided.

- What are you going to study in graduate school?
- I was planning on going to law school but at this point it doesn't really matter. I mean my parents have always wanted me to do something within business field but I never liked it. I think that if I'm in a good school it doesn't matter what I study, like they are more lenient about that now.