

# Asians in the U.S. labor force: profile of a diverse population

*The labor force characteristics of the Nation's 11.2 million Asians vary considerably when the data are disaggregated by Asian group; this report examines similarities and differences in labor force participation, employment, unemployment, and more for the Asian groups, particularly during the 2008–2010 period*

Mary Dorinda Allard

In 2010, the Nation's 11.2 million Asians accounted for 4.7 percent of the U.S. civilian noninstitutional population ages 16 and older, according to data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The largest Asian group in 2010 were the Chinese, making up 22 percent of all Asians. Next came Asian Indians, who made up 18 percent, followed by Filipinos (17 percent), Vietnamese (11 percent), Koreans (10 percent), and Japanese (6 percent). The remainder—16 percent—were classified as Other Asians. (See chart 1.) CPS data show wide variations in labor market activities from group to group.

This article marks the first time BLS has published CPS data for specific Asian groups. First, it discusses the questions used to collect the CPS data about these seven Asian groups. Then, tabulations that were created specifically for this article are used to examine the similarities and differences among these groups by a variety of demographic characteristics, including gender, age, nativity, and educational attainment. The analysis also focuses on labor force participation, employment, and unemployment. Finally, information about how the groups have fared in the labor market is presented for the period from 2003 through 2010.

## About the data

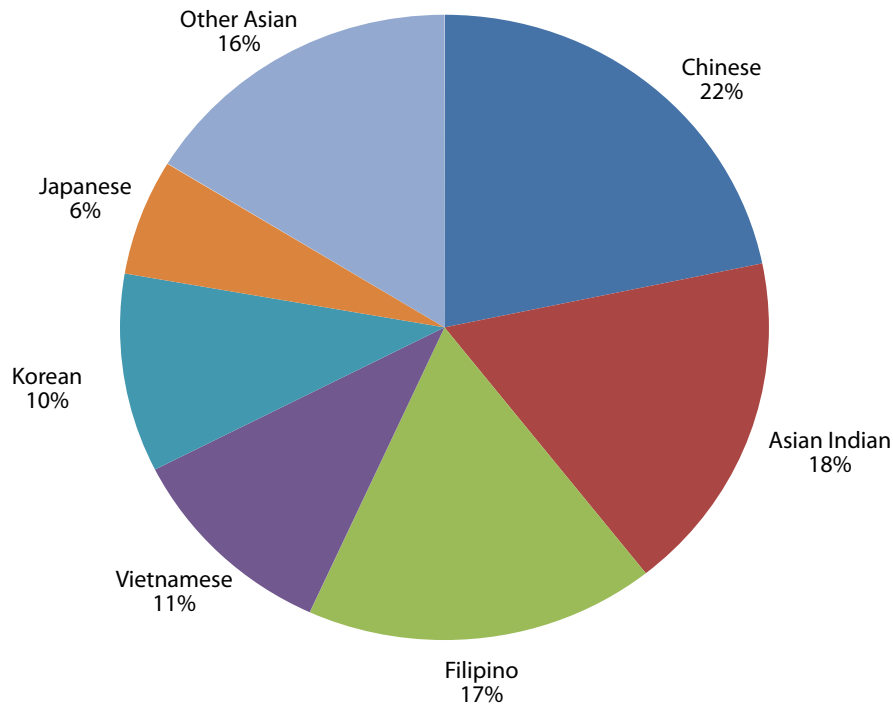
Unless otherwise noted, data in this analy-

sis are from the CPS, a monthly household survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for BLS,<sup>1</sup> and reflect the civilian noninstitutional population ages 16 and older. Since 2003, when questions on race and ethnicity were revised to comply with Office of Management and Budget guidelines, the CPS has collected information about five race categories: (1) White, (2) Black or African American, (3) Asian, (4) American Indian and Alaska Native, and (5) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. In addition, individuals may list all the race groups that they or other household members consider themselves to be, thus allowing for the identification of those who are multi-racial.<sup>2</sup>

Also in 2003, an additional question specifically about Asians was added to the CPS. Survey respondents who identify themselves or another household member as Asian are asked, "Which of the following Asian groups are you: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese?"<sup>3</sup> Respondents may choose one of these six categories or may volunteer the name of another Asian group, such as Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, or Laotian.<sup>4</sup> Groups other than the six included in the question are recorded by CPS interviewers as "Other Asians." Individuals may identify themselves or other household members as belonging to more than one Asian group; for example, respondents may say that they are both Chi-

Mary Dorinda Allard is chief of the Division of Labor Force Statistics at the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Email: allard.dorinda@bls.gov.

**Chart 1. Asian population by Asian group, U.S. civilian noninstitutional population ages 16 and older, 2010 annual averages**



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

nese and Vietnamese. For the purposes of this analysis, the small number of people identified as belonging to multiple groups are classified as “Other Asians.”<sup>5</sup>

Unless otherwise indicated, the estimates presented in this paper are 36-month averages for the period beginning in January 2008 and ending in December 2010. The pooling of multiple years of monthly data allows for a more in-depth examination of groups that would otherwise have prohibitively small sample sizes.<sup>6</sup>

### Demographic characteristics

Previously published BLS data show that there are several demographic characteristics that distinguish Asians as a whole from non-Asians. Asians are more likely to (1) be in the prime-working-age group of 25 to 54, (2) be foreign born,<sup>7</sup> (3) be married, and (4) have greater educational attainment. Table 1 shows demographic detail for the various Asian population groups, which allows for an examination of these characteristics for each group.

*Age.* Except for the Japanese, the Asian groups were more likely than non-Asians to be in the 25-to-54 age

range. Asian Indians were most likely to be 25 to 54 years old, with 70 percent of their population in this age range. Vietnamese, Koreans, and Chinese each had about 60 percent of their population in this age range. Only 49 percent of Japanese were ages 25 to 54, slightly less than the proportion for non-Asians (53 percent). Compared with non-Asians and with the other Asian groups, a higher proportion of Japanese were ages 55 or older (43 percent).

*Nativity.* The Asian population in the United States has grown rapidly since the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which replaced the national-origins quota system that had been used since the 1920s with a preference system based on skills and on family relationships with U.S. citizens and legal residents.<sup>8</sup> In the 2008–2010 period, all of the Asian groups were more likely to be foreign born than was the combined group of non-Asians. The foreign born include naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents, temporary workers and their families, students, and undocumented immigrants; however, these categories cannot be separately identified in the CPS data. Asian Indians were the most likely of the groups to be foreign born (84 percent). Roughly three-

**Table 1. Civilian noninstitutional population of Asian groups and non-Asians by selected characteristics, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**

(Percent distribution)

Demographic characteristic	Asian								Non-Asian
	Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian	
Total population, ages 16 and older (in thousands)	10,931	1,882	2,536	1,894	700	1,107	1,126	1,686	224,876
<b>Gender</b>									
Total, 16 and older	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Men	47.6	52.9	48.6	42.9	41.5	44.4	48.4	49.3	48.4
Women	52.4	47.1	51.4	57.1	58.5	55.6	51.6	50.7	51.6
<b>Age</b>									
Total, ages 16 and older	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
16 to 24	14.0	13.3	12.3	13.8	7.8	14.8	14.0	19.4	16.1
25 to 54	60.8	70.1	59.4	56.5	49.0	60.0	61.3	62.1	52.9
25 to 34	20.7	30.6	17.9	16.6	12.3	18.5	19.2	24.6	17.0
35 to 44	22.1	24.8	22.0	20.4	16.7	21.9	25.0	21.8	17.1
45 to 54	17.9	14.7	19.6	19.4	20.0	19.7	17.1	15.7	18.8
55 and older	25.3	16.6	28.2	29.7	43.1	25.1	24.7	18.5	31.1
55 to 64	12.9	9.1	14.2	16.2	14.8	12.1	13.6	10.8	14.8
65 to 74	7.2	5.0	7.4	8.4	10.8	8.7	7.3	5.1	8.8
75 and older	5.2	2.5	6.6	5.2	17.5	4.4	3.8	2.6	7.5
<b>Nativity</b>									
Total, ages 16 and older	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Native born	26.6	16.5	27.4	27.0	61.9	23.4	22.6	26.5	87.8
Foreign born	73.4	83.5	72.6	73.0	38.1	76.6	77.4	73.5	12.2
<b>Marital status</b>									
Total, ages 25 to 54	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Married, spouse present	68.6	79.0	66.4	66.8	64.4	67.0	65.4	65.3	59.3
Other marital status <sup>1</sup>	31.4	21.0	33.6	33.2	35.6	33.0	34.6	34.7	40.7
<b>Educational attainment</b>									
Total, ages 25 and older	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than high school	11.4	6.0	13.6	7.1	4.0	6.2	21.9	19.3	13.2
High school graduate, no college	20.0	10.8	20.9	16.2	23.7	22.5	30.6	23.6	31.6
Some college or associate's degree	16.5	8.2	12.2	24.9	25.0	14.9	19.6	18.2	26.6
Bachelor's degree or higher	52.0	75.0	53.4	51.9	47.3	56.3	27.9	38.9	28.6
Bachelor's degree	31.7	34.7	27.0	44.4	32.7	38.6	21.2	23.1	18.7
Master's degree	13.7	29.7	17.0	4.4	10.0	11.6	3.6	10.5	7.3
Professional or doctoral degree	6.6	10.6	9.4	3.1	4.6	6.1	3.1	5.3	2.7

<sup>1</sup> Other marital status includes those who were separated, widowed, divorced, married but living apart, or never married.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

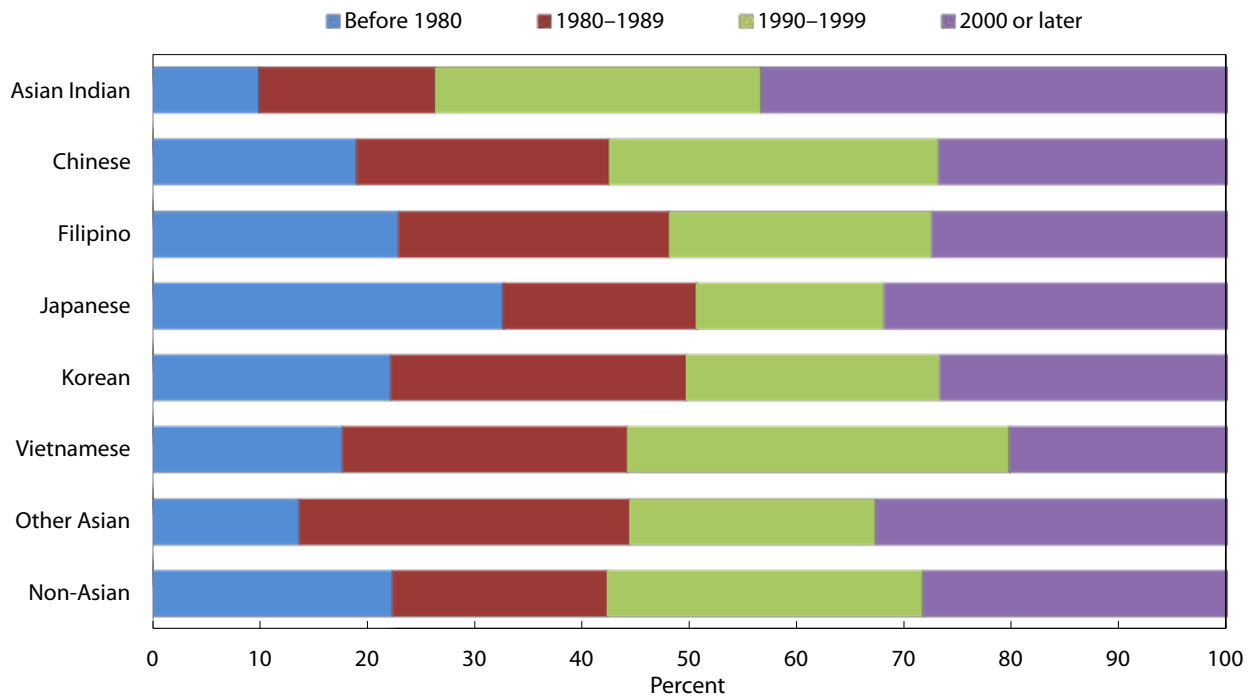
quarters of Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Vietnamese, and Other Asians were foreign born. By contrast, the majority of Japanese were native born.<sup>9</sup> Although only 38 percent of Japanese were foreign born, this proportion far exceeds the 12 percent for non-Asians.<sup>10</sup>

A wide variety of factors influence international migration. As can be seen on chart 2, the foreign born of each group arrived in the United States at different times.<sup>11</sup> Foreign-born Asian Indians were the most likely to have entered the country in recent years. Forty-three percent of foreign-born Asian Indians arrived in 2000 or later, com-

pared with 20 percent of the Vietnamese foreign born. The proportion of foreign-born Vietnamese who entered the United States from 2000 to 2010 was the smallest of any Asian group. About a third of Vietnamese had arrived during the 1990s.

As the following tabulation illustrates, the share of the foreign born who were naturalized citizens varied substantially among the Asian groups. Of the Asian groups, foreign-born Vietnamese were most likely to be naturalized citizens. Foreign-born Japanese and Asian Indians were least likely to be naturalized citizens.

**Chart 2. Foreign-born people ages 16 and older by year of entry to the United States for Asian groups and non-Asians, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

*Percent of the foreign born that were naturalized citizens, averages for the combined years 2008–2010*

Total Asian.....	56
Asian Indian.....	44
Chinese.....	59
Filipino .....	66
Japanese.....	39
Korean.....	52
Vietnamese.....	72
Other Asian.....	54
Non-Asian.....	41

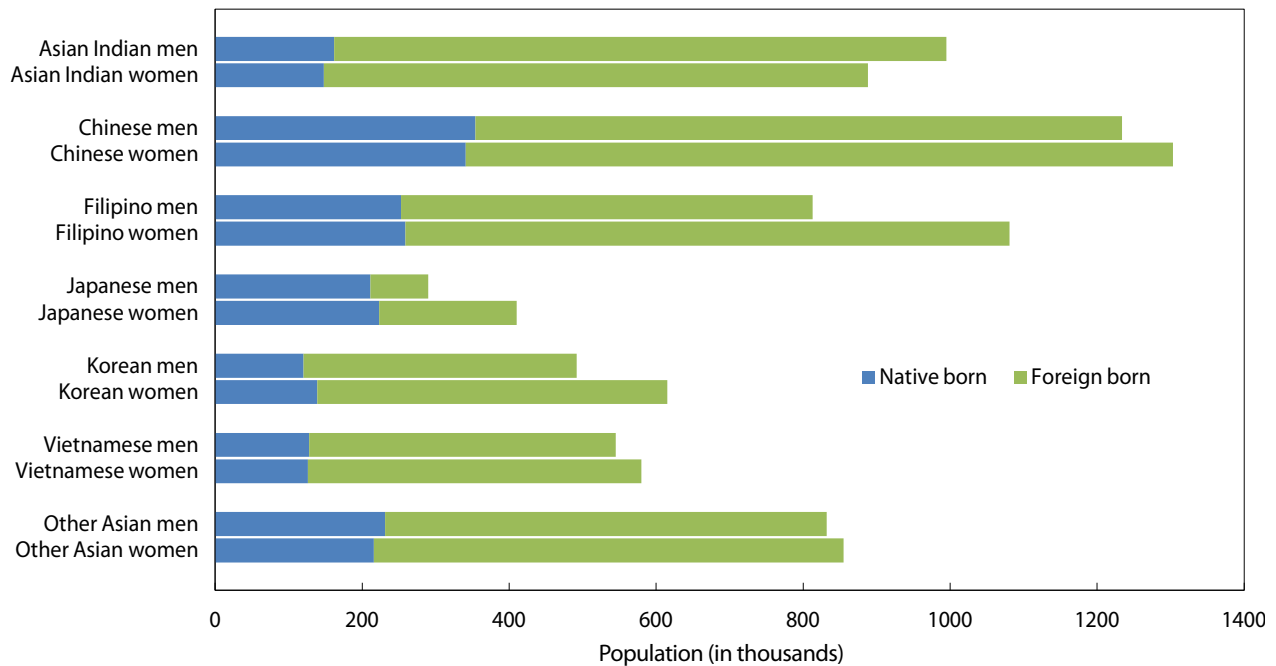
Chart 3 provides a breakdown of the civilian noninstitutional population ages 16 and older by nativity and gender. There were more foreign-born Asian Indian men than foreign-born Asian Indian women in the 2008–2010 period. According to statistics from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, almost half of all temporary specialty occupation workers (also referred to as H-1B workers)<sup>12</sup> in fiscal year 2009 were born in India.<sup>13</sup> A substantial number of foreign-born Asian Indians were intracompany transfers or students. Short-term resident nonimmigrants—a group that includes temporary workers, intracompany transfers, and students—were more likely to be male.<sup>14</sup> Also, the largest share of Indian-born people who

became legal permanent residents in the past several years did so through employment-based preferences,<sup>15</sup> and these individuals were slightly more likely to be male.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to Asian Indians, several of the other Asian groups had considerably more foreign-born women than foreign-born men. This was especially true for Filipinos. Foreign-born Filipino workers have, for many years, included a large number of nurses, most of whom are women.<sup>17</sup> Also, according to statistics from the Department of Homeland Security, about half of the people born in the Philippines who became legal permanent U.S. residents in recent years did so as immediate family members of U.S. citizens—that is, as spouses or children, or as parents of U.S. citizens ages 21 and older—and these individuals were much more likely to be women. A similar pattern occurred with those born in Japan or Korea who became legal permanent U.S. residents.<sup>18</sup>

*Marital status.* In general, Asians were more likely to be married than were non-Asians. (See table 1.) Among 25- to 54-year-olds in the Asian groups, Asian Indians were the most likely to be married. Seventy-nine percent of Asian Indians in this age range were married. Between 64 and 67 percent of 25- to 54-year-olds in the other groups

**Chart 3. Population ages 16 and older of Asian groups by nativity and gender, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

were married, compared with 59 percent for non-Asians.

The following tabulation shows the percent of married foreign-born people ages 25 to 54 with a native-born spouse. More than a third of married Filipino and Japanese women in this age range had a native-born spouse, a much higher share than their male counterparts. By contrast, married foreign-born Asian Indian men and women were about equally likely to have a native-born spouse.

*Percent of married foreign-born people ages 25 to 54 with a native-born spouse, by gender, averages for the combined years 2008–2010*

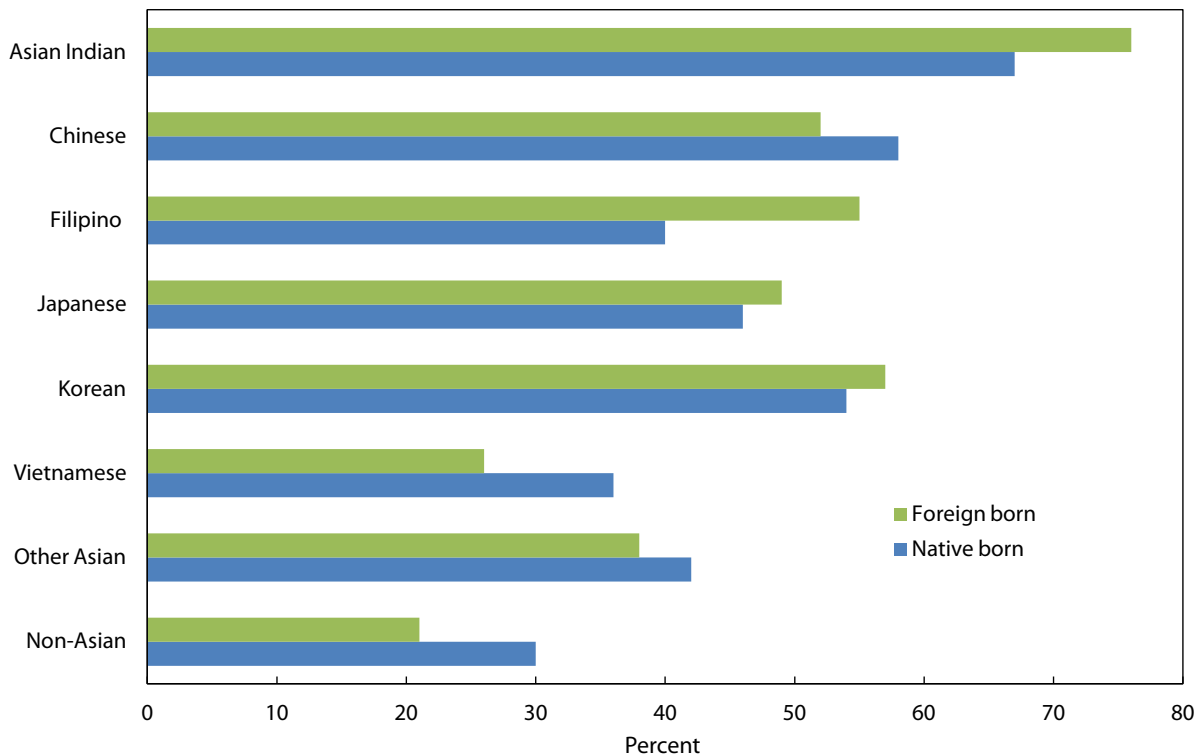
	Men	Women
Total Asian.....	8	17
Asian Indian.....	6	4
Chinese.....	6	15
Filipino.....	13	36
Japanese.....	9	42
Korean.....	6	18
Vietnamese.....	6	12
Other Asian.....	11	17
Non-Asian.....	21	21

*Educational attainment.* Another notable characteristic of Asians is their high rate of educational attainment. (See table 1.) Fifty-two percent of those ages 25 and older

had a bachelor's degree or higher in the 2008–2010 period, considerably more than the average of 29 percent for non-Asians. Of the Asian groups, Asian Indians had the highest levels of educational attainment: 35 percent had a bachelor's degree, 30 percent had a master's degree, and 11 percent had a professional or doctoral degree. While no other Asian group had such a high level of educational attainment, all except Vietnamese were more likely to be college graduates than were non-Asians. Vietnamese were about as likely as were non-Asians to have a bachelor's degree or higher.

For some Asian groups, educational attainment tended to be higher among the foreign born, as chart 4 illustrates. Foreign-born Asian Indians and Filipinos were more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher than their native-born counterparts, while the opposite was the case for Chinese and Vietnamese. Also, as the tabulation that follows demonstrates, educational attainment for all of the Asian groups except Filipinos was higher for men than for women. A higher percentage of Filipino women ages 25 and older had a bachelor's degree than did their male counterparts. Non-Asians had a different pattern, with men and women about equally likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher.

**Chart 4. Percent of people ages 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher by nativity for Asian groups and non-Asians, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

*Percent of people ages 25 and older with at least a bachelor's degree, by gender, averages for the combined years 2008–2010*

	Men	Women
Total Asian.....	55	49
Asian Indian.....	79	70
Chinese.....	57	50
Filipino.....	48	54
Japanese.....	52	44
Korean.....	65	49
Vietnamese.....	31	25
Other Asian.....	43	35
Non-Asian.....	29	28

### Labor force participation

Overall, Asians were about as likely to participate in the labor force (that is, to work or look for work) as were those who were not Asian—65.9 percent, compared with 65.3 percent in the 2008–2010 period. (See table 2.) Among Asians, Filipinos and Asian Indians had the highest rates, 70.3 and 69.6 percent, respectively. Japanese were least likely to participate in the labor force (56.5 percent). The relatively low rate for Japanese partially reflects their older age profile, as people ages 55 and older tend to have lower

labor force participation rates.<sup>19</sup>

Among all Asian groups ages 25 and older, those with a bachelor's degree or higher were more likely to be in the labor force than were those with a high school diploma or less. This pattern also held for non-Asians.

*Age and gender.* For Asians as a whole, individuals ages 16 to 24 were much less likely to be in the labor force than were non-Asians in this age range—42.5 versus 57.5 percent. This disparity is partially due to the higher school enrollment rates of Asian youth, as labor force participation rates are much lower for youth enrolled in school. However, even among those who are enrolled in school, Asian youth were less likely to participate in the labor force than were non-Asian youth.<sup>20</sup> In the 2008–2010 period, labor force participation rates were lowest for Chinese (35.3 percent) and Koreans (36.5 percent), each more than 20 percentage points lower than the rate for non-Asians.

For both Asians and non-Asians, labor force participation rates were much higher among 25- to 54-year-olds than among 16- to 24-year-olds. Overall, Asians ages 25 to 54 had a participation rate of 81.0 percent, and the rate for non-Asians in the same age group was 82.7 percent.

**Table 2. Labor force participation rates for Asian groups and non-Asians by selected characteristics, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**

Demographic characteristic	Asian								Non-Asian
	Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian	
Civilian labor force, ages 16 and older (in thousands)	7,202	1,309	1,640	1,331	396	666	747	1,114	146,904
Participation rate, ages 16 and older	65.9	69.6	64.7	70.3	56.5	60.2	66.3	66.1	65.3
<b>Age</b>									
16 to 24	42.5	41.5	35.3	46.0	46.5	36.5	41.9	50.0	57.5
25 to 54	81.0	79.7	83.1	86.5	79.9	74.0	82.6	77.9	82.7
55 and older	42.4	49.0	38.6	50.8	31.8	41.1	39.9	43.4	39.8
<b>Nativity</b>									
Native born	62.2	60.7	62.4	65.8	58.4	61.1	61.3	63.3	64.9
Foreign born	67.2	71.3	65.5	71.9	53.6	59.9	67.8	67.1	68.2
Citizen	69.9	75.7	66.6	72.9	45.3	64.6	71.0	71.7	65.0
Non-citizen	63.8	67.9	64.0	70.0	58.9	54.9	59.7	61.6	70.4
Men	74.4	82.5	71.1	73.7	68.1	70.4	72.7	75.8	71.9
Native born	66.3	65.9	67.0	68.7	62.5	68.0	62.8	67.4	70.5
Foreign born	77.5	85.7	72.8	76.0	83.0	71.1	75.8	79.0	81.5
Citizen	77.5	84.1	73.0	75.7	77.1	74.0	77.9	81.4	75.0
Non-citizen	77.5	87.0	72.5	76.6	85.5	68.2	69.5	76.2	85.6
Women	58.2	55.0	58.5	67.7	48.3	52.0	60.3	56.6	59.1
Native born	58.0	55.0	57.7	63.0	54.4	55.1	59.8	59.0	59.8
Foreign born	58.3	55.1	58.9	69.1	41.1	51.1	60.5	55.8	54.3
Citizen	63.4	66.6	60.9	71.0	36.1	57.6	64.1	62.5	56.1
Non-citizen	51.4	45.6	55.8	65.6	44.9	43.9	52.0	48.1	52.9
<b>Marital status, ages 25 to 54</b>									
Men, married, spouse present	93.6	96.4	94.4	92.5	96.1	89.9	92.2	91.3	93.6
Men, other marital status <sup>1</sup>	85.2	84.8	86.2	88.1	90.0	75.8	84.1	86.3	84.3
Women, married, spouse present	68.4	60.7	72.4	82.0	62.6	60.2	73.0	62.0	73.6
Women, other marital status <sup>1</sup>	80.7	79.9	82.0	85.9	81.8	75.2	82.6	75.5	79.0
<b>Educational attainment</b>									
Total, ages 25 and older	69.7	73.9	68.8	74.2	57.4	64.3	70.3	69.9	66.8
Less than a high school diploma	44.8	38.3	43.4	39.5	19.5	33.8	51.9	50.3	46.5
High school graduate, no college	62.7	65.2	63.8	64.1	37.4	57.4	69.6	67.8	62.1
Some college or associate's degree	71.7	73.4	68.6	79.0	53.8	63.2	76.2	75.1	71.2
Bachelor's degree or higher	77.2	78.0	77.2	79.7	72.5	70.7	81.5	78.5	77.3

<sup>1</sup> Other marital status includes those who were separated, widowed, divorced, married but living apart, or never married.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

However, rates for 25- to 54-year-olds varied by Asian group, ranging from a high of 86.5 percent for Filipinos to a low of 74.0 percent for Koreans.

As previously noted, individuals in the 55-and-older age group have lower participation rates than those ages 25 to 54, but rates differed across the Asian groups. Only about a third of Japanese ages 55 and older were in the labor force, compared with about half of their Filipino and Asian Indian counterparts. A higher proportion of Japanese were ages 75 and older, and labor force participation rates are very low for those in this age range.

Sharp differences appear when labor force participation rates are broken down by gender. Among all Asian groups,

men were more likely to be in the labor force than were women. The gap was widest for Asian Indians, whose rate for men (82.5 percent) was 27.5 percentage points higher than that for women (55.0 percent). The gap was narrowest for Filipinos; at 73.7 percent, the rate for Filipino men was just 6.0 percentage points higher than the rate for Filipino women (67.7 percent). In contrast, there was a nearly 13-percentage-point difference between the participation rates for non-Asian men and non-Asian women.

Among men, Asian Indians had the highest labor force participation rate, 82.5 percent. This may reflect the fact that Asian Indians were the most likely of the groups to be 25 to 54 years old, an age range in which labor force

participation rates tend to be high. Rates for men in other Asian groups ranged from 68.1 percent for Japanese men to 75.8 percent for Other Asian men. Among women, labor force participation rates for most of the Asian groups were lower than those for non-Asians. However, Filipino women had a rate of 67.7 percent, which exceeded the rate of 59.1 percent for non-Asian women by 8.6 percentage points. Japanese women were least likely to participate in the labor force; their participation rate was 48.3 percent. Vietnamese and Chinese women were about as likely as non-Asian women to be in the labor force.

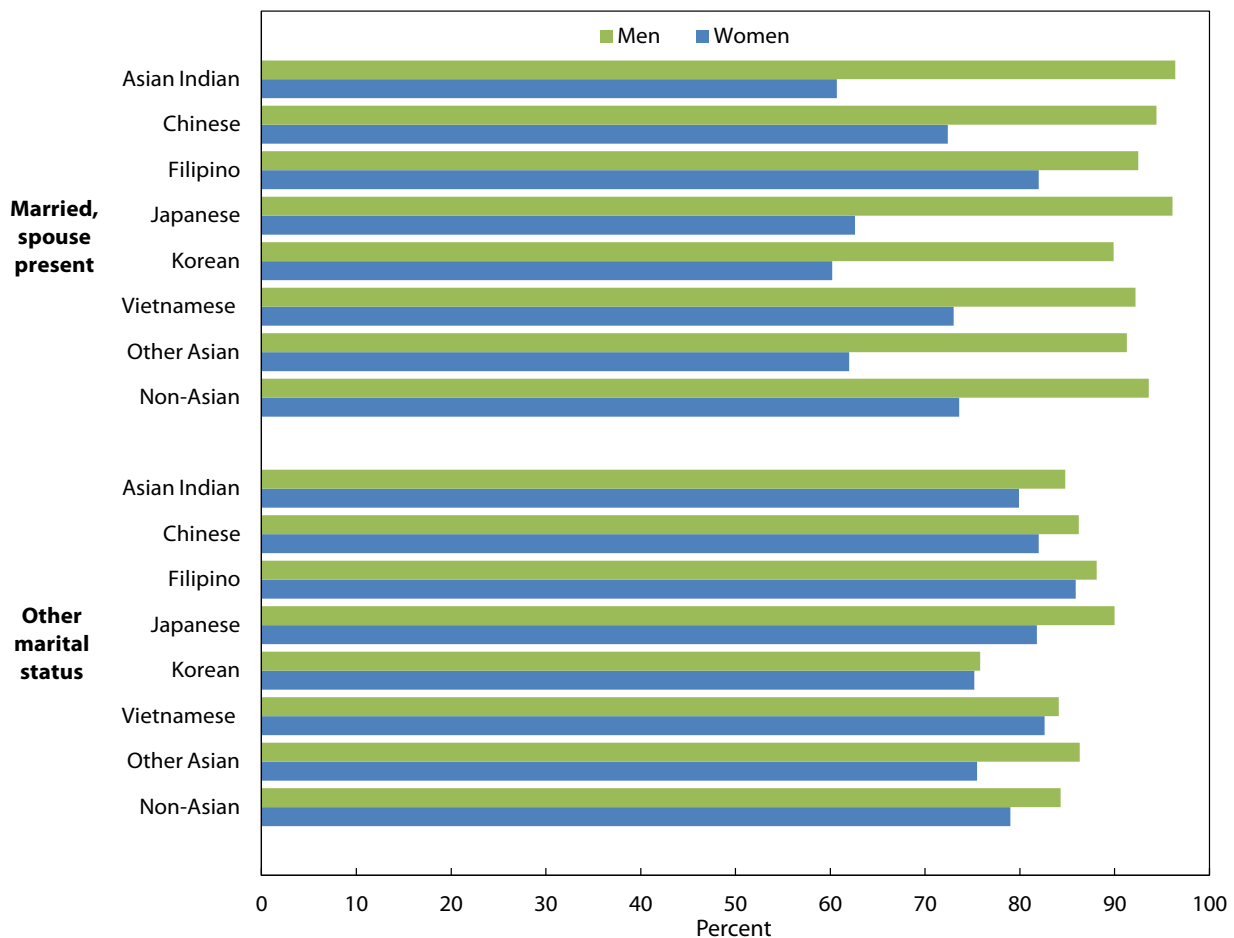
*Marital status.* Labor force participation rates also varied by marital status. (See chart 5). The vast majority of all 25- to 54-year-old married men participated in the labor force. Married non-Asian men in this age range had a rate of 93.6 percent, and married men in the Asian groups had

rates between 89.9 and 96.4 percent.

For all groups, rates for married women ages 25 to 54 were much lower than for their male counterparts. The rate for non-Asian married women was 20.0 percentage points lower than for their male counterparts, and the difference between the rates of married men and women varied across the Asian groups. The gap was greatest for Asian Indians: married women had a participation rate that was almost 36 percentage points below that of married men. Differences between the rates for Japanese and Korean married men and women were also quite sharp. Filipinos were the only group for which the gap between the rates of married men and women was narrower than for non-Asians; the participation rate for Filipino married women was only about 11 percentage points lower than that for Filipino married men.

Labor force participation rates showed a different pattern

**Chart 5. Labor force participation rates of people ages 25 to 54 by gender and marital status, Asian groups and non-Asians, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**



NOTE: Other marital status includes those who were separated, widowed, divorced, married but living apart, or never married.  
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.



for 25- to 54-year-olds with other marital statuses—that is, those who were separated, widowed, divorced, married but living apart, or never married. For all Asian groups and for non-Asians, men with other marital statuses had lower participation rates than their married counterparts. The opposite was true for women; those in other marital statuses had higher rates than married women. The rates for men and women in other marital statuses were closer than for married men and women, though rates for women were lower for most Asian groups.

*Nativity.* Differences across the groups are also apparent after disaggregation by nativity. (See table 2.) For most Asian groups, foreign-born men were more likely to participate in the labor force than were native-born men, sometimes considerably so. Foreign-born Asian Indian men had a participation rate of 85.7 percent, almost 20 percentage points higher than their native-born counterparts. The gap was similarly large for Japanese men. Gaps between the rates of foreign-born and native-born men in other Asian groups were narrower.

Differences in participation rates between foreign-born and native-born women generally were not as great, though native-born Japanese women had a higher participation rate than foreign-born Japanese women. The reverse was the case for Filipino women, where the foreign born were a little more likely to be in the labor force. For the other Asian groups, the rates for foreign-born women were little different from those for native-born women.

Among the foreign born, participation rates by citizenship status were quite different for some groups. For both Koreans and Vietnamese, non-citizen men and women had lower rates than did their citizen counterparts. For Asian Indian women, there was a large disparity between the rates of foreign-born naturalized citizens and non-citizens: 66.6 percent of Asian Indian women who were naturalized citizens were in the labor force, compared with just 45.6 percent of their non-citizen counterparts. By contrast, the rates for Asian Indian men were little different by citizenship status.

## Employment

*Part-time workers.* Most employed people usually work full time—that is, 35 hours or more per week. However, a substantial share of the employed usually work a part-time schedule, and this share tends to be higher among employed women than among employed men. Among non-Asians and most Asian groups, employed women were about twice as likely to be working part time as were

men, as the following tabulation illustrates:

*Percent of employed people who usually worked part time, by gender, averages for the combined years 2008–2010*

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Total Asian.....	10	21
Asian Indian .....	8	20
Chinese.....	11	20
Filipino.....	13	18
Japanese.....	11	21
Korean.....	11	24
Vietnamese.....	11	24
Other Asian.....	12	25
Non-Asian.....	13	26

*Occupation, industry, and self-employment.* Employed individuals are classified by both their occupation (what type of work they perform) and their industry (what kind of work their employer or business does). Additionally, they are identified by whether they are self-employed.<sup>21</sup> The Asian groups show marked differences in all three of these characteristics. Data on occupation and industry are presented in tables 3 and 4, and information on self-employment is displayed in chart 6.

Of the groups, Asian Indians were by far the most likely to work in computer and mathematical occupations in the 2008–2010 period. About 22 percent of employed Asian Indians worked in these occupations, compared with just 2 percent of employed non-Asians. (See table 3.) The high share of Asian Indians working in this occupation group is in line with the fact that a large number are in the United States through either temporary employment visas (H-1B visa holders) or employment-based legal permanent resident status. A large share of these individuals were in computer occupations.<sup>22</sup>

Chinese workers, too, were more likely than non-Asians to be employed in computer and mathematical occupations; 10 percent of Chinese workers had jobs in this field. This occupational group is particularly concentrated in the professional and technical services industry, which includes computer systems design services and management, scientific, and technical consulting services; thus, Asian Indian and Chinese workers were more likely to have jobs in this industry (22 and 12 percent, respectively) than were non-Asian workers (6 percent). (See table 4.)

Employment characteristics of Filipinos were quite different. Workers in this Asian group were more than three times as likely as non-Asians to work in the healthcare practitioners and technical occupations category—18 percent versus 5 percent. More than half of Filipino workers in this occupational category were registered nurses, reflecting the many years of migration to the United States

Asian Workers

**Table 3. Employed people by occupation, for Asian groups and non-Asians, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**  
(Percent distribution)

Occupation	Asian								Non-Asian
	Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian	
Total employed, ages 16 and older (in thousands)	6,752	1,232	1,555	1,242	380	624	699	1,019	134,682
<b>Occupational employment as a percent of total employed</b>									
Total employed	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Management, professional, and related occupations	48.0	67.9	53.0	43.2	55.3	47.4	27.4	34.0	36.4
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	15.8	19.1	17.6	12.1	23.7	20.7	9.2	12.0	15.2
Management occupations	10.2	12.9	11.5	6.7	16.7	15.1	5.2	7.5	10.9
Business and financial operations occupations	5.5	6.2	6.0	5.4	7.0	5.6	4.0	4.5	4.2
Professional and related occupations	32.2	48.8	35.4	31.1	31.6	26.7	18.1	22.0	21.2
Computer and mathematical occupations	8.5	22.2	9.5	3.1	4.4	3.6	4.3	4.5	2.2
Architecture and engineering occupations	3.9	5.2	5.3	2.6	4.1	2.3	3.7	2.8	1.9
Life, physical, and social science occupations	2.4	3.1	4.4	1.2	2.0	1.5	.6	1.6	.9
Community and social services occupations	1.0	.4	.8	1.1	1.3	2.5	.6	1.0	1.7
Legal occupations	.8	.8	.9	.7	1.0	1.1	.7	.7	1.2
Education, training, and library occupations	4.9	5.3	6.9	3.0	8.0	5.6	1.9	4.4	6.2
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	1.6	1.0	1.7	1.2	3.6	3.4	.8	1.6	2.0
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	9.1	10.8	6.0	18.1	7.1	6.6	5.5	5.5	5.2
Service occupations	17.1	6.2	18.0	20.1	13.2	13.7	32.2	18.3	17.4
Healthcare support occupations	2.0	1.3	1.6	4.8	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.7	2.3
Protective service occupations	.9	.8	.8	1.4	1.3	.8	.4	1.1	2.3
Food preparation and serving related occupations	6.3	1.9	10.0	4.9	5.1	6.6	5.7	8.1	5.4
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	2.3	.9	1.8	4.4	1.4	1.1	3.3	2.7	3.9
Personal care and service occupations	5.6	1.3	3.9	4.5	4.2	4.2	21.8	4.8	3.4
Sales and office occupations	21.3	18.1	19.7	23.9	22.8	25.5	16.2	24.7	24.4
Sales and related occupations	11.3	11.5	10.0	9.3	10.2	17.9	7.3	14.6	11.1
Office and administrative support occupations	10.0	6.7	9.7	14.6	12.5	7.6	8.9	10.1	13.2
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	4.0	1.7	3.0	5.0	4.1	4.1	6.9	5.0	10.0
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	.2	.1	.1	.4	.3	.3	.3	.3	.7
Construction and extraction occupations	1.6	.7	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.8	2.5	1.9	5.7

**Table 3. Continued— Employed people by occupation, for Asian groups and non-Asians, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**

(Percent distribution)

Occupation	Asian								Non-Asian
	Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian	
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	2.2	.9	1.4	2.8	2.2	2.1	4.0	2.8	3.6
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	9.6	6.0	6.3	7.8	4.7	9.3	17.3	18.0	11.9
Production occupations	6.3	2.7	3.6	4.5	2.7	7.1	13.8	12.8	5.8
Transportation and material moving occupations	3.3	3.3	2.7	3.3	2.0	2.2	3.5	5.2	6.1

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

of Filipinos working in nursing and other medical professions.<sup>23</sup> Employed Asian Indians, too, were more likely to work in the healthcare practitioners and technical occupations category (11 percent); these jobs are most often in the health care and social assistance industry. Almost one-third (32 percent) of employed Filipinos worked in this industry, compared with 13 percent of non-Asian workers. The health care and social assistance industry tends to have a low self-employment rate, and Filipinos were less likely than other Asian groups to be self-employed. As chart 6 shows, only about 5 percent of Filipinos were self-employed, on average, in the 2008–2010 period.

About one-fifth of Vietnamese workers were employed in personal care and service occupations, likely due to the relatively high employment of Vietnamese in nail salons.<sup>24</sup> In fact, more than half of the Vietnamese employed in this category were classified as miscellaneous personal appearance workers, an occupational category that includes manicurists and pedicurists. Workers in other Asian groups were far less likely to be employed in personal care and service occupations. Vietnamese workers were much more likely than workers in other Asian groups to be employed in the other services industry; this industry includes personal and laundry services, such as hair salons and nail salons. Thirteen percent of Vietnamese workers were self-employed. Statistics from the Census Bureau's 2007 Survey of Business Owners show that 59 percent of Vietnamese-owned businesses were in the other services industry; within other services, more than half of Vietnamese-owned businesses were in the nail salon industry.<sup>25</sup> Vietnamese were more than twice as likely as non-Asians to be employed in production occupations, 14 percent compared with 6 percent. Many of these production workers were employed in the durable

goods manufacturing industry.

Of the Asian groups, Koreans had by far the highest self-employment rate, at least twice the rate of any of the other groups. On average during the 2008–2010 period, 26 percent of Korean workers were self-employed, compared with 11 percent of non-Asian workers. According to the 2007 Survey of Business Owners, about half of Korean-owned businesses were in three industries: other services (21 percent); retail trade (19 percent); and professional, scientific, and technical services (9 percent).<sup>26</sup> In the 2008–2010 period, 18 percent of employed Koreans were in sales and related occupations. This compares with 11 percent of employed non-Asians.

Ten percent of Chinese workers were in food preparation and serving related occupations, double the share of employed non-Asians in this category. Accordingly, Chinese workers were more likely than non-Asian workers to be employed in the accommodations and food services industry, 15 versus 7 percent. Asian Indians, Japanese, Filipinos, and Vietnamese were all about as likely as non-Asians to work in this industry, and Koreans were somewhat more likely.

There were other, somewhat less striking, differences in the occupational profiles of the Asian groups. Japanese and Koreans were more likely than Filipinos and Vietnamese to be employed in management occupations: 17 percent of employed Japanese and 15 percent of employed Koreans were in these occupations, compared with 7 percent of Filipino workers and 5 percent of Vietnamese workers. Workers in all Asian groups were less likely than non-Asian workers to be employed in the construction industry.

*Usual weekly earnings.* Among full-time wage and salary workers, about three-quarters of Asian Indians earned

**Table 4. Employed people by industry, for Asian groups and non-Asians, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**

(Percent distribution)

Industry	Asian								Non-Asian
	Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian	
Total employed, ages 16 and older (in thousands)	6,752	1,232	1,555	1,242	380	624	699	1,019	134,682
<b>Industry employment as a percent of total employed</b>									
Total employed	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agricultural, forestry, fishing, and hunting	.4	.1	.1	.6	1.2	.3	.5	.4	1.6
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	.1	.1	.1	.0	.1	.0	.4	.2	.6
Construction	2.4	1.5	2.2	2.4	3.2	3.5	2.9	2.4	7.2
Manufacturing	12.5	11.5	12.0	7.8	12.2	8.7	19.0	17.8	10.3
Manufacturing, durable goods	8.4	7.9	7.9	5.0	9.5	5.2	14.2	11.3	6.5
Manufacturing, nondurable goods	4.1	3.6	4.1	2.8	2.8	3.5	4.8	6.5	3.8
Wholesale and retail trade	13.5	14.2	11.1	11.8	13.1	18.9	11.0	17.0	14.2
Wholesale trade	2.5	2.0	3.2	1.7	3.4	3.5	2.1	2.5	2.8
Retail trade	11.0	12.2	7.9	10.2	9.7	15.4	8.9	14.5	11.4
Transportation and utilities	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.8	3.1	3.0	3.8	5.3
Transportation and warehousing	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.3	4.0	2.8	2.7	3.4	4.4
Utilities	.4	.3	.5	.3	.9	.2	.3	.4	.9
Information	2.6	2.9	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.0	2.5	2.3
Financial activities	7.2	9.1	7.7	7.3	6.1	6.4	5.6	6.3	6.9
Finance and insurance	5.8	7.7	6.4	5.6	4.9	4.7	4.1	4.7	4.8
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.6	2.0
Professional and business services	13.2	24.1	13.8	8.7	13.7	10.5	7.8	9.9	10.7
Professional and technical services	10.9	22.1	12.1	5.7	10.7	8.6	5.9	7.0	6.3
Management, administrative, and waste services	2.3	2.0	1.7	3.0	3.0	1.9	2.0	2.9	4.4
Education and health services	22.5	21.7	21.9	36.5	22.7	18.4	11.9	17.1	22.5
Educational services	7.4	7.2	10.5	4.8	12.6	7.7	3.5	6.7	9.4
Health care and social assistance	15.1	14.5	11.4	31.7	10.1	10.8	8.4	10.5	13.0
Leisure and hospitality	11.8	6.4	17.2	9.4	9.4	12.7	10.3	14.5	8.8
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2.1	0.9	2.1	2.5	2.3	1.5	2.9	3.0	2.1
Accommodation and food services	9.7	5.4	15.1	7.0	7.1	11.2	7.4	11.4	6.7
Other services	6.1	1.5	3.3	3.6	5.0	12.0	22.1	4.7	4.8
Private households	.4	.1	.3	.8	.3	.2	.2	.4	.5
Other services, except private households	5.7	1.4	3.0	2.7	4.8	11.8	21.9	4.3	4.3
Public administration	3.6	2.7	3.4	4.8	6.1	2.9	3.3	3.4	4.9

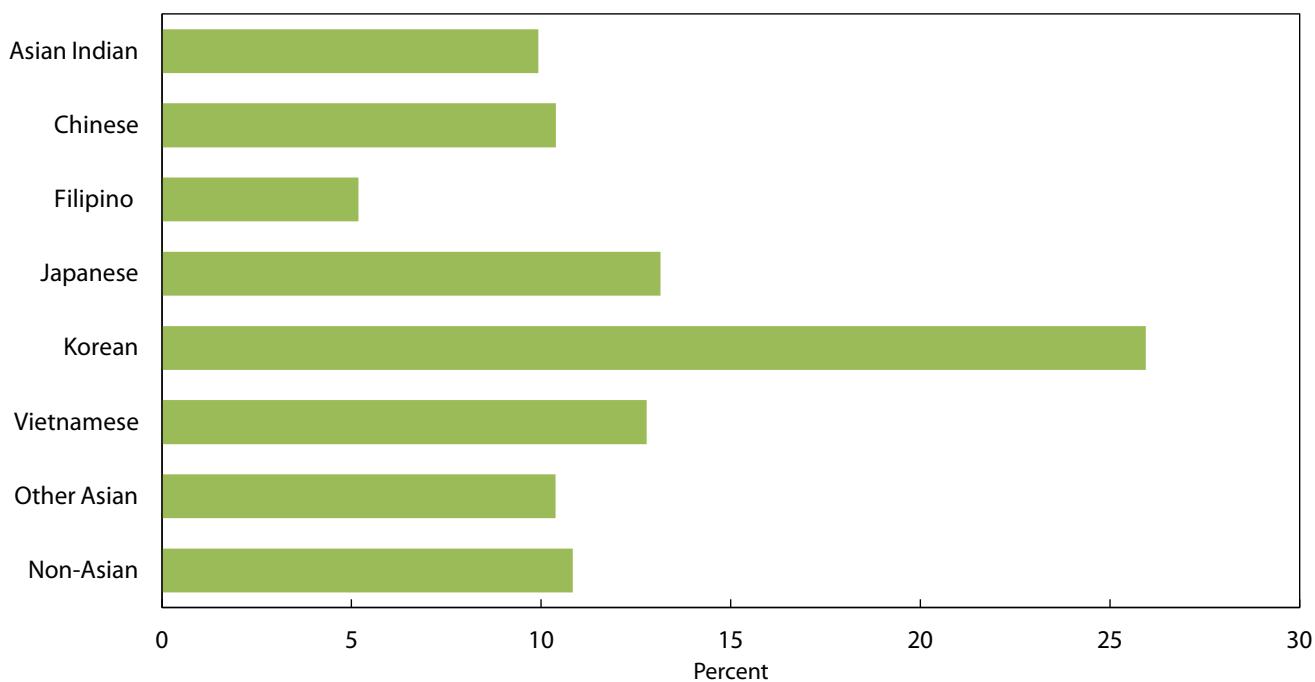
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

\$750 or more per week, compared with about half of non-Asians. More than 30 percent of Asian Indians earned \$1,500 or more per week. Vietnamese and Other Asians were the least likely of the groups to earn \$750 or more per week. Differences in earnings reflect many factors, such as variations in educational attainment, occupation, industry, and geographic region. (See chart 7.)

## Unemployment

With the exception of Other Asians, unemployment rates for all of the Asian groups were lower than for non-Asians in the 2008–2010 period. Other Asians had the highest rate (8.5 percent), and Japanese had the lowest rate (4.0 percent). The jobless rate for Chinese was 5.1 percent, and

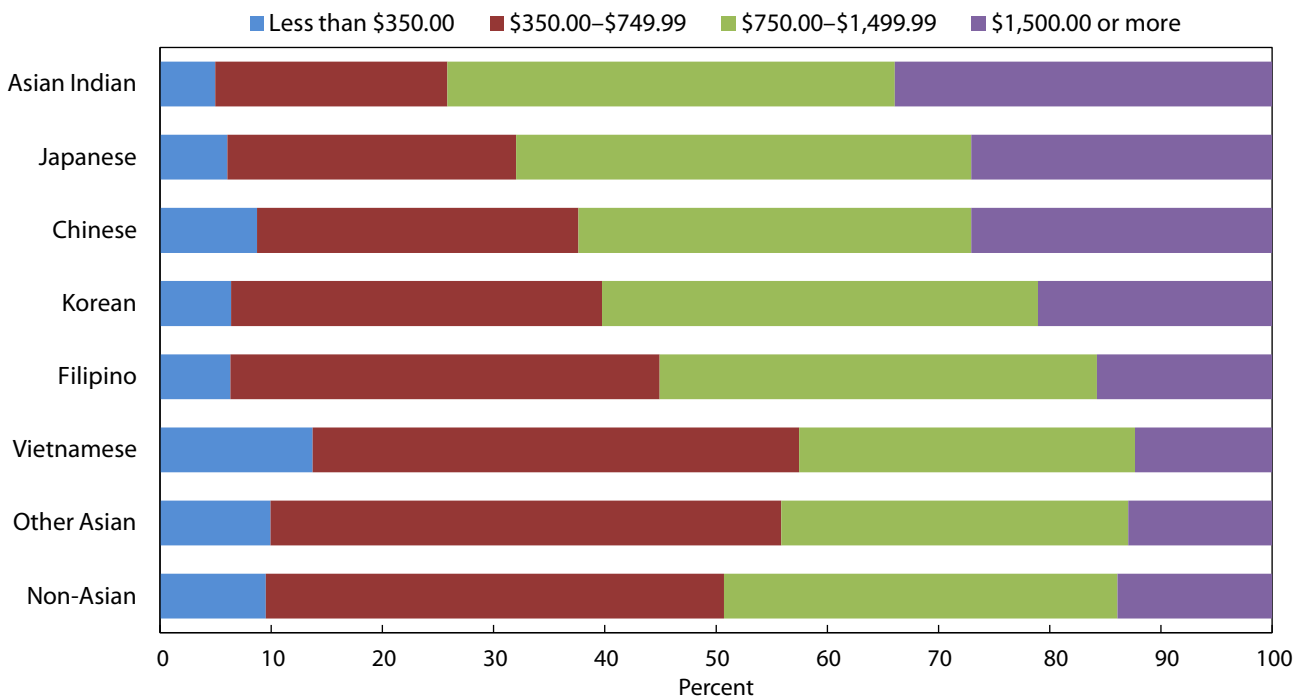
**Chart 6. Percent of employed people who were self-employed, Asian groups and non-Asians ages 16 and older, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**



NOTE: Data include all self-employed workers, both those with incorporated businesses and those with unincorporated businesses.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Chart 7. Percent distribution of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, Asian groups and non-Asians ages 16 and older, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

## Asian Workers

rates for Asian Indians, Filipinos, Koreans, and Vietnamese ranged from 5.9 to 6.6 percent. By contrast, the rate for non-Asians during this period was 8.3 percent. (See table 5.)

Among youth ages 16 to 24, unemployment rates for the Asian groups were either lower than or similar to the rate for non-Asians. In the 25-to-54 age range, rates for most of the Asian groups were lower than they were for non-Asians and joblessness was lowest for Japanese. For people ages 55 and older, rates varied; Japanese and Koreans had lower rates than non-Asians, while Asian Indians had a higher rate.

The unemployment rate for Asian Indian women was higher than the rate for Asian Indian men. However, the rates for Vietnamese, Filipino, and Chinese women were somewhat lower than for their male counterparts, which was the same pattern as for non-Asians. The jobless rates for Japanese men and Japanese women were little different; the same was true of the rates for Korean men and

women.

Jobless rates for non-Asians varied substantially by educational attainment. For instance, non-Asians ages 25 and older with less than a high school diploma had a rate of 13.0 percent, 9.1 percentage points higher than the 3.9 percent rate for non-Asians with a bachelor's degree or higher. The gap for Asian groups was less pronounced. The jobless rate for Chinese ages 25 and older with less than a high school diploma was 5.5 percent, 1.3 percentage points higher than the rate for their counterparts with at least a bachelor's degree (4.2 percent). For most of the Asian groups, the rates for those with less than a high school diploma were lower than for non-Asians, and the rates for those with at least a bachelor's degree tended to be slightly higher.

Among Asian Indians, Chinese, Filipinos, and Koreans, the unemployment rates for the native born were somewhat higher than the rates for the foreign born. For non-Asians, the reverse was true; the rate for the native born

**Table 5. Unemployment rates for Asian groups and non-Asians by selected characteristics, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**

Demographic characteristic	Asian								Non-Asian
	Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian	
Unemployed, ages 16 and older (in thousands)	450	77	84	88	16	42	47	95	12,221
Unemployment rate, ages 16 and older	6.2	5.9	5.1	6.6	4.0	6.3	6.4	8.5	8.3
<b>Gender</b>									
Men	6.6	5.1	5.6	7.8	4.4	6.4	7.5	9.2	9.1
Women	5.8	7.3	4.5	5.6	3.7	6.2	5.0	7.6	7.4
<b>Age</b>									
16 to 24	12.6	9.3	9.7	15.3	13.8	12.3	10.8	15.3	16.4
25 to 54	5.5	5.0	4.5	5.7	3.6	6.2	6.2	7.2	7.3
55 and older	6.1	9.6	6.3	6.0	2.7	3.4	4.4	8.1	5.8
<b>Nativity</b>									
Native born	7.1	7.2	5.9	7.5	4.4	7.9	7.4	10.3	8.2
Foreign born	6.0	5.7	4.9	6.3	3.4	5.8	6.1	7.9	9.2
<b>Marital status, ages 25 to 54</b>									
Men, married, spouse present	5.1	3.6	4.1	6.2	3.2	6.0	6.0	7.2	5.6
Men, other marital status <sup>1</sup>	7.3	4.6	6.6	7.9	4.4	8.1	10.6	8.8	11.7
Women, married, spouse present	4.9	7.0	3.6	3.8	3.6	4.9	4.6	6.4	4.9
Women, other marital status <sup>1</sup>	5.9	7.1	4.4	6.9	6.9	7.4	4.7	6.9	8.9
<b>Educational attainment</b>									
Total, ages 25 and older	5.6	5.6	4.8	5.8	3.4	5.7	5.9	7.4	7.0
Less than a high school diploma	8.6	9.4	5.5	12.2	—	7.5	7.8	11.4	13.0
High school graduate, no college	6.5	7.9	5.7	6.6	4.2	5.2	5.8	8.5	8.6
Some college or associate's degree	6.8	6.3	6.1	6.6	4.6	9.3	5.5	8.8	7.0
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.6	5.1	4.2	4.8	2.7	4.9	5.3	4.8	3.9

<sup>1</sup> Other marital status includes those who were separated, widowed, divorced, married but living apart, or never married.

NOTE: Dash represents data that do not meet BLS publication criteria. SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

was somewhat lower than the rate for the foreign born.

During the 2008–2010 period, the distribution of the jobless by reason for unemployment was similar for most of the Asian groups and for non-Asians. (See table 6.) Except for the Japanese, the share of the unemployed that were job losers—that is, those who had lost jobs or who had completed temporary jobs—ranged from 57 to 63 percent, similar to the 61-percent share for non-Asians. Except among Koreans and Japanese, the share of the unemployed that were job leavers was also in line with the share of 7 percent for unemployed non-Asians. The unemployed Japanese had a different pattern from each of the other groups; the share that were job losers (45 percent) was considerably lower than for non-Asians, and the share that were job leavers (17 percent) was higher. This may reflect the group’s age profile and the fact that older workers are more likely to leave the labor force than are those ages 25 to 54.

In recent years, the number of unemployed experiencing long durations of joblessness has been quite large by historical standards. Unemployed people in the Asian groups also experienced joblessness of long duration. Among the unemployed, a substantial portion of all Asian groups had been jobless for 27 weeks or longer. (See table 6.) About 4 of 10 unemployed Chinese and Filipinos had been jobless for at least 27 weeks. This compares with about 3 of 10 unemployed Koreans and non-Asians.

### Asians in the labor market, 2003–2010

In addition to investigating detailed labor force characteristics of Asian groups, it is possible to explore how the

different groups have fared in the labor market over time. This section examines how various economic measures have changed for the different groups between 2003 and 2010.

*Labor force participation.* The labor force participation rates of non-Asians held steady at around 66 percent from 2003 through 2008 but fell during the recent recession<sup>27</sup> and continued to decline through 2010; the participation rates for the various Asian groups, however, varied considerably. (See table 7.) The Asian groups had generally steady rates from 2003 through 2008. Between 2008 and 2010, the rates declined for Chinese, Filipinos, and Japanese but remained fairly stable for Asian Indians, Koreans, and Vietnamese.

*Unemployment.* Except for 2003, when the unemployment rates for Asians and non-Asians were both 6.0 percent, Asians generally had lower jobless rates than non-Asians. (See chart 8.) From 2003 through 2010, jobless rates for Asians as a whole showed roughly the same pattern as for non-Asians. For both groups, the rates declined from a high point in 2003 and were relatively low in 2006 and 2007. The rates then rose sharply for both groups from 2007 to 2009, with most of the increase taking place from 2008 to 2009. The rate in 2010 was up slightly from the 2009 rate.

Unemployment rates for each of the Asian groups generally followed this same overall pattern. (See table 7.) In 2003, Vietnamese and Other Asians had the highest unemployment rates, at 8.4 and 8.1 percent, respectively; Japanese and Koreans had the lowest rates, at 3.5 and 3.6

**Table 6. Unemployed people by reason for and duration of unemployment, for Asian groups and non-Asians, averages for the combined years 2008–2010**

(Percent distribution)

Reason and duration	Asian								Non-Asian
	Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian	
<b>Reason for unemployment</b>									
Total unemployed	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Job losers and persons who completed temporary jobs	58.7	59.8	62.5	59.1	45.4	57.1	62.0	55.2	61.1
Job leavers	8.0	5.6	7.6	7.6	16.6	13.6	5.0	8.2	7.0
Reentrants	23.1	24.2	21.0	24.1	27.9	19.9	22.5	24.0	24.0
New entrants	10.3	10.5	8.9	9.2	10.1	9.3	10.6	12.6	7.9
<b>Duration of unemployment</b>									
Total unemployed	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than 27 weeks	62.4	64.2	56.1	58.3	64.2	69.8	64.3	65.6	66.8
27 weeks and over	37.6	35.8	43.9	41.7	35.8	30.2	35.7	34.4	33.2

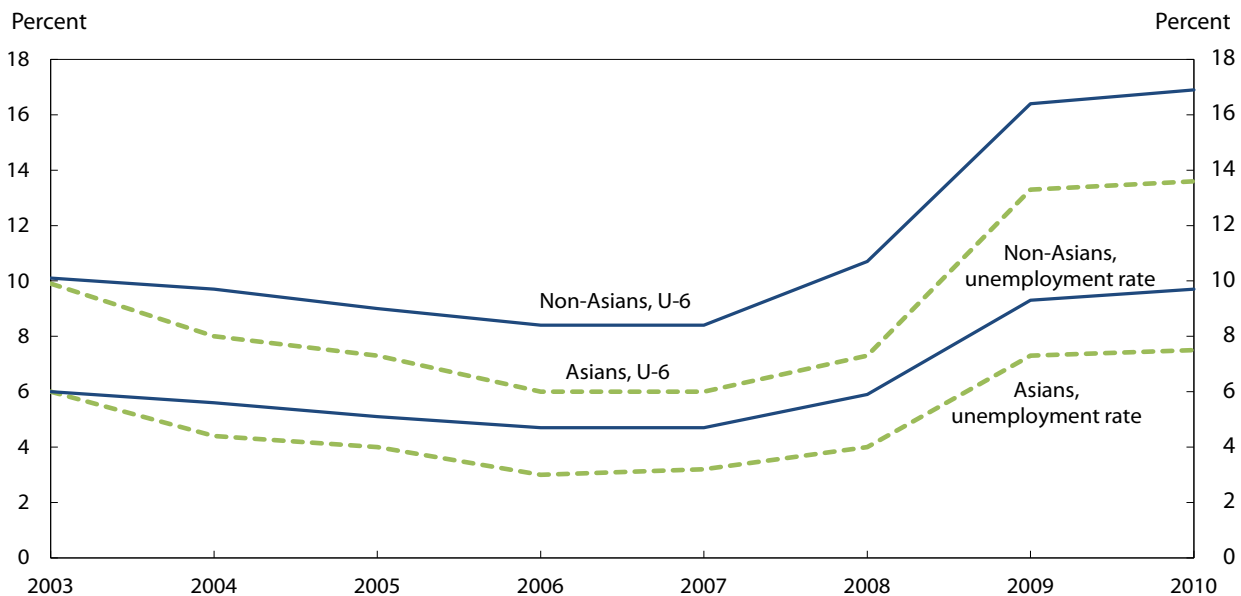
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Table 7. Labor force participation rates and unemployment rates of Asian groups and non-Asians, 2003–2010 annual averages**

Year	Asian								Non-Asian
	Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian	
<b>Labor force participation rate</b>									
2010	64.7	69.2	63.7	67.2	55.3	59.2	65.5	64.9	64.7
2009	66.0	69.9	64.3	69.7	55.7	60.1	67.7	66.9	65.3
2008	67.0	69.5	65.8	74.1	58.4	61.3	66.0	66.5	65.9
2007	66.5	69.5	65.7	72.8	60.4	60.6	65.3	65.7	66.0
2006	66.2	70.5	64.7	71.8	62.0	60.9	65.3	66.0	66.2
2005	66.1	70.4	63.6	70.8	63.9	60.7	65.6	66.6	66.0
2004	65.9	72.0	62.5	70.3	62.7	60.5	66.1	67.5	66.0
2003	66.4	72.0	64.8	73.3	58.0	61.2	64.2	68.0	66.2
<b>Unemployment rate</b>									
2010	7.5	6.6	6.5	8.5	4.6	6.4	7.6	10.3	9.7
2009	7.3	6.7	6.2	7.4	4.8	8.5	7.5	9.4	9.3
2008	4.0	4.3	3.0	4.0	2.9	3.9	3.9	5.5	5.9
2007	3.2	3.3	2.8	3.9	1.7	3.3	3.5	3.8	4.7
2006	3.0	3.3	3.2	2.9	1.9	2.0	3.1	4.2	4.7
2005	4.0	3.7	4.2	3.6	2.2	3.5	4.8	5.7	5.1
2004	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.3	2.7	3.1	5.8	5.9	5.6
2003	6.0	6.0	5.5	6.0	3.5	3.6	8.4	8.1	6.0

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Chart 8. Unemployment rate and alternative labor underutilization measure U-6 for Asians and non-Asians ages 16 and older, 2003–2010 annual averages**



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

percent, respectively. In 2010, the rate for Other Asians, at 10.3 percent, was the highest among the groups, followed by Filipinos (8.5 percent) and Vietnamese (7.6 percent). The rate for Koreans—whose unemployment rate

was the most volatile of the groups—fell sharply from 8.5 percent in 2009 to 6.4 percent in 2010. The rate for Japanese, at 4.6 percent, was the lowest for all the groups in 2010. Throughout the 2003–2010 period, rates for Japa-



**Table 8. Alternative measures of labor underutilization of Asian groups and non-Asians, 2003–2010 annual averages**

Year	Asian								Non-Asian
	Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	Other Asian	
<b>U-1: People unemployed 15 weeks or longer, as a percent of the civilian labor force</b>									
2010	4.8	4.1	4.4	5.5	3.1	3.8	4.7	6.6	5.8
2009	3.9	3.4	3.9	4.0	1.9	4.0	3.7	5.1	4.8
2008	1.5	1.9	1.2	1.6	1.1	1.9	1.5	1.4	2.1
2007	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.5	.6	.4	1.3	1.4	1.5
2006	1.2	1.7	1.5	1.1	.6	.4	1.4	1.4	1.5
2005	1.7	1.5	1.9	1.6	.7	1.2	2.5	2.3	1.8
2004	1.9	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.2	.5	2.9	2.2	2.1
2003	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.9	1.3	1.4	4.1	3.2	2.3
<b>U-2: Job losers and people who completed temporary jobs, as a percent of the civilian labor force</b>									
2010	4.6	4.1	4.4	5.2	1.7	3.6	4.3	6.2	6.1
2009	4.5	4.4	3.7	4.6	2.9	5.4	4.8	5.3	6.0
2008	1.9	2.0	1.6	1.9	1.0	1.7	2.7	2.3	3.2
2007	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.6	.7	1.0	1.7	1.5	2.3
2006	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	.8	.8	1.4	1.5	2.2
2005	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.5	.7	1.2	2.1	2.4	2.5
2004	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.5	1.1	.8	3.4	2.9	2.9
2003	3.2	2.7	3.5	3.2	2.2	1.6	5.2	3.3	3.3
<b>U-4: Total unemployed plus discouraged workers, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus discouraged workers</b>									
2010	8.1	7.1	7.1	9.1	4.9	7.0	8.5	10.9	10.4
2009	7.8	7.0	6.8	7.9	5.1	9.0	8.1	9.9	9.8
2008	4.2	4.5	3.4	4.2	3.0	4.2	4.2	5.9	6.2
2007	3.4	3.5	3.1	4.1	1.7	3.5	3.9	3.9	4.9
2006	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.1	2.2	2.2	3.3	4.6	4.9
2005	4.2	3.8	4.5	3.7	2.3	3.8	5.0	6.1	5.4
2004	4.8	4.8	5.1	4.5	2.7	3.2	6.7	6.4	5.9
2003	6.4	6.5	6.0	6.3	3.5	4.1	9.2	8.7	6.3
<b>U-5: Total unemployed, plus discouraged workers, plus all other people marginally attached to the labor force, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all people marginally attached to the labor force</b>									
2010	8.9	7.6	7.7	10.0	5.5	7.8	9.5	11.8	11.2
2009	8.5	7.7	7.5	8.8	5.7	9.9	9.2	10.5	10.6
2008	4.8	5.0	4.1	4.7	3.5	4.7	4.8	6.6	6.9
2007	4.0	4.0	3.6	4.6	2.2	4.2	4.5	4.6	5.6
2006	4.0	4.1	4.6	3.8	2.5	2.9	3.9	5.4	5.6
2005	4.9	4.6	5.2	4.6	2.6	4.6	5.5	7.1	6.1
2004	5.5	5.2	5.9	5.3	3.2	3.5	7.2	7.3	6.6
2003	7.2	7.0	6.8	7.1	4.2	4.9	9.9	9.6	7.0
<b>U-6: Total unemployed, plus all people marginally attached to the labor force, plus total employed part time for economic reasons, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all people marginally attached to the labor force</b>									
2010	13.6	10.2	11.9	16.7	8.5	11.7	15.7	17.6	16.9
2009	13.3	10.7	11.3	14.7	8.4	14.4	16.1	16.8	16.4
2008	7.3	6.6	6.3	7.6	5.5	7.7	7.5	10.0	10.7
2007	6.0	5.2	5.7	6.9	3.7	5.8	7.3	6.9	8.4
2006	6.0	5.5	6.7	6.1	3.9	4.9	6.3	7.4	8.4
2005	7.3	5.8	7.7	7.3	4.8	7.3	8.6	9.6	9.0
2004	8.0	6.8	8.3	8.1	5.2	5.3	10.8	10.6	9.7
2003	9.9	8.9	9.9	10.4	5.9	6.7	13.2	12.5	10.1

NOTE: U-3 is the official unemployment rate and can be found in table 7.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

nese tended to be lower than for the other groups, and rates for Other Asians tended to be relatively high.

To allow users to better assess the degree to which labor resources are underutilized, BLS produces a number

of alternative measures of labor underutilization; these measures are referred to as U-1 through U-6. (U-3 is the official unemployment rate).<sup>28</sup> For each of the Asian groups, the measures—displayed in table 8—have generally moved along with the official unemployment rate and have shown similar trends. The U-1 through U-6 rates were generally relatively high in 2003 and then trended down. After reaching lows in 2006 or 2007, the rates began to rise and then leveled off somewhat in 2010.

The broadest measure of labor underutilization—known as U-6—includes the unemployed, people marginally attached to the labor force, and people who are employed part time but would prefer to work a full-time schedule (also referred to as people employed part time for economic reasons).<sup>29</sup> Chart 8 shows U-6 for Asians as a whole and for non-Asians during the 2003–2010 period, along with the unemployment rate for both groups. While the U-6 rate was always higher than the unemployment rate, it followed the same general pattern. U-6 rates for each of the Asian groups also followed this general pattern. As with the official unemployment rate, U-6 rates for the Japanese tended to be low during the 2003–2010 period, and rates for Other Asians tended to be relatively high. (See table 8.)

THIS PAPER HAS PRESENTED previously unpublished CPS estimates for Asian groups. These estimates illustrate the groups' varied demographic and labor force characteristics. Some highlights of the averages for the combined years 2008–2010 are as follows:

- Of the groups, Asian Indians were most likely to be foreign born, married, and have a bachelor's degree or higher. Asian Indian women were much less likely to be in the labor force than were Asian Indian men. About one-fifth of employed Asian Indians were in computer and mathematical occupations.
- Chinese were the largest of the groups. Chinese workers were overrepresented in food preparation

and serving related occupations and in computer and mathematical occupations.

- Filipino women outnumbered Filipino men, with the disparity occurring among the foreign born. Filipino women had a higher labor force participation rate than women in any other Asian group. About a third of Filipino workers were in the health care and social assistance industry.
- Unlike other Asian groups, the majority of Japanese were native born. Japanese also were more likely to be ages 55 and older. The labor force participation rate of Japanese was the lowest among the Asian groups, at least in part reflecting the older age profile of Japanese. Their unemployment rate was lower than that of any other Asian group.
- About one quarter of Korean workers were self-employed, a much higher percentage than for any other group.
- Vietnamese were the least likely of the groups to have a bachelor's degree or higher, although the native born were more likely than the foreign born to have attained a bachelor's degree. About one-fifth of Vietnamese workers were in personal care and service occupations.
- Other Asians are made up of a variety of smaller Asian groups, and data from other sources indicate that these groups have varied labor force characteristics. Other Asians had the highest unemployment rate of all the Asian groups.

For each of the groups, changes in key economic indicators were examined for 2003 through 2010. During the recent recessionary period, unemployment rates rose for all the Asian groups, but these rates were generally below the rate for non-Asians. Alternative measures of labor underutilization for Asian groups during 2003 through 2010 show patterns broadly similar to that of the official unemployment rate.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 households, is the data source for the official national unemployment rate and many other U.S. labor force statistics. The demographic data available from the CPS allow for comparisons across a variety of subpopulations, enabling researchers and policymakers to assess how different groups are faring in the labor market.

<sup>2</sup> See the Office of Management and Budget Federal Register

notice, "Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity," [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg\\_1997standards/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg_1997standards/) (visited November 18, 2011). Before 2003, Asian and Pacific Islander was a single race category in the CPS.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about the questions on race in the CPS, see Current Population Survey Interviewing Manual (U.S. Census Bureau, January 2007), pp. C3-25 through C3-29, <http://www.census.gov>.

[gov/apsd/techdoc/cps/CPS\\_Interviewing\\_Manual\\_July2008rv.pdf](#) (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> The CPS contains additional questions about the country of birth of respondents and their parents; these data are not used for the tabulations appearing in this paper. The country-of-birth data differ from the data about Asian groups in two principal ways. First, the country-of-birth questions capture information on foreign-country births only for first- and second-generation U.S. residents, while people identified as belonging to an Asian group include individuals whose families have lived in the United States for generations. Second, individual members of Asian groups who were born abroad may or may not have been born in Asia. For example, 2009 data from the American Community Survey show that almost 1 in 10 foreign-born Asian Indians was born outside of Asia. Statistics on world region of birth for Asian groups is available from the American Community Survey. These estimates are available at [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?\\_program=ACS&\\_submenuId=datasets\\_1&\\_lang=en&\\_ts](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=ACS&_submenuId=datasets_1&_lang=en&_ts) (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Although the CPS does not collect information on each of the individual groups included in the Other Asian category (such as Hmong, Laotian, or Pakistani), data from other sources have shown that there are sharp differences among these groups. For this reason, the Other Asian group is rarely discussed in this paper. For statistics about groups included in the Other Asian category, see results from the American Community Survey, [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?\\_program=ACS&\\_submenuId=datasets\\_1&\\_lang=en&\\_ts](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_program=ACS&_submenuId=datasets_1&_lang=en&_ts) (visited November 18, 2011). Also see Terrance J. Reeves and Claudette E. Bennett, *We the People: Asians in the United States, Census 2000 Special Reports*, issued December 2004, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/censr-17.pdf> (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> For more information on CPS estimation procedures, see *Design and Methodology: Current Population Survey*, Technical Paper 66 (U.S. Census Bureau, October 2006), p. 10–15, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/tp-66.pdf> (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> The foreign born are persons who reside in the United States but who were born outside the country or one its outlying areas to parents who were not U.S. citizens. The foreign born include legally-admitted immigrants, refugees, temporary residents such as students and temporary workers, and undocumented immigrants. The survey data, however, do not separately identify the numbers of people in these categories.

<sup>8</sup> For more information on the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, see David M. Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> The native born are persons born in the United States or one of its outlying areas, such as Puerto Rico or Guam, or who were born abroad of at least one parent who was a U.S. citizen.

<sup>10</sup> For more information about the foreign born, see U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Foreign-born Workers: Labor Force Characteristics—2010,” USDL-11-0763, news release, May 27, 2011, [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn\\_05272011.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn_05272011.pdf) (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> A number of publications have examined migration of Asian groups in depth. For example, see Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from Another Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1998). For more recent developments, see Min Zhou and J.V. Gatewood, “Transforming Asian America: Globalization and Contemporary Immigration to the United States,” in Min Zhou and J.V. Gatewood, eds., *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> For more information on H-1B visas, see Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, “H-1B, H-1B1 and E-3 Specialty (Professional) Workers,” <http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/h-1b.cfm> (visited November 22, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> See *Characteristics of H-1B Specialty Occupation Workers: Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Report*, (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, April 15, 2010), <http://www.uscis.gov/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/H-1B/h1b-fy-09-characteristics.pdf> (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> See Randall Monger and Macreadie Barr, *Nonimmigrant Admissions to the United States: 2009* (Office of Immigration Statistics, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, April 2010), [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ni\\_fr\\_2009.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ni_fr_2009.pdf) (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> For more information on employment-based preferences, see U.S. Department of State, “Employment-Based Immigrant Visas,” [http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types\\_1323.html#overview](http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1323.html#overview) (visited November 22, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> “Profiles on Legal Permanent Residents,” fiscal years 2003–2010, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, <http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/data/dslpr.shtm> (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> See Yen Le Espiritu, “Gender, Migration, and Work: Filipina Health Care Professionals to the United States,” in Min Zhou and J.V. Gatewood, eds., *Contemporary Asian America: A Multidisciplinary Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

<sup>18</sup> See “Profiles on Legal Permanent Residents,” U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of labor force participation of older workers, see Emy Sok, “Record Unemployment Among Older Workers Does Not Keep Them Out of the Job Market,” *Issues in Labor Statistics*, Summary 10–04 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 2010), <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ils/pdf/opbils81.pdf> (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> For statistics about the labor force participation rates of youth ages 16 to 24 by school enrollment status and race, see U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “College Enrollment and Work Activity of 2010 High School Graduates,” USDL-11-0462, news release, April 8, 2011, [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/hsgec\\_04082011.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/hsgec_04082011.pdf) (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Self-employed workers include both those whose businesses are incorporated and those whose businesses are unincorporated. For more information about self-employment, see Steven F. Hipple, “Self-employment in the United States,” *Monthly Labor Review*, September 2010, pp. 17–32, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2010/09/art2full.pdf> (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> See *Characteristics of H-1B Specialty Occupation Workers: Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Report* and Kelly Jefferys, *Characteristics of Employment-Based Legal Permanent Residents: 2004* (Office of Immigration Statistics, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, October 2005 fact sheet), <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/FSEmployBasedLPR2004.pdf> (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> See Le Espiritu, “Gender, Migration, and Work.”

<sup>24</sup> According to the industry trade publication *Nails Magazine 2010 Industry Statistics*, 40 percent of nail technicians were Vietnamese, which is larger than any other demographic group. These statistics are available at <http://files.nailsmag.com/Market-Research/bb2010-11stats-reprints.pdf> (accessed November 18, 2011). A more complete discussion of the Vietnamese presence in nail salons is in Janya Rust, “A Vietnamese American Dynasty,” *Nails Magazine*, March 1, 2006,

<http://www.nailsmag.com/article/40129/a-vietnamese-american-dynasty> (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> See U.S. Census Bureau, “Survey of Business Owners—Asian-Owned Firms: 2007” at <http://www.census.gov/econ/sbo/get07sof.html?16> (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>26</sup> See “Survey of Business Owners—Asian-Owned Firms: 2007.”

<sup>27</sup> According to the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), which is generally recognized as the official arbiter of recessions in the

United States, the most recent recession began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009.

<sup>28</sup> For a detailed description of the different labor underutilization measures, see Steven E. Haugen, “Measures of Labor Underutilization from the Current Population Survey,” BLS Working Paper 424, March 2009, <http://www.bls.gov/osmr/pdf/ec090020.pdf> (visited November 18, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> See Haugen, “Measures of Labor Underutilization.”