



FINAL REPORT

A Practical Approach to Disaggregating Data on Asian Americans







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NORC at the University of Chicago | APIAHF Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum | Stop AAPI Hate

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Overview

Data on Asian Americans are often presented as a single, aggregated category, obscuring the wide range of experiences and well-being outcomes across communities. This can limit the ability of researchers, analysts, and practitioners to identify variation in outcomes and where differences are most pronounced.

This report presents practical, evidence-based methodological guidance for disaggregating data on Asian Americans in ways that more clearly reflect differences in well-being within the population. Developed by NORC at the University of Chicago in partnership with the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum and Stop AAPI Hate, with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the guidance introduces an approach to mid-level disaggregation that balances analytic depth with real-world circumstances.

A Practical Approach to Disaggregating Data on Asian Americans

At the center of this guidance is a mid-level approach to disaggregating data on Asian American populations. While disaggregation at the most detailed level possible—such as by country of origin or ethnicity—is ideal, this is not always feasible due to sample size, resource constraints, or confidentiality considerations. This approach offers a practical alternative by grouping communities based on factors linked to well-being, creating categories that can identify meaningful differences while remaining usable across a range of data contexts.

In this approach, Asian country-of-origin and ethnic subgroups are grouped into five mid-level categories based on similar historical migration patterns and socioeconomic conditions, with geographic region incorporated to support interpretation and usability. The table below presents the categories and the factors used to organize them.

Table 1. Disaggregation Categories and Their Organizing Factors

Categories & Subgroups[a]	Organizing Factors (for additional reference)[b]
Bangladeshi, Kazakh, Mongolian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Uzbek	• Overall historical reasons for migrating were for non-professional employment,[c] better economic opportunities, or family reunification and are primarily Central and South Asian • Lower to medium average socioeconomic status[d]
Filipino, Indonesian, Thai	• Overall historical reasons for migrating were for non-professional employment, better economic opportunities, or family reunification and are primarily Southeast Asian • Lower to medium average socioeconomic status
Chinese, Japanese, Korean	• Overall historical reasons for migrating were for non-professional employment, better economic opportunities, or family reunification and are primarily East Asian • Wide range of socioeconomic status
Afghan, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, Mekong-area ethnicities (e.g., Mien), Vietnamese	• Overall historical reason for migrating was via refugee pathways and are primarily South and Southeast Asian • Lower average socioeconomic status
Indian, Malaysian, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese	• Overall historical reasons for migrating were for professional employment[e] or educational opportunities • Higher average socioeconomic status

[a] The above list of Asian subgroups is not comprehensive. These categories were informed by available data in the formative research. See Key Point #2, Step 2 below for guidance on incorporating additional subgroups.

[b] The table above lists factors that can inform the classification of subgroups into categories, rather than defining specific values. Data users should set appropriate ranges or criteria to define each factor (e.g., socioeconomic status), based on their sample population and context.

[c] Non-professional employment refers to jobs that do not require a four-year degree, though they may still require training or experience.

[d] Key indicators of socioeconomic status include income, employment and occupation, and educational attainment.

[e] Professional employment refers to jobs that generally require a bachelor's degree or higher.

These categories offer a practical way to detect variation that may not be apparent in aggregated data, while maintaining sufficient sample sizes for analysis.

The project team developed these categories through a mixed-methods research process that integrated qualitative cultural and historical analysis, quantitative data analysis, and extensive community engagement. We triangulated findings from these activities along with key findings from the Improving Asian Classification Typologies (ImpACT) project—conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research under the Data Equity Center to understand public perspectives on how Asian American subgroups are defined, measured, and classified in federal data standards—to identify patterns across Asian country-of-origin and ethnic subgroups in factors shaping well-being. The result is an evidence-informed categorization structure that reflects both empirical data and community perspectives.

Applying the categories. The report outlines three key points for data users:

- **Disaggregate to the most detailed level possible.** When data allow, analyses at the level of specific Asian country-of-origin or ethnic subgroup can support detailed understanding of well-

being across communities. Further disaggregation by factors such as income, generational status, and English proficiency can provide additional insight into variation within communities.

- **Consider using this project's mid-level categories to analyze well-being data.** The categories can help identify differences among communities when more detailed disaggregation is not feasible. Step-by-step guidance on applying the categories can be found in the full report.
- **Consider adapting the categories or using different ones to fit the context and purpose of the analysis.** No single categorization can capture the full heterogeneity within Asian American communities. Consider the goals of each analysis, the characteristics of the sample population, and the factors most relevant to the outcome of interest—as well as the impact on comparability across studies—when applying or adapting the categories.

Taken together, these key points provide a structured yet flexible approach for working with data on Asian Americans. The approach is intended to complement, rather than replace, existing methods for disaggregation and can be used alongside existing approaches such as federal standards. At the same time, while categories can be adapted to suit specific analyses, doing so may affect comparability across studies. Data users should thoughtfully weigh the benefits of customization against the potential loss of comparability—including how disaggregation decisions affect the ability to bridge to past data and support future data collection—and clearly document how these decisions were made.

Conclusion and Implications for the Future

This project advances ongoing efforts to improve how data on Asian Americans are collected and analyzed by expanding the set of analytic methods available to data users. It offers a practical methodological tool to support researchers, analysts, and practitioners in examining patterns and differences in outcomes and experiences across Asian American communities.

While this guidance is grounded in rigorous research and community input, it is not intended to be a definitive solution. Taking into account data limitations, evolving community contexts, and varying analytic goals, this approach would benefit from continued testing and refinement over time. This includes validating the approach, exploring how it can better reflect underrepresented and complex identities, and assessing its application across different data contexts.

We hope that users will build on this approach, share lessons learned, and develop new methods. Together, these efforts can strengthen the evidence base and advance the broader goal of producing data that represent the range of Asian American communities.

Introduction

Background

All too often, narratives about Asian Americans paint a monolithic experience—ignoring the vastly different cultural norms, traditions, histories, languages, and experiences of the dozens of communities included under the term 'Asian American.' In addition, sociopolitical events and historical policies that influence where people of Asian descent could live, work, or participate in society affect Asian American communities in different ways. Despite these distinctions, data structures still frequently use a single 'Asian' or 'Asian American' category, obscuring important differences and disparities among Asian American communities.

Disaggregated data can provide a more detailed view of Asian American communities and their well-being. Larger federal and state surveys provide disaggregated data for the six largest country-of-origin or ethnic subgroups, but most studies lack detailed data on smaller subgroups. When data for smaller subgroups are combined into an 'other Asian' category due to small sample size, each subgroup's unique outcomes and experiences, as well as differences between communities, are less noticeable in the aggregated data. For example, in 2023, 12 percent of Asian Americans were living in an overcrowded house.[1] Looking deeper among Southeast Asian communities, this figure ranged from 8 percent among Thai Americans and 13 percent among Vietnamese Americans to 33 percent among Burmese Americans. This illustrates both the range within 'Asian American' and that key differences are less apparent even at the next level of disaggregation (geographic region).

Project Purpose and Overview

This project aimed to develop evidence-based guidance for the disaggregation of data to better examine the substantial heterogeneity within the Asian American population.[i]

From April 2025 to June 2026, a team from NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC), the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF), and Stop AAPI Hate (SAH) led a three-pronged, mixed-methods research strategy to ground and inform the guidance, combining: 1) secondary qualitative cultural and historical analysis, 2) secondary quantitative data analysis, and 3) primary input from community members.

[i] For this project, we define "Asian American" as an individual in the U.S. who self-identifies as Asian. This includes an individual who identifies as Asian only or in combination with other races; and an individual who was born in the U.S. or immigrated to the U.S. For example, an individual who lives in the U.S. may have ancestors who are of Asian descent and formerly lived in the Caribbean. This individual may self-identify in a number of ways, including as Asian American.

The cultural and historical analysis consisted of a literature scan and thematic analysis of peer-reviewed and gray literature to assess patterns in sociocultural and historical factors across Asian country-of-origin or ethnic subgroups. Using the 2019–2023 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata, the team also conducted stratified sampling and quantitative analyses—including weighted descriptive statistics and latent class analysis—to identify patterns in well-being across Asian subgroups[ii] on indicators of education, income, housing, and health. To ensure the guidance would be rooted in lived experience, the team conducted a community listening tour across the U.S. with Asian American community members and researchers and practitioners who work with data on Asian Americans.

Insights from all three methods, as well as key findings from the Improving Asian Classification Typologies (ImpACT) project—conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research under the Data Equity Center to understand public perspectives on how Asian American subgroups are defined, measured, and classified in federal data standards—were triangulated to identify consistent patterns and iteratively develop and refine the proposed categorization structure. The project team collaborated with an advisory panel from the outset to help ensure the work balanced empirical evidence with community-informed perspectives.

The following report presents methodological guidance developed through this research effort. It is intended to offer one approach for analyzing well-being data and does not prescribe or evaluate classification systems or policy decisions. Its applicability depends on context, data availability, and analytic objectives, and users should consider relevant requirements, constraints, and standards when applying or adapting the guidance.

Navigating This Report

This report outlines guidance for disaggregating data on Asian Americans. It provides practical methodological guidance for data users (e.g., researchers, analysts, practitioners), so they can collect, analyze, and use data in ways that capture the range of outcomes and experiences among Asian American communities.

Accordingly, this report is organized into three sections:

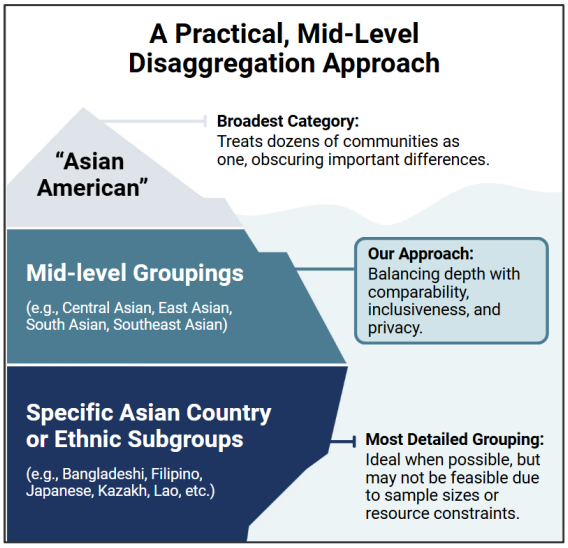
1. **The core guidance** contains principles underpinning the approach, the categorization structure central to the approach, and key points for disaggregation.
2. **Supporting material** for putting the guidance into practice, including tips and considerations, illustrative use cases, illustrative examples, and areas for future research.
3. **Appendices** containing additional detail on the research design, methods, and key findings that informed the guidance.

[ii] Throughout this report, we use the terms “Asian country-of-origin or ethnic subgroup,” “Asian country or ethnic subgroup,” and “Asian subgroup” interchangeably.

Disaggregation Guidance

Below we present an approach for disaggregating data on Asian Americans that aims to support more detailed analysis of differences in well-being across communities. We begin by outlining key principles for understanding and applying the disaggregation approach. Then, we provide a disaggregation categorization structure and key points for applying it.

Guiding Principles



The purpose of this guidance is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the range of experiences and well-being outcomes among communities within the broader Asian American population. Traditional approaches to data analysis often rely on highly aggregated categories (i.e., "Asian American"), in which differences between communities are more difficult to discern. Highly detailed disaggregation, while ideal, is not always feasible due to resource constraints or data limitations.

This project introduces a **practical approach to mid-level data disaggregation** that balances analytic depth with real-world constraints. It is grounded in the need to enable a deeper understanding of Asian American populations without sacrificing the inclusion of smaller or underrepresented communities, whose experiences are often not well captured in more aggregated categories. We therefore designed the approach to support statistical reliability and comparability across various datasets, while also reducing disclosure risks when working with smaller populations.

Several key principles underpin the development and use of this disaggregation approach:



This project's categories are intended for use with data on well-being outcomes. Our suggested categories are not intended to define, redefine, or replace how individuals describe their own identities. Instead, this approach provides a useful structure to identify meaningful patterns in well-being among Asian American populations. Communities' well-being is shaped by many factors (e.g., migration history, patterns of settlement in the U.S., cultural values, access to services, financial stability), which we have incorporated into our approach. By organizing these factors in a structured way, the guidance helps data users to identify patterns and insights about well-being—particularly related to health, education, housing, and income—that might otherwise be less apparent.

This approach complements, rather than replaces, existing approaches. Asian Americans' experiences and identities cannot be neatly divided into distinct categories. Given the wide variation in migration histories, cultures, languages, and socioeconomic conditions, no single approach can entirely capture the heterogeneity within and across communities. This project recognizes that no one model can meet all analytic and community needs; rather than proposing a universal solution, our approach is designed to work alongside other approaches. For example, they can be used alongside federal standards by adding another layer in addition to—not instead of—the broad "Asian" category. We anticipate that for mid-level disaggregation, data users would likely choose between this project's categories and commonly used geographic regional groupings (e.g., South Asian), depending on their analytic purpose and sample population. For studies where factors such as self-identification and geography play key roles in determining the outcome, disaggregating by regional grouping may be more informative. For studies focused on well-being outcomes, particularly those shaped by socioeconomic context, migration histories, and related factors, this project's categories can provide an additional lens to understand variation among Asian American populations.

Our guidance centers comparability while allowing for flexibility. While we recommend adapting the categories to suit a particular study, custom categories may make it difficult to compare findings across studies. Data users should weigh the benefits of customization against the potential loss of comparability, including how disaggregation decisions affect the ability to bridge to past data and support future data collection. To support cross study comparison, we encourage users to clearly document disaggregation decisions and explain how the approach used differs from other approaches.

This project focused on understanding differences within the Asian American population, rather than between Asian Americans and other racial or ethnic groups (including Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities). By grouping communities based on shared factors that influence well-being, this guidance provides a practical methodological tool to generate meaningful insights while remaining feasible for many uses.

Mid-Level Disaggregation Categories

It is not always practicable to disaggregate by individual Asian country or ethnic subgroup. Perhaps a dataset includes a small number of a particular subgroup, such that breaking out that subgroup into its own category would not support analysis or would pose a risk to participant confidentiality; or there are limited resources to conduct data collection and analysis. This does not mean that disaggregation is not possible, but that a mid-level approach may be more appropriate.

Our approach builds on commonly used categorizations—which often rely on geographic region—by incorporating factors that are empirically and contextually linked to differences in four areas of well-being: health, housing, income and wealth, and education. Specifically, we developed the categories according to the following organizing factors:

Historical reasons for migrating to the US, overall (primary factor). Migration histories vary widely across and within Asian American communities and cannot be easily captured in a categorization structure. At the same time, our research identified meaningful similarities in why some subgroups migrated to the U.S. and, to some extent, when they migrated for these reasons. These patterns are shaped in part by broader sociopolitical events and U.S. immigration policies in place during specific historical periods, which influenced migration opportunities and pathways for different groups. Across communities, common reasons for migration include the pursuit of economic opportunities, family reunification, and forced migration or refugee resettlement. These historically rooted migration pathways shape not only the timing of immigration, but also the economic and sociopolitical conditions individuals faced upon arrival in the U.S., including employment options and access to resources and services.

Average socioeconomic status (SES; primary factor). SES also varies within each Asian country or ethnic subgroup, particularly for the largest subgroups who have a longer history in the U.S. Nevertheless, indicators of SES—particularly income levels, levels of educational attainment, and occupation types—can be associated with differences in well-being at an intermediate level of disaggregation. In our research, we found patterns of similarities in these three SES variables among clusters of Asian subgroups.

Geographic regional grouping (secondary factor). Many Asian Americans primarily identify by specific country of origin or ethnicity. However, throughout our research, geographic regional grouping—i.e., Central Asian, East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian—also surfaced as playing a role in how Asian American individuals identify themselves and their communities, as well as capturing important similarities in cultural factors, language, religion, and experiences of belonging and discrimination.

Table 1 below presents the disaggregation categories and the organizing factors for each category.

Table 1. Disaggregation Categories and Their Organizing Factors

Categories & Subgroups[a]	Organizing Factors (for additional reference)[b]
Bangladeshi, Kazakh, Mongolian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Uzbek	• Overall historical reasons for migrating were for non-professional employment,[c] better economic opportunities, or family reunification and are primarily Central and South Asian • Lower to medium average socioeconomic status[d]
Filipino, Indonesian, Thai	• Overall historical reasons for migrating were for non-professional employment, better economic opportunities, or family reunification and are primarily Southeast Asian • Lower to medium average socioeconomic status
Chinese, Japanese, Korean	• Overall historical reasons for migrating were for non-professional employment, better economic opportunities, or family reunification and are primarily East Asian • Wide range of socioeconomic status

Categories & Subgroups[a]	Organizing Factors (for additional reference)[b]
Afghan, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, Mekong-area ethnicities (e.g., Mien), Vietnamese	• Overall historical reason for migrating was via refugee pathways and are primarily South and Southeast Asian • Lower average socioeconomic status
Indian, Malaysian, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese	• Overall historical reasons for migrating were for professional employment[e] or educational opportunities • Higher average socioeconomic status

[a] The above list of Asian subgroups is not comprehensive. These categories were informed by available data in the formative research. See Key Point #2, Step 2 below for guidance on incorporating additional subgroups.

[b] The table above lists factors that can inform the classification of subgroups into categories, rather than defining specific values. Data users should set appropriate ranges or criteria to define each factor (e.g., socioeconomic status), based on their sample population and context.

[c] Non-professional employment refers to jobs that do not require a four-year degree, though they may still require training or experience.

[d] Key indicators of socioeconomic status include income, employment and occupation, and educational attainment.

[e] Professional employment refers to jobs that generally require a bachelor's degree or higher.

How these categories were developed

This categorization structure is the result of an iterative process of findings triangulation, category development, and refinement. Below we summarize this process; please see Appendix E for additional detail.

The project team triangulated findings from qualitative cultural and historical analysis, quantitative data analysis, community perspectives from listening sessions, and key themes from the ImpACT project. While no single, definitive set of groupings emerged, areas of alignment across these sources pointed to consistent and interpretable ways to organize subgroup differences. In particular, there were patterns in the Asian country or ethnic subgroups that shared similar historical migration reasons and those that shared similar place of birth, citizenship status, and socioeconomic characteristics.

The categories were informed by both evidence and practical considerations. Because data on place of birth and citizenship are not always available or may be sensitive to collect, historical migration patterns and socioeconomic status were selected as the primary organizing dimensions for the categorization structure. Taking into account cultural and historical analysis findings and community input, including from the ImpACT project, geographic regional grouping was added as a secondary organizing factor to enhance usability and align with how many community members identify. In addition, an initial four-category structure was revised to a five-category structure in response to community feedback that the structure needed to reflect important cultural and historical distinctions.

Finally, the project team conducted additional quantitative analyses on four well-being indicators and confirmed that disaggregating data by these categories showed meaningful differences among Asian American communities for the selected indicators. Community input was also key to shaping the approach presented in the next sections of this document, to support users in applying the guidance and adapting it as needed.

Key Points for Disaggregation

Building on the disaggregation categories and organizing factors described above, this section presents key points for approaching disaggregation of well-being data among Asian Americans, including steps for applying the categories. An at-a-glance summary is provided below, followed by more detailed discussion of each key point.

KEY POINTS AT A GLANCE

1. Disaggregate to the most detailed level possible.
2. For mid-level disaggregation of well-being data, consider using this project's categories.
3. Consider adapting the categories or using different ones to better fit the analysis context and purpose.

KEY POINT #1

Disaggregate to the most detailed level possible.

Disaggregation enables examination of patterns and variation that may not be apparent in aggregate data. Therefore, disaggregating data to the greatest extent possible—**ideally, by specific country-of-origin or ethnic subgroup**—enables detailed understanding of variation in well-being across Asian American communities. For example, rather than analyzing data on Southeast Asian Americans as one category, go further and break out Cambodian, Hmong, and so forth, into individual categories. Where feasible, this can provide insight into each community's specific outcomes and experiences.

If sufficient data are available, data users may further disaggregate within each Asian country or ethnic subgroup by income, immigrant generational status, and/or degree of English proficiency. Our research found that these factors strongly influence the well-being of Asian Americans, broadly, and vary widely within specific Asian country or ethnic subgroups. Additional guidance on applying these variables can be found in Key Point #2, Step 4.

KEY POINT #2

For mid-level disaggregation of well-being data, consider using this project's categories.

This point contains multiple steps. An at-a-glance summary of the steps is provided below, followed by more detailed discussion of each step.

STEPS TO APPLY CATEGORIES: AT A GLANCE

1. If you have data by detailed Asian country or ethnic subgroup, combine their data into the categories described in Table 1.
2. If your dataset includes Asian country or ethnic subgroups not listed, categorize them according to the organizing factors in Table 1.
3. Conduct and report on analyses for each category.
4. Further disaggregate each category when possible.

STEP 1

If you have data by detailed Asian country or ethnic subgroup, combine their data into the categories described in Table 1.

After combining the data, examine the sample sizes for each category. To enable statistically robust analysis, we suggest each category has an N ≥ 100, and preferably N ≥ 125.[iii]

If sample sizes are too small to construct a category at a statistically robust level:

- **Assess whether sufficient sizes would be reached by combining some categories.** Specifically, generate estimates for the measures of interest in your study for the three categories that are characterized by overall historical migration for non-professional employment, economic opportunities, or family reunification. Assess whether any of the estimates for those three categories are similar. If so, would combining the categories with similar outcomes reach sufficient sample size?
- **For longitudinal datasets, explore the feasibility of aggregating data across years.** Does this strategy result in a sample size sufficient to construct the mid-level categories?

If these strategies yield sufficient sample sizes to construct the categories, go to Step 2.

If they do not, disaggregate available data by adjusted household income, immigrant generational status, and/or English language proficiency (see Step 4). If these variables are not available, disaggregate by other variables associated with socioeconomic status (level of educational attainment, occupation type) and/or proxy variables for immigrant generational status (place of birth, year/decade of migration for individuals born outside the U.S.).

[iii] This suggested threshold is based on input from research methodologists and survey experts at the NORC at the University of Chicago and resources from the American Association of Public Opinion Research (https://aapor.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Measuring-Sub-Group-Preferences-508.pdf).

STEP 2

If your dataset includes Asian country or ethnic subgroups not listed, categorize them according to the organizing factors in Table 1.

As described earlier and in Appendix B, the categories were partly informed by an analysis of data from the 2019-2023 ACS, which includes 21 Asian country or ethnic subgroups. Therefore, the categorization structure in Table 1 does not contain an exhaustive list of all Asian countries of origin or ethnicities.

If a dataset includes a subgroup that is not already listed in Table 1, review the organizing factors in the righthand column and determine the category where that subgroup fits best. It is also helpful to engage community leaders or review existing literature (peer-reviewed or gray) to make an informed determination of the best-fit category.

STEP 3

Conduct and report on analyses for each category.

Interpretation. When interpreting findings that use these categories, it is important to recognize that they are designed to reflect shared patterns in factors that influence well-being, rather than to define community identity. As a result, differences observed between categories can be understood as indicating where outcomes or experiences may be more concentrated, while also acknowledging that variation exists within each category and each Asian subgroup. These groupings provide one lens for understanding disparities and are most informative when used alongside community knowledge and, where possible, more detailed subgroup data.

Reporting. Although these categories are for mid-level disaggregation, it is still helpful to show results at the most aggregated level (Asian American, overall) as well as at the mid-level categories. Together, these views provide complementary insights, showing both overall patterns and differences among communities.

In addition, for many of the categories, the Asian country or ethnic subgroups listed in a given category are not typically grouped together in current reporting or narratives. It is important to clearly explain which organizing factors were used to construct the categories for a given analysis. For example, for this project's categories, we may offer the following note:

> **Categories were developed based primarily on empirically observed similarities in well-being outcomes, overall migration histories, and average socioeconomic circumstances, with geography incorporated secondarily to improve interpretability.**

This type of explanation should be customized for each analysis and included in reporting.

STEP 4

Further disaggregate each category when possible.

Conducting additional disaggregation can support more detailed understanding of the range of outcomes across communities. At the same time, users should weigh the impact on comparability with other studies using this project's categories as-is, as well as the goals of the analysis. **Consider the following only as additional analyses after disaggregating data by the mid-level categories, to support comparability of results.**

Analyzing by additional well-being factors. In our research, income, generational status, and English language proficiency emerged as factors in well-being among Asian Americans. Because they can differ widely within communities, additional analysis within each category by these variables enables a more robust understanding of the sample population:



Income (adjusted household income). Although two members of a specific Asian subgroup or category may share the same country of origin, ethnicity, cultural norms, or other characteristics, differences in their income level may lead to differences in their ability to afford stable housing or healthcare. Every subgroup and category contains a spectrum of income levels, although some have wider income disparities than others.[2,3] If conducting additional disaggregation within each category, it is preferable to adjust household income to account for household size. To calculate this, data are needed on household-level income and number of persons in the household that are adults vs. children.



Generational status (immigrant). Individuals from different generations often have different beliefs, experiences, and behaviors that influence their educational attainment, health status, and other indicators of well-being. For example, Asian Americans in the "1.5" generation (people born in another country who immigrated to the U.S. before adulthood) and second generation (people born in the U.S. who have at least one parent born outside the U.S.) may have higher levels of acculturation, integration, and internally driven self-identification than first-generation Asian Americans.[4-8]



Degree of English proficiency. An individual with lower English proficiency may have more difficulty accessing information or services than one from the same ethnicity with higher English proficiency. In addition, English proficiency tends to increase across generations.[6,9] Disaggregating by this factor—along with generational status—can help data users understand differences in language access needs across communities.

Table 2 presents alternative variables if data on primary variables are unavailable.

Table 2. Primary and Alternate Variables for Detailed Disaggregation of Data on Asian Americans

Primary Variable	Alternative Variable (as needed)
Adjusted household income (adjusted for household composition)	• Unadjusted household-level income • Level of educational attainment • Occupation type
Immigrant generational status	• Place of birth (U.S. or outside of U.S.) • If born outside of the U.S., year or decade of migration
English language proficiency	• Survey/interview language[10] • Use of interpreter

Separating large subgroups. In some cases, there may be an additional benefit by separating Asian country or ethnic subgroups with a larger sample size into their own categories. Placing a large subgroup in the same category as smaller subgroups may make outcomes for the smaller subgroups more difficult to discern in the data. Placing large subgroups into their own categories can help mitigate this risk by enabling analytic separation between communities with different outcomes.

The definition of a 'large' subgroup depends on the particular study and the measures under consideration. As a general rule of thumb, to justify placing a large country or ethnic subgroup into its own category, we suggest that:

- A country or ethnic subgroup size has at least 100 and preferably 125 cases to be considered large,[iv] and
- The overall Asian American sample size would include at least 1,000 and preferably 1,250 cases.

Size is only one factor when deciding how to categorize large subgroups. If a large Asian subgroup shares similarities with other subgroups within the same category for an outcome of interest, keeping the subgroups in the same category still provides insight into well-being among the communities in that category. **Separating the large subgroup becomes more important when there is evidence that it differs meaningfully from the others in the category.** In those cases, combining them could make it harder to identify meaningful within-category differences and lead to inaccurate conclusions about the category as a whole.

In situations where one or more Asian country or ethnic subgroups are large enough to be placed into their own category, the resulting categorization structure may be composed of some categories with a single country-of-origin/ethnicity and some categories with a mix of countries-of-origin/ethnicities. When interpreting results of analyses using this categorization structure, consider: *How does an average [single country-of-origin/ethnic subgroup] individual compare to an average member of [multi-subgroup category] with respect to the outcome of interest?*

[iv] See footnote iii.

KEY POINT #3

Consider adapting the categories or using different ones to better fit the analysis context and purpose.

Well-being outcomes are affected by a multitude of factors. For mid-level disaggregation, focus on the primary factors for the specific outcome of interest. For example, shared cultural norms may play a more substantial role in influencing outcomes related to attitudes towards mental health than is reflected in the organizing factors that we prioritized in our categorization approach.

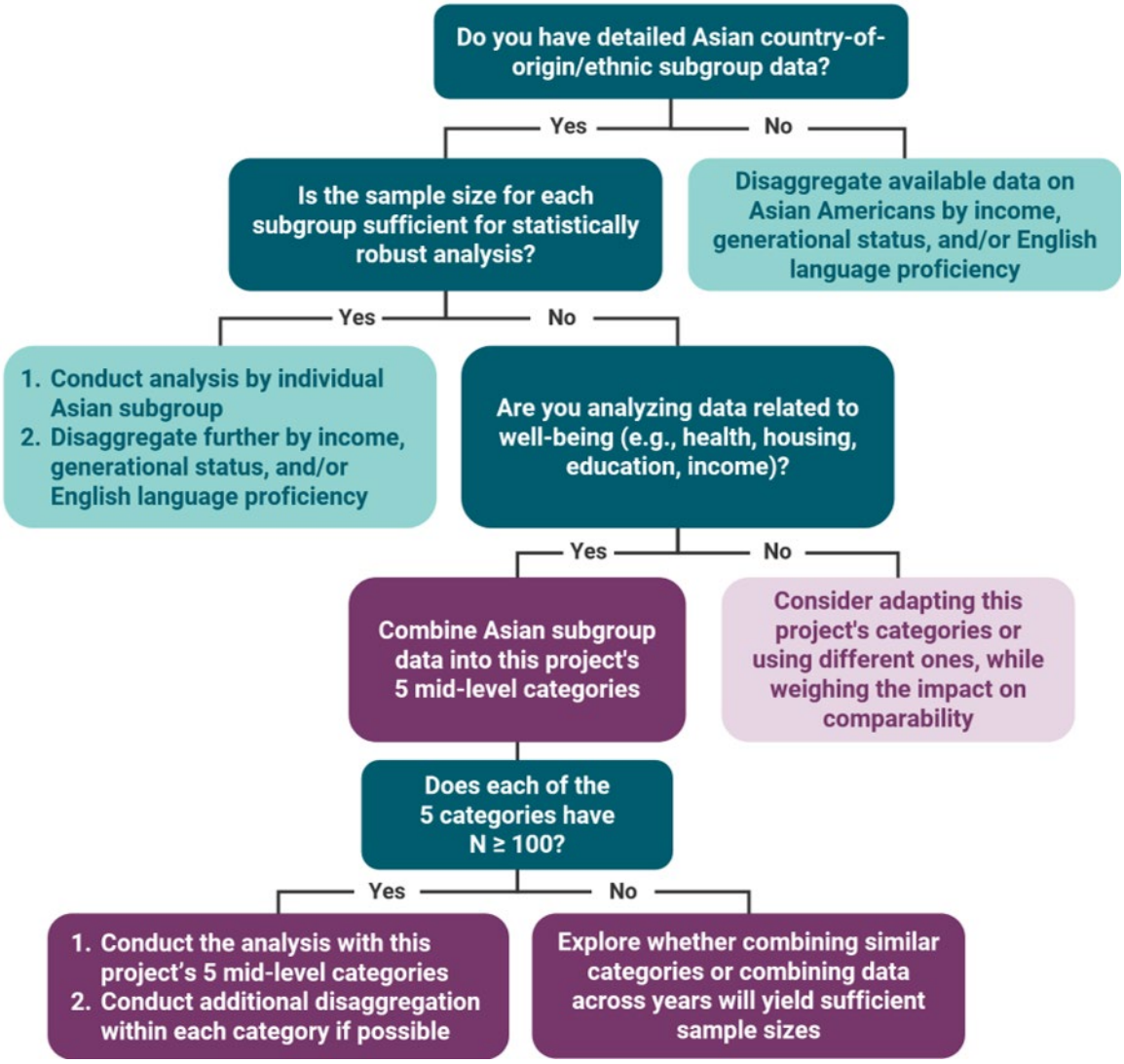
When key factors for the outcome of interest are substantially different from the organizing factors for this project's categories (historical migration patterns and average socioeconomic status), different organizing factors and categories may be needed. The categories can be adapted based on the purpose of a given analysis, the characteristics of the sample population, and real-world circumstances.

At the same time, users should carefully weigh the benefits of customization against the potential loss of comparability across studies. **Consider the following questions when deciding whether adapting this project's categories offers sufficient benefit over using them as-is:**

- What information on the Asian American population is available in the dataset?
  - What level of disaggregation is feasible?
- What are the primary factors that affect the outcome of interest? It is helpful to engage community leaders or review peer-reviewed and gray literature to identify the organizing factors to prioritize.
- Looking at the country or ethnic subgroups within the Asian American sample population, what are their characteristics with respect to the primary factors you have identified?
  - Which subgroups share similar characteristics?

To support users in applying this guidance, Exhibit 1 below presents a decision tree based on the purpose and focus of your analysis and available data.

Exhibit 1. Decision Tree for Disaggregating Data on Asian Americans



Putting the Guidance Into Practice

Tips and Considerations

Below we offer tips and outline considerations to keep in mind when applying this guidance.

Use the categories in service of deeper understanding.

Whether using this project's categories or a different structure, remember that there is always variation within any category. Experiences and support needs vary widely within each category and Asian subgroup, and these differences are best understood by close examination of the data.

When feasible, additional disaggregation helps ensure that communities whose circumstances differ from the overall category remain represented in the analysis. Consider who will use or be affected by the findings, and how further disaggregation can support understanding of their experiences and outcomes. When more detail would help illuminate meaningful differences or inequities, consider conducting additional disaggregation.

Engaging community leaders and members helps identify which categories may be most affected by within-category variation, understand why differences exist, explore implications for the results, and if needed, develop strategies to address them.

Use the organizing factors as a guide, not a rule.

This guidance is intended to provide a starting point to disaggregate data so users can identify meaningful differences in Asian American experiences and well-being. Put another way: the categories are a tool to identify meaningful differences—they are not a universal solution or an end in themselves.

For this reason, users are encouraged not to automatically apply the categories. Instead, users can start with the categories and then consider the specific study or program goals, the characteristics of the sample population, and the accompanying guidance. As noted, it is also important to weigh customization against comparability and explain how disaggregation decisions were made when reporting.

In some cases, users may need to meet specific reporting requirements from a funder, partner, or other agency. Consider whether the categories can be adapted to meet those requirements while still maintaining nuance in the analysis, or whether a different structure is more appropriate.

In addition, as this approach is applied in different contexts, the subgroup assignments for a given category may not exactly match those outlined in this guidance. For example, we expect that the appropriate category assignment for some Asian country or ethnic subgroups may change over time as overall migration patterns or average socioeconomic conditions change.

Plan data collection to enable disaggregated analyses.

Building a more robust evidence base on Asian American populations requires primary data collection strategies that are intentionally designed to be representative and culturally and linguistically appropriate. Below are some considerations to keep in mind.



Representativeness. Selecting a representative sample is key to ensuring the study results accurately characterize the population. Disaggregation of data on Asian American communities has been inconsistent to date, which may mean that many existing datasets only include data on the largest Asian subgroups. Some datasets may include more Asian subgroups but at too small of a size to construct a statistically robust category (e.g., a dataset may include Bangladeshi and Uzbek Americans, but the total is less than 100 for each of these subgroups, our suggested minimum for each category).

When designing a new study, oversample smaller Asian country or ethnic subgroups when feasible to help ensure that those subgroups can be meaningfully included in disaggregated analyses. Oversampling of certain subgroups (drawing them into the sample at a higher proportion than they are in the population) can be useful for ensuring smaller subgroups are represented or that sample size is sufficient for larger subgroups to be included as separate categories.



Methodology. The cultural appropriateness of study methods and procedures is also important. For example, some Asian communities may have cultural beliefs around topics viewed as sensitive or private, discouraging them from sharing their data. In addition, concerns about participating could include fears or mistrust about who has access to the data and fears associated with being asked about citizenship status or immigration-related topics.



Instrument. For more detailed understanding of the Asian American population in your sample, it is helpful to collect data on the key variables listed in Table 3 below. Including these variables in your instrument also ensures you will have the data needed to carry out the disaggregation approach. Alternative options are listed in Table 3 for instances where it is not feasible to collect the suggested variables. However, we recognize that some (such as citizenship status or place of birth) may be difficult to collect due to sensitivity. Engaging community partners can also help identify acceptable alternative variables and outreach strategies.

Table 3. Suggested and Alternative Variables to Include in Primary Data Collection

Variable to Include in Primary Data Collection	Alternative Variable
Detailed Asian subgroup	N/A
Adjusted household income (adjusted for household composition)	Unadjusted household-level income
Generational status	• If born outside the U.S., reason for migration and/or year or decade of migration • Citizenship status
English language proficiency	• Interview language • Use of interpreter
Level of educational attainment	N/A
Occupation type	Employment status
Religion	N/A

In addition, many Asian Americans speak a language other than English. Making questionnaires or discussions available in additional languages is key to ensuring that communities with greater language access needs are included.

Be thoughtful when reporting results.

Typically, data tables or figures present disaggregated results with labels assigned to each category. Because we designed this categorization approach to provide an initial set of categories with built-in flexibility, we have not assigned preset category labels. In addition, more research would be needed to test the acceptability of labelling options (see also Next Steps). Below are some considerations for data users working with this categorization approach when reporting results:

- In our research, community members (including researchers as well as individuals with lived experience as Asian Americans) expressed an understanding of the organizing factors used in our approach—while emphasizing that labels that could be construed as conveying a hierarchy among Asian American communities would be unacceptable and lack face validity.
- Therefore, we do not recommend using numbers or letters in category labels when reporting results.
- Similarly, we do not recommend ordering the categories or their definitions by the value of an organizing factor (e.g., do not order categories by average SES in ascending or descending order).

Illustrative Use Cases

This approach offers a tool to understand differences in well-being across Asian American communities. Below are some examples of how this approach could be relevant for data users in different settings; specific uses depend on institutional context, purpose, and requirements.



Research. For researchers, this approach can clarify where analytic gaps may exist for data on Asian Americans in a given dataset. By organizing the categories according to factors linked to well-being, the approach helps make it more evident when certain communities are underrepresented or aggregated in ways that limit understanding of their experiences and outcomes. This, in turn, can inform decisions about where additional data are needed—for example, where purposeful sampling or targeted recruitment is warranted to ensure that smaller or underrepresented communities are included in analytically meaningful ways. The approach can therefore support researchers to make informed study design choices that enable a clearer understanding of Asian American well-being.



Policy and program planning. For those engaged in policy analysis, this guidance provides one methodological approach to identify patterns and examine variation in well-being within the Asian American population. Since the categorization structure was developed using national-level data, it may not fully capture the unique demographic compositions or needs of individual states or localities. However, the guidance offers a roadmap to the factors to consider when analyzing data for policy or program purposes. For example, a state agency examining differences in access to health services might use the categories as a starting point to identify and group communities that share similar migration histories or language access barriers, and then refine those categories further using local data. Similarly, analysts working on workforce development could use the guidance to examine how employment patterns differ across communities shaped by distinct migration pathways or socioeconomic conditions. In policy and program contexts, this approach can be used as one analytical input to understand well-being across Asian American communities, even when more granular data are not readily available.



Community-based initiatives. For community-based organizations, this guidance can serve as an analytical resource. While the approach is grounded in national-level data and may require adaptation to account for local community dynamics, it provides a structured way to examine differences in well-being outcomes that may not be apparent in highly aggregated data. For example, an organization serving Southeast Asian refugee communities could use the guidance to analyze how their population's outcomes differs from broader "Asian American" outcomes, providing more detailed information for planning and resource allocation. Similarly, this guidance can inform data collection approaches by illustrating how disaggregation methods affect the ability to detect variation that may be obscured in aggregated data.

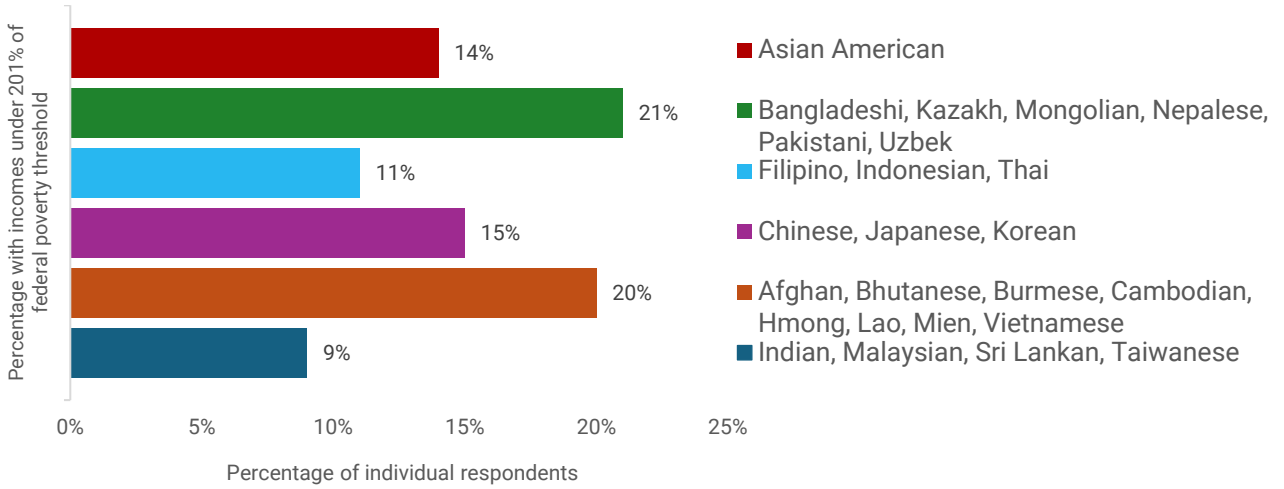
Illustrative Examples

Below are some examples to help illustrate how these key points may be applied in different contexts. Interpretation of results in these examples reflects the specific contexts shown and may differ in other applications.

Key Point #2 Example: Disaggregating income data by this project's mid-level categories

Our team conducted descriptive analyses to understand the level of insight that could be produced by applying the categories we had developed. (See Appendices B and E for more detail on the methods and findings, respectively.) We selected income levels under 201% of the federal poverty threshold as one indicator to explore whether there were differences in which Asian American communities are eligible for certain public benefits. Although eligibility levels vary by state and program component, this threshold is generally applicable to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid or subsidized health insurance coverage, Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) for higher education, and public housing assistance, among other programs. Exhibit 2 presents the results, based on 2024 ACS Public Use Microdata.

Exhibit 2. Differences in Income Level Across Asian American Communities



Source: 2024 ACS PUMS

We see that overall, 14 percent of Asian Americans have incomes under 201% of the poverty threshold—but this increases to 20 percent among Afghan, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, Mien, and Vietnamese Americans and 21 percent among Bangladeshi, Kazakh, Mongolian, Nepalese, Pakistani, and Uzbek Americans. This supports the categorization structure as a practical approach that can effectively detect variation in well-being among Asian American communities that would not be apparent if the data were aggregated.

An additional step could involve separating larger Asian subgroups into their own categories to further draw out nuance in the analysis.

Key Point #3 Example: Using different categories to prioritize different factors

During the community listening tour, participants shared examples of topics that may be better aligned with a categorization approach that prioritizes cultural, religious, or other factors. The examples below illustrate how researchers might consider whether the factors most relevant to an outcome differ from the organizing factors used in this project's categories.

These examples are intended to describe considerations involved in selecting a categorization approach, not to suggest that a different approach will always be needed. Users should consider the potential impact on comparability across studies when deciding whether to use a different approach. Where appropriate, using established categorizations may help maintain comparability with other research. In both examples below, existing geographic regional groupings may be a better fit.



Mental health. Cultural beliefs around the origin of mental illness, cultural norms such as stigma around disclosure of mental health challenges, and religious beliefs can strongly influence attitudes towards and willingness to seek mental health care. For example, some Indian and Chinese families conceal their or their relatives' mental illness to avoid public disclosure or shame.[11,12] In addition, beliefs around mental illness may be influenced by Confucianism among East Asian and Southeast Asian cultures; by Islam and Buddhism among Southeast Asians, and Hinduism among South Asians.[13] These types of cultural norms and religious beliefs can impact health outcomes by inhibiting people from accessing services and seeking care, or influencing who people perceive as trusted messengers of health information.

These norms and beliefs may affect health behaviors as well as inform targeted outreach approaches to engage these communities—and may be more accurate organizing factors for some mental health topics than those used in our categorization approach. Researchers and program analysts working in mental health may wish to consult the literature and engage community members to 1) identify the cultural, religious, or other factors that have the greatest impact on the specific mental health outcome of interest among Asian American communities, and 2) determine which Asian subgroups share similarities for the identified factors. If this is not feasible due to time or resource constraints, consider whether regional groupings may be a reasonable fit for the identified factors.



Anti-Asian discrimination. Experiences of anti-Asian hate and discrimination are driven by factors different from the primary organizing factors used in this project's categories. Although income (an SES variable) has not emerged as a significant factor, research suggests that place of birth, generational status, and language are important factors.[14-16] For example, people born in the U.S. and those who speak a non-English language at home are more likely to experience or report hate and discrimination than those born outside the U.S. or those who speak English at home.

In addition, anti-Asian hate and discrimination experiences are often shaped by how individuals are perceived by others rather than how they self-identify. For example, many perpetrators rely on broad assumptions, such as perceiving East Asians as Chinese or South

Asians as Indian, regardless of an individual's actual ethnic background.[17] As a result, for mid-level disaggregation, geographic regional groupings may be more analytically meaningful than groupings based on historical migration patterns or socioeconomic characteristics. In addition, organizations that provide prevention and direct services related to hate and discrimination are often organized around ethnic or regional communities, making data structured by geographic region more actionable for community-based efforts.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Lessons Learned

While this guidance provides a grounded approach to working with data involving Asian American populations, several key lessons emerged over the course of this project with important implications for future data disaggregation efforts:

- **Limitations in existing data impact what can be learned about smaller subgroups through secondary research (i.e., publication bias).** A key challenge encountered in this project was the limited data available on smaller or less studied Asian American subgroups. Existing research and datasets often focus on larger communities, which can result in gaps in knowledge on communities with smaller population sizes. As a result, the project team prioritized communities underrepresented in existing research in its outreach strategy. Through this additional effort, we successfully included perspectives from these communities; further efforts of this kind would continue to strengthen representation and expand the evidence base.

- **Community engagement is essential for effective data disaggregation and requires time, trust, and intentionality.** It helps ensure that disaggregation approaches align with the realities that shape differences in well-being and incorporate perspectives from communities represented in the data. Engaging community members and partners in a way that is substantive and respectful takes time and cannot be treated as a one-time or transactional activity. It is a process rooted in transparency and communication that requires flexibility, responsiveness, and a willingness to adapt based on input received.[18] In this project, we planned for active, ongoing community engagement from the outset, and collaborated with community partners to shape and tailor our plans to the local context where listening sessions were held. Community input was critical in helping the team understand how the categories could be improved and what guidance would be helpful to users in applying them.

- **Future disaggregation efforts would benefit from planning for the time and resources needed for rigorous, informed design.** Developing and implementing a practical approach for data disaggregation requires a comprehensive and rigorous effort to identify appropriate variables, develop solutions to working within data limitations, and assess the feasibility of various analytic approaches. This guidance is intended to support users with an approach that can be used as-is (or with minor adaptations), but as discussed below, should continue to be built on and improved by other research teams. Those seeking to develop disaggregation approaches may benefit from planning for adequate staffing and time to gather and analyze evidence—including thoughtful community engagement—and apply that evidence to inform development, testing, and refinement.

Refinement and Validation

In developing this disaggregation approach, we incorporated evidence from extensive formative research, including input from community members across the nation. The approach we present is not intended to be definitive, but serves as a step forward in promoting methods that enable deeper and more nuanced understanding of the well-being and experiences of the Asian American population. At the same time, further refinement and validation is needed to further confirm its utility and applicability and inform potential revisions to strengthen it.

Validation testing may be conducted with additional datasets including Asian Americans that vary in:

- **Asian country or ethnic subgroups included**. Examine the disaggregation process, comparing their use with samples with a larger, and a smaller, number of Asian American subgroups to assess how the categories function with each of these types of samples.
- **Sample size**. Examine the impact of sample size on the level of disaggregation that can be carried out.
- **Study topic**. Examine ways in which the organizing factors that drive the disaggregation categories can be adapted depending on the focus of research. Greater use of the approach may contribute to a more structured rubric for adapting it.

Validation should be conducted by different types of data users in different settings in order to understand implementation challenges and successes in these contexts. Further, sharing study findings helps build the evidence base, especially reporting that compares the outcomes of presenting aggregated data on Asian Americans vs. disaggregated data. Dissemination is important to further inform the public about resources and considerations related to data disaggregation and promote understanding and use of sound methods for its practice.

Potential Areas for Future Research

Throughout the course of this project, our team investigated and weighed numerous topics and questions raised by partners, community members, and others whom we consulted for this effort. Keeping in mind our goal of developing a practical approach that would offer users a new way of understanding data on Asian American well-being, we focused on producing guidance that would be both usable and grounded in available evidence. In doing so, some complex topics could not be addressed as fully as we would have liked. We consider these important areas for continued exploration and inclusion in future efforts to build on this work.

- **Whether to include Southwest Asian communities in the analysis.** As the team developed our formative research plan, we discussed how “Asian American” would be defined for purposes of this work. We consulted with individuals and organizations that represent or serve Southwest Asian or Arab American communities to learn their preferences and understand the context. There was no clear consensus about whether to include Southwest Asian communities in this project. We heard input that Southwest Asian individuals vary widely in how they identify—as

Middle Eastern and North African (MENA), Asian American, a combination, or another race or ethnicity—and classification approaches for these communities remain an active area of discussion. As a result, we decided not to include Southwest Asian communities in this project. However, we encourage future efforts to reassess feasibility and community preferences, which may change over time.

- **How to incorporate multiracial and multiethnic Asian Americans in the categories**. With dozens of Asian country and ethnic subgroups, the number of potential racial and ethnic combinations is substantial. Under existing categorization structures, multiracial and multiethnic Asian American individuals are often placed in broad, aggregate categories (e.g., 'other Asian'). This means that existing evidence is scant or difficult to disaggregate. Whereas members of a specific Asian country-of-origin or ethnic subgroup often share cultural norms, it may not be as feasible to identify which multiracial and multiethnic Asian Americans share norms or other factors that shape their well-being. We did not have enough evidence to inform how to categorize the wide range of multiracial and multiethnic Asian Americans, but recognize that this leaves them underrepresented under this project's approach. Future work to build on this approach should consider building in primary research to understand experiences, needs, and preferences among this subgroup.

- **How to incorporate cross-national Asian communities in the categories**. In two of the data sources that informed this project's work (community listening tour and the ImpACT project), members of, or organizations that serve, cross-national communities noted that they are often underrepresented in or not well-served by traditional categorization structures—which also contributes to limited availability of data on these communities. These communities included specific ethnicities (e.g., Hmong), ethno-religious subgroups (e.g., Sikh), and subgroups with distinct sociopolitical histories (e.g., Indo-Caribbean). Similar to the complexities of incorporating multiracial and multiethnic Asian Americans, these cross-national subgroups differ widely in experiences and factors that shape their well-being. The variation in the types of cross-national communities made it challenging to consistently apply the organizing factors used in our disaggregation approach. Nonetheless, it is important that future research pay particular attention to the needs of these communities and consider how they might be incorporated into disaggregation approaches.

- **Developing labels for the categories.** As discussed, community members shared that category labels should not imply a hierarchy among Asian American communities. The organizing factors used in our approach may be sensitive to some community members, as migration and SES are tied to sometimes-painful memories or concepts such as status that are considered improper to discuss according to some traditional Asian cultural norms. In addition, our approach is designed to be adaptable, which could change the accuracy of any preset labels. Additional research is needed to develop and assess the face validity of potential labelling options with individuals from a variety of Asian American communities.

Conclusion

This project advances ongoing efforts to improve how data on Asian Americans are collected and analyzed. By proposing an approach that sits between highly aggregated data ("Asian American") and fully disaggregated data (by specific country or ethnic subgroup), we offer an additional way to understand the complexity and variation within and across communities. More broadly, the findings underscore the importance of viewing Asian American populations not as a single, uniform group, but as a set of communities shaped by distinct migration histories, socioeconomic contexts, and lived experiences. In this way, the guidance in this report expands the set of evidence-informed methods available for data analysis.

At the same time, this work is intended as one contribution that helps to move the field, rather than a definitive solution. We hope that researchers, analysts, and practitioners will build on this approach by applying it in multiple contexts, testing its usefulness, and identifying opportunities for refinement. Further validation, adaptation, and innovation will be important to strengthen the evidence base and ensure that disaggregation practices continue to evolve. Ultimately, we also hope this effort sparks additional ideas and approaches that further the broader goal of producing data that more accurately represent Asian American communities.

Appendices
How This Guidance Was Developed

Appendix A. Research Strategy

The project team designed a multi-pronged formative research strategy to gather data and insights on the experiences and well-being of a range of Asian American communities that would ground the eventual guidance in evidence. Because some communities are underrepresented in the existing evidence base, we were intentional about conducting primary research with both smaller and larger Asian American communities to complement analyses of secondary data.

We sought to understand:

- Research Question #1: Which Asian American subgroups share similarities in sociocultural or historical factors?
- Research Question #2: Which Asian American subgroups share similarities in well-being outcomes?
- Research Question #3: Are there consistent patterns suggesting meaningful groupings across dimensions of culture, history, and well-being?

To answer these questions, as shown in Exhibit 3, the project team:

a. Conducted baseline formative research to identify similarities and differences among Asian American subgroups along dimensions of culture, history, and well-being, comprising:

    i. A scan and thematic analysis of peer-reviewed and gray literature to find patterns in how cultural and historical factors affect experiences across Asian American communities, and

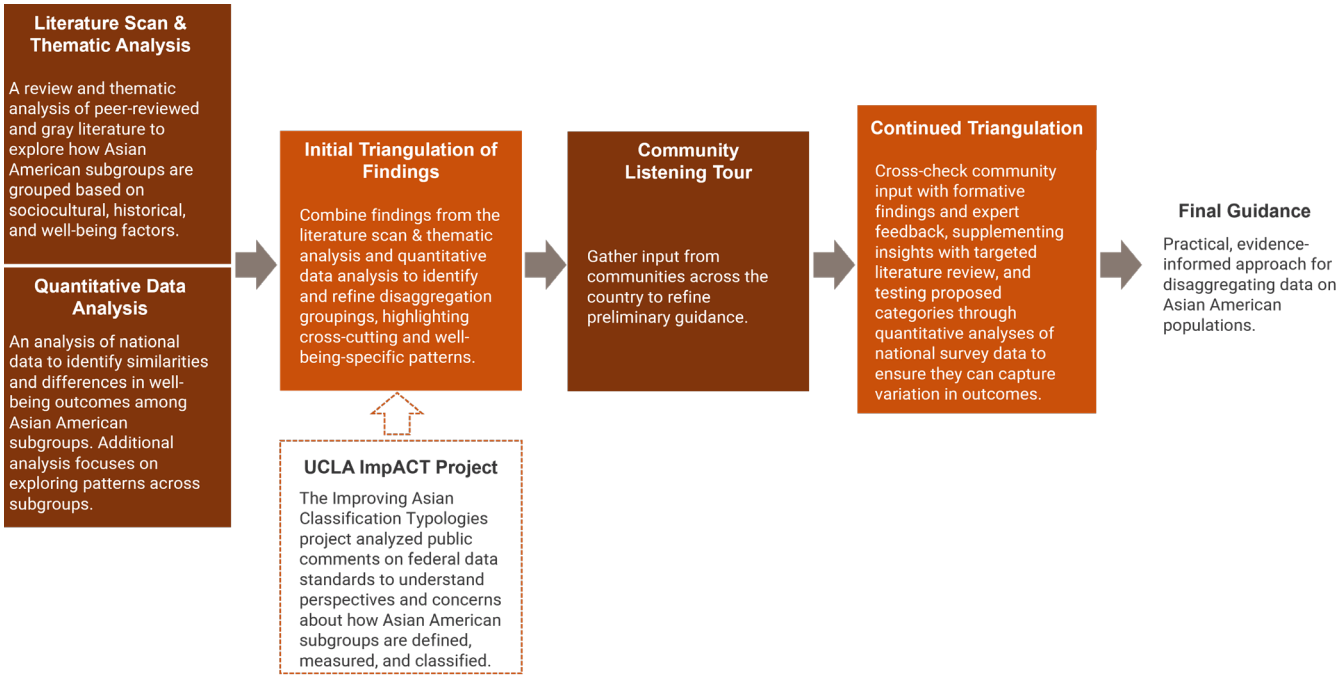
    ii. An analysis of existing quantitative data to identify patterns in four well-being areas (health, education, housing, and income/wealth) across Asian American communities;

b. Triangulated the baseline formative research findings to identify overarching patterns that could inform the development of mid-level disaggregation categories;

c. Conducted a listening tour to gather community input on the draft categories; and

d. Triangulated the community input with the baseline formative research findings to revise the categories and accompanying guidance.

Exhibit 3. Research Strategy



At each step, we worked with an advisory panel with lived and professional experience serving Asian American communities. This helped ensure the research was respectful, inclusive, and rigorous, reflected community experiences and priorities, and ultimately benefited the communities. We also coordinated with the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research to include key findings from the Improving Asian Classification Typologies (ImpACT) project conducted under the Data Equity Center, which analyzed public comments on federal data standards to understand perspectives and concerns about how Asian American subgroups are defined, measured, and classified. As such, ImpACT findings provided another source of community input.

Appendix B. Methods

Below we summarize the specific methods used to carry out the research strategy outlined in Appendix A. To support users who wish to apply the disaggregation guidance and future researchers looking to build on this work, we describe the data sources, analytic strategies, and engagement processes used at each stage.

Advisory Panel

The advisory panel was established as a core component of the project's community engagement strategy, providing ongoing guidance to ensure that all phases were inclusive and grounded in community priorities. The panel was composed of six leaders representing academic institutions, community-based, civil rights, and cultural promotion organizations, and service delivery expertise, as well as a range of Asian American communities. Panelists contributed subject matter expertise in addition to lived and professional experience, helping to bridge community and research perspectives. Panel members received an honorarium for their active participation over the duration of the project.

Throughout the project, the advisory panel served as an active partner, providing input at each stage. Panel members advised on the research plan, reviewed formative research findings, and helped shape both the listening tour strategy and disaggregation approach. Advisory panel engagement included three virtual meetings over the course of the project, supplemented by interim reviews and discussions by email, allowing members to continuously contribute insights and refine the direction of the work. By integrating advisory panel feedback throughout the process, the project ensured that its outputs were not only analytically rigorous but also responsive, practical, and grounded in community experiences.

Cultural and Historical Analysis

NORC conducted a scan of peer-reviewed literature and gray literature to gather and examine resources able to identify how Asian American subgroups cluster together based on sociocultural and historical factors.[v] The scan also gathered and examined resources describing similarities and differences in determinants of well-being outcomes among Asian American subgroups.

Literature search strategy

The project team developed a set of search terms for five domains (Table 4) in collaboration with the advisory panel. We then created search parameters using different combinations of keywords and applied Boolean operators (i.e., AND, OR) between search terms. Due to the number of search terms, the team conducted multiple searches. Search strings were applied to the following databases to identify articles for analysis: Google Scholar, JSTOR, ScienceDirect (well-being determinants only), PubMed (well-being determinants only), and publicly available reports and articles from research

[v] Sociocultural and historical similarities refer to geographic origins, drivers of migration to the U.S., migration and residential patterns in the U.S., time in the U.S., historical experiences in the U.S., cultural values, family dynamics, language, customs, acculturation (including strength of community ties within and across subgroups), and experiences of racism and discrimination.

organizations and Asian American community organizations, including those focused on Asian Americans broadly and those focused on specific country-of-origin or ethnic subgroups. We also conducted targeted searches to identify articles for certain subgroups (e.g., subgroups with relatively fewer search results). The team uploaded the first 50 search results by relevance from each search string (titles and abstracts) in Covidence, an online literature review management program. The team also conducted a targeted search for at least one article that met inclusion criteria describing missing subgroups.

Table 4. Search Strategy Domains and Terms

Domain (AND)	Search Terms (OR)
Population ***Note: Each bullet was used for a separate search (total seven searches).***	• Asian American, Asian • Asian AND biracial, Asian AND multiracial • East Asian, Buryat, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian*, Okinawan, Taiwanese, Tibetan • Southeast Asian, Bruneian, Burmese, Cambodian, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Karen, Lahu, Lao, Laotian, Malay, Malaysian, Mien, Singaporean, Tai Dam, Thai, Timorese, Vietnamese • South Asian, Afghan**, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Indian, Indo-Caribbean, Kuki, Maldivian, Mizo, Nepalese, Pakistani, Pashtun, Sikh, Sindhi, Sri Lankan • Central Asian, Afghan**, Kalmyk, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mongolian*, Tajik, Tatar, Turkmen, Uyghur, Uzbek
Setting	United States, America, U.S.
Sociocultural Factors	Assimilation, acculturation, values, family structure, multigenerational, intergenerational, religious community, cultural identity, discrimination, social cohesion, social capital, othering, otherness, third culture, belonging, stereotype, model minority, racialization, racial identity, ethnic identity, language, English proficiency, heritage
Historical Factors	Immigration, immigration status, migration, refugee, diaspora, citizenship, ethnic enclave, ethnic community, generation, first-generation, 1.5 generation, second-generation, third-generation, transnationalism, colonization, war, displacement
Well-being Outcomes	Health, mental health, healthcare access, health literacy, educational attainment, educational persistence, permanent employment, temporary employment, income, wealth, socioeconomic status, housing, mobility, achievement
Well-being Determinants	Attitudes, barriers, facilitators, policy, law, systems

* People who identify as Mongolian may consider themselves to be East Asian or Central Asian. We included Mongolian in both searches.[19,20]

** People who identify as Afghan may consider themselves to be South Asian or Central Asian. We included Afghan in both searches.[19]

Thematic analysis

A total of 4,803 unique articles were identified through the search strategy. To rapidly identify articles of relevance, two team members reviewed the title and abstract of each article to determine if articles met inclusion criteria (Table 5). A total of 543 articles were identified for further analysis. We used GPT-4.1, an artificial intelligence (AI) model, to list Asian country or ethnic subgroups and search terms mentioned in each article and to generate initial summaries of key findings from each article. The results were included in an Excel table. Importantly, the project team carefully cross-checked the AI output against human review on a subset of articles to verify its accuracy before proceeding. Based on this quality check, we limited the use of AI strictly to aid in article prioritization and sorting. All review, coding, and analysis was completed by human reviewers to maintain rigor and integrity of the work.

Table 5. Literature Scan Inclusion Criteria

Domain	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Publication Year	After January 1, 2005	Before January 1, 2005
Language	English	Not English
Setting	United States – national and regional	United States – state or local Outside the United States
Population	Asian adults (overall) and Asian subgroup adults, including multiracial Asian adults, residing in the United States	Asian adults and children, not residing in the United States Asian children residing in the United States All other races/ethnicities
Outcomes	Data source examines sociocultural and/or historical factors. Data source examines well-being outcomes among Asian American subgroups.	Data source examines programs or interventions for Asian Americans. Data source compares Asian Americans (overall) to non-Asian Americans.

The project team reviewed the results table to sort and prioritize articles for coding and analysis, focusing on more recent articles that discussed multiple Asian American communities and could best answer Research Question 1. A total of 111 articles were prioritized for full-text review and coding.

The team conducted a thematic analysis using a grounded theory approach and constant comparison analysis.[21-23] First, we reviewed full-text articles to conduct open coding, then reviewed codes to identify common domains. Table 6 presents the identified domains and subdomains of interest.

Table 6. Thematic Domains and Subdomains

Domain	Sub-Domain	Description
Population	Countries of Origin	Y/N: Article includes countries of origin
	Racial/Ethnic Subgroups	Y/N: Article includes racial/ethnic subgroups
	Other	Any other Asian populations mentioned (e.g., Brown Asian)
Sociocultural Factors	Racialization	Findings describing racialization of Asian subgroups in the United States (search terms: assimilation, acculturation, othering, otherness, third culture, belonging, English proficiency, cultural identity, discrimination, stereotype, model minority).
	Culture	Findings describing cultural characteristics of Asian subgroups in the United States (search terms: family structure, multigenerational, intergenerational, values, religious community, social cohesion/social capital, language, racial identity, ethnic identity, heritage).
	Other	Findings describing other cultural characteristics of Asian subgroups in the United States that are not racialization or culture.
Historical Factors	Migration and Settlement	Findings describing the history of migration and settlement of Asian subgroups in the United States (search terms: immigration, immigration status, migration, refugee, diaspora, transnationalism, ethnic enclave, and ethnic community)
	Generation	Findings related to generational status and length of time the subgroup has resided in the United States (search terms: generation, first-generation, 1.5 generation, second-generation, third-generation, citizenship).
	Other	Findings describing other historical factors that are not migration/settlement or generation.
Well-Being Areas	Health	Findings related to determinants of physical and mental health outcomes, health care access, and health literacy.
	Income/Wealth	Findings related to determinants of income, income mobility, wealth, employment, and socioeconomic status.
	Housing	Findings related to determinants of housing, including quality, affordability, and accessibility.
	Education	Findings related to determinants of educational attainment, educational persistence, and education outcomes.
	Other	Findings related to other or general determinants of well-being.

Team members assigned one or more codes to each subdomain for each article and Asian American subgroup, entering the information into a central Excel file. When relevant, codes indicated the level or

degree to which an Asian American subgroup experiences or exhibits a specific subdomain (e.g., high/medium/low level of religiosity). Next, we reviewed the application of codes within and across domains to identify patterns of similarities and differences across subgroups.[22,23]

Quantitative Data Analysis

Using an existing national dataset, NORC analyzed quantitative data for selected key indicators of well-being to identify similarities and differences in outcomes among Asian American subgroups.

Data sources and indicator selection

To ensure the project's work would have wide applicability, we focused on publicly available datasets that included indicators related to well-being and whose Asian American sample populations were nationally representative. Initially, we selected the American Community Survey (ACS) 2019–2023 5-year Public Use Microdata (PUMS) and the Current Population Survey (CPS) 2023 Annual Social and Economic Supplement and 2022 Voting Supplement; however, we ultimately focused on the ACS data due to the CPS dataset's more limited coverage of Asian country or ethnic subgroups.

Indicators were chosen based on the availability of relevant variables in the ACS and their alignment with four domains of well-being—health, education, income/wealth, and housing—guided by frameworks such as Healthy People 2030, prior research, and input from the advisory panel and NORC subject matter experts. We also assessed data completeness and sample sizes across Asian American subgroups to ensure analytic reliability and the ability to detect meaningful patterns, if they existed. While most indicators were directly derived from survey measures, the team recoded or conducted additional data processing to calculate well-being measures.

Analysis

The project team initially planned for two rounds of analyses, with the results of Round 1 informing the specific analyses in Round 2. In Round 1, the team conducted ***descriptive analyses and simple regressions*** on the selected variables to identify statistically significant variables associated with the well-being indicators. The team encountered two main challenges during Round 1. First, running the 5-year ACS with the replicate weights required a long computation time. Second, chi-squared test results indicated that every Asian subgroup-well-being relationship was significant—meaning that the utility of the chi-squared test results to select variables of interest for Round 2 was limited—likely due to the large sample size. Consequently, the team proceeded with the Round 2 analyses in parallel with Round 1 analyses and included all identified relevant variables in the Round 2 analysis. Subsequent descriptive analyses were conducted to inform and test the effectiveness of the developed groupings.

In Round 2, NORC conducted a ***latent class analysis (LCA)*** to understand how Asian American subgroups may cluster together. LCA is a statistical method that identifies distinct subgroups (classes) based on patterns in the data. To reduce computing load, we used five weighted subsamples of the 2019-2023 5-year ACS data. To draw each subsample, the project team included samples of up to 15,040 cases from each of the Chinese (except Taiwanese), Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean,

Vietnamese, and Other Asian alone or any Asian combination subgroups, and all cases from the remaining Asian subgroups in the data. Table 7 presents the variables used in the model. This approach resulted in a total N = 199,994 for each of the five weighted subsamples. This approach was taken to ensure that smaller subgroups were adequately represented and that the total subsample size was large enough to enable robust analysis while preempting computational power challenges.

Table 7. Latent Class Analysis Variables and Values/Levels

Core demographics

- Asian subgroup (21 categories)
- Marital status (married, widowed, divorced, separated, never married)
- Sex (male, female)
- Age category (18-29, 30-44, 45-64, 65+)

Housing

Housing-related costs 30% or more of household income status (not more than 30%, more than 30%, not applicable)

Education

- Bachelor's degree or above flag
- Associate's degree or above flag

Health

- Private health insurance flag
- Disability flag

Income/Wealth

- Employment status (unemployed, employed, not in labor force)
- Adjusted household income category (low, middle, high)[24]
- Adjusted household income to poverty ratio category (5 categories)
- Homeownership flag

Contextual

- Census division (9 divisions)
- Multigenerational household flag
- Occupation code (15 categories)
- Hours worked per week (past 12 months) category (did not work, worked part-time, worked full-time, worked more than full-time)
- Food stamp flag
- English proficiency (very well, well, not well, not at all, N/A)
- Citizenship status (born in the U.S., born in territories/born abroad to U.S. parents, U.S. citizen by naturalization, not a citizen of the U.S.)
- Decade of entry (before 1960, 1960-1969, 1970-1979, 1980-1989, 1990-1999, 2000-2009, 2010 or later, born in US)
- Internet access status (yes paying, yes but not paying, no access)

With the LCA method, variables work together to identify overall group patterns—or classes—rather than looking at differences between specific subgroups. The team ran five versions of the model, each with a different number of classes (2, 4, 6, 8, or 10 classes). Notably, Asian subgroup was not a statistically significant variable in any of the models. Although the team had initially planned to conduct

advanced regression analyses to validate any identified Asian subgroup clusters, this additional method was no longer appropriate. However, the LCA model results were still useful in identifying overarching patterns among different Asian communities.

We reviewed model fit statistics for each of the five models. While the 10-class model had the best model fit statistics, as generally happens when with a higher number of classes, there were few defining characteristics and the classes were more difficult to interpret. Therefore, for improved interpretability—particularly to assess whether the classes had defining characteristics distinct from one another—and to identify a practical number of categories, we examined the 4-class and 6-class models more closely.

Given high entropy scores, which may indicate overfitting, we ran a reduced-variable, 4-class model to confirm that the models with all variables were robust and not being driven by idiosyncratic indicators. The included variables were: English proficiency, income-to-poverty ratio category, decade of entry, having an associate's degree or above, age category, and combined hours worked per week and employment status (combined from the all-variable model).

Finally, to understand which variables had the most influence on how the classes were forming, we ran exploratory tree models using unweighted data. We also used tree models to identify which variables, including LCA class, most influenced well-being outcomes in the data.

Community Listening Tour

Our team designed the community listening tour as a central component of the project to ensure the guidance was grounded in community perspectives and experiences, with community voices meaningfully integrated alongside quantitative and qualitative findings.

Strategy. The project team took a deliberate approach to identifying partners and communities for engagement. APIAHF and SAH leveraged their national community and research networks, which was critical to identifying and engaging community partners and communities. From these efforts, community-based organizations (CBOs) were selected as key partners for in-person sessions based on their deep connections to local Asian American communities, the range of subgroups served, and ability to facilitate culturally responsive dialogue. These partnerships informed the selection of three sites: Fresno, CA; Houston, TX; and Queens, NY. Together, these locations are home to dozens of Asian countries of origin and ethnicities, migration histories, and community contexts. In parallel, we

designed virtual sessions to engage a broader set of stakeholders from across the U.S., including researchers and practitioners, ensuring that both community-based and systems-level perspectives were included.

Recruitment. The project team hosted a total of seven listening sessions (three in-person and four virtual) from February to April 2026. The tour engaged approximately 140 participants across multiple roles, geographies, countries of origin, and ethnicities. Recruitment strategies were tailored to each format: in-person sessions relied primarily on CBO-led outreach through trusted networks to engage community members and local leaders, while virtual sessions used project team-led outreach via networks and partnerships held by APIAHF, SAH, NORC, advisory panelists, and NORC subject matter experts to reach a geographically diverse group of stakeholders. Across both formats, recruitment prioritized variation in country of origin, ethnicity, and role in relation to using data.

Race/Ethnicity of Registrants*

- Central Asian = 10%
- East Asian = 34%
- South Asian = 11%
- Southeast Asian = 37%
- MENA or West Asian = 3%
- Another race/no answer = 6%

**May not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

Number of Session Attendees

- Fresno, CA = 38
- Houston, TX = 14
- Queens, NY = 32
- Virtual sessions = 56

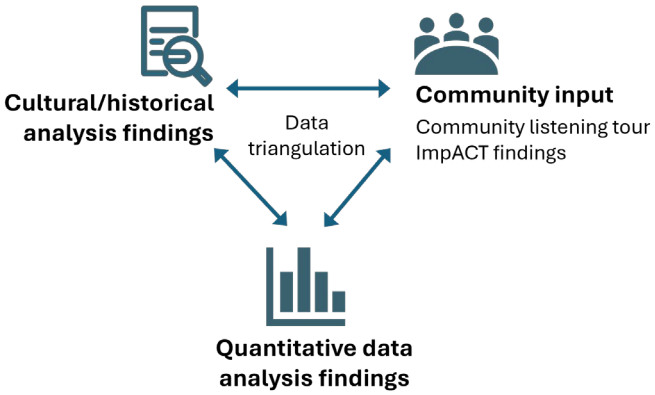
Session structure. Sessions were designed as interactive conversations that encouraged reflection, dialogue, and co-creation of considerations for data disaggregation. Discussions were guided by semi-structured prompts to surface community-driven perspectives, particularly on complex topics such as identity, categorization, and data use. Accessibility was further supported through six in-language discussions across two in-person sessions and attention to participants' language and communication needs, helping to ensure that more voices could participate meaningfully.

Discussions were held in:

- Chinese (Mandarin)
- Dari/Pashto
- English
- Hmong
- Khmer
- Korean
- Lao

Data collection and analysis. Data collection followed a systematic process, including audio recording, de-identified transcripts, and structured notetaking. Our analysis included post-session debriefs to identify key takeaways and cross-session thematic analysis. To determine the top-level findings, we considered the volume and frequency of similar input, including whether it was shared by attendees from different settings, Asian American communities, and levels of data experience.

Triangulation



A key part of the research strategy was triangulating data from multiple data sources and on different communities and aspects of well-being to ensure the evidence informing the guidance was well-rounded in both subject matter and representation. Importantly, our team was intentional to ensure that no one type of evidence (quantitative, qualitative, or community) disproportionately outweighed another in shaping the guidance. The challenge in balancing empirical evidence, lived experience, and stakeholder perspectives in research is longstanding. For research involving Asian American communities, this takes on increased weight as some communities are more represented in certain types of evidence than others.

Data sources. We iteratively triangulated data from three main sources over the course of the project: findings from the cultural and historical analysis, findings from the quantitative data analysis, and community input from listening sessions and findings from the UCLA Data Equity Center's ImpACT project. ImpACT analyzed two sets of public comments on federal data standards.[vi] Although public comments may reflect some selection bias, as not all individuals or communities participate in the comment process, they nonetheless serve as a source of community input on Asian American classification. In particular, the ImpACT findings provide insight into factors that Asian American community members and those who serve Asian American populations consider important for identification and clustering, including perspectives on which subgroups may be meaningfully grouped together. As part of our project, we reviewed key themes and findings from ImpACT's analysis of each set of comments as well as common themes and takeaways across both analyses.

Initial triangulation. The first triangulation stage came after the synthesis of key findings from the baseline formative research (cultural and historical analysis and quantitative data analysis). Initially, the team planned to compile characteristics of Asian country or ethnic subgroups within clusters identified by either analysis to determine similar patterns or groupings. However, as described in Appendix C, when neither analysis identified clear, cross-cutting clusters, we modified our strategy.

We probed the findings from each analysis more closely. With the LCA results, we tested different thresholds of the Asian country or ethnic subgroup variable—indicating that a particular subgroup was assigned to a class at a higher proportion than their proportion in the overall Asian American sample—to explore which subgroups may cluster together. With the cultural and historical analysis findings, alongside ImpACT findings, we looked for similarities among Asian subgroups in more than one

[vi] ImpACT identified relevant comments through a systematic keyword-based screening and manual review process. Then, using a hybrid deductive-inductive thematic analysis approach, the team reviewed and analyzed approximately 690 public comments related to classification of Asian Americans submitted in response to two Federal Register Notices. Comments were treated as analytic units of equal weight regardless of whether they were submitted by individual commenters or by organizations. Based on qualitative review of the results, seven overarching themes were identified. Please see ImpACT's forthcoming report for more information on its methods and findings.

subdomain. Then, we identified where the quantitative and qualitative insights aligned or complemented each other.

Development of draft categories. The team constructed draft categories based on identified cross-cutting similarities and centered them on the same core factors to enable comparison across categories. We then revised the draft categories based on feedback from the advisory panel and presented them during the community listening sessions, where we gathered input on whether they were meaningful and acceptable and how they could be improved.

Continued triangulation and category refinement. Next, the project team reviewed and cross-checked key themes and specific suggestions from the community listening sessions against the formative findings, and discussed them with the advisory panel and NORC subject matter experts. For example, we heard that topics like mental health and cultural/historical factors such as ethnic enclaves may lend themselves to different categorization structures, so the team consulted the literature scan and did a limited, targeted search and article review to explore these points.

Finally, NORC conducted additional quantitative analyses to assess whether meaningful differences could be seen among the draft categories. We used the 2024 ACS 1-year Public Use Microdata to conduct weighted descriptive analyses comparing multiple categorization approaches, beginning with stratified sampling and recoding of cases into the proposed categories. The unweighted analytic sample included 2,876,060 individuals, of whom 175,111 were Asian American respondents who identified as Afghan, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Indian, Japanese, Kazakh, Korean, Lao, Malaysian, Mien, Mongolian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Thai, Uzbek, or Vietnamese. Using ACS replicate weights, the weighted estimate for Asian American respondents was approximately 17,970,483. We selected one indicator per area of well-being for the analyses, reported as weighted percentages with 90% confidence intervals and statistical significance using Rao-Scott chi-square tests. These indicators were:

- Having a bachelor's degree or higher
- Percent of individuals with incomes below 201% of the federal poverty threshold
- Private health insurance coverage
- Homeownership, defined as owning a home either with a mortgage or loan or free and clear

Results were reviewed alongside formative research and community input to inform the number and composition of categories.

Limitations

Methods. As with all research, this project is subject to several limitations. First, the literature scan was constrained by the scope of the search strategy, including the years of coverage, the search terms selected, and the databases used. This produced a large volume of articles. Given capacity constraints, the research team prioritized abstract review to narrow the pool of identified articles, rather than reviewing all articles in full. Additionally, the existing literature itself is not fully comprehensive, particularly with respect to smaller Asian subgroups, which are often underrepresented in published research. These factors may limit the breadth and representativeness of the perspectives captured in

the review. In fact, this was one reason that our team designed a multi-pronged research strategy that placed equal importance on traditional data sources as well as on community perspectives.
The quantitative analysis also faced some limitations. First, the size of the ACS file posed computational issues such that analysis could not be conducted with weights using the full five-year file. To address computational constraints, the research team created five subsampled files for analysis and integrated findings across the five sets of analyses. Further, while the ACS is among the most comprehensive sources providing detailed information on Asian subgroups, the analysis was restricted to the level of detail available in the public-use file. In addition, the ACS focuses broadly on topics related to employment, education, housing, and demographics, without the more detailed economic and health data available in other federal surveys. While additional economic and health data were not available for analysis in the ACS, the computational constraints would have made the potential inclusion of additional variables infeasible. Despite these limitations, the ACS's comprehensive national-level data made it the most suitable dataset for achieving the project's analytic goals.

Finally, the community engagement activities were also subject to limitations. These activities were conducted at a national level using both in-person and virtual formats to maximize reach to different Asian American communities, especially groups less well-represented in research. The study placed particular emphasis on smaller groups that were underrepresented in the literature and data, which enhanced insights for these populations but may have resulted in comparatively less input from larger Asian American groups. In addition, the range of English proficiency and number of languages spoken within Asian American communities posed challenges for reaching some community members. Although interpretation was provided when possible, the number of in-language sessions was limited, potentially constraining participation for some groups.

Disaggregation guidance. The disaggregation guidance was developed through triangulation of evidence from qualitative (cultural/historical analysis), quantitative (ACS data analysis), and community engagement activities, providing a broad, panoramic perspective rather than a narrow focus. However, the methodological limitations described above may constrain the applicability of the guidance, particularly with respect to the range of well-being domains to which it can be applied. While preliminary testing of the disaggregation categories using more recent ACS data supports their utility across a subset of well-being indicators, additional validation using other datasets and a wider range of indicators would further strengthen confidence in their generalizability.

Appendix C. Baseline Formative Research Findings

As described in Appendix A, we conducted formative research to understand which Asian subgroups share similarities in 1) sociocultural or historical factors, and 2) well-being outcomes. We aimed to identify cross-cutting patterns of Asian country or ethnic subgroups that shared similarities across multiple factors to inform potential groupings. This section summarizes the formative research findings.

Research Question 1: Which Asian American subgroups share similarities in sociocultural or historical factors?

We primarily used the findings from the cultural/historical analysis to answer this research question, along with relevant ImpACT findings.

Overall, there were no definitive clusters of Asian country or ethnic subgroups across most sociocultural or historical factors. The articles reviewed had substantial variation in terms of which subgroups were discussed, the number of subgroups discussed, and which sociocultural and historical factors were discussed. **However, we did identify similarities between some subgroups for <u>some</u> factors or combinations of factors.** These similarities were not consistent across factors and were therefore insufficient by themselves to form groupings—but could contribute to how groupings are constructed.

Articles described various ***migration waves and reasons*** throughout U.S. history, with the most significant change following passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which removed national origin quotas restricting immigration from Asia.[25-29] Reasons for migration varied by time of immigration. Prior to 1965, reasons included economic opportunity, legal/policy factors (e.g., exclusion laws, colonial rules), and family/social factors (e.g., family reunification).[29-32] For example, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and Korean migration to the U.S. was characterized by multiple such reasons.[32-34] After 1965, migration also included political factors (e.g., war, persecution, refugee resettlement programs) and cultural/education factors.[4,27-29,31-40] For example, among smaller Asian American communities, migration by Bhutanese, Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, Uzbek populations during this period was characterized by multiple such factors.[4,27-29,31-35,37-40] ***Settlement patterns*** varied by Asian American subgroup, time of migration, and family structure. For example, it was noted that Uzbek and Vietnamese populations settle in strong ethnic enclaves, while Cambodian, Hmong, and Lao populations settle in weak ethnic enclaves.[28,40,41]

Asian American subgroups with larger populations often have a longer history in the U.S., which may contribute to greater heterogeneity in their sociocultural experiences. We observed this breadth in the literature. For example, across racialization subdomains, several larger subgroups were characterized across articles as exhibiting both high and low levels of the same subdomain. Smaller subgroups were also characterized as exhibiting multiple levels of the same subdomain for some sociocultural factors,

which are highly context dependent. We did observe some smaller Asian subgroups characterized as exhibiting a single level for factors such as ***level of acculturation*** (medium among Bangladeshi and Pakistani; lower among Bhutanese, Burmese, and Hmong) and ***assimilation*** (medium among Afghan, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani; lower among Burmese, Cambodian, Hmong, and Lao).[8,38,42]

Factors influencing Asian American group/subgroup identity

Several internal and external factors emerged as influencing Asian American experience and identity. This varies by subgroup and factor. ***Internal factors*** included cultural values and heritage, ethnic identity and pride, acculturation and bicultural identity, and generational status. ***External factors*** included perceived discrimination and stereotypes, community composition and local context, societal narratives and representation, and historical and migration context.

Across articles, these factors were found to interact with each other, whether to reinforce or complicate an individual's sense of belonging and group identity. They are described further in Table 8.

Table 8. Descriptions of Internal and External Factors Influencing Asian American Identity

Internal Factor	Description
Cultural Values and Heritage	Strong adherence to values such as family ties, filial piety, cultural practices, and languages, can help preserve ethnic identification.[7,43-45]
Ethnic Identity and Pride	The degree to which individuals affirm and positively regard their ethnic identity influences self-identification.[7,46-50]
Acculturation and Bicultural Identity	Personal perceptions of acculturation, such as bicultural harmony or conflict, feelings of cultural distance, strategies for balancing multiple cultural identities.[47,48,50-52]
Generational Status	First-generation immigrants may exhibit stronger ethnic attachment or different forms of identity, whereas subsequent generations may adapt or blend their identification based on lived experiences and socialization.[47]

External Factor	Description
Perceived Discrimination and Stereotypes	Experiences of discrimination, both interpersonal (e.g., racial microaggressions) and structural (e.g., exclusion from the "default" Asian category), can strengthen ethnic identity as a coping mechanism or, conversely, lead to distancing from the group if stigma is internalized.[9,36,43,53,54]
Community Composition and Local Context	The size and presence of co-ethnic communities, ethnic enclaves, and peer networks influence the salience of ethnic versus pan-ethnic identities.[45,52,54]
Societal Narratives and Representation	Government definitions, the "model minority" myth, public perceptions (such as being seen as perpetual foreigners)[35-37,53,55]
Historical and Migration Context	Shared migration histories (e.g., reasons for migration like escape from war or seeking educational opportunity, refugee experiences), generational differences.[31,56]

Factors influencing connectedness between Asian American subgroups

Language, generational status, shared stereotypes, experiences of discrimination, and U.S. immigration history play roles in shaping the connections (or lack thereof) between Asian American subgroups. These connections are dynamic and context-dependent rather than uniform across the Asian American population.

A 2024 Pew Research Center survey found that Asian Americans are more likely to identify by their ***national origin group*** than by the broader "Asian" label, especially among those who are first generation.[57] This results in a tendency for subgroups to maintain strong in-group affiliations while sometimes perceiving less connection to other Asian subgroups unless shared experiences (such as immigration status, cultural practices, or language barriers) foster pan-ethnic solidarity. For example, one article explored how Indian Americans are less likely to identify as "Asian" or "Asian American" when they live among large non-Indian Asian populations, especially if they are highly integrated or have experienced discrimination.[50] In areas with large Indian communities, Indian Americans tend to identify more strongly as "Indian."

Social perceptions and experiences with discrimination or shared marginalization may either bridge or reinforce boundaries between subgroups. The length of time in the United States and number of individuals often privileges East Asians to be perceived as the default for "Asian," which can result in the exclusion or marginalization of South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Central Asian groups from pan-Asian identification and community connections.[36,46,53]

Social context, institutional settings, and interracial interactions can foster affiliation or differentiation with other Asian subgroups. For example, one article described Filipino American identification shifting from seeing themselves as Asian in high school due to overrepresentation in honors classes to experiencing a sense of difference from East Asian peers in college.[47] This may lead some to question or distance themselves from a pan-Asian identity, sometimes forming pan-minority identifications with Latinos or African Americans. Similarly, ImpACT findings noted debate over identification of Filipino Americans as Asian American, Pacific Islander, or Latino due to distinct geographic, cultural, linguistic, and religious factors.

Patterns by generation and U.S. geography

Findings related to generation varied, while there was insufficient information to assess the role of U.S. geography.

Those with low acculturation were most often first- or second-generation Asian Americans. First generation individuals, including among Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese American populations, were more likely to experience othering and exhibited low assimilation, often maintaining strong ties to their country of origin and cultural practices.[8,28,41,47,58] In contrast, second generation individuals exhibited higher levels of acculturation, integration, and internal ways of self-identification, particularly in areas of educational and occupational settings.[8,28,47,59] Second generation individuals were also noted as experiencing othering in some articles that we reviewed.[28,47] Other generational groups between first and second generations were mentioned but did not exhibit any cross-cutting

patterns across categories in the articles that we reviewed. Across generations, family structure remained predominantly nuclear, though extended family support was found to be more common among Southeast Asian and South Asian groups.[4,32,33,41,51,59-62]

Where possible, the team captured U.S. geographic location discussed in each reviewed article. While some articles mentioned specific locations, others were not specific or did not mention geography. Therefore, there was insufficient information to assess whether U.S. geography plays a role in patterns of sociocultural or historical factors among Asian American subgroups.

Research Question 2: Which Asian American subgroups share similarities in well-being outcomes?

We primarily used the quantitative data analysis findings to answer this question — particularly the 4- and 6-class LCA models — along with findings on well-being determinants from the literature scan and thematic analysis.

As noted earlier, **Asian subgroup was not a statistically significant variable in any of the LCA models.** However, subgroups emerged as notable based on their proportion in a model class being substantially higher than their proportion in the general adult population. Using a 1.5x overrepresentation threshold, only a subset of subgroups were identified as notable. Moreover, some of these subgroups appeared in only a few of the five subsamples.

After modifying the overrepresentation threshold to 1.25x, as seen in Table 9, nearly every Asian subgroup was notable in the 4-class model and **all subgroups were notable in the 6-class model**. Although these classes should not be interpreted as definitive clusters, they identify distinct patterns of characteristics, including Asian subgroup, that inform potential groupings.

Table 9. Asian Subgroup Class Assignment in Latent Class Analysis

4-class model		6-class model	
1.5x	**1.25x**	**1.5x**	**1.25x**
Bangladeshi Bhutanese Burmese Cambodian Lao Mongolian Nepalese Thai Vietnamese	Bangladeshi Bhutanese Burmese Cambodian Indonesian Lao Mongolian Nepalese Sri Lankan* Thai Vietnamese	Bangladeshi Bhutanese Burmese Cambodian Lao Mongolian Nepalese Thai Vietnamese	Bangladeshi Bhutanese Burmese Cambodian Indonesian Lao Mongolian Nepalese Sri Lankan Thai Vietnamese
[Not a class in this model]	*[Not a class in this model]*	Bangladeshi Bhutanese Burmese Chinese* Mongolian	Bangladeshi Bhutanese Burmese Cambodian Chinese Korean Malaysian* Mongolian Nepalese Pakistani Thai* Vietnamese
	Japanese	Japanese*	Bhutanese* Filipino Japanese* Taiwanese Thai
Indian Taiwanese	Indian Malaysian* Sri Lankan* Taiwanese	Indian Taiwanese*	Indian Malaysian Sri Lankan Taiwanese
Hmong Other Asian alone or any Asian combination	Hmong Japanese Other Asian alone or any Asian combination	Cambodian Hmong Japanese* Lao Other Asian alone or any Asian combination	Cambodian Hmong Japanese Lao Other Asian alone or any Asian combination
[Not a class in this model]	*[Not a class in this model]*	Japanese Other Asian alone or any Asian combination	Japanese Other Asian alone or any Asian combination Taiwanese

**Appeared as notable in a subset of subsamples*

Note that some subgroups (Japanese, Other Asian alone or any Asian combination) appear in multiple classes. The classes are defined by multiple characteristics, including but not limited to Asian subgroup. Tables 11 and 12 on pages C-13 – C19 list the defining characteristics for each model and the values that defined each class in the models.

The top variables predicting or driving how the classes clustered were similar across the two models. In both models, the top predictor variable was ***citizenship*** (U.S.-born, born in territories/outside the U.S. to U.S. parents, naturalized, non-citizen). Other variables that appeared in the top five in both models included ***employment*** (more than full-time, full-time, part-time, did not work), ***educational attainment*** (bachelor's degree or above), and ***income-to-poverty ratio category*** (0-100, 101-150, 151-200, 201-500, 501+). Table 10 shows the gain scores of the top predicting variables across the two models. Gain scores indicate the relative importance or contribution of each variable in predicting how the classes clustered within the models, with higher scores indicating greater influence on the classification.

Table 10. Tree Model Gain Scores for 4-Class and 6-Class LCA Models

Variable	Gain Score	
	4-class model	**6-class model**
Citizenship	0.59	0.26
Income Category	0.002	0.22
Employment	0.30	0.14
Bachelor's or Above	0.06	0.08
Occupation	0.02	0.03
Income-to-Poverty Ratio Category	0.02	0.12

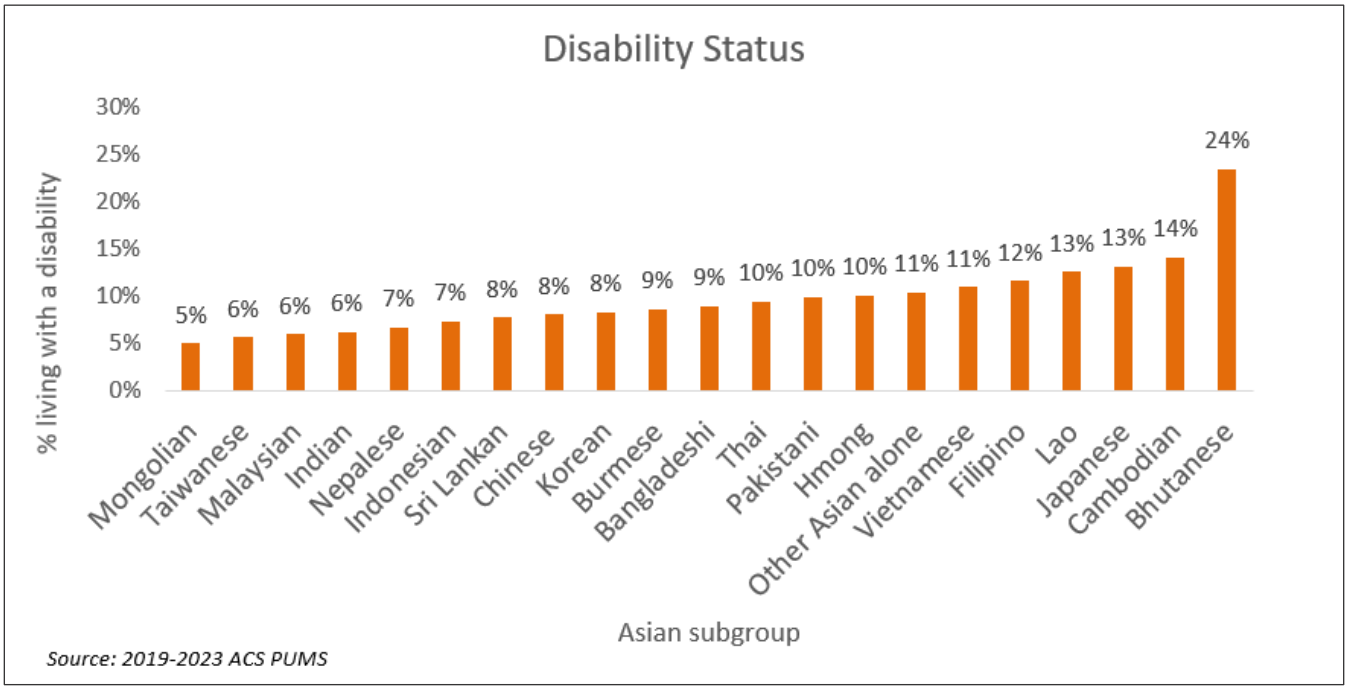
Citizenship had the highest gain score in both models, indicating it was the strongest predictor of class membership.

Inequities in well-being outcomes among Asian American subgroups

We observed disparities within, and across, well-being areas. Importantly, Asian subgroup was not found to be the driving factor of outcomes included in this analysis.

Health. As seen in Exhibit 4, the proportion living with a disability ranged from 5.1 percent (Mongolian) to 23.6 percent (Bhutanese) among the 21 Asian subgroups. Taiwanese (5.7 percent) and Indian (6.3 percent) Americans had the second and third lowest proportions.

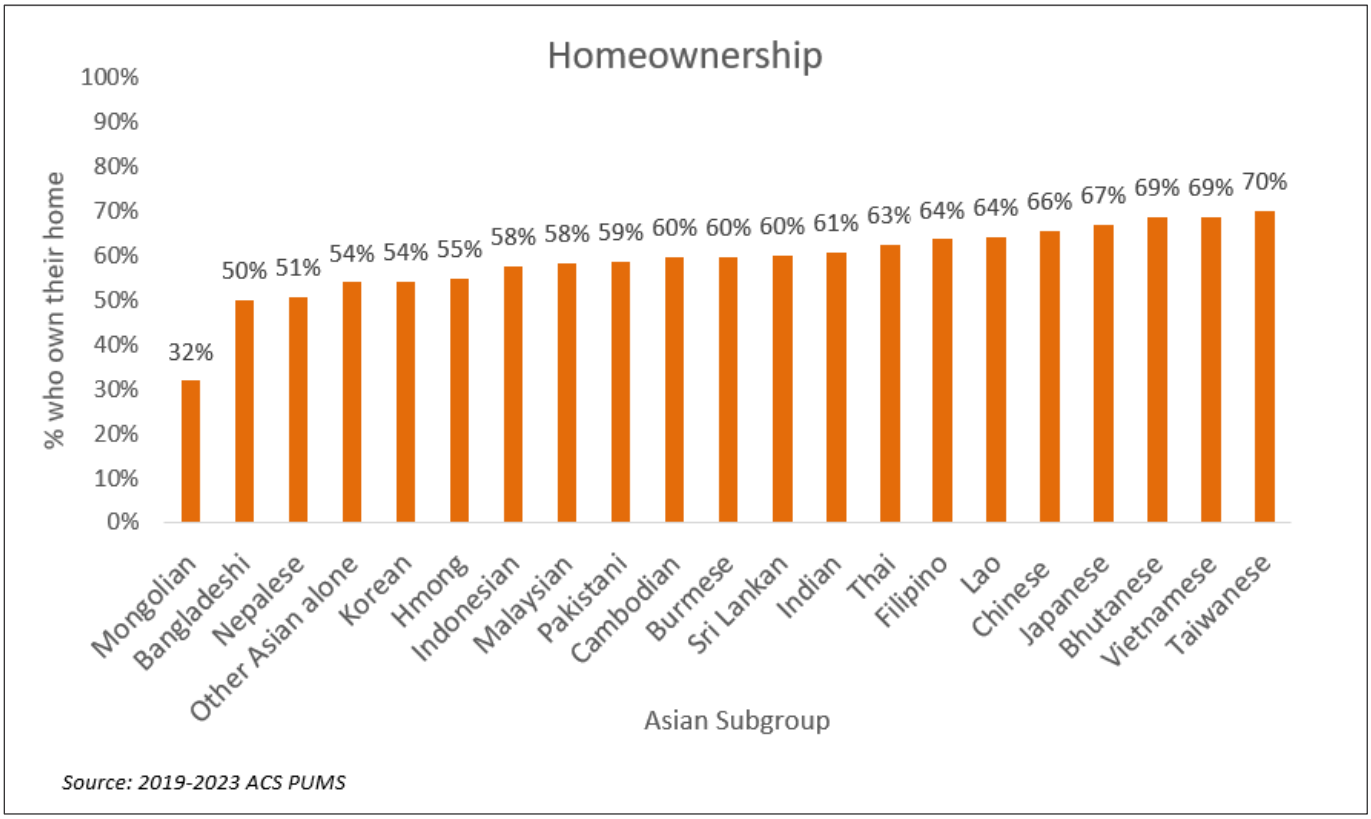
Exhibit 4. Disability Status Among Asian Country or Ethnic Subgroups



The majority of individuals have health insurance coverage, with coverage rates ranging from 73.5 percent to 97.1 percent. Mongolian Americans had the lowest coverage at 73.5 percent, followed by Burmese Americans at 86.1 percent. Indian (94.9 percent), Taiwanese (95.9 percent), and Japanese (97.1 percent) American populations had the highest rates of health insurance coverage.

Housing. We looked at housing by homeownership rates and housing costs. As seen in Exhibit 5, most homeownership rates ranged from 50.0 percent (Bangladeshi) to 70.1 percent (Taiwanese), although Mongolian Americans had a lower rate (32.0 percent). The larger country or ethnic subgroups appear to have higher rates of homeownership, except for Korean Americans, which ranked fifth lowest among the subgroups.

Exhibit 5. Homeownership Among Asian Country or Ethnic Subgroups



A key indicator of financial stability is housing affordability, measured here as housing costs making up less than 30 percent of gross annual income. For this indicator, most outcomes similarly ranged between 54.0 percent (Bangladeshi) to 76.5 percent (Bhutanese), with a lower rate among Mongolian Americans (40.4 percent).

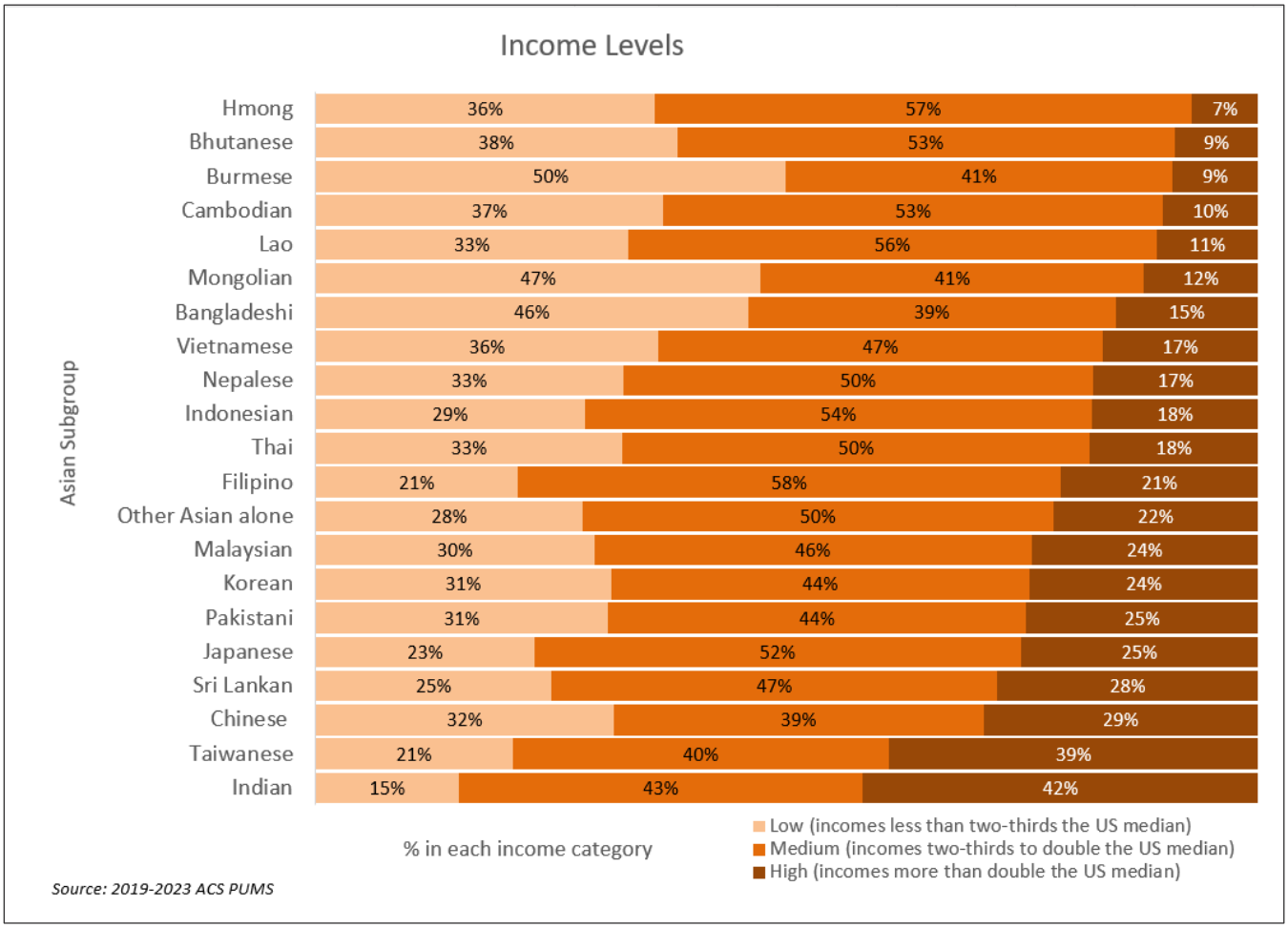
We observed that some subgroups with higher rates of homeownership also experience better housing affordability, such as Bhutanese, Filipino, Lao, and Taiwanese Americans. There were also some subgroups that had higher rates of homeownership but lower rates of housing affordability in relation to other Asian country or ethnic subgroups, such as Chinese American (65.6 percent homeownership and 62.4 percent housing affordability) and Thai American (62.5 percent and 60.3 percent, respectively). Mongolian and Bangladeshi Americans had the lowest rates of both homeownership and housing affordability.

Income. Existing literature has highlighted income inequalities among Asian American communities. Pew data show that median income of Asian-headed household spanned a wide range in 2023, with median annual household income in Indian-headed households almost three times that of Mongolian-headed households. When looking at income category, Pew also found that the percent of each subgroup in the high and low categories range across subgroups.[3,63] Indian alone or in combination with another Asian subgroup and Japanese alone or in combination with another Asian subgroup had the highest percentages of the subgroup in the high-income category in addition to the lowest percentages of the subgroup in the low-income category, indicating higher average incomes among

these subgroups. Mongolian, Bangladeshi, and Burmese Americans had the greatest percentages of the subgroups in the low-income category.

As seen in Exhibit 6, our analysis of 2019-2023 data generally aligns with these findings, showing Indian and Taiwanese Americans among those with the highest proportions in the higher-income class and the smallest in the lower-income class. Note that Pew's analysis combined Taiwanese with Chinese, which may account for some differences in results.

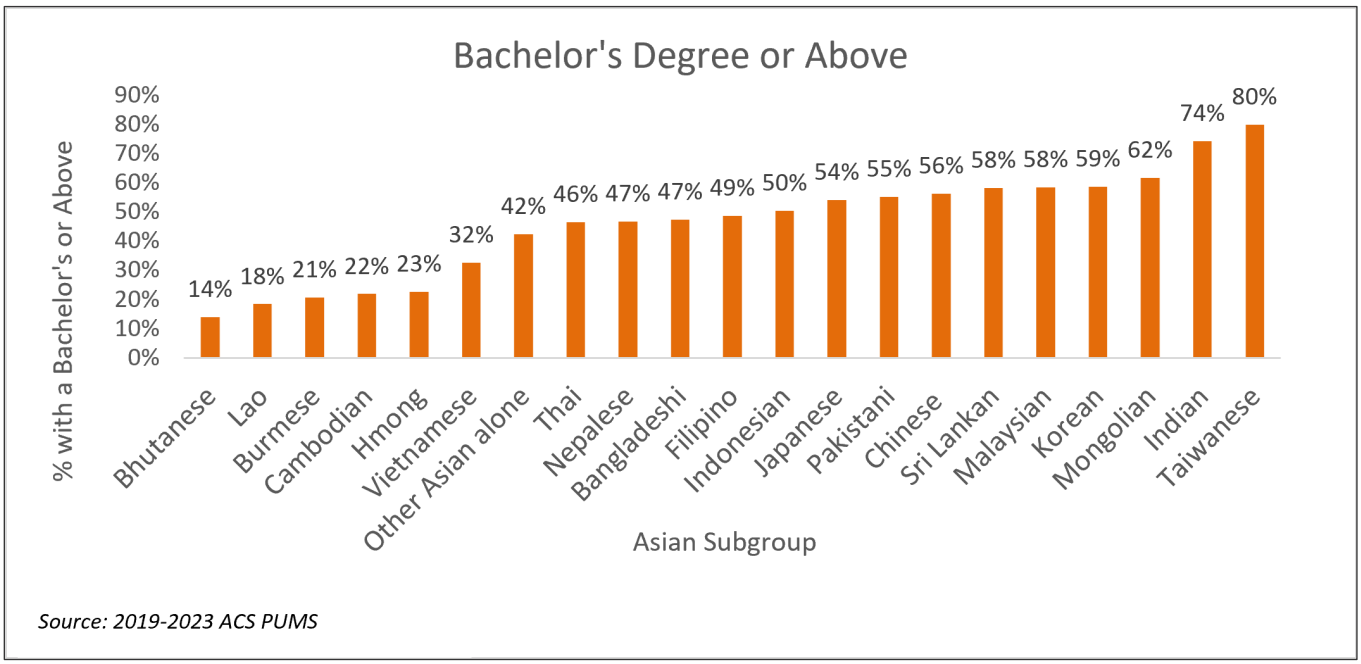
Exhibit 6. Income Levels Among Asian Country or Ethnic Subgroups



Education. Previous Pew research using 2022 ACS data show that Indian and Taiwanese Americans have the highest rates of having a bachelor's degree or higher, at 77 percent and 83 percent, respectively.[63] Lao, Bhutanese, Cambodian, Burmese, and Hmong Americans have far lower rates of having a bachelor's degree or higher, ranging from 18 percent to 26 percent.

Exhibit 7 presents the results from our analysis, which reinforced Pew's findings. For example, Indian and Taiwanese Americans have the highest rates of having a bachelor's degree or higher, and the same five Asian subgroups had the lowest rates of having a bachelor's degree or higher.

Exhibit 7. Attainment of Bachelor's Degree or Higher Among Asian Country or Ethnic Subgroups



Source: 2019-2023 ACS PUMS

Patterns in social service attitudes, barriers, and facilitators across Asian country or ethnic subgroups

Overall, there was no clear pattern for which Asian American subgroups share similar attitudes about and face similar barriers and facilitators to social services. Specifically, we looked at barriers and facilitators related to racialization, cultural, and historical factors. For several subgroups, these domains were seen as both barriers and facilitators. Similarities are context-dependent; therefore, no clear subgroup patterns emerged.

Barriers and facilitators that many subgroups faced included:

- **Internal barriers** across several subgroups included stigma, cultural and family expectations, and mistrust or lack of awareness about available social or mental health services. Patriarchal norms and the desire to preserve culture or family reputation were also recurring internal barriers.[34,64-71]
- **External barriers** include limited English proficiency, high service costs or lack of insurance, lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services, and unfamiliarity with U.S. social service systems.[72-75]
- Effective **facilitators** were interventions that were culturally tailored, provided through community or faith-based organizations, and that enhanced language access and social support networks. Family and community endorsement of services, and peer/community outreach, can improve social service use. [4,39,69,76-88]

Structural and systemic influences on differences in well-being outcomes among Asian country or ethnic subgroups

Overall, there was no clear pattern for which Asian American subgroups experience similarities in structural and systemic factors (e.g., policies, laws, social service systems) affecting differences in outcomes. This may partly reflect limitations in the evidence base. Despite including targeted search terms, the literature scan yielded few articles that explicitly focused on how policies, laws, and social service systems shape subgroup differences.

Some articles did highlight the need for culturally competent care and culturally and linguistically appropriate services for the following communities: Afghan, Bhutanese, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and South Asian more broadly.[28,62,67,69,88-93] Notably, while policies may support Asian American refugee settlement in the U.S., these groups often face other barriers affecting outcomes.[28]

Patterns by generation and U.S. geography

Overall, there was no clear evidence that similarities in well-being outcomes are consistent across generations or U.S. geographic contexts.

This may partly reflect the lack of data on generational status. However, we did have data on ***age and decade of entry*** (for individuals born outside the U.S.), which emerged as significant or defining characteristics for some classes. For example, in the 6-class LCA model:

- Five classes were defined by certain age groups. Two have greater proportions of adults ages 65+ and three groups each have a greater proportion of 18-29-, 30-44-, or 45-64-year-olds, respectively. One class did not have a defining age group.
- Decade of entry was a defining characteristic in some but not all samples. Two classes had greater proportions of individuals who entered in the 1990s or 2000s; one class was defined by those who entered through the 1980s; one class by those who entered through the 1980s or after the 2010s; and two classes did not have defining decades of entry.

U.S. geographic location (i.e., Census division) was not identified as a defining characteristic of the LCA classes or as a predictor of well-being outcomes in the tree model results. This was supported by descriptive analyses of Asian subgroups and U.S. geographic location, which did not surface any clear or consistent patterns of similarities across well-being areas but did produce some notable results:

- For homeownership, there appears to be higher homeownership in the South Atlantic division[vii] across Asian subgroups. However, that region is home to many Asian American communities, who also reside in other regions with varying homeownership outcomes.

[vii] The South Atlantic division includes the following states/districts: West Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida.

- Employment status (among those in the labor force) showed some Asian subgroup variation in the East North Central division[viii]. Almost all (95 percent or higher) Burmese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Nepalese, and Taiwanese Americans in the sample population in this region are employed, compared to 60 to 90 percent of Cambodian and Sri Lankan Americans in the same region. These smaller subgroups (Cambodian and Sri Lankan) also appear to exhibit greater variability in employment status in other geographic regions than the larger subgroups. Looking at employment rates that also include people not in the labor force, employment among Japanese Americans declines across states, suggesting that a larger share are not in the labor force—possibly related to the higher proportion of older adults in the Japanese American community compared to other communities.
- For educational attainment (bachelor's degree or higher), housing affordability, medium-to-high income levels, and disability status, there were no clear differences by state or Census division between Asian subgroups.

[viii] The East North Central Division includes the following states/districts: Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.

Characteristics of 4-Class and 6-Class Models

Table 11 summarizes the defining characteristics of each class in the 4-class model, while Table 12 presents a corresponding summary for the 6-class model. Note that Tables 11 and 12 list Asian subgroups that are represented at a 1.5x threshold relative to their share of the general adult population; refer to Table 9 for Asian subgroup class assignment based on a 1.25x threshold.

Table 11. Defining Characteristics of the 4-Class Model

Characteristics not identified across all five subsamples are indicated by shaded cells (*).

Characteristic	Class			
	Born outside the U.S., not in labor force	Born outside the U.S., worker, high income	Born outside the U.S., worker, low income	U.S. born
Place of Birth	Outside the U.S.	Outside the U.S.	Outside the U.S.	U.S.
Citizenship Status		Not a citizen of the U.S.	Born in territories/born abroad to U.S. parents	Born in the U.S.
Employment Status	Not in labor force	Worked full-time (between and including 30 to 40 hours)	Worked part-time (< 30 hours)	Worked part-time (< 30 hours)
Income Level	Low (incomes less than two-thirds of the U.S. median household income, after incomes have been adjusted for household size)	High (incomes that are more than double the median)	Low (incomes less than two-thirds of the U.S. median household income, after incomes have been adjusted for household size)	
Level of Educational Attainment		Associate's degree or above	Less than an Associate's degree	

Characteristic	Class			
	Born outside the U.S., not in labor force	Born outside the U.S., worker, high income	Born outside the U.S., worker, low income	U.S. born
Asian Subgroup		Indian Taiwanese	Bangladeshi Bhutanese Burmese Cambodian Lao Mongolian Nepalese Thai Vietnamese	Hmong Other Asian alone or any Asian combination
Occupation Type	Not working Unemployed Not in Labor Force	Management, STEM, Health, Business Computer, Engineering, and Science Occupations Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations Management, Business, and Financial Occupations	Blue-collar, less technical job Construction and Extraction Occupations Office and Administrative Support Occupations Production Occupations Service Occupations Sales and Related Occupations Transportation and Material Moving Occupations Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	Lower-paying jobs Construction and Extraction Occupations Office and Administrative Support Occupations Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media Occupations Military Specific Occupations
Ability to Speak English	Not well Not at all	Very well	Well Not well	Only speak English

Characteristic	Class			
	Born outside the U.S., not in labor force	Born outside the U.S., worker, high income	Born outside the U.S., worker, low income	U.S. born
Decade of Entry	Before 1959 1960 – 1969 1970 - 1979	1990 – 1999* 2000 – 2009* 2010 or later*	1990 – 1999* 2000 – 2009*	Born in US
Income to Poverty Ratio	>=0 & <= 100 >100 & <=150	501+	>100 & <=150 > 150 & <= 200	
Health Insurance	Without private health insurance coverage			
Disability Status	With a disability			
Age	65 years old or above			18-29 years old
Marital Status	Widowed		Separated*	Never married
Internet	No access to the Internet at this house, apartment, or mobile home			
Food Stamp	Yes			

Table 12. Defining Characteristics of the 6-Class Model

Characteristics not identified across all five subsamples are indicated by shaded cells (*).

Characteristic	Class					
	Born outside the U.S., employed, high education, high income	Born outside the U.S., not in labor force, mostly citizen by naturalization in chart	Born outside the U.S., not working, low income, low education	Born outside the U.S., employed, low income, low education	U.S. born, employed, high income, high education	U.S. born, unemployed, low income, low education, half 18-29
Place of Birth	Born outside the U.S.	Born outside the U.S.	Born outside the U.S.	Born outside the U.S.	U.S.	U.S.
Citizenship Status	Not a citizen of the U.S.*	U.S. citizen by naturalization*	Not a citizen of the U.S.	Born in territories/born abroad to U.S. parents		
Employment Status		Not in labor force	Unemployed Not in labor force			Unemployed
Income Level	High (incomes that are more than double the median)	Middle income*	Low (incomes less than two-thirds of the U.S. median household income, after incomes)	Low (incomes less than two-thirds of the U.S. median household income, after incomes)	High (incomes that are more than double the median)	Low (incomes less than two-thirds of the U.S. median household income, after incomes)
Level of Educational Attainment	Bachelor's degree or above Associate's degree or above		Less than a Bachelor's degree Less than an Associate's degree	Less than a Bachelor's degree Less than an Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree or above Associate's degree or above*	Less than a Bachelor's degree Less than an Associate's degree
Asian Subgroup	Indian		Bangladeshi Bhutanese Burmese Mongolian	Bangladeshi Bhutanese Burmese Cambodian Lao Mongolian Nepalese Thai Vietnamese	Japanese Other Asian alone or any Asian combination	Cambodian Hmong Lao Other Asian alone or any Asian combination
	Taiwanese*	Japanese*	Chinese (except Taiwanese)*			Japanese*

Characteristic	Class					
	Born outside the U.S., employed, high education, high income	**Born outside the U.S., not in labor force, mostly citizen by naturalization in chart**	**Born outside the U.S., not working, low income, low education**	**Born outside the U.S., employed, low income, low education**	**U.S. born, employed, high income, high education**	**U.S. born, unemployed, low income, low education, half 18-29**
Occupation Type	Computer, Engineering, and Science Occupations Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations Management, Business, and Financial Occupations	Unemployed Not in Labor Force	Unemployed Not in Labor Force	Construction and Extraction Occupations Office and Administrative Support Occupations Production Occupations Service Occupations Sales and Related Occupations Transportation and Material Moving Occupations Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media Occupations Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations Management, Business, and Financial Occupations Military Specific Occupations	Construction and Extraction Occupations Office and Administrative Support Occupations Transportation and Material Moving Occupations Unemployed Military Specific Occupations
						Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations* Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations* Service Occupations* Sales and Related Occupations*
Ability to Speak English	Very well	Well* Not well* Not at all*	Not well Not at all	Well Not well	Speaks only English	Speaks only English

Characteristic	Class					
	Born outside the U.S., employed, high education, high income	Born outside the U.S., not in labor force, mostly citizen by naturalization in chart	Born outside the U.S., not working, low income, low education	Born outside the U.S., employed, low income, low education	U.S. born, employed, high income, high education	U.S. born, unemployed, low income, low education, half 18-29
Decade of Entry	1990 - 1999 2000 - 2009	Before 1959 1960 – 1969 1970 - 1979	Before 1959 1960 – 1969 1970 – 1979 1980-1989	2000-2009		
	2010 or later*	1980 – 1989*	2010 or later*	1990 – 1999*		
Income to Poverty Ratio	501+		>=0 & <= 100 >100 & <=150 > 150 & <= 200	>100 & <=150 > 150 & <= 200	501+	>=0 & <= 100
						>100 & <=150* > 150 & <= 200*
Health Insurance		Without private health insurance coverage*	Without private health insurance coverage			
Disability Status		With a disability	With a disability			
Age	30-44 45-64	65 years old or above	65 years old or above	45-64 years old*	30-44 years old*	18-29 years old
Marital Status		Widowed	Widowed	Separated*	Never married	Never married
			Separated*			
Internet			Yes, without paying a cell phone company or Internet service provider No access to the Internet at this house, apartment, or mobile home			Yes, without paying a cell phone company or Internet service provider*
Food Stamp			Yes			Yes*

Characteristic	Class					
	Born outside the U.S., employed, high education, high income	Born outside the U.S., not in labor force, mostly citizen by naturalization in chart	Born outside the U.S., not working, low income, low education	Born outside the U.S., employed, low income, low education	U.S. born, employed, high income, high education	U.S. born, unemployed, low income, low education, half 18-29
Multi-generational Household		Yes, is a multigenerational household				
Own/Rent			Renter or occupied without rent			
Housing Costs			Housing-related costs (gross rent or owner costs) are NOT 30% or less of household income Not applicable (vacant/not owned or being bought/occupied without rent/no income)			Housing-related costs (gross rent or owner costs) are NOT 30% or less of household income * Not applicable* (vacant/not owned or being bought/occupied without rent/no income)
Work Hours	Worked full-time (between and including 30 to 40 hours)	Did not work	Did not work	Worked part-time (< 30 hours)	Worked more than full-time (> 40 hours)	Worked part-time (< 30 hours)

Appendix D. Key Themes from Community Input

Factors Influencing Identity

Community listening session participants generally described their identity using specific ethnic, sub-ethnic, or country-of-origin terms, rather than broader regional labels. While some participants noted that broad labels such as "Asian American" can be useful as a general or shared term, most preferred more specific identifiers (e.g., country of origin or ethnicity) to better reflect cultural and historical differences. Moreover, mid-level geographic regional categories such as East Asian, South Asian, or Southeast Asian were seen as useful in certain contexts—particularly when they reflect shared migration histories or similar cultural and historical experiences—but many participants felt that important differences among communities are not captured in these categories. These themes align with findings from the ImpACT project, where public comments noted that regional groupings can be useful but are context-dependent and that geography is inadequate as an organizing factor by itself. As a result, more specific identifiers were viewed as better aligned with how individuals understand and describe their own identities.

Across listening sessions, participants described identity as shaped by multiple factors, including spoken language, English proficiency, migration history and generational status, education, cultural beliefs and practices, and religion. ImpACT findings reinforced these factors as important for classification. Listening session participants also emphasized that no single factor—even country of origin or ethnicity—was sufficient on its own to meaningfully define groupings. Instead, they expressed that categorization should combine multiple dimensions, including sociocultural, historical, and structural factors.

Perspectives on Proposed Categories

Across community listening sessions, participants generally found the categories meaningful or acceptable as a starting point, particularly as they incorporated shared migration histories, refugee experiences, and historical or geopolitical context. Some participants emphasized that clustering helped capture common experiences of war, displacement, and migration, as well as shared social and cultural factors. However, country-based labeling emerged as a key point of tension. Some participants noted that country of origin or ethnicity alone is not enough to meaningfully group people, as it may oversimplify, mislead, and fail to capture heterogeneity within a given Asian subgroup. When the clusters were framed more descriptively, without country labels, participants tended to find them more acceptable.

Participants also emphasized that the usefulness of categories is highly context-dependent. Categories were seen as more meaningful for certain purposes (e.g., migration or employment research) than for others (e.g., identity or community belonging). Some noted that they can be a helpful organizing tool, with the value varying depending on a study's purpose.

Considerations for Improving Categories

Overall, there was no consensus across listening session participants on revisions for reassigning specific communities to another category. Suggestions varied, reflecting multiple perspectives and priorities. However, some participants identified potential ways to strengthen the groupings:

- **Account for differences within communities to better capture lived realities**. Categories should incorporate variation in language access, education, socioeconomic position, migration pathways and reasons, and historical experiences (e.g., colonization, forced migration, resettlement), all of which were seen as important for understanding well-being outcomes. Participants emphasized that when these dimensions are not adequately captured, categories may unevenly represent lived realities—for example, by organizing Filipino Americans according to migration for non-professional employment, better economic opportunities, or family reunification despite substantial representation in healthcare professions, and by grouping them with subgroups with different cultural and religious characteristics; or by organizing Vietnamese Americans based on average migration through refugee pathways that may not align with some individuals' actual migration histories.
- **Use cultural and linguistic factors thoughtfully**. Language was seen as central to access and communication, and religion was noted as shaping health behaviors and decision-making. However, participants cautioned that these factors alone should not define groupings.
- **Keep the approach flexible**. Groupings should be adaptable and aligned with the specific purpose of the analysis, rather than fixed across all uses.
- **Avoid implying hierarchy.** Numbered or ordered groupings were seen by some as suggesting a ranking; more neutral ways of sorting the categories were preferred.

Additional Considerations

Listening session participants identified several other factors that should be incorporated to improve how groupings are defined and interpreted. While some of these factors are embedded in the categorization approach, participants emphasized the importance of how they are conceptualized and applied in practice.

One suggestion included **accounting for diasporic experiences**. Participants in one session suggested creating a category focused on transnational or diasporic communities, such as Indo-Caribbean Americans, whose identities, experiences, and migration histories are shaped across multiple countries rather than tied to a single place of origin. Notably, the ImpACT project found that the term "transnational" was disputed.

Historical and political context was also raised as an important consideration. Some participants noted that categorization decisions should take into account relationships between countries and intergenerational experiences of conflict or colonization. For instance, one group of participants pointed out that older generation Koreans may not identify with or feel comfortable being grouped with

persons of Japanese descent due to historical trauma. Another example involved Taiwan, where participants noted that its current placement may not fully reflect shared lived experiences and geopolitical history with China and Japan. Both examples—involving communities traditionally labelled as East Asian—underscore that geographic proximity alone does not necessarily translate into shared identity or experience. At the same time, many participants highlighted historical and cultural factors that often overlapped with geographic regional identities, such as Central and South Asian.

Appendix E. Triangulation of Findings

To answer *Research Question 3: Are there consistent patterns suggesting meaningful groupings across dimensions of culture, history, and well-being?,* the project team triangulated multiple data sources as described in Appendix B. Across these sources, we did not identify a single, definitive set of groupings by Asian country-of-origin/ethnicity. However, closer examination identified **areas of alignment across sources that could form a basis for constructing structured categories**.

Initial Triangulation

As described in Appendix C, in the cultural/historical analysis, we identified similarities among some Asian country or ethnic groups (e.g., Bangladeshi and Pakistani populations; Burmese, Cambodian, Hmong, and Lao populations) in historical migration reasons and pathways (e.g., employment or economic opportunities, family reunification, refugee experiences), settlement in ethnic enclaves, and levels of acculturation and assimilation. These patterns also aligned with ImpACT findings that historical factors such as migration history and refugee experiences, as well as culture and language, are important characteristics for classification. Both sets of findings also reinforced that many communities continue to identify by country of origin, ethnicity, or broader regional groupings, and that patterns of experience may differ by generational status.

Looking at the LCA results, the 4-class model was less useful for constructing groupings because it combined all U.S.-born individuals into a single category, limiting the ability to capture nuance. The 6-class model provided more meaningful differentiation: using a 1.25x overrepresentation threshold, every Asian country or ethnic subgroup was identified as notable in at least one class. In addition, several classes composed primarily of individuals born outside the U.S. shared similar characteristics, suggesting potential for consolidation. Across models, classification was driven primarily by place of birth (U.S. or outside the U.S.) and citizenship status and by socioeconomic factors, including income, employment, and educational attainment.

Across data sources, several areas of alignment and complementarity emerged. **Patterns in migration history partly overlapped with Asian subgroup representation in several classes identified in the 6-class LCA model.** The quantitative analyses highlighted variation associated with place of birth (U.S. or outside the U.S.), citizenship status, and SES, while the qualitative and community-informed findings emphasized the role of shared cultural context, generational dynamics, and lived experiences in shaping identity and well-being. Together, these findings pointed to a set of factors that could be used to organize subgroup differences in a meaningful and interpretable way.

Development of Draft Categories

Building on these triangulated patterns, the team developed preliminary categories by prioritizing the most consistent and actionable dimensions identified through triangulation. The strongest area of alignment across sources was the relationship between migration history and Asian subgroups defined in the LCA models, which also shared place of birth, citizenship, and socioeconomic characteristics.

However, because data on place of birth and citizenship are not always available and may be sensitive to collect, we selected historical migration patterns and SES as the primary organizing dimensions.

The team also noted the importance of cultural similarities from the cultural and historical analysis and the ImpACT findings, as well as the continued use of regional groupings as a useful, if imperfect, way of expressing identity. Accordingly, we incorporated geographic regional grouping as a secondary organizing factor. We recognize that regional categorizations differ by source and that for some subgroups, a clear consensus is lacking on which regional grouping is most appropriate. For example, we observed from both sources of community input that there is disagreement over whether Afghan should be categorized as Central or South Asian; Bhutanese as East or South Asian; and Mongolian and Tibetan as Central or East Asian. For this project, we drew primarily from sources such as the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Census Bureau, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations,[94-96] while also taking into account community input. For example, community partners that represent or serve Mongolian Americans indicated that they generally identify as Central Asian, so we incorporated this into the draft categorization structure.

We also considered feasibility in constructing the categories. Evidence suggested that a smaller number of categories would be more practical for use. Based on the identified organizing dimensions, we developed an initial four-category structure that balanced analytic clarity with practical applicability. In addition, our decision to include regional grouping as a secondary organizing factor helped ensure that the structure remained aligned with commonly used approaches and recognizable to users, while also integrating additional factors associated with variation in well-being outcomes among Asian American communities.

Continued Triangulation and Category Refinement

Community input from the listening sessions, ImpACT project, and the advisory panel was essential to refining the draft approach to better align with lived experiences where possible. For example, initial groupings placed Filipino Americans within a category characterized by Central, South, and Southeast Asian populations who, on average, historically migrated for non-professional employment, better economic opportunities, or family reunification and have lower to medium average SES. Community members highlighted that this framing did not adequately capture differences between Filipino Americans and other Asian American communities in historical context, English proficiency, religious background, and representation in professional sectors, particularly healthcare. Drawing on additional evidence from the cultural and historical analysis, ImpACT findings, and expert input, the project team considered that although migration for professional employment was substantial, it was one aspect of an overall pattern of economic and family-based migration. We then divided the original category into two, separating out Southeast Asian communities to better reflect cultural distinctions while retaining shared organizing factors. This resulted in shifting from a four-category structure to a five-category structure.

Similarly, we explored whether to change the placement of Afghan Americans based on community input, as described on the next page.

Applying Key Point #2, Step 2: Categorizing Asian subgroups not listed in Table 1

The project team applied this step to incorporate additional Asian country or ethnic subgroups into the initial draft categorization structure. For the additional quantitative analyses conducted to test draft categories, we used a more recently available 2024 release of the ACS data. This dataset included several Asian subgroups that did not appear as separate subgroups in the formative research dataset: Afghan, Kazakh, Mien, and Uzbek Americans.

To determine the best-fit category for each subgroup, we drew on formative research findings and community input to assign these subgroups to categories according to the organizing factors. For example, we initially placed Afghan Americans in a category alongside Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, Mien, and Vietnamese Americans, based on shared migration patterns and socioeconomic characteristics. During the listening tour, some community members suggested that Afghan Americans be recategorized with Bangladeshi, Kazakh, Mongolian, Nepalese, Pakistani, and Uzbek Americans, to align with cultural, linguistic, and other similarities.

To assess which of these two categories was the appropriate placement for Afghan Americans, the project team compared selected well-being outcomes for the Afghan subgroup only to the same outcomes for each of the two categories (not including Afghan Americans). This helped determine whether the inclusion of Afghan Americans in a category would inadvertently skew category-level outcomes. Results indicated that Afghan American outcomes were more similar to the original category for socioeconomic variables (educational attainment, income level) but to the alternate category for homeownership. For private health insurance coverage, Afghan American outcomes were closer to those of the alternate category, but outcome values were similar across the original and alternate categories.

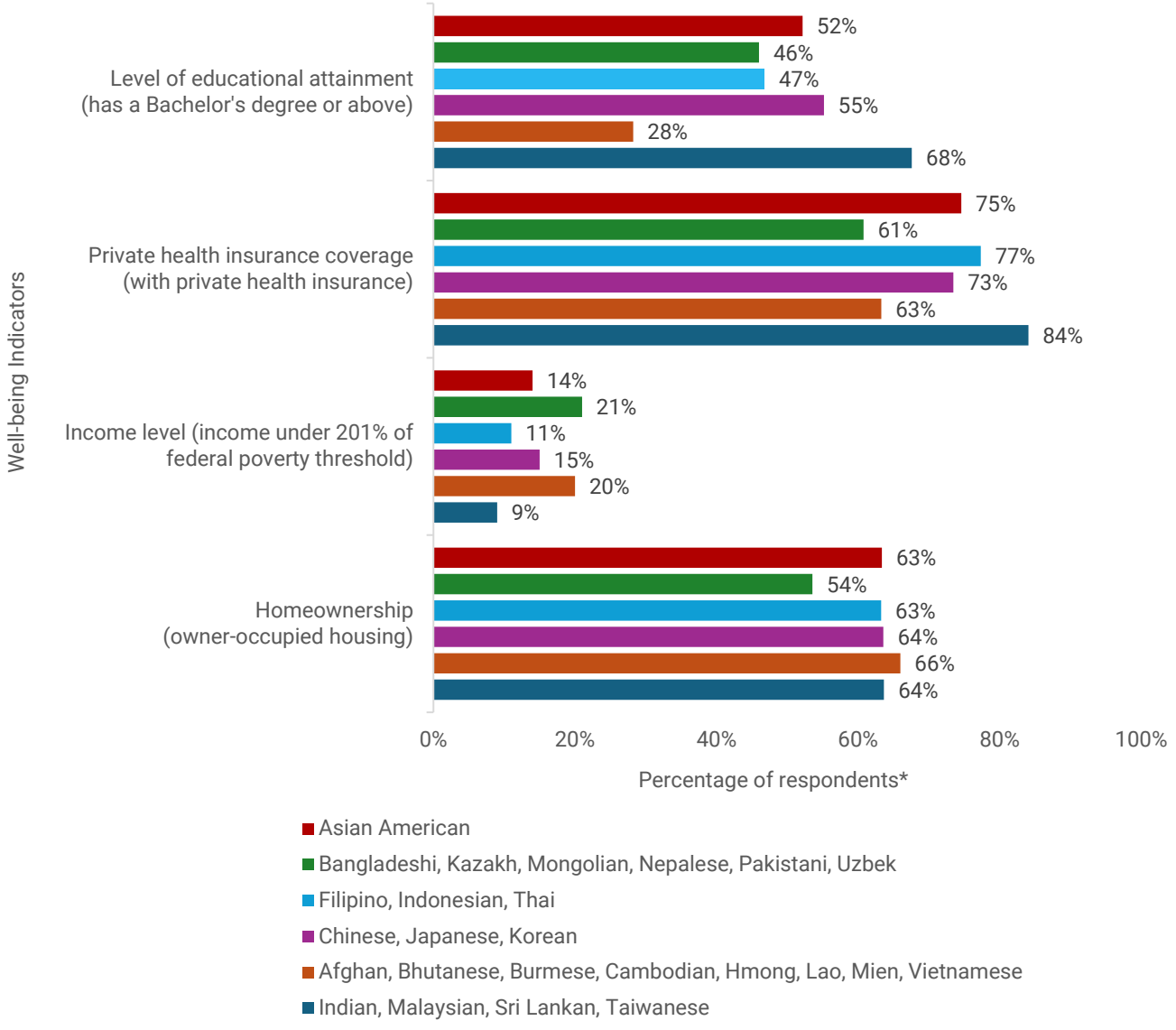
When comparing outcomes, we saw that Afghan American outcomes were more similar to those of the original category than those of the alternate category. As a result, placing Afghan Americans in the alternate category could misrepresent how other subgroups in that category are faring and have a disproportionate influence on category-level outcomes.

We tested multiple grouping scenarios to evaluate how different categorizations affected observed patterns of variation and interpretability, as well as to determine the most appropriate categories to place each of the subgroups. Overall, findings indicated that a four-category grouping structure provided a strong and practical default, preserving patterns of variation across indicators while maintaining interpretability and generally non-overlapping confidence intervals between categories. More granular groupings (e.g., five-category structures) offered additional nuance for private insurance and homeownership by capturing within-group heterogeneity and shifting which groups appeared to experience less favorable outcomes, though these differences were not always large enough to justify added complexity. Across all scenarios and indicators, statistically significant differences between groups were observed ($p < 0.05$), but some subgroup differences were modest or overlapping, suggesting that finer disaggregation may be applied selectively depending on the analytic goal and available sample size. Taking into account the added nuance of the five-category structure and its

ability to reflect community input regarding Filipino Americans, we proceeded with the five-category structure.

To evaluate whether the draft categories detected variation in well-being outcomes, we conducted additional descriptive analyses for selected indicators (educational attainment, private health insurance coverage, income level, and homeownership). As seen in Exhibit 8, results showed that the outcomes for Asian Americans as a whole do not adequately capture the range of outcomes among communities.

Exhibit 8. Comparison of Well-being Outcomes Among This Project's Categories



*Education, health insurance, and income are calculated using person-level weights and represent percentages of individual respondents. Homeownership is calculated using household-level weights and represents percentages of household respondents.

Source: 2024 ACS PUMS

For example, while 52 percent of Asian Americans hold a bachelor's degree or higher, this outcome ranges from 28 percent to 68 percent across the disaggregation categories. In addition, across all four

selected indicators, the Rao-Scott chi-square p-values were below 0.05, indicating statistically significant overall associations. In other words, there appeared to be meaningful differences between the categories. This reinforces the categorization structure as a practical approach that can effectively identify differences in well-being among Asian American communities that would not be apparent if the data were presented only at a highly aggregated level.

Another key theme from community input was the importance of flexibility in using the categories in different contexts. In response, we built out guidance to equip users with a practical roadmap for applying and adapting the approach. This includes identifying situations where adaptation may be appropriate, outlining considerations for making those adaptations, providing guidance on when to break out specific subgroups to improve representation, and highlighting key variables that may strengthen future data collection efforts. Together, these elements support the use of the categories as a structured starting point that can be tailored to specific goals and contexts.

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