

# Tiger Mother Amy Chua 'reveals' what gives Jews and Indians a head start

- *WILL PAVIA*
- *THE TIMES*

## **THE TIGER Mother is back.**

Three years ago Amy Chua caused uproar with her assertion that Chinese parents who imposed martial law over their children's homework, piano and violin practice were far superior to their soft-hearted white counterparts. Now she has taken her analysis of superhuman behaviour into even more controversial territory: race and creed in America.

Next month, Ms Chua and her husband Jed Rubenfeld will publish a book that singles out seven racial groups, along with Mormons, as culturally superior to all the rest.

In *The Triple Package: How Three Unlikely Traits Explain the Rise and Fall of Cultural Groups in America*, Ms Chua and her husband claim to have isolated the cultural elements that have propelled certain immigrant groups to wealth and success.

Ms Chua, who hails from a Chinese American family, and Mr Rubenfeld, who is Jewish, argue that Chinese, Jewish, Indian, Iranian, Lebanese and Nigerians have all prospered due to innate characteristics in their respective cultures, as have Cuban exiles and Mormons.

These groups, they say, have defied the reported demise of upward mobility in America.

"What do the current or recent CFOs or CEOs of American Express, Black & Decker, Citigroup, Dell, Fisher Price, Deloitte, Jet Blue, Marriott International, Sears, Roebuck, Huntsman, Skullcandy, Sam's Club and Madison Square Garden have in common?" they ask. "They are all members of the Church of Latter Day Saints."

They say Cuban-Americans are two and a half times more likely than other Hispanics to be earning more than \$200,000, Nigerians are over-represented in the country's top universities and on Wall Street, and Indian Americans "have

the highest income of any census-tracked ethnic group. Chinese, Iranian and Lebanese Americans are not far behind".

They argue that the reason for the success of the groups is that all possess an innate sense of cultural superiority, a sense of insecurity that drives them to achieve, and a rigid self-discipline that makes them more likely to persevere in the face of hardship.

They maintain that all these qualities, which may once have existed more widely in the nation of immigrants, have been softened by "post 1960s liberal American principles" which emphasised self-esteem and equality.

They even argue that the Civil Rights Movement may have dented the prospects of African Americans.

"In this paradoxical sense, equality isn't fair to African-Americans," they say.

"Superiority is the one narrative that America has relentlessly denied or ground out of its black population."

The arguments have fierce opposition.

"It's incendiary but it's also wrong," said Nancy Foner, a sociology professor at Hunter College in New York.

"There is a large literature in the US and in Europe on why certain groups do better than others. Overwhelmingly that literature emphasises the education and class background of the parents. Indians are the most highly educated immigrant group in the US."

She said the attempt to insist on culturally specific causes was "distorting" and strongly disagreed with the authors' reading of the effect of the Civil Rights movement.

"Civil rights and affirmative action would lead to opportunities to create a much larger African American middle class," she said, adding: "Give me a break."

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