

ASIAN AMERICANS IN METRO BOSTON: Growth, Diversity, and Complexity

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Introduction

In the introduction to *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity and Change in the 21st Century*, the book's editors Eric Lai and Dennis Arguelles observe that: "Far too often and for far too long, statistics have been used to paint an inaccurate portrait of the Asian Pacific American community, often to its detriment. In the late 19th century, immigration statistics were used to foment fears of a 'yellow peril,' justify restrictive quotas, and discourage Asian workers from settling in the United States. In the late 20th century, statistics were used to portray Asian Pacific Americans as a monolithic Model Minority, a community in which everyone was well-educated and well-off, a concept that is often used to drive a wedge between minority communities."¹ Mindful of the potential of statistics to perpetuate myths and misunderstandings about Asian Americans, we are determined in this report to utilize data drawn from the 2000 U.S. Census to paint as accurately as possible a portrait of the often ignored and misrepresented Asian American community in Metro Boston.²

Our primary focus, consequently, is on description rather than on detailed analysis or even informed speculation. In writing about many groups this emphasis might seem relatively insignificant. In the case of Asian Americans, however, there have been few efforts to describe them fully and of the descriptions that have emerged many have been simplistic, stereotypical, and devoid of critical nuances. Furthermore, in many studies where race has been a critical consideration, Asian Americans have either been simply excluded or lumped indiscriminately in a similarly simplistic fashion either with majority whites or with other minorities. Certainly seeking answers to the "why" questions are critical undertakings with regard to Asian Americans. Nevertheless, we maintain that it is an important contribution and an essential preliminary component for effective analysis

¹ Eric Lai and Dennis Arguelles, eds., *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity and Change in the 21st Century* (Berkeley, CA: Asian Week with UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 2003), 1.

² For purposes of this report, Metro Boston entails the census geographical area defined as the "Massachusetts (part); Boston-Worcester-Lawrence-Lowell-Brockton, MA-NH New England county metropolitan area." This area includes Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, and Worcester counties, and 192 cities and towns. The source of the data in this paper is U.S. Census Data 2000 Summary File (SF-4) Sample Data unless otherwise indicated.

to describe what the Asian American community looks like and to capture accurately three essential components - its growth, diversity, and enormous complexity.

The stunning growth of the Asian American population, fed significantly by immigration, has been dramatic. As in an earlier time, some might even now regard this expansion as perilous, particularly if statistics on growth rates are all that are considered. A fuller understanding of Asian Americans in Metro Boston, therefore, requires an appreciation of the diversity that exists within that population. Far from the monolithic characterization that Lai and Arguelles refer to, the Asian American community is incredibly diverse in its characteristics and socio-economic condition. Furthermore, an accurate portrait requires a full recognition of the ways in which rapid growth and diversity contribute to complexity. On numerous dimensions – educational attainment, income, employment, etc., it is unwise and impossible to portray in any simple way what is happening in the Asian American community.

We must not lose sight of the fact that race has been and remains a critical factor in the lives and destinies of Asian Americans. We are mindful as well that the complexity that accompanies diversity has potentially important policy implications when dealing with Asian Americans. When considered collectively Asian Americans run the gamut. They are rich and poor, well and poorly educated, city and suburban dwellers, professionals and manual laborers. Individual Asian subgroups often occupy different locations on these divides. Assuredly, given this situation, one size fits all policies in areas such as immigration, education, social welfare, housing, and employment may be inappropriate where Asian Americans are concerned. Especially due to the continuing importance of race, we must caution once again that as responses to this complexity and the difficulty of accounting for its sources and consequences, policy practitioners and analysts should not be tempted to ignore or oversimplify the situation of Asian Americans in Metro Boston and throughout the United States.

Size, Growth, and Geographical Distribution

In 2000 the Metro Boston Asian American population was 223,424³, comprising over 4% of the total Metro Boston population (Table 1). The Asian American population grew by 70% in the 1990s. This compares to a growth rate for the overall population of less than 6%. Twenty cities and towns within Metro Boston in 2000 had at least 2000 Asian Americans (Table 2). These cities and towns are remarkably diverse – urban and suburban, well-to-do and struggling, racially heterogeneous and homogenous. Boston had the largest Asian American population followed by Lowell, Quincy, Cambridge, Worcester, Malden, Brookline, Newton, and Lynn. The large cities, therefore, generally

³ The data reported in this report includes those persons identified as selecting one race alone with the exception of instances where figures for “total population” are designated which include all persons. It is important to bear in mind some of the consequences of reporting statistics on single race persons. For example, by utilizing “Asian alone” when referring to Asian Americans, the numbers reported represent the minimum figures for Asian Americans. By not including persons who indicated Asian and at least one other race in our calculations, we do not account for multiracial individuals who might be regarded as “Asian Americans.” In 2000, 23,544 persons identified themselves as Asian in combination with one or more other races, meaning that 9.5% of all Asians (those reporting Asian alone and Asian in combination with one or more other race) were multiracial.

Table 1. Population by Race

	1990	2000	% change	% of 2000 population
White*	4,480,028	4,439,861	-0.9%	86.0%
Black or African American	256,969	295,106	14.8%	5.7%
Asian American	131,453	223,424	70.0%	4.3%
Native American	9,304	11,629	25.0%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1,061	2,224	109.6%	0.0%
Other Race	121,032	189,895	N/A**	3.7%
TOTAL ONE RACE	-	5,161,876	N/A	97.6%
TOTAL TWO OR MORE RACES	-	125,517	N/A	2.4%
TOTAL POP	4,999,847	5,287,393	5.8%	100.0%
Latino***		347,242		

* 96.8% of Whites are non-Latino.

** The change in the composition of the Other Race category between 1990 and 2000 does not allow for comparison.

*** Latinos may be of any race.

Data Sets: U.S. Census 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100% Data and U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 2 (STF 2) 100% Data

Table 2. Asian American Population in Cities and Towns with 2000 or More Asian Americans

	Asian Am. 1990	Asian Am. 2000	Absolute Change	Percent Change
Boston	30,388	44,284	13,896	45.7%
Lowell	11,493	17,371	5,878	51.1%
Quincy	5,577	13,546	7,969	142.9%
Cambridge	8,081	12,036	3,955	48.9%
Worcester	4,770	8,402	3,632	76.1%
Malden	2,815	7,882	5,067	180.0%
Brookline	4,585	7,325	2,740	59.8%
Newton	3,760	6,434	2,674	71.1%
Lynn	3,003	5,730	2,727	90.8%
Somerville	2,824	4,990	2,166	76.7%
Waltham	2,055	4,318	2,263	110.1%
Framingham	1,904	3,527	1,623	85.2%
Lexington	1,876	3,310	1,434	76.4%
Randolph	1,675	3,151	1,476	88.1%
Burlington	1,040	2,436	1,396	134.2%
Shrewsbury	904	2,408	1,504	166.4%
Medford	1,152	2,157	1,005	87.2%
Revere	1,571	2,146	575	36.6%
Arlington	1,351	2,107	756	56.0%
Brockton	1,589	2,066	477	30.0%

Data Sets: U.S. Census 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100% Data and U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 2 (STF 2) 100% Data

speaking did have the largest Asian American populations. By and large, the greatest increases in Asian American populations, however, were recorded in suburban cities and towns – Malden 180%, Shrewsbury 166.4%, Quincy 142.9%, Burlington 134.2%, and Waltham 110.1%. The communities that experienced relatively more modest growth were Brockton 30%, Revere 36.6%, Boston 45.7%, Cambridge 48.9%, and Lowell 51.1%.

The themes of diversity, complexity, and growth are amply demonstrated in the broad range of Asian ethnic groups represented among Metro Boston’s Asian American population. Fifteen Asian ethnic groups each had at least 500 persons (Table 3). The histories and experiences of these groups are as diverse as their number, and much too difficult to ably summarize in a short space. The Chinese, for example, have been a presence in this region for several decades, and they have been influenced by several immigration regimes stretching back prior to the Chinese exclusion period well over a century ago. Indians immigrated to this region in significant numbers only after passage of the Hart-Cellar Act in 1965. Southeast Asian groups, including Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Thai, and Hmong, began arriving in substantial numbers, many as refugees, less than thirty years ago. The Japanese and Korean communities are each comprised of a large number of college and graduate students.

Table 3. Population by Asian Subgroup

	1990	2000	% Change	% AAs in 2000
Bangladesh alone	–	544	–	0.2%
Cambodian	13,405	18,890	40.9%	8.5%
Chinese	50,713	78,415	54.6%	35.1%
Filipino	5,523	7,415	34.3%	3.3%
Hmong	228	1,038	355.3%	0.5%
Indian	17,978	41,240	129.4%	18.5%
Indonesian	–	670	-	0.3%
Japanese	7,912	9,699	22.6%	4.3%
Korean	10,107	15,615	54.5%	7.0%
Laotian	3,797	3,576	-5.8%	1.6%
Malaysian	–	199	–	0.1%
Pakastani	–	1,821	–	0.8%
Sri Lankan	–	602	–	0.3%
Taiwanese	–	2,208	–	1.0%
Thai	1,314	1,969	49.8%	0.9%
Vietnamese	14,502	31,511	117.3%	14.1%
Other Asian	–	533	–	0.2%
Other Asian, not specified	–	3,655	–	1.6%
Total Asian (one ethnicity)	–	219,600	–	98.3%
Total Asian*	131,453	223,424	70.0%	100.0%

Data Sets: U.S. Census 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) 100% Data and U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 2 (STF 2) 100% Data

* This total reflects Asians who identified themselves as one or more Asian subgroups.

As in 1990 and, indeed, throughout most of the history of Asian Americans in Metro Boston, the Chinese in 2000 remained the largest Asian American group. Their share of the total Asian American population, however, dropped from 39% in 1990 to 35% in 2000. Indians and Vietnamese remained the second and third largest Asian American groups, but unlike the Chinese their shares of the population increased in the 1990s. The Indian portion of the Asian American population increased in 2000 to 19% from 14% in 1990. The Vietnamese share also grew, from 11% in 1990 to 14% in 2000. For certain Asian ethnic groups their growth rates were even more dramatic than the 70% increase for the overall Asian American population. The Hmong population, for example, grew by a whopping 355.3%, Indians by 129.4%, and Vietnamese by 117.3%.

Diversity is clearly apparent as well in the distribution of Asian ethnic groups in Metro Boston's cities and towns. The larger cities and towns in Metro Boston with Asian American populations greater than 2000, including Boston, Lowell, Cambridge, Worcester, were most likely to include persons from a broad array of Asian ethnic groups (Table 4).

Table 4. Population of Asian Subgroups in Cities and Towns with 2000 or More Asian Americans

	Cambodian	Chinese	Filipino	Hmong	Indian	Japanese	Korean	Laotian	Pakistani	Thai	Vietnamese
Boston	528	19,638	1,405	-	4,442	2,384	2,564	114	267	378	10,818
Lowell	9,850	661	106	-	2,424	-	147	1,541	-	108	1,598
Quincy	-	9,184	517	-	1,127	146	241	-	-	102	1,679
Cambridge	-	4,854	265	-	2,720	943	1,901	-	125	156	235
Worcester	250	1,181	147	-	1,021	191	224	120	-	-	4,764
Malden	144	4,504	157	-	962	-	249	-	-	-	1,343
Brookline	-	3,509	143	-	932	1,302	861	-	-	-	109
Newton	-	4,047	161	-	769	352	530	-	-	-	181
Lynn	3,050	204	-	-	353	-	-	262	-	-	1,112
Somerville	-	1,862	161	-	1,363	289	462	-	-	-	329
Waltham	-	1,472	115	-	1,580	129	355	-	-	-	301
Framingham	-	1,215	101	-	1,488	152	208	-	-	-	137
Lexington	-	1,692	-	-	672	214	431	-	-	-	-
Randolph	-	1,516	232	-	439	-	-	-	-	-	718
Burlington	-	529	-	-	1,570	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shrewsbury	-	720	-	-	1,148	-	-	-	-	-	212
Medford	-	886	-	-	411	-	159	-	-	-	319
Revere	847	271	-	-	251	-	-	-	-	-	397
Arlington	-	860	-	-	470	246	223	-	-	-	-
Brockton	162	530	249	197	220	-	-	-	-	-	283

Data Set: U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 2 (STF 2) 100% Data

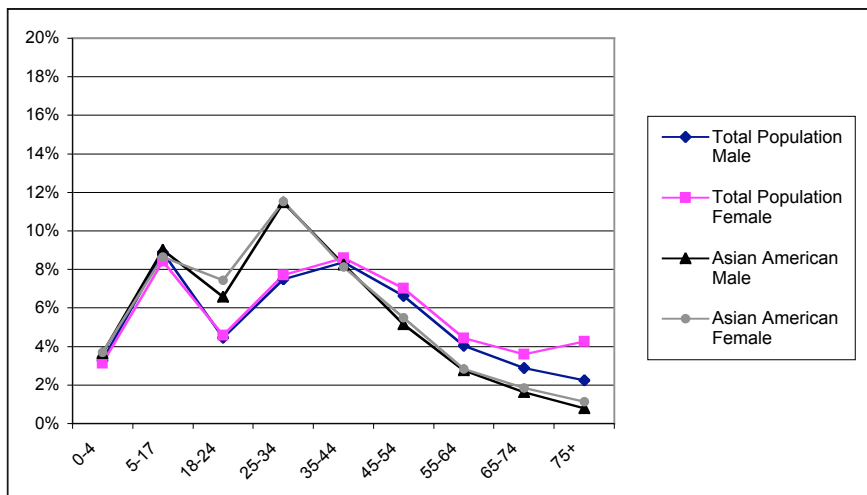
The patterns of Filipino, Japanese, and Korean settlement are similar to that of the Chinese. The Cambodian community is heavily concentrated in Lowell with significant communities in Lynn, Fall River, and Revere. Fitchburg has by far the area’s largest number of Hmong residents. Vietnamese tend to live largely in the areas larger cities and towns – Boston, Worcester, Quincy, Lowell, Malden, and Lynn. Indians, in contrast, are distributed broadly throughout the region in cities and towns-large and small, urban and suburban.

Age and Sex

The age and sex distribution of Asian Americans differed significantly from that of the general population in several categories (Figure 1 and Table A-1). The percentage of Asian Americans in the age groups 45 years old and older, for example, was much lower than that of the total population. This discrepancy was particularly pronounced in the oldest age groups. On the other hand, in the 18-24 and especially in the 25-44 year old age groups, a considerably higher percentage of Asian Americans were found compared to the total population. The overall gender distribution of Asian Americans was 49.2% male and 50.8% female.

In examining the distribution of age and sex for specific Asian American groups, there were some notable variations (Figure 2 and Table A-2). Pakistanis and Indians, for example, had considerably higher percentages of males compared to females, 56.4% to 43.6% for Pakistanis and 53.8% to 46.2% for Indians. In contrast, the Filipino and Japanese groups were disproportionately female. For Filipinos the gender distribution was 41.3% male and 58.7% female; for Japanese, 42.1% male and 57.9% female.

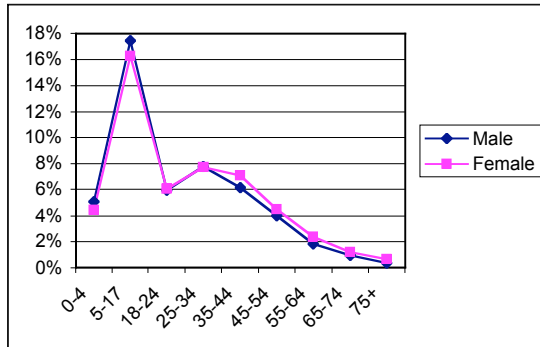
Figure 1. Age and Sex for Asian Americans and Total Population



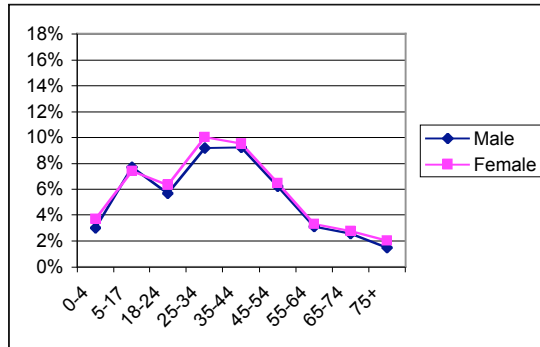
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Figure 2. Age and Sex for Selected Asian Subgroups

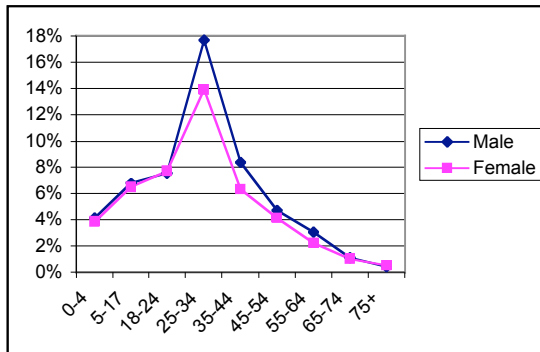
Cambodian



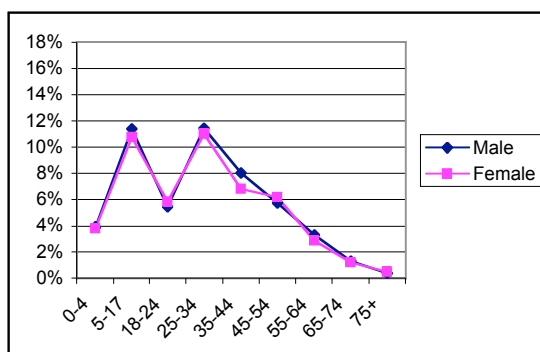
Chinese



Indian



Vietnamese



Data Set: U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 2 (STF 2) 100% Data

There was little uniformity in the patterns of age distributions among various Asian ethnic groups. For instance, compared with other Asian American groups, an especially large percentage of Cambodians and Hmong were in the two youngest categories. At the other end of the age spectrum a higher percentage of Chinese were in the two oldest age groups compared with other Asian American groups. This may reflect the fact that the Chinese have been established for the longest time of any Asian group in Metro Boston. A comparatively higher percentage of Indians was in the 25-34 years old category.

Nativity, Citizenship, and English Language Proficiency

In order to fully understand and analyze the circumstances of Asian Americans in Metro Boston, we maintain that it is absolutely essential to understand the interplay of immigration policies and immigrant experiences. As we have indicated, it is not possible within the scope of this report to adequately account for these policies and experiences. We simply want to reiterate the fact that the diversity and complexity that are reflected

throughout much of the information in this portrait of Asian Americans are linked to the varied policies, time periods, and political, social, and economic realities that accompanied the arrival and reception of each of the Asian ethnic groups.

Data on nativity and citizenship readily reflect the immigrant foundations of the Asian American population. Furthermore, this information is extremely useful in providing a context for analyzing policies and strategies as they influence Asian Americans in diverse domains – social welfare, education, political participation, housing, employment, and community development. One can imagine, for example, myriad political and strategic implications accompanying the fact that over 70% of Asian Americans in Metro Boston were foreign-born, by far the highest percentage of any group in the region (Figure 3 and Table 6). Fewer than 60% of all Asian Americans were United States citizens, the smallest percentage of any group. Among the groups with large percentages of foreign born populations, however, Asian Americans had 42.1% of its foreign-born population become citizens compared with Blacks or African Americans with 39.2% and Latinos with 26.6% naturalized.

Figure 3. Nativity and Citizenship by Race and Latino Origin

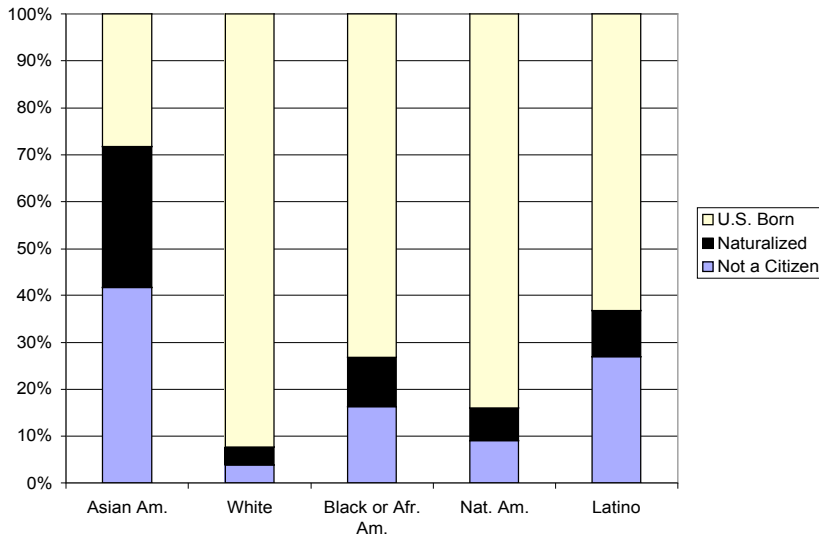


Table 6. Nativity and Citizenship by Race and Latino Origin

	Asian Am.	White	Black or Afr. Am.	Nat. Am.	Latino
Foreign Born	71.8%	7.7%	26.8%	15.9%	36.8%
Not a Citizen	41.6%	3.8%	16.3%	9.0%	27.0%
Naturalized	30.2%	3.9%	10.5%	6.9%	9.8%
U.S. Born	28.2%	92.3%	73.2%	84.1%	63.2%

When examining specific Asian American groups there was some variation with regard to nativity and citizenship (Figure 4 and Table 7). Although all of the Asian groups, with the exception of the Hmong at 47.6%, had foreign-born populations greater than 60%, the Pakistanis and Thais had foreign-born populations of 79.7% and 80.7% respectively. Stated in another way, only the Hmong had a U.S.-born population greater than 40%.

The Asian subgroups with the largest portions of their foreign-born populations naturalized were the Filipinos, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Koreans. The communities with the highest overall percentages of U.S. citizens were the Filipinos, Hmong, and Chinese. The Japanese with 31.2% had by far the lowest citizenship rate. One can speculate that this reflects the relatively large number of Japanese residents of the region who were students (Table A-3).

Figure 4. Nativity and Citizenship by Asian Subgroup

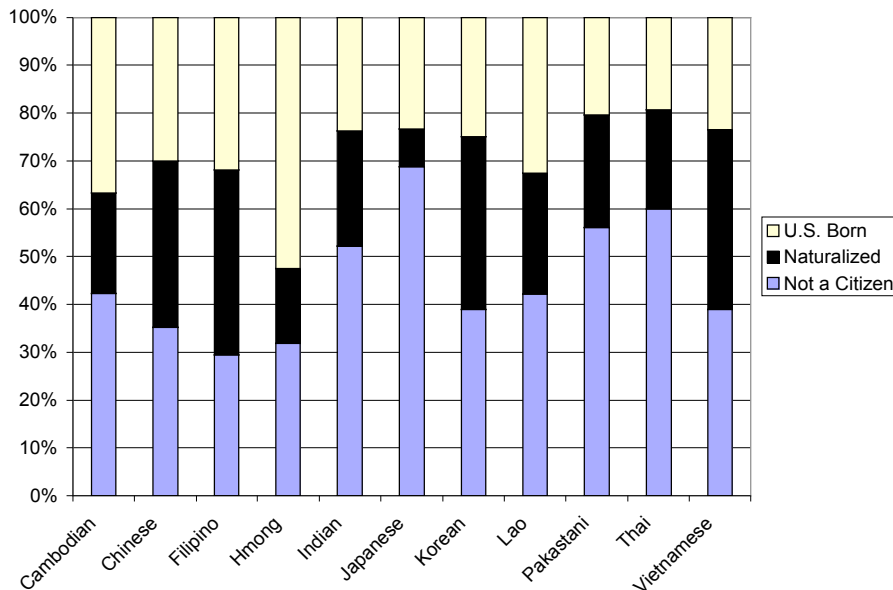


Table 7. Nativity and Citizenship by Asian Subgroup

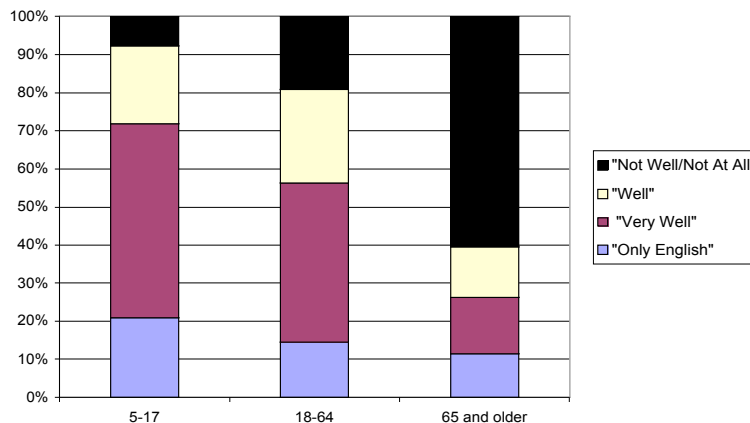
	Cambodian	Chinese	Filipino	Hmong	Indian	Japanese
Foreign Born	63.3%	70.1%	68.1%	47.6%	76.3%	76.6%
Not a Citizen	42.3%	35.3%	29.4%	31.9%	52.2%	68.8%
Naturalized	21.0%	34.8%	38.7%	15.7%	24.1%	7.8%
U.S. Born	36.7%	29.9%	31.9%	52.4%	23.7%	23.4%

	Korean	Laotian	Pakastani	Thai	Vietnamese
Foreign Born	75.1%	67.4%	79.7%	80.7%	76.5%
Not a Citizen	39.0%	42.1%	56.1%	60.0%	38.9%
Naturalized	36.1%	25.3%	23.6%	20.7%	37.6%
U.S. Born	24.9%	32.6%	20.3%	19.3%	23.5%

An important accompaniment of information about the citizenship and nativity of Asian Americans is data on their English language proficiency. Language issues are of strong importance to Asian Americans. The diverse countries of origin of Asian Americans mean that many Asian Americans concomitantly speak a broad range of languages adding to the complex relationships among Asian American groups. In contrast to the large foreign-born Latino population, for example, who mostly share the Spanish language, Asian groups do not have a corresponding non-English language that ties them together. Asian American immigrants from a range of Asian subgroups, therefore, have a considerable stake in the development of their English language capabilities for personal and, to the extent that they exist or are germane, larger group interests. English, in short, must serve as a tie that binds many Asian Americans together as well as a vehicle for facilitating their participation in the economic, political, and social life of American society.

For Asian Americans in Metro Boston, English language proficiency is strongly associated with age (Figure 5). Fewer than 10% of Asian Americans in the youngest age group (5-17 years old) were described as “not well or not at all well” proficient in English. Between the ages of 18 and 64 years old, approximately 20% reported that level of proficiency. In the oldest age group, over 60% were described as “not well or not at all well” proficient.

Figure 5. English Proficiency by Age Among Asian Americans



Household and Per Capita Income, Poverty Status, and Public Assistance

The median household income of Asian Americans was less than that of whites and considerably greater than that of other groups (Table 8). In the case of Asian Americans, however, the aggregate income figure, as was true for several other variables, masked the wide diversity among specific Asian subgroups where the range of incomes was substantial (Table 9). At the high end, Indians had a median household income in 2000 of nearly \$72,000. Filipinos and Chinese also had incomes above the median for all Asian

Americans. Cambodians with approximately \$38,000 had the lowest median family income of any Asian American group. Their income was the closest to those of Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans. Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Thais, Hmong, and Laotians had incomes below the Asian American median.

Table 8. Median Household Income by Race and Latino Origin

Asian Am.	White	Black or Afr. Am.	Nat. Am.	Latino	TOTAL POP
\$51,830	\$54,976	\$34,680	\$37,547	\$29,294	\$52,154

Table 9. Median Household Income by Asian Subgroup

Cambodian	Chinese	Filipino	Hmong	Indian	Japanese
\$37,295	\$52,121	\$60,524	\$46,875	\$71,771	\$38,033

Korean	Laotian	Pakistani	Thai	Vietnamese
\$40,408	\$50,893	\$45,174	\$44,167	\$42,402

A factor that might help to account for the relatively lower income levels of Japanese, Koreans, and some other groups might be the large number of college students within their ranks (Table A-3). For example, 34.3% of Japanese and 33.4% of Koreans in Metro Boston were enrolled in college or graduate schools.

Generally speaking, the distribution of Asian American household incomes approximated that of the total population with one very notable exception (Figure 6). Nearly 14% of Asian Americans were in the lowest income category (those making less than \$10,000) compared with just over 8% of the total population. Indeed the largest number of Asian American households was in the lowest income category. For the total population the category with the largest number of households was \$75,000 to \$99,999.

Figure 6. Household Income Distribution for Asian Americans and Total Population

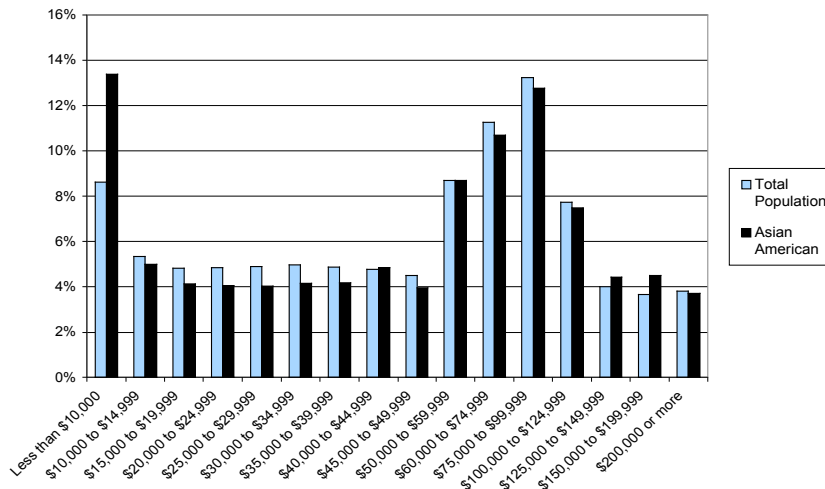
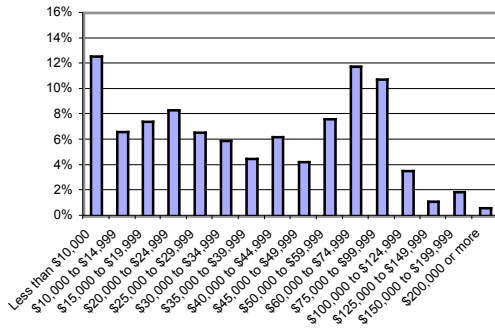
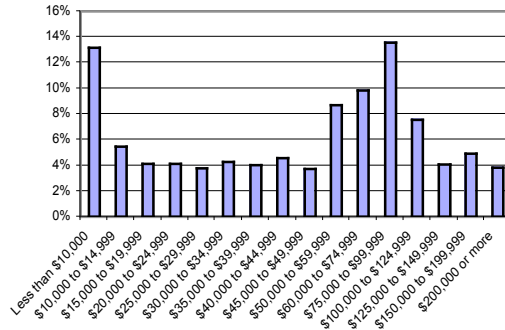


Figure 7. Household Income Distribution for Selected Asian Subgroups

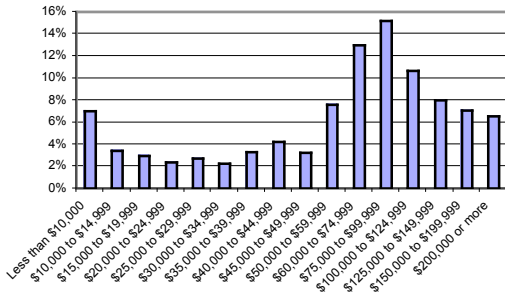
Cambodian



Chinese



Indian



Vietnamese

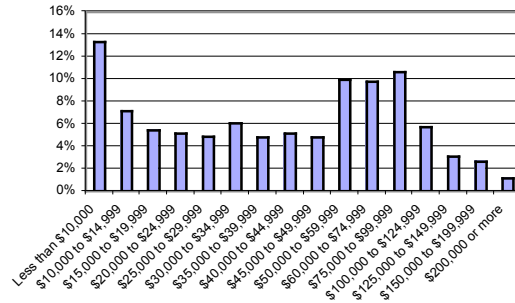


Figure 7 shows that when considering the four largest Asian American groups there are some significant disparities in their income distributions. For example, almost half of all Indian households had incomes over \$75,000 while fewer than 20% of Cambodian households had incomes over \$75,000. About 13% of Indian households had incomes below \$20,000 compared to approximately 25% of Cambodian and Vietnamese households.

The mean per capita income of Asian Americans, \$21,712, was substantially lower than that of whites, \$28,822, and higher than that of Latinos, \$12,546, Native Americans, \$16,214, and Blacks or African Americans, \$16,230 (Table 10).

Table 10. Per Capita Income by Race and Latino Origin

Asian Am.	White	Black or Afr. Am.	Nat. Am.	Latino	TOTAL POP
\$21,712	\$28,822	\$16,230	\$16,214	\$12,546	\$26,821

Table 11. Per Capita Income by Asian Subgroup

Cambodian	Chinese	Filipino	Hmong	Indian	Japanese
\$10,363	\$23,455	\$26,434	\$8,130	\$31,940	\$22,891
Korean	Laotian	Pakistani	Thai	Vietnamese	
\$20,654	\$14,611	\$14,765	\$20,743	\$13,643	

With per capita income as in the case of household income, broad variability could be found among Asian subgroups (Table 11). The per capita income in 2000 of the Hmong population, for example, was barely \$8,000 and the Cambodian population was just over \$10,000. In contrast, Indian per capita income was nearly four times higher than Hmong and three times higher than Cambodian.

For all non-white groups, including Asian Americans, poverty is an especially significant challenge and a dramatic reflection of inequality. The percentage of Asian American families in poverty, 12.3%, was nearly double that of the total population, 6.4%, and nearly three times that of whites, 4.4% (Table 12).

Poverty rates varied substantially among Asian subgroups (Table 13). Notably, however, in every Asian subgroup the poverty rate was higher than that of the white population. Nearly one-fourth of Cambodian and Pakistani families were in poverty. The Asian groups with the lowest poverty rates were the Indians and Laotians where about one in twenty of their families were in poverty.

Table 12 . Poverty Status of Families by Race and Latino Origin

Asian Am.	White	Black or Afr. Am.	Nat. Am.	Latino	TOTAL POP
12.3%	4.4%	17.7%	18.7%	26.2%	6.4%

Table 13. Poverty Status of Families by Asian Subgroup

Cambodian	Chinese	Filipino	Hmong	Indian	Japanese
23.9%	9.9%	7.4%	17.4%	5.3%	13.0%
Korean	Laotian	Pakistani	Thai	Vietnamese	
14.6%	5.0%	23.3%	10.6%	21.2%	

Comparing poverty status and public assistance figures yields some interesting results (Table 14). For example, the percentage of white households receiving public assistance, 2.1%, was about half the percentage of white families in poverty. For Asian Americans the percentage receiving public assistance income, 4.4%, was only about one third of the percentage of Asian American families in poverty.

For specific Asian subgroups several discrepancies can be found (Table 15). Cambodians, for example, as was noted earlier had a large number of families and households in poverty and a large percentage, 16.9%, receiving public assistance.

Pakistanis, however, had a large number of families in poverty, but none who reported receiving public assistance. The differences in public assistance utilization may be another area that is influenced by the specific immigration status and experiences of the various Asian groups. Individuals who arrived as refugees, students, or under employment related programs, for example, would be in some areas have differential eligibility for certain government assistance programs.

Table 14. Percentage of Households Receiving Public Assistance Income by Race and Latino Origin

Asian Am.	White	Black or Afr. Am.	Nat. Am.	Latino	TOTAL POP
4.4%	2.1%	6.8%	6.9%	11.4%	2.7%

Table 15. Percentage of Households Receiving Public Assistance Income by Asian Subgroup

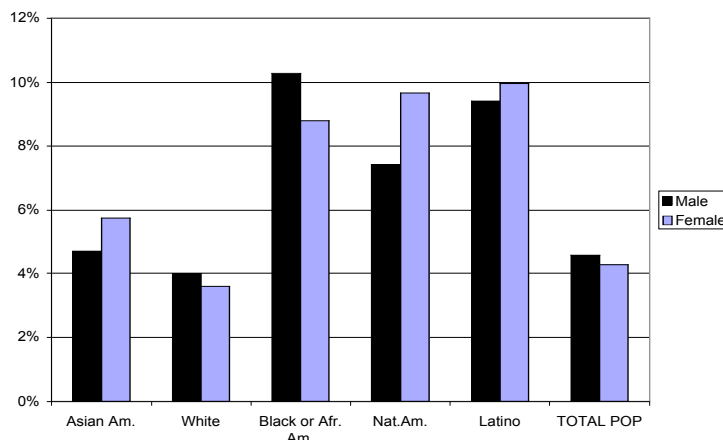
Cambodian	Chinese	Filipino	Hmong	Indian	Japanese
16.9%	3.0%	1.1%	11.0%	1.4%	0.5%

Korean	Laotian	Pakistani	Thai	Vietnamese
1.4%	4.9%	0.0%	2.0%	12.7%

Employment Status and Occupations

The Asian American unemployment rate was greater than that of whites and significantly less than that of other groups (Figure 8 and Table A-4). In comparing Asian American unemployment with the total population, Asian Americans differed in that for them the female unemployment rate exceeded the male rate whereas in the total population the male rate was higher than the female.

Figure 8. Unemployment Rate for the Population 16 Years and Older by Sex, Race, and Latino Origin



Over one half of Asian Americans, 52.9% were in occupations categorized as management, professional, and related occupations (Table 16). Asian Americans were especially well-represented compared to the total population in professional and related occupations such as computing, mathematics, architecture, engineering, and the sciences. Production, transportation, and material moving occupations included a higher percentage of Asian Americans compared to the total population. Asian Americans trailed the total population in service, sales, construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations.

Table 16. Detailed Occupation of Employed Civilians 16 Years and Older for Asian Americans and Total Population

	Asian Am.	Total Pop
Management, professional, and related occupations:	52.9%	42.3%
Management, business, and financial occupations:	13.7%	16.4%
Management	7.8%	10.7%
Business and Financial	5.9%	5.7%
Professional and related occupations:	39.2%	25.9%
Computer & Mathematical	13.6%	4.2%
Architecture & Engineering	5.1%	2.8%
Life, physical, social sciences	5.9%	1.7%
Community and social services	0.8%	1.7%
Legal	0.6%	1.5%
Education, Training & Library	4.7%	6.3%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	1.4%	2.4%
Healthcare	7.1%	5.5%
Service occupations:	11.8%	13.5%
Healthcare support	1.3%	2.1%
Protective service	0.4%	2.0%
Food preparation and serving	6.9%	4.3%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	1.1%	2.6%
Personal care & service	2.1%	2.5%
Sales and office occupations:	18.3%	25.9%
Sales	7.6%	10.5%
Office & administrative support	10.7%	15.4%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations:	0.1%	0.2%
Agricultural	0.1%	0.1%
Fishing, hunting, and forestry	0.0%	0.1%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations:	2.5%	7.2%
Construction and extraction	1.2%	4.3%
Installation, maintenance & repair	1.4%	2.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations:	14.5%	10.9%
Production	12.7%	6.6%
Transportation and material moving	1.7%	4.4%

An examination of the distribution of occupations among Asian subgroups in 2000 makes it clear that wide differences existed (Table 17). Indians with 72.6% and Japanese with 67%, for example, were heavily concentrated in management, professional, and related occupations. On the other hand, only 11.9% of Laotians and 16.3% of Cambodians were in these occupations. Markedly higher percentages of Laotians, 61.6%, and Cambodians, 51.6%, compared with other Asian Americans were in occupations categorized as production, transportation, and material moving. In contrast fewer than 7% of Japanese, Pakistanis, and Indians were in these occupations.

Table 17. Occupation for Asian American Employed Civilians 16 Years and Older by Subgroup

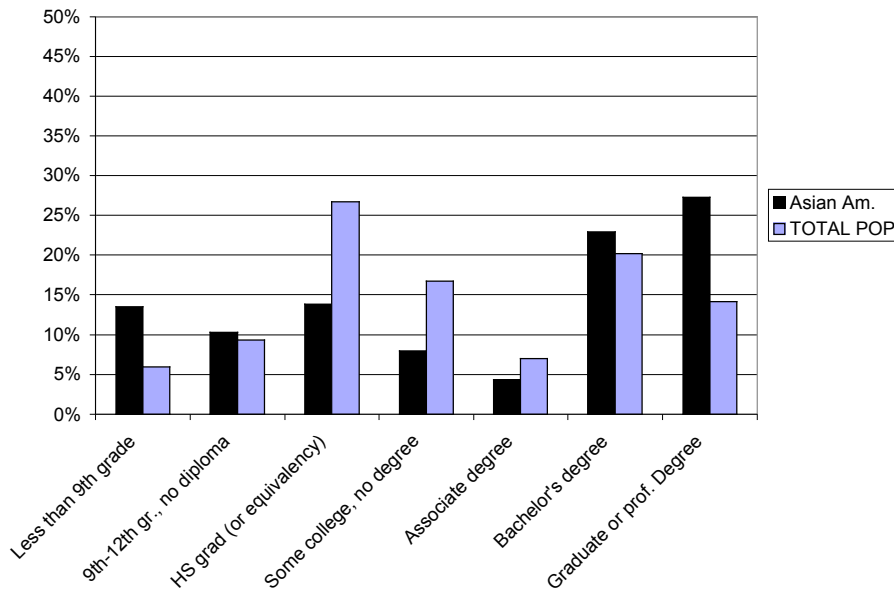
	Cambodian	Chinese	Filipino	Hmong	Indian	Japanese
Management, professional, and related occupations	16.3%	57.2%	53.2%	15.0%	72.6%	67.0%
Service occupations	7.6%	15.1%	15.5%	4.0%	5.4%	9.2%
Sales and office occupations	20.5%	17.7%	20.1%	19.0%	14.0%	19.3%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	4.1%	1.9%	2.7%	4.6%	1.3%	0.6%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	51.6%	8.0%	8.5%	57.5%	6.7%	3.8%

	Korean	Laotian	Pakistani	Thai	Vietnamese
Management, professional, and related occupations	55.9%	11.9%	44.8%	39.9%	26.4%
Service occupations	9.2%	7.1%	8.1%	27.7%	13.2%
Sales and office occupations	21.7%	13.9%	40.1%	18.3%	20.4%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	0.8%	4.9%	1.1%	2.2%	7.2%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	12.3%	61.6%	5.9%	12.0%	32.5%

Educational Attainment

The pattern of Asian Americans disproportionately occupying the low and high ends of various spectrums is again readily apparent in the data on levels of educational attainment for those 25 years old and older (Figure 9 and Table A-5). At the low end, the percentage of Asian Americans in 2000 with less than a ninth grade education was more than double that of the total population. Only Latinos had a higher percentage of their population in this category. At the high end, the percentage of Asian Americans with graduate or professional degrees was more than double that of the total population and was considerably larger than that of any group. Indeed, one out of two Asian Americans had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Furthermore, while a slightly higher percentage of Asian Americans compared to the total population had a bachelor's degree, the percentage of Asian Americans whose highest level of educational attainment was graduating from high school, 13.8%, was nearly half that of the total population and was by far the lowest percentage of any group.

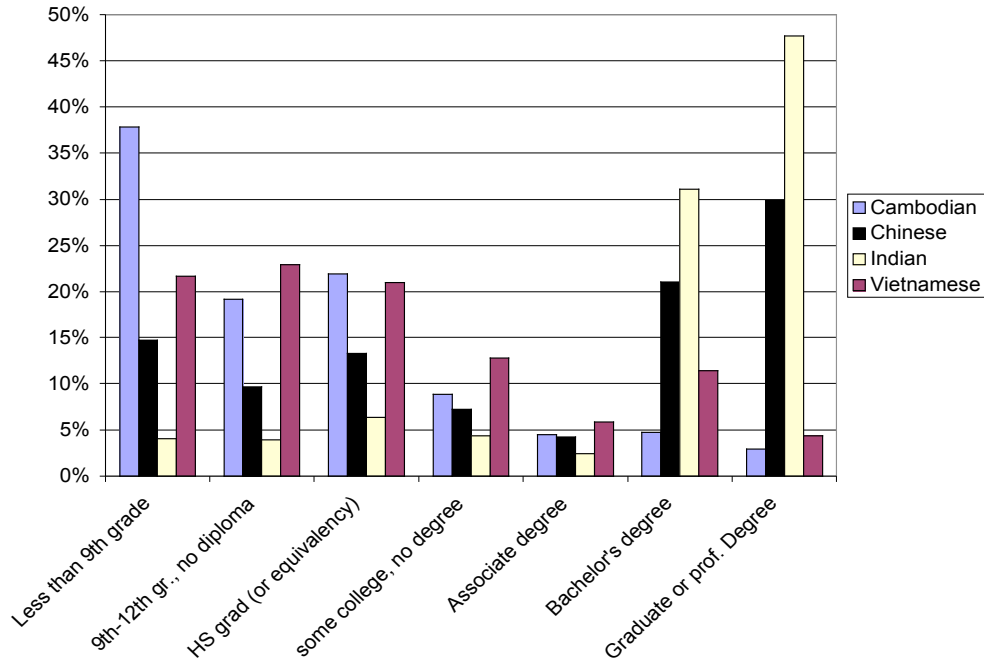
Figure 9. Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Older for Asian Americans and Total Population



It is especially important to move beyond data on Asian American educational attainment as a group and instead examine individually specific subgroups. For example, in looking at the four largest Asian ethnic groups - Indians, Chinese, Cambodians, and Vietnamese, we found several notable differences (Figure 10 and Table A-6). Cambodians had considerably lower levels of educational attainment than Indians who had remarkably high levels of attainment. Nearly 40% of Cambodians had less than a ninth grade education compared to 4% of Indians, while 47.7% of Indians had a graduate or professional degree compared to just below 2.9% of Cambodians. The pattern of

Chinese attainment most closely resembled that of Indians, while the pattern for Vietnamese somewhat followed that of the Cambodians.

Figure 10. Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Older for Selected Asian Subgroups



Housing: Household Size, Tenure, and Rent

Asian American households were second only to Latinos in their average size (Table 18). All of the non-white racial groups and Latinos had average household sizes larger than those of whites and the total population.

Among Asian subgroups, Hmong households with 6.5 members were by far the largest (Table 19). The Cambodians, Laotians, Vietnamese, and Pakistanis also had average household sizes greater than the Asian American average. The Japanese at 2 had the smallest average household size.

Table 18. Average Household Size by Race and Latino Origin

Asian Am.	White	Black or Afr. Am.	Nat. Am.	Latino	TOTAL POP
3.0	2.5	2.7	2.7	3.2	2.5

Table 19. Average Household Size by Asian Subgroup

Cambodian	Chinese	Filipino	Hmong	Indian	Japanese
4.6	2.9	2.7	6.5	2.7	2.0
Korean	Laotian	Pakistani	Thai	Vietnamese	
2.4	4.4	3.8	2.3	3.9	

While a majority of whites lived in owner occupied households, the majority of Asian Americans, Blacks or African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans lived in households where rents were paid (Figure 11). The Asian American owner occupancy rate was higher than that of Blacks or African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos but about one-third less than that of the total population and of whites.

Figure 11. Tenure by Race and Latino Origin

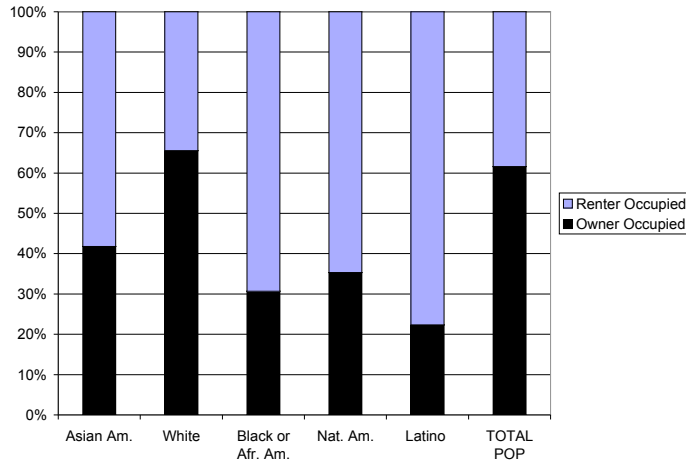
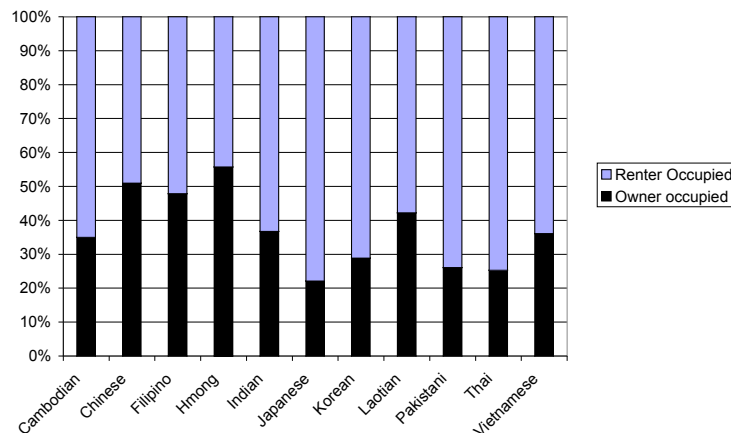


Figure 12. Tenure by Asian Subgroup



Of the Asian subgroups, the Hmong had the highest owner occupancy rate and the Japanese the lowest (Figure 12). It is not readily apparent from the data why the Hmong have such a high rate. The concentration of Hmong in cities such as Fitchburg with relatively low home values may account for the high ownership rate. For some groups such as the Japanese, Koreans, and Thais, the relatively low owner occupancy rates might be a reflective of their high college student populations.

Asian Americans, according to Table 20, paid the highest median gross rents of any group. The median gross rent for the total population, for example, was \$711 while for Asian Americans the figure was \$855. For whites the figure was \$717, for Blacks or African Americans \$673, and for Latinos \$623.

There were several differences as well among Asian ethnic groups in the median gross rents they paid (Table 21). The Japanese at \$1,092 paid the highest rents. Koreans, Indians, Pakistanis, Filipinos, and Thais also had median gross rents over \$800. The gross rents for other Asian subgroups were less than \$800 with the Hmong having paid the least at \$587.

Table 20. Median Gross Rent by Race and Latino Origin

Asian Am.	White	Black or Afr. Am.	Nat. Am.	Latino	TOTAL POP
\$855	\$717	\$673	\$617	\$623	\$711

Table 21. Median Gross Rent by Asian Subgroup

Cambodian	Chinese	Filipino	Hmong	Indian	Japanese
\$613	\$793	\$865	\$587	\$977	\$1,092

Korean	Laotian	Pakistani	Thai	Vietnamese
\$990	\$654	\$922	\$853	\$701

Conclusion

The themes of growth, diversity, and the attendant complexity that accompanies rapid change have been amply chronicled in the data presented here on Asian Americans in Metro Boston. On virtually every variable - size, growth, location, age, nativity, citizenship, English language proficiency, income, poverty rate, employment status, occupation, educational attainment, and housing – there are significant differences both between Asian Americans and certain other racial groups and also among the specific Asian groups that constitute the Asian American population.

This report, of course, should by no means be regarded as a final and comprehensive account of the socio-economic and demographic situation of Asian Americans. Indeed, any picture of the Asian American community can only capture a moment in a dynamic landscape. As we mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the tendency historically has been to depict Asian Americans simply and stereotypically resulting in attitudes, assumptions, and policies that often have been detrimental to them.

One lesson, therefore, is clear. Fresh and comprehensive information and analysis on the Asian American community and the resources needed to carry out these tasks are crucial in better understanding and fashioning policies that enhance the lives of Asian Americans and their neighbors who call Metro Boston home.

Appendix

Table A-1. Age and Sex for Asian Americans*

Years	Male		Female	
0-4	8,130	3.6%	8,274	3.7%
5-17	20,117	9.0%	19,336	8.7%
18-24	14,692	6.6%	16,611	7.4%
25-34	25,622	11.5%	25,728	11.5%
35-44	18,422	8.2%	18,183	8.1%
45-54	11,482	5.1%	12,252	5.5%
55-64	6,176	2.8%	6,355	2.8%
65-74	3,608	1.6%	4,116	1.8%
75+	1,776	0.8%	2,544	1.1%
Total	110,025	49.2%	113,399	50.8%

*Column percentages refer to percentages of total Asian American population.

Data Set: U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 2 (STF 2) 100% Data

Table A-2. Age and Sex by Asian Subgroups

Years	Cambodian				Chinese				Filipino			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
0-4	962	5.1%	838	4.4%	2,437	3.0%	2,993	3.7%	165	2.2%	141	1.9%
5-17	3,298	17.5%	3,076	16.3%	6,211	7.7%	6,013	7.5%	524	7.1%	485	6.5%
18-24	1,132	6.0%	1,146	6.1%	4,578	5.7%	5,109	6.3%	519	7.0%	582	7.8%
25-34	1,476	7.8%	1,459	7.7%	7,415	9.2%	8,119	10.1%	667	9.0%	1,045	14.1%
35-44	1,162	6.2%	1,343	7.1%	7,473	9.3%	7,713	9.6%	496	6.7%	898	12.1%
45-54	759	4.0%	849	4.5%	4,993	6.2%	5,219	6.5%	317	4.3%	591	8.0%
55-64	342	1.8%	449	2.4%	2,523	3.1%	2,680	3.3%	201	2.7%	361	4.9%
65-74	178	0.9%	230	1.2%	2,074	2.6%	2,235	2.8%	125	1.7%	169	2.3%
75+	65	0.3%	126	0.7%	1,202	1.5%	1,636	2.0%	45	0.6%	84	1.1%
Total	9,374	49.6%	9,516	50.4%	38,906	48.3%	41,717	51.7%	3,059	41.3%	4,356	58.7%

Years	Hmong				Indian				Japanese			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
0-4	60	5.8%	70	6.7%	1,706	4.1%	1,591	3.9%	261	2.7%	275	2.8%
5-17	217	20.9%	236	22.7%	2,802	6.8%	2,669	6.5%	421	4.3%	415	4.3%
18-24	65	6.3%	67	6.5%	3,115	7.6%	3,189	7.7%	719	7.4%	1,239	12.8%
25-34	72	6.9%	72	6.9%	7,288	17.7%	5,730	13.9%	1,163	12.0%	1,597	16.5%
35-44	47	4.5%	52	5.0%	3,462	8.4%	2,607	6.3%	929	9.6%	987	10.2%
45-54	26	2.5%	17	1.6%	1,945	4.7%	1,699	4.1%	345	3.6%	415	4.3%
55-64	7	0.7%	11	1.1%	1,251	3.0%	910	2.2%	138	1.4%	289	3.0%
65-74	4	0.4%	7	0.7%	453	1.1%	419	1.0%	68	0.7%	307	3.2%
75+	3	0.3%	5	0.5%	184	0.4%	220	0.5%	43	0.4%	88	0.9%
Total	501	48.3%	537	51.7%	22,206	53.8%	19,034	46.2%	4,087	42.1%	5,612	57.9%

Years	Korean				Laotian				Pakistani			
	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female	
0-4	554	3.5%	498	3.2%	135	3.8%	114	3.2%	125	6.9%	75	4.1%
5-17	1,298	8.3%	1,327	8.5%	469	13.1%	470	13.1%	166	9.1%	160	8.8%
18-24	1,368	8.8%	1,901	12.2%	267	7.5%	263	7.4%	144	7.9%	141	7.7%
25-34	2,047	13.1%	2,371	15.2%	316	8.8%	333	9.3%	218	12.0%	187	10.3%
35-44	847	5.4%	1,104	7.1%	356	10.0%	300	8.4%	212	11.6%	115	6.3%
45-54	439	2.8%	705	4.5%	189	5.3%	141	3.9%	101	5.5%	65	3.6%
55-64	317	2.0%	396	2.5%	67	1.9%	63	1.8%	45	2.5%	35	1.9%
65-74	115	0.7%	166	1.1%	38	1.1%	34	1.0%	12	0.7%	15	0.8%
75+	43	0.3%	119	0.8%	7	0.2%	14	0.4%	4	0.2%	1	0.1%
Total	7,028	45.0%	8,587	55.0%	1,844	51.6%	1,732	48.4%	1,027	56.4%	794	43.6%

Years	Thai				Vietnamese			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
0-4	39	2.0%	26	1.3%	1,238	3.9%	1,208	3.8%
5-17	102	5.2%	76	3.9%	3,586	11.4%	3,398	10.8%
18-24	223	11.3%	220	11.2%	1,717	5.4%	1,835	5.8%
25-34	257	13.1%	275	14.0%	3,606	11.4%	3,473	11.0%
35-44	125	6.3%	227	11.5%	2,534	8.0%	2,144	6.8%
45-54	99	5.0%	167	8.5%	1,819	5.8%	1,940	6.2%
55-64	34	1.7%	66	3.4%	1,040	3.3%	909	2.9%
65-74	7	0.4%	13	0.7%	407	1.3%	385	1.2%
75+	5	0.3%	8	0.4%	115	0.4%	157	0.5%
Total	891	45.3%	1,078	54.7%	16,062	51.0%	15,449	49.0%

Data Set: U.S. Census 2000 Summary File 2 (STF 2) 100% Data

Table A-3. College or Graduate School Enrollment for the Population 15 Years and Over for Asian American Subgroups

Cambodian	7.9%
Chinese	18.9%
Filipino	18.5%
Hmong	11.1%
Indian	19.5%
Japanese	34.3%
Korean	33.4%
Laotian	5.7%
Pakastani	19.7%
Thai	29.5%
Vietnamese	14.1%
Total Asian Am.	19.5%
Total Pop.	9.3%

Table A-4. Labor Force Attachment for the Population 16 Years and Older by Sex, Race, and Latino Origin

	Asian Am.	White	Black /Afr. Am.	Nat.Am.	Latino	TOTAL POP
Males	84,405	1,682,810	97,665	4,460	114,427	1,975,507
In Labor Force	59,201	1,250,937	62,777	2,822	73,444	1,447,135
In Armed Forces	22	2,631	192	34	200	3,000
Civilian Employed	56,399	1,198,876	56,160	2,581	66,360	1,378,262
Civilian Unemployed	2,780	49,430	6,425	207	6,884	65,873
Not in Labor Force	25,204	431,873	34,888	1,638	40,983	528,372
Male Unempl. Rate*	4.7%	4.0%	10.3%	7.4%	9.4%	4.6%
Participation Rate**	70.1%	74.3%	64.2%	63.0%	64.1%	73.2%
Females	89,865	1,870,982	110,879	4,604	121,934	2,190,426
In Labor Force	52,237	1,145,771	67,332	2,586	68,508	1,334,698
In Armed Forces	11	559	132	10	35	761
Civilian Employed	49,232	1,104,241	61,297	2,327	61,652	1,276,947
Civilian Unemployed	2,994	40,971	5,903	249	6,821	56,990
Not in Labor Force	37,628	725,211	43,547	2,018	53,426	855,728
Female Unempl. Rate*	5.7%	3.6%	8.8%	9.7%	10.0%	4.3%
Participation Rate**	58.1%	61.2%	60.7%	56.1%	56.2%	60.9%

* Unemployment Rate = (Civilian Unemployed) / (Civilian Employed + Civilian Unemployed)

** Participation Rate = (Civilian Employed + Civilian Unemployed) / (Civilian Employed + Civilian Unemployed + Not in labor Force)

Table A-5. Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Older by Race and Latino Origin

	Asian Am.	White	Black or Afr. Am.	Nat.Am.	Latino	TOTAL POP
Less than 9th grade	18,564	148,384	12,366	901	39,308	212,855
	13.5%	4.8%	7.4%	12.3%	22.5%	6.0%
9th-12th gr., no diploma	14,116	259,332	27,400	1,164	34,281	331,858
	10.3%	8.4%	16.4%	15.9%	19.6%	9.3%
HS grad (or equivalency)	19,019	837,621	47,449	1,860	42,764	948,376
	13.8%	27.2%	28.3%	25.4%	24.5%	26.6%
Some college, no degree	10,945	523,351	34,116	1,376	24,363	594,204
	8.0%	17.0%	20.4%	18.8%	13.9%	16.7%
Associate degree	5,970	223,137	12,450	548	7,840	250,089
	4.3%	7.2%	7.4%	7.5%	4.5%	7.0%
Bachelor's degree	31,455	649,825	20,948	858	14,761	718,282
	22.9%	21.1%	12.5%	11.7%	8.4%	20.2%
Graduate or Prof. Degree	37,424	443,081	12,778	616	11,543	503,337
	27.2%	14.4%	7.6%	8.4%	6.6%	14.1%
TOTAL	137,493	3,084,731	167,507	7,323	174,860	3,559,001

Table A-6. Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Older by Selected Asian Subgroups

	Cambodian	Chinese	Indian	Vietnamese
Less than 9th grade	3,375	7,854	1,026	4,084
	37.9%	14.7%	4.0%	21.7%
9th-12th gr., no diploma	1,710	5,173	1,006	4,315
	19.2%	9.7%	3.9%	22.9%
HS grad (or equivalency)	1,958	7,089	1,612	3,947
	22.0%	13.3%	6.3%	21.0%
Some college, no degree	790	3,850	1,123	2,411
	8.9%	7.2%	4.4%	12.8%
Associate degree	401	2,274	628	1,105
	4.5%	4.3%	2.5%	5.9%
Bachelor's degree	421	11,230	7,934	2,145
	4.7%	21.0%	31.1%	11.4%
Graduate or prof. Degree	261	15,930	12,160	820
	2.9%	29.8%	47.7%	4.4%
TOTAL	8,916	53,400	25,489	18,827