

Ancestry, Birthplace, Race, and Language from the 1980 Census:

Who's Who Among Asians and Pacific Islanders?

In this paper we focus only on Asian groups listed separately on the race item of the 1980 Decennial Census. Table 1 shows the groups and figures derived from the complete sample detailed file for 1980. The Asian groups included Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Asian Indian and Vietnamese. Asian Indian and Vietnamese appeared as separate entries for the first time in 1980. The Asian groups shown were the largest in 1980. Two other Asian groups - Laotians (47,683 persons) and Thais (45,279 persons) - had more than 45,000 responses (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983b).

Table 1 also shows ancestry, language, and birthplace responses for these selected groups. The Census Bureau tabulated the data on the basis of correspondence to the race responses. For example, Japanese was the only acceptable language for a correspondence to the Japanese race response. The code lists included several Indian languages - Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Panjabi, Marathi, Gujarathi, Bihari, etc.

Ancestry and race items differ from other socio-demographic queries since responses may not be 'correct' in the same manner as responses to questions about age or income. Although we cannot determine the accuracy of a reported ancestry or race exactly, we can study those factors which relate to the choice of an ancestry. We can look at race, language, and own birthplace from the 1980 Census. (From the 1979 CPS we were able to look at birthplace, mother's birthplace, father's birthplace, mother

tongue, and current language with results appearing in the previous papers - See Levin and Farley, 1982).

Comparative analysis is difficult because of necessary census conventions and definitions. The Census Bureau collected language data continuously over the last century. Birthplace data also have remained straight forward except when boundaries change or countries reform into other entities because of wars or independence movements. Both race and ancestry responses have other problems.

Race, for example, reflects self-identification by respondents in the Census. Race does not denote any clear-cut scientific definition of biological stock. Also, for persons who could not provide a single response to the race question in 1980, the Census Bureau uses race of the person's mother. If respondents did not provide a single response for the person's mother, the Bureau used the first race the person reported, a change from the 1970 census procedure of using the person's father' race.

The Bureau directly tabulated the 6 groups listed above which appeared on the questionnaire. Staff also coded Thais, Laotians, and other write-in entries. Finally, the Bureau classified persons who did not classify themselves in one of the specific categories using a set of rules. For example, the Bureau classified entries on Nipponese and Japanese American as Japanese, and entries of Taiwanese and Cantonese as Chinese.

In 1980, respondents were asked the direct ethnic question, "What is ...'s ancestry?" Hence, respondents self-identified. Some individuals in the census reported a single ancestry group; others reported more than one group. Staff coded all single-and double-ancestry responses, and 17 frequently reported triple-origin ancestries. The Bureau coded only the

first two reported ancestries for all other responses of three or more ancestries. Persons reporting multiple ancestries appeared in more than one group, so the sum of ancestries reported was more than the total population. The Bureau tabulated persons reporting "Chinese-Hawaiian," for example, in both the Chinese and Hawaiian categories. None of the 17 triple responses including an Asian or Pacific Islander group. A person reporting "Chinese-Filipino-Hawaiian" would only appear in the Chinese and Filipino categories. The Bureau did not code or tabulate the Hawaiian response.

We use the terms 'ancestry' and 'ethnicity' interchangeably here. Ancestry refers to a person's nationality group, lineage, or the country in which the person or the person's parents or ancestors were born. Thus, persons reported their ancestry group regardless of the number of generations removed from their country of origin. Responses to the ancestry question reflected the ethnic group(s) with which persons identified. We cannot determine the degree of attachment or association the person had with the particular ethnic group(s).

The "Total" row in Table 1 includes all Asian coded responses. We exclude Pacific Islander responses unless they appeared as part of a multiple with an Asian response. The lack of a complete total resulted from the creation of separate files for Asians and Pacific Islanders from the complete sample detailed file. We could not combine the files for tabulation since households with Asian-Pacific Islander marriages would appear twice.

Altogether 3,482,178 persons reported an Asian race compared to 3,627,759 persons reporting one or more Asian ancestry responses, a

difference of 4.2 percent. Persons who responded with multiple race responses would have lost the second and later entries in coding and tabulation. Also, persons responding with multiple ancestry responses would have lost the third and later responses. The large number of ancestry responses reflects, in part, the additional responses coded for the ancestry item.

An Asian response appeared in both the race and ancestry responses in 3,143,812 cases (90.3 percent of all Asian race responses and 86.7 percent of all the Asian ancestry responses). There were 3,966,125 cases of an Asian response in either the race or ancestry item (but not necessarily in both) which was 113.9 percent of the Asian race responses and 109.3 percent of the Asian ancestry responses. The data show consistency for the race and ancestry items for all Asians.

Each of the selected groups also shows this same consistency more or less. For Chinese, the largest group by both race and ancestry, the ancestry responses were 110.1 percent of the race responses, 122.0 percent of the combined race and ancestry responses, and 91.9 percent of the "race or ancestry" responses.

Table 1 also shows the correspondence between birthplace and language with race and ancestry. Lieberman and Santi (1983) assessed the use of nativity data to estimate ethnic characteristics and patterns for selected groups. For our data, in every case, except birthplace, the numbers reporting corresponding language and birthplace were smaller than the race and ancestry responses. It is likely that the Vietnam birthplace total is larger than Vietnamese by ancestry because persons of other races, notably Chinese, were born in Vietnam, but were not Vietnamese.

A relationship existed between speakers, and persons born in the corresponding place to period of peak migration. Some groups, such as Japanese, had peak migration in the earlier decades of this century showed a smaller proportion of persons born in the corresponding area and speaking languages of the area. On the other hand, groups such as Vietnamese have large proportions speaking the language and having been born in the corresponding area.

We have disaggregated single and multiple ancestry responses in Table 1. The data presented here differ slightly from those published before (Bureau of the Census 1983a). Here we show multiple responses in the same common code range (for example, Japanese and Okinawan) used by the Census Bureau as multiple responses. The previous publication showed these as single responses. For example, 71,873 persons reported two multiple responses within the common code range (noted as "same ancestry" in Table 1) for all Asian ancestry responses. Therefore, no cases of "different Asian response" occurred.. That is, the Bureau recorded 71,873 persons as having two Asian ancestry responses. The proportions with the same ancestry response among the Asian and Pacific Islander groups were much smaller. Also, people reported Vietnamese as a multiple with another Asian response in somewhat less than half of its multiple responses (45.6 percent). None of the other groups had similar proportions of multiples with other Asian responses. Filipinos had the largest number and proportion of non-Asian multiple responses.

In summary, Asians and Pacific Islanders, whether defined by race or by ancestry had similar characteristics. Language and birthplace tend to

give different levels for the various characteristics than do race and ancestry because there is selection by age and recency of peak immigration.

Data grouped to compile Tables 2 through 4, are shown in a disaggregated matrix for Asians in Table 5. There were 5,838,006 Asians based on the sample file information in the 1980 Census. Of these, 3,482,178 were Asians by race and 3,627,759 were Asians by ancestry based on the sample numbers. As noted earlier, but shown again here, 3,143,812 persons were Asians by both race and ancestry. Of these, (percent) also spoke an Asian language but were not born in Asia; on the other hand, only (percent) were born in Asia but did not speak an Asian language. Fully (percent of those who were Asians by both race and ancestry) were Asians by race, ancestry, language and birthplace. This was percent of all persons of Asians ancestry, and percent of all persons of Asians race.

Table . Race, Ancestry, Birthplace, and Language Responses
for Asians: 1980

Responses	Responses	Percents			
		Ances-try	Birth- Race	place	Lan- guage
Ancestry.....	3,627,759	100.0	104.2	168.6	148.3
Race.....	3,482,178	96.0	100.0	161.8	142.3
Birthplace.....	2,152,277	59.3	61.8	100.0	88.0
Language.....	2,446,875	67.4	70.3	113.7	100.0

Ances.Race.....	3,143,812	86.7	90.3	146.1	128.5
Ances.....Bplace.....	1,967,716	54.2	56.5	91.4	80.4
Ances.....Lang.....	2,054,646	56.6	59.0	95.5	84.0
.....Race.Bplace.....	1,898,373	52.3	54.5	88.2	77.6
.....Race.....Lang.....	2,059,065	56.8	59.1	95.7	84.2
.....Bplace.Lang.....	1,791,486	49.4	51.4	83.2	73.2

Ances.Race.Bplace.....	1,898,373	52.3	54.5	88.2	77.6
Ances.Race.....Lang.....	2,002,456	55.2	57.5	93.0	81.8
Ances.....Bplace.Lang.....	1,689,672	46.6	48.5	78.5	69.1
.....Race.Bplace.Lang.....	1,735,185	47.8	49.8	80.6	70.9

Ances.Race.Bplace.Lang.....	1,654,098	45.6	47.5	76.9	67.6

Source: Unpublished tabulations, U.S. Bureau of the Census

About percent of the persons of Asians race and ancestry were neither born in Asia nor spoke an Asian language at home on 1980. Although only percent of the single ancestry Asians responses were in this category, this was true for percent of the multiple ancestry responses (and 88.1 percent of the "non-Asian other" multiple responses), showing exogamy which would certainly reduce the proportion speaking Asians at home and undoubtedly reflects length of residence of the group in the United States. In fact, those persons who were Asians by ancestry, race, and language, but were not born in Asia, were percent of the single ancestry persons with Asians race, but only percent of the multiple ancestry persons, and only percent of those multiples with a non-Asian other ancestry.

Since the marriage of two persons of single ancestry would only produce a single ancestry offspring if both parents were the same ancestry, but a marriage between a single and a multiple ancestry couple or two multiples will produce multiple ancestry offspring, it is not surprising that a smaller proportion of multiples than singles fall in these categories. As noted earlier, these persons also tend to be younger.

About percent of persons of Asians ancestry were not reported as having Asian race; only percent of persons of single Asian ancestry were not reported to be Asians by race, but percent of those with multiple ancestry responses fell in this category. Also although percent of all persons who were not Asians by race had Asian ancestry only (were not born in Asia and did not speak an Asian language at home), this was true for fully percent of persons with multiple ancestry responses, but for only percent of those with single ancestry responses. In fact, while only percent of all Asians by ancestry but not race spoke an Asian language at home, percent of those with a single ancestry response were in this category.

Although percent of all Asians by race were also Asians by ancestry, (percent) had some other specified ancestry response, and 39,016 (percent) did not specify an ancestry, or gave an unclassifiable response such as American or a religious affiliation. About percent of those specifying some other ancestry spoke an Asian language but were not born in Asia, and about percent neither spoke an Asian language nor were born in Asia. That is, (percent) of all persons who reported as Asians race, specified some other ancestry, were not born in Asia and did not speak an Asian language at home.

CONCLUSIONS

We have shown that for Asians, many of the demographic, social, and economic characteristics in the 1980 census do not differ appreciably by single census item. We have also presented data which show the numbers of persons defined as "Asian" depending on the method of selection by race, ancestry, language spoken at home, and birthplace.

These data show that it would not be necessary to get information for detailed Asian and Pacific Islander races on the 100 percent census questionnaire, if small areas do not require them. That is, since we tabulate only the 100 percent data for small areas, we cannot drop detailed races and still provide adequate information for planning in small local areas. However, ancestry provides a reasonable substitute for race in most cases for the sample data.

The data presented here are for 1980. By 1990, the effects of the increased immigration from Asian and Pacific Islander areas will be showing up in both the first and second generation data. Much of the data presented here is for fairly recent immigrants. We have already seen in these data that less recent immigrants and later generation persons differ considerably from the recent immigrants. Therefore, ancestry probably will not be a good substitute for race in 1990.

In fact, if we are going to get complete information for planning and policy decisions for Asian and Pacific Islander groups, we will eventually need information both for parental birthplace and ancestry.