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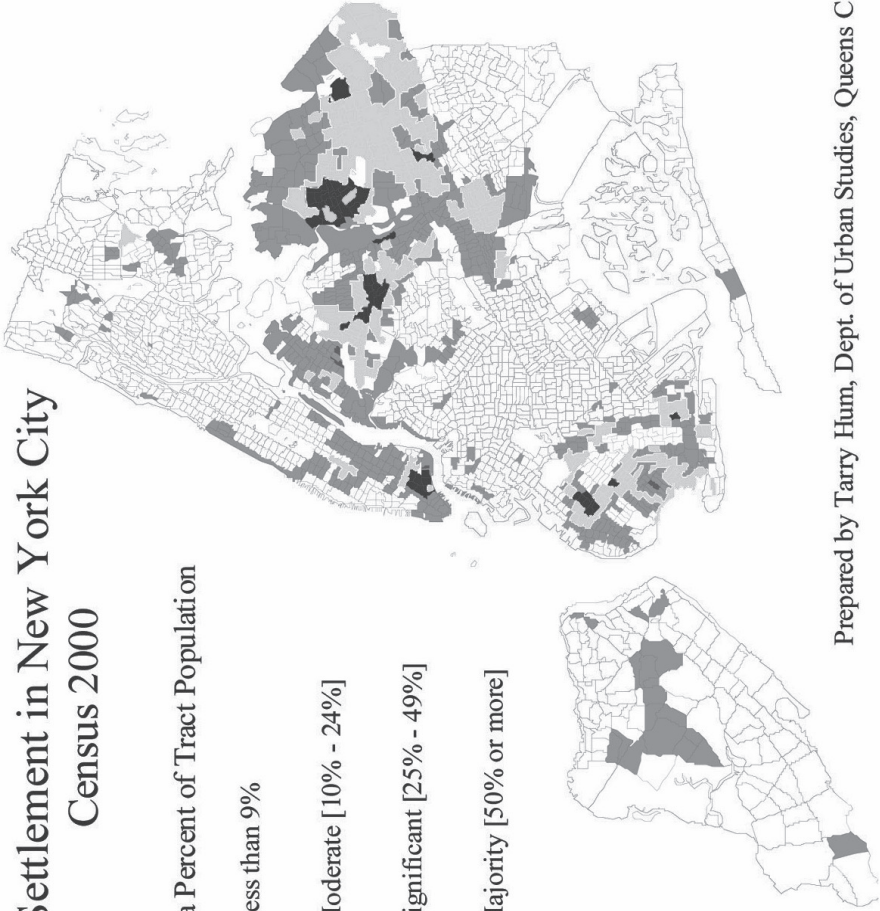
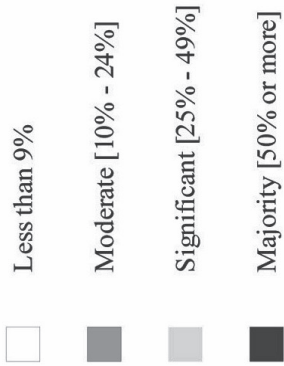
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Peer reviewed

# Asian Settlement in New York City Census 2000

Asians as a Percent of Tract Population



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# Asian Immigrant Settlements in New York City: Defining “Communities of Interest”

Tarry Hum

## Introduction

As the fastest growing racial group, Asians helped facilitate New York City's transformation to a majority “minority” city. This demographic recomposition is evident in the local socioeconomic and cultural landscape of numerous neighborhoods throughout New York City. In addition to Manhattan's historic Chinatown, several distinct and concentrated Asian neighborhoods have formed and cluster in Brooklyn and Queens.<sup>1</sup> In fact, one in every two Asian New Yorkers is a resident of Queens where they now constitute a full 18 percent of the borough's total population. The potential for these growing numbers to translate to Asian political representation was realized in the history-making election of the first Asian American public official in New York. In 2001, John Liu, a resident and community advocate of Flushing, Queens, was elected to the New York City Council.

Every ten years following the decennial census, political district lines must be redrawn to contain approximately equal numbers of people in order to adhere to the constitutional mandate of “one person, one vote.” As guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the redrawing of districts must not dilute the voting strength of racial, ethnic, and language minorities, and must provide full and fair opportunities for these minorities to elect candidates of their choice. Since the 1991 redistricting, the United States Supreme Court has also held that districts must include “communities of interest” defined as groupings of people with “actual shared interests.” The courts, however, have never precisely defined this concept.

In preparation for redistricting, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) embarked on a survey-

based study to document New York City's historic and emergent Asian neighborhoods and more importantly, to provide a venue for a largely immigrant population to define their neighborhoods spatially, as well as identify local concerns and issues.<sup>2</sup> While there are several ethnographic studies of Manhattan Chinatown and Flushing, Queens, there is little research on the emerging Asian communities in Brooklyn and Queens. Moreover, a top priority for AALDEF was to outreach and survey segments of the Asian immigrant population whose needs and interests are typically not represented in political and/or policy discourses.

AALDEF's community survey project provides a timely and original data source to investigate several important questions including: Where are Asian concentrated neighborhoods in NYC? What is the quality of neighborhood life? Do Asians who work and/or live in a neighborhood share similar concerns and issues? Are neighborhoods a viable unit of identity for Asian immigrants? This paper discusses the survey findings for four neighborhoods with the densest immigrant Asian concentrations—Manhattan Chinatown, Flushing and Elmhurst in Queens, and Sunset Park in Brooklyn.<sup>3</sup> Important similarities in neighborhood conditions, the qualities that define and differentiate neighborhood spaces, and local concerns that shape daily life for Asian New Yorkers support the survey's key finding that Asian neighborhoods can be "nested" within broader "communities of interest."

Survey findings informed AALDEF's redistricting plans and strategies to ensure fair opportunities for Asian political representation. AALDEF's goal was to draw district boundaries that kept Asians in a neighborhood whole and created opportunity where they would have a fair chance of electing a public official who represents their interests and concerns. Of the fifty-one districts comprising the New York City Council, this paper examines AALDEF's redistricting strategy for three districts that are key residential centers for NYC's diverse and growing Asian population—District 1 in Manhattan Chinatown, District 25 in Elmhurst, Queens, and District 38 in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

Since data on Asian immigrant neighborhoods is limited, the implications of these findings extend beyond the immediate task of political redistricting and may be useful to community studies. This paper concludes with a discussion of two potentially fruitful research directions. The first pertains to the "socioeconomic po-

tential of enclaves," especially since survey findings underscore concerns about employment opportunities and conditions, public safety, and overcrowded educational facilities (Zhou 1992). The second observation points to the need to broaden the typology of Asian neighborhoods and immigrant settlements to include multi-ethnic and multiracial neighborhoods. Future research should examine the ethnic specificity of neighborhood concerns and elaborate on those issues that "link the fates" of all immigrant neighborhood residents.

### Defining a Methodology to Locate "Communities of Interest"

Recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions such as in the 1993 case of *Shaw v. Reno* effectively chip away at race and ethnicity as a "predominant factor" in the drawing of political district boundaries. As race is increasingly challenged, particularly in drawing "majority minority" districts, the traditional redistricting principle of communities of interest is becoming an important tool to protect minority-voting rights (MacDonald 1998). Application of the community of interest concept to protect the voting rights of Asians was tested in the 1996 constitutional challenge to New York's largely Latino Congressional 12th District, which elected the first Puerto Rican woman to Congress. Snaking through three boroughs, the 12th Congressional District encompassed the predominantly Latino neighborhoods of Bushwick and Williamsburg in Brooklyn and Corona in Queens, as well as multiracial Sunset Park in Brooklyn and Elmhurst, Queens, and part of the Lower East Side of Manhattan including some of Chinatown (Hicks 1996). Representing Asian American voters as a defendant-intervener in the case of *Diaz v. Silver*, AALDEF successfully argued that Asian Americans in Manhattan's Chinatown and Brooklyn's Sunset Park neighborhoods constituted a community of interest that should be kept together within a single district.

In preparation for the most recent round of redistricting, AALDEF's analysis of New York City political jurisdictions concluded that several rapidly growing and expanding Asian neighborhoods were divided between two or more political districts.<sup>4</sup> To determine if "distinctive and coherent neighborhood interests and geographical boundaries" define local Asian communities, AALDEF replicated UC Berkeley researcher Karin MacDonald's 1998 study of Oakland, California, described in an unpublished pa-

per titled, "Preparing for Redistricting in 2001—Communities Define Their Interests" (2). No comparable survey of established or emergent Asian neighborhoods had been conducted to date. The community survey project provided evidence that Asian neighborhoods in New York City are defined by distinct and coherent boundaries and interests. Moreover, neighborhood issues frequently transcended spatial boundaries such that Asian neighborhoods constituted a "community of interest."

AALDEF modified MacDonald's survey instrument and methodological approach to be more appropriate for a largely immigrant Asian population in two key ways—sampling methodology and mapping tools. While MacDonald surveyed Oakland residents who attended neighborhood meetings, AALDEF cast a broader and more inclusive definition of community stakeholder. AALDEF's sample population included neighborhood residents, community-based organization staff and volunteers, and a small number of business owners. As a result, two versions of the survey instrument were developed—one for organizational staff and volunteers and the other for neighborhood residents. In addition to a common set of questions about neighborhood concerns and issues, neighborhood differences, selection of similar neighborhoods, and a mapping exercise to locate neighborhood boundaries, the resident survey included questions about housing tenure and type, employment status and workplace location, as well as commuting time and mode of transportation. The staff survey included questions on the respondent's organizational position, the geographic scope of the service area, and organizational activities.

To locate areas of Asian population concentration in Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn—the three boroughs where the majority of Asian New Yorkers resides—AALDEF reviewed data sources including the 1990 Census, 1999 NYC Housing and Vacancy Survey, and 1990-1997 Immigration and Naturalization Services data.<sup>5</sup> The staff and volunteers of key pan-Asian and ethnic-specific community advocacy, social service agencies, and non-profit organizations in these neighborhoods as well as citywide groups were interviewed. A snowball sampling was also employed as referrals and contacts led to additional community stakeholders who were then contacted. The sampling methodology also included random surveying at several community events and locations, including a community festival in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, a

job-training program, and a public library in Flushing, Queens.

Another adjustment was the geographic scale used in the mapping component of the community survey project. MacDonald's survey respondents drew the boundaries of their neighborhoods using a block level map. The densities of blocks (how often blocks were included in respondents' definitions of neighborhoods) were analyzed with GIS. Rather than blocks, AALDEF used street level maps from the New York City Planning Department and asked respondents to draw a boundary around their neighborhoods based on streets. These planning maps identify streets, parks, cemeteries, and highways but do not include neighborhood names. A spreadsheet was prepared to identify the street boundaries of greatest consensus. Based on the area bounded by the streets of greatest consensus, the census tracts encompassed within these boundaries were identified in order to prepare a demographic analysis using 1990 and 2000 census data.

Conducted during a one-year period between February 2000 and 2001, AALDEF collected more than 450 surveys from community stakeholders, including local residents, community-based organizational staff and volunteers, and a few local business owners.<sup>6</sup> Twenty-five volunteers helped conduct the survey. Virtually all volunteer interviewers were Asian, representing several ethnicities. The survey was conducted in face-to-face interviews in English, Chinese, and Korean, and typically took twenty minutes to an hour to complete. The survey included open-ended questions about neighborhood concerns and issues, neighborhood differences, selection of similar neighborhoods, as well as a mapping component to identify neighborhood boundaries. While the interviews were not taped, interviewers were instructed to write down the responses to the open-ended questions as close to verbatim as possible. Interviewers provided instruction and/or clarification on drawing neighborhood boundaries.

### Asian Immigrant Neighborhoods in New York City

Asian Americans continue to be New York City's fastest growing population group increasing their numbers by 55 percent in the past decade. At close to 800,000, Asian Americans now comprise 10 percent of New York City's population. The overwhelming majority (92 percent) of Asian New Yorkers live in three of the five boroughs that comprise New York City—Queens, Brooklyn, and



Manhattan. To examine the spatial patterns of Asian settlement, all 2,217 census tracts comprising New York City were assigned to one of five categories based on its share of Asians as a percent of the total tract population: (1) low tracts that contain up to 9 percent Asians, (2) moderate tracts comprised of 10 to 24 percent

Table 1: NYC Asian Population Distribution By Census Tract Type

	Census Tracts	Total Population	Asians	% Asian in Tract By Borough
<b>NEW YORK CITY TOTAL</b>	2,217	8,008,278	787,047	100%
Queens	673	2,229,379	391,500	50%
Manhattan	296	1,537,195	144,538	18%
Brooklyn	783	2,465,326	185,818	24%
Bronx	355	1,332,650	40,120	5%
Staten Island	110	443,728	25,071	3%
<b>Majority [ 50% or greater ]</b>				
<b>New York City</b>	<b>42 [ 2% ]</b>	<b>201,792</b>	<b>126,351</b>	<b>16%</b>
Queens	27 [ 4% ]	115,330	64,465	16%
Manhattan	7 [ 2% ]	60,844	46,455	32%
Brooklyn	7 [ 1% ]	25,611	15,426	8%
<b>Significant [ 25% to 49% ]</b>				
<b>New York City</b>	<b>197 [ 9% ]</b>	<b>702,810</b>	<b>228,552</b>	<b>29%</b>
Queens	134 [ 20% ]	502,565	166,579	43%
Brooklyn	52 [ 7% ]	168,496	51,024	27%
Manhattan	10 [ 3% ]	27,948	9,893	7%
Bronx	1 [ .03% ]	3,801	1,056	3%
<b>Moderate [ 10% to 24% ]</b>				
<b>New York City</b>	<b>465 [ 21% ]</b>	<b>1,773,465</b>	<b>271,384</b>	<b>34%</b>
Queens	231 [ 34% ]	851,077	137,591	35%
Brooklyn	129 [ 17% ]	432,556	69,865	38%
Manhattan	70 [ 24% ]	356,067	46,628	32%
Staten Island	17 [ 15% ]	71,579	9,690	39%
Bronx	18 [ 5% ]	62,186	7,610	19%
<b>Low [ 9% or less ]</b>				
<b>New York City</b>	<b>1513 [ 68% ]</b>	<b>5,330,211</b>	<b>160,760</b>	<b>20%</b>
Brooklyn	595 [ 76% ]	1,838,663	49,503	27%
Manhattan	209 [ 71% ]	1,092,336	41,562	22%
Bronx	336 [ 95% ]	1,266,663	31,454	78%
Queens	281 [ 42% ]	760,407	22,865	6%
Staten Island	92 [ 84% ]	372,142	15,376	61%

Source: 2000 SF1 data, U.S. Census Bureau



Asians, (3) significant tracts with 25 to 49 percent Asians, and (5) majority Asian tracts with one-half or greater of the census tract population who is Asian [Table 1].

While only a small number of NYC census tracts are categorized as majority Asian tracts, it is notable that approximately one-third of Asians residing in Manhattan live in one of the seven census tracts comprised of 50 percent or more Asians. A full 16 percent of the Asian population in Queens also resides in a majority Asian census tract. The population share increases dramatically for census tracts with a significant Asian population—between 25 to 49 percent. As a result, close to 60 percent of the Asian population in Queens resides in a census tract with a majority or significant concentration of Asians. In contrast, the overwhelming majority of Asians in the Bronx and Staten Island, boroughs with significantly smaller Asian populations, reside in low Asian concentrated census tracts.

Several neighborhoods, including Manhattan's Chinatown, Flushing and Elmhurst in Queens, and Sunset Park in Brooklyn, are concentrated core areas for Asian New Yorkers [see map]. These four neighborhoods contain nearly all the majority, i.e., 50 percent or greater, Asian census tracts.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, these core areas are surrounded by census tracts with significant numbers of Asians, clearly indicating how "clustering in adjacent tracts accentuates the ethnic character and reputation of neighborhoods by aggregating more group members in a delimited space" (Logan, Alba, Zhang 2002). Frequently cited as New York City's three Chinatowns, Manhattan Chinatown, Flushing, Queens and Sunset Park, Brooklyn have notable similarities as well as important differences that qualify local neighborhood conditions (Browning 1994 and Matthews 1997).

Table 2 summarizes the demographic shifts that substantiate NYC's majority "minority" transformation marked by the dramatic growth of Asians and Latinos in the past two decades. In addition to a declining non-Hispanic white population, these four Asian neighborhoods have a small number of African American residents that is also decreasing. Although Asians comprise approximately one half of the population of Flushing and Chinatown, Asians are not the majority racial group in Elmhurst and Sunset Park. While Asian neighborhoods are defined by a clustering of highly concentrated Asian census tracts, these neighborhoods are, in fact, multiracial and multiethnic, comprised of majority Asian and Latino

populations, and in the case of Flushing, non-Hispanic whites represent 25 percent of neighborhood residents.<sup>8</sup>

Census 2000 provides some detail on the socioeconomic char-

Table 2: Demographic Shifts in NYC's Asian Neighborhoods

	1980	1990	2000	% Change 80-90	% Change 90-00
<b>New York City</b>	7,071,639	7,322,564	8,008,278	4%	9%
NH White	52%	43%	35%	-14%	-12%
African American	24%	26%	25%	11%	5%
Asian	3%	7%	10%	108%	55%
Latino	20%	24%	27%	23%	25%
Other <sup>a</sup>	0.3%	0.5%	4%	60%	127%
<b>Flushing, Queens</b>					
<b>Total Population</b>	108,147	121,316	139,747	12%	15%
NH White	65%	42%	25%	-28%	-31%
African American	7%	6%	4%	-5%	-29%
Asian	14%	34%	48%	173%	66%
Latino	14%	18%	19%	47%	22%
Other <sup>a</sup>	0.3%	1%	4%	93%	43%
<b>Elmhurst, Queens</b>					
<b>Total Population</b>	83,472	94,710	114,154	13%	21%
Non Hispanic White	44%	26%	14%	-33%	-34%
African American	2%	2%	1%	19%	-34%
Asian	21%	37%	39%	99%	27%
Latino	33%	34%	43%	19%	49%
Other <sup>a</sup>	0.04%	1%	4%	2123%	4%
<b>Manhattan Chinatown</b>					
<b>Total Population</b>	106,357	113,949	115,637	7%	1%
Non Hispanic White	24%	19%	17%	-15%	-9%
African American	7%	7%	6%	4%	-14%
Asian	37%	46%	51%	34%	13%
Latino	31%	27%	23%	-7%	-14%
Other <sup>a</sup>	0.1%	0.3%	3%	339%	115%
<b>Sunset Park, Brooklyn</b>					
<b>Total Population</b>	89,440	96,978	116,436	8%	20%
Non Hispanic White	45%	30%	17%	-26%	-32%
African American	2%	3%	2%	67%	-9%
Asian	5%	17%	27%	247%	93%
Latino	48%	49%	49%	12%	21%
Other <sup>a</sup>	0.4%	1%	4%	46%	106%

<sup>a</sup>Other in 2000 includes multi-racial individuals.  
Source: 2000 SF1 data, U.S. Census Bureau

acteristics of Asians residing in these neighborhoods [Table 3]. While the Asian population in Chinatown and Sunset Park is overwhelmingly Chinese, Flushing's Asian population includes a large share of Koreans and Asian Indians. Elmhurst's Asian population is most ethnically diverse, as the Chinese comprise less than half of the Asian population. In addition to Koreans and Asian Indians, a sizable Filipino population resides in Elmhurst. Common to all four neighborhoods is the largely immigrant population with approximately one in every two immigrants from Asia having arrived in the United States in the past decade.

Asians residing in Chinatown and Sunset Park are clearly more impoverished than those who call the Queens neighborhoods of Flushing and Elmhurst home. This observation is substantiated by the lower 1999 median household and average per capita incomes in addition to the significantly higher poverty rates among Chinatown and Sunset Park's Asian population. The socioeconomic disparity indicated by these measures is further evidenced in significant differences in English language ability and educational attainment. In light of the majority immigrant population, the small share of English-only speakers among Asians in all four neighborhoods is not surprising. The greater presence of Filipinos and Asian Indians in Elmhurst may account for the larger share of Asian residents who are English-only speakers. Linguistic isolation is particularly acute in Chinatown and Sunset Park where nearly two-thirds of Asians who speak an Asian language speak English poorly or not at all.

Augmenting the high level of linguistic isolation among Asians in Chinatown and Sunset Park is their relatively low educational attainment. Compared to Flushing and Elmhurst where two-fifths of Asian adults are college graduates with some who have graduate and/or professional degrees as well, the majority of Asian adults in Sunset Park and Chinatown have not even completed high school. The Census 2000 variables indicate important differences among these four Asian neighborhoods. Clearly, Flushing and Elmhurst in Queens are more ethnically diverse neighborhoods whose Asian immigrant population has relatively higher human capital resources. The significantly lower Asian poverty rates further underscore a different neighborhood quality and resources relative to Sunset Park and Chinatown.

**Table 3: Detailed Socioeconomic Characteristics of Asian Population by Neighborhood**

	Flushing	Elmhurst	Chinatown- Lower East Side	Sunset Park
<b>Total Asian Population</b>	<b>67,659</b>	<b>44,042</b>	<b>59,167</b>	<b>31,507</b>
Chinese	50%	43%	95%	84%
Asian Indian	14%	17%	1%	6%
Korean	27%	16%	--a	--a
Filipino	3%	10%	--a	2%
Pakistani	2%	2%	--a	1%
Japanese	--a	--a	1%	--a
Bangladeshi	1%	4%	--a	1%
Southeast Asian	1%	1%	--a	2%
Multi-Ethnic Asian	1%	2%	1%	1%
Other <sup>b</sup>	2%	5%	1%	1%
Foreign Born	83%	82%	80%	81%
% Recent Immigrant <sup>c</sup>	50%	53%	48%	55%
% Population Below Poverty Level	16%	15%	24%	26%
Homeownership Rates	34%	31%	7%	28%
Speaks English Only <sup>d</sup>	17%	24%	10%	11%
English Language Ability <sup>e</sup>				
API Lang., English Very Well	31%	33%	20%	19%
API Lang., English Well	29%	29%	18%	22%
API Lang., English Poor or Not at all	40%	38%	62%	59%
Educational Attainment <sup>f</sup>				
Less than High School	26%	28%	68%	59%
High School Graduate	22%	22%	14%	20%
Some College	12%	10%	5%	6%
College Graduate or Higher	40%	39%	12%	14%
In Labor Force <sup>g</sup>	59%	59%	56%	56%
Unemployed	5%	8%	9%	6%
Median Household Income	\$40,347	\$37,257	\$22,313	\$26,250
Average Per Capita Income	\$15,898	\$14,825	\$13,261	\$11,848

<sup>a</sup>Less than 1%

<sup>b</sup>Other Asian includes Thai, Sri Lankan, Malaysian, and Indonesian.

<sup>c</sup>Recent Immigrant refers to those born in Asia and entered US during 1990 to March 2000.

<sup>d</sup>English Only Speakers is calculated by subtracting the numbers of Asians ages 5 and older who do not speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language.

<sup>e</sup>English Language Ability question pertains to those ages 5 years and older who do not speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language.

<sup>f</sup>Educational attainment question pertains to 25 years and older.

## Locating Neighborhood Boundaries

While neighborhoods are spatial entities, their boundaries are highly subjective and influenced by various social factors including gender, race, ethnicity, class, and age (Chaskin 1995). Despite a rich literature on Asian enclave neighborhoods, there is very little research on how Asian Americans define the social and spatial boundaries of their neighborhoods. Beyond identifying geographic service areas defined by ethnic concentration and poverty measures, how do Asian American community stakeholders, especially residents, define neighborhood boundaries? What are the important spatial and socioeconomic markers that delineate neighborhood? These questions pertaining to Asian Americans and the factors that shape the cognitive mapping of public spaces are especially relevant to understanding the process of community formation and building among Asian immigrants.

Table 4 lists the top three street boundaries and the frequency they were drawn by respondents in the mapping component of the community survey.<sup>9</sup> As noted, neighborhood boundaries are highly subjective and while there are no “official” NYC neighborhood boundaries, the Citizens Committee of New York is publishing a series of books that provide maps and histories of all the neighborhoods that comprise New York City (Jackson and Manbeck 1998). The neighborhood maps in this book series are based on a survey and interviews of local neighborhood civic associations including block and tenant associations, and serve as the unofficial reference for neighborhood street boundaries.

Although there is variation in the northern, southern, eastern, and western street boundaries that encompass Asian neighborhoods, the mapping component of the community survey provides several insightful observations on how Asian community stakeholders define their neighborhoods. First, it is notable that the survey respondents’ spatial boundaries are fairly consistent with the unofficial neighborhood definitions. Spatially bounded neighborhoods are a meaningful source of identity for immigrant Asians. Moreover, the area encompassed by the street boundaries of greatest consensus among survey respondents typically enclosed the largest neighborhood area. In other words, respondents may have drawn streets that bound areas that are smaller or bigger but the boundaries of greatest consensus appear to capture a fairly

Table 4: AALDEF Community Survey Project Neighborhood Boundaries

NORTHERN BOUNDARY	SOUTHERN BOUNDARY	EASTERN BOUNDARY	WESTERN BOUNDARY
<b>Manhattan Chinatown</b>			
Houston St. 33%	South St.—Brooklyn Bridge—Chambers St. 32%	FDR Drive 22%	Broadway 35%
Delancey St. 26%	Worth St. 13%	Essex St. 17%	Lafayette St. 21%
Broome St. 6%	Canal St. 7%	Clinton St. 9%	Centre St. 13%
Other Streets 35%	Other Streets 48%	Other Streets 53%	Other Streets 31%
<b>Flushing, Queens</b>			
Northern Blvd. 25%	Horace Harding Expwy/Long Island Expwy 37%	Francis Lewis Blvd. 20%	College Point Blvd. 41%
Wilets Point Blvd. 18%	Booth Memorial Ave. 8%	Clearview Expwy 17%	Van Wyck Expwy 20%
32nd Avenue 16%	Elder Ave. 5%	Utopia Pkwy 13%	Main St. 10%
Other Streets 41%	Other Streets 49%	Other Streets 49%	Other Streets 29%
<b>Elmhurst, Queens</b>			
32nd Ave 21%	Queens Blvd 54%	Junction Blvd 56%	58th St. 15%
Northern Blvd 13%	Horace Harding Expressway 10%	Queens Blvd 5%	Broadway 15%
Roosevelt Ave 10%	56th Ave 5%	90th Street 5%	77th St. 13%
Other Streets 57%	Other Streets 31%	Other Streets 33%	Other Streets 57%
<b>Sunset Park, Brooklyn</b>			
39th Street 25%	65th St. 36%	Fort Hamilton Pkwy 25%	1st Ave 28%
37th Street 11%	Bay Ridge Pkwy 8%	8th Ave. 19%	3rd Ave 19%
49th Street 11%	62nd St. 8%	9th Ave. 17%	5th Ave 19%
Other Streets 53%	Other Streets 48%	Other Streets 39%	Other Streets 33%

Source: AALDEF Community Survey Project, 2001

large spatial area encompassing smaller areas and/or comprising a sizable overlapping portion of larger neighborhood definitions.

Conflicting perceptions of neighborhood boundaries have important consequences as noted in the official geographic definition of the impacted area in the aftermath of September 11th. Initially, the northern boundary of the impacted area eligible for emergency assistance was designated as Canal Street. While Chinatown was recognized as an impacted neighborhood, a Canal Street boundary essentially excluded a large section of the neighborhood as defined by Asian community residents and leaders (AAFNY 2002; Lee 2001; Wyatt 2002). Notably, the majority of Chinatown survey respondents identified streets north of Canal Street as the northern boundary of Chinatown.

Neighborhood boundaries are frequently defined by “natural” borders, e.g., highways and major streets. For example, more than half of the Elmhurst survey respondents drew Queens Boulevard as southern boundary even though Census 2000 indicates that the census tracts on the other side of Queens Boulevard also contain high numbers of Asians. Queens Boulevard is a major four-lane thoroughfare that has been the target of much public attention due to the high numbers of pedestrian deaths that have occurred as people tried to cross it. In fact, eleven pedestrians recently died in a six-block area of Elmhurst.<sup>10</sup> This example illustrates the importance of physical structures and barriers in defining neighborhood spaces.

The significance of neighborhood boundaries is that they reflect the local spaces in which daily life activities of shopping, recreation, employment, and socializing are carried out. The qualities that differentiate neighborhood or communal space are evident when respondents are asked to describe how the area that is bounded by their drawn boundaries differs from the surrounding area. The following discussion of several open-ended survey questions provides further insight on the meaning of neighborhood for Asians and moreover, the concerns and issues that define daily life.

#### Defining “Communities of Interest”: Neighborhood Concerns and Differences

Three survey questions provide essential information to help determine whether Asian neighborhoods are bounded by a common set of concerns and interests such that they comprise commu-



nities of interest. Two of the questions are open-ended, while a third question asked respondents to check off from a prepared list of neighborhoods. One of the open-ended questions asked, “what are the most important issues that concern your neighborhood?” Upon completion of drawing the spatial borders of their neighborhoods, respondents were then asked “how is the area that is outside your neighborhood boundaries different from your neighborhood?” Finally, the third question asks respondents to review a prepared list of neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan, and select those neighborhoods they perceive as similar to their own. If respondents asked for clarification, interviewers explained that similar was defined as sharing the same neighborhood concerns and issues and/or residential composition including race and ethnicity. Respondents were also instructed to include neighborhoods that were not on the list and space was provided for write-ins.

There are many common themes in the specific neighborhood concerns and issues expressed by the survey respondents. Table 5 lists the top five neighborhood concerns reflecting those issues of greatest consensus among the neighborhood respondents. While the ordering may vary, it is apparent that these Asian neighborhoods share similar concerns.

The quality of neighborhood conditions is a common concern. Neighborhood quality issues reflect the population density of many Asian neighborhoods as respondents noted the “limited space for population and business expansion” as a key concern. Poor environmental conditions are also common to Asian neighborhoods with significant commercial centers as sanitation and pollution are frequently cited. Additional environmental issues that affect neighborhood quality include land use and development such as the relocation of red light district shops from Times Square to Sunset Park and a proposed waste treatment plant in Flushing. Neighborhood quality concerns underscore the density of Asian neighborhoods as well as their mixed use.

Related to neighborhood quality, public safety is a common concern. Respondents noted crime, theft, gang activity, loitering, and personal safety particularly in the evenings as key public safety issues. In several neighborhoods, respondents expressed the view that Asians are frequently targeted crime victims. A Flushing respondent noted, “Asians are perceived as easy targets.” Moreover, while Asians are more commonly crime victims, Sunset Park re-

Table 5: Top Five Responses to Community Survey Project Questions

Elmhurst	Flushing	Chinatown-Lower East Side	Sunset Park
<b>Neighborhood Concerns</b>			
Employment	Neighborhood Quality	Employment	Public Safety
Education	Public Safety	Housing	Neighborhood Quality
Health	Education	Immigrant Issues	Employment
Public Safety	Housing	Education	Youth Issues
Neighborhood Quality	Immigrant Issues	Health Care	Housing
<b>Neighborhood Differences</b>			
Race and Ethnic Composition	Race and Ethnic Composition	Race and Ethnic Composition	Race and Ethnic Composition
Neighborhood Quality	Neighborhood Quality	Land Use	Neighborhood Quality
Land Use	Land Use	Neighborhood Quality	Land Use
Familiarity	Economic Differences	Economic Differences	Economic Differences
Economic Differences	Culture/Language	Culture/Language	Social Issues
<b>Similar Neighborhoods</b>			
Jackson Heights	Elmhurst	Flushing	Chinatown
Woodside	Jackson Heights	Sunset Park	Flushing
Astoria	Chinatown	Elmhurst	Bay Ridge
Sunnyside	Woodside	Jackson Heights	Bensonhurst
Flushing	Sunnyside	Woodside	Sheepshead Bay

Source: AALDEF Community Survey Project, 2001

spondents commented that Asians are hesitant to report crimes—“high crime but not reported by Chinese,” “anti-Chinese crime,” “robberies, assaults, Chinese get robbed,” and “Chinese victims of robbery but dare not report.”

Education, particularly the poor quality of public education, is a common concern in Asian neighborhoods. Survey respondents shared concerns about overcrowded schools, poor teaching quality, school safety, the lack of resources for infrastructure, and the inadequacy of educational services for immigrants. In addition to overcrowded classrooms, housing concerns further substantiate the density of Asian neighborhoods. The lack of affordable housing has contributed to overcrowded and substandard housing conditions, and illegal subdivisions and conversions were simply noted as the “basement” issue. As an Elmhurst respondent commented, “overcrowding; many new immigrants per apartment.” In Chinatown and Sunset Park, respondents noted decrepit conditions and lack of landlord accountability and responsiveness.

Shared concerns about neighborhood quality, public safety, education and housing are common to all Asian neighborhoods. In addition to these top concerns, health, employment opportunity and conditions, immigrant issues, transportation, race and ethnic relations, police relations, land use, and youth issues are also common. Health concerns were a top issue for Elmhurst and Chinatown. These concerns pertained to access, quality, and affordability issues including the lack of health insurance and the inadequacy of existing services. Public health concerns were also noted by Chinatown respondents, particularly the rise in hepatitis in the Fujianese community.

Neighborhood concerns about employment are especially pronounced in Chinatown, Sunset Park, and Elmhurst. These concerns centered on low wages, sweatshop conditions, labor exploitation, worker rights, and lack of job opportunity, particularly in the declining immigrant dominated garment industry. Chinatown and Sunset Park respondent comments that illustrate these concerns include “low-income and worker exploitation,” “new arrivals lack education and employment skills, trapped in low-paid jobs,” “seasonal work in factories,” “no worker benefits,” “poor work conditions,” “lack of employment mobility.” In addition to poor employment conditions, Asian neighborhoods need local employment opportunities, a livable wage, and career training venues. As Elmhurst

respondents expressed, they “need more jobs” since there are “not adequate employment opportunities.”

Immigrant issues were among the top concerns for Flushing and Chinatown respondents. These issues pertain to a range of social service needs that help facilitate adjustment to life in the U.S., as well as concerns about immigrant rights. Specific issues focused on citizenship, language barriers, immigrant services, acculturation—“difficult to understand rules of American society,” and cultural and generational gaps. Related to issues of both neighborhood quality and public safety, transportation concerns indicate a lack of parking spaces, high traffic volume and congestion as well as dangerous intersections.

These neighborhood concerns reflect central issues that shape the daily life and experiences of Asians residing in concentrated Asian neighborhoods. Common to all Asian neighborhoods are concerns with the quality of life reflected in the high level of consensus around issues of the local environment, public safety, and housing conditions. Clearly, Asian neighborhoods are key settlement areas for immigrants including both old-timers as well as newcomers. Since these neighborhoods are centers of significant population growth, neighborhood services such as sanitation are increasingly insufficient. The housing stock is also inadequate to accommodate the demand for affordable housing and the resulting crisis contributes to the growing practice of illegal subdivisions in immigrant neighborhoods.

In addition to neighborhood conditions, there is shared concern about the quality of neighborhood institutions and infrastructure that influence the future life chances of local residents. These concerns include the status of public schools, local labor market opportunities and conditions, and community relations. The survey responses on neighborhood concerns and issues indicate that there are key uniting interests among different Asian communities, and these shared concerns center on daily neighborhood quality issues as well as neighborhood institutions that structure opportunities for education, employment, social services, immigrant rights, and economic justice. In summary, the survey findings highlight the prevalence of substandard conditions in Asian concentrated areas in New York City and underscore an observation made by urban sociologist Albert Hunter more than twenty years ago<sup>11</sup>: “[T]hough the neighborhood may be small as a social/spatial unit, it looms

large as a locus for many of the issues confronting contemporary urban society" (1983, 3).

Upon completion of drawing the boundaries of their neighborhood, survey respondents were asked an open-ended question on how the surrounding areas differ from their neighborhood.<sup>12</sup> This question seeks to uncover the types of social and physical markers that respondents use to define the boundaries of their neighborhood, and how respondents view the relationship of their neighborhood to surrounding areas. Neighborhood boundaries are significant in part because they serve as markers of racial and ethnic concentrations. An overwhelming majority of all respondents cited specific differences in the race and ethnic composition of surrounding areas (e.g., "different kinds of people outside," "not many Chinese outside boundaries," "when you move outside of Flushing, more white," "less Asian and Latino and more white outside") that served to delineate the boundaries of their neighborhood space.

While survey respondents described differences in race and ethnic compositions of surrounding areas, it was also evident in the respondent comments that their own neighborhoods are, in fact, racially and ethnically diverse (e.g., "Sunset Park mixed with Chinese and Latino," "Elmhurst is unusual in diversity," "Inside is more Hispanics, African Americans, South Asians—multicultural"). The observation that Asian neighborhoods are diverse is further substantiated by responses to survey questions that asked respondents to describe the racial and ethnic composition, and common languages spoken in their neighborhood. The majority of respondents noted at least three racial/ethnic groups comprising their neighborhood population. A similar finding pertains to respondents' observations of the linguistic composition of their neighborhoods. While Asian neighborhoods are distinct spatial units because of the concentration of Asian institutions, population, and commercial activity, these neighborhoods are rarely ethnically homogenous.

Social and spatial markers pertaining to race and ethnic composition, neighborhood quality, land use and housing types, and economic composition were significant in how respondents differentiated their neighborhoods from surrounding areas. In particular, the concentration of Asians within the neighborhood boundaries and related ethnic institutions and cultural activities provide neighborhood cohesion and a sense of place. The concentration of immigrant-owned businesses and an ethnic marketplace is a com-

mon land use that differentiated Asian neighborhoods from the surrounding area. An ethnic economy serving consumer and cultural needs is a central symbol of community presence (e.g., “Chinese groceries inside Elmhurst, no American stores,” “Inside, Koreans live, churches, businesses”).

Typically, surrounding areas were described as less dense in terms of people and traffic and having an improved physical and housing environment. Illustrative respondent comments include, “More suburban, less crowded, better schools, public transportation and libraries are less crowded, less crime” and “North is comfortable, clean, parks, better quality, good looking houses.” These responses indicate that Asian community stakeholders view their neighborhood as a distinct unit of space defined by various activities, social relationships, and institutions. While Asian neighborhoods are often differentiated from their immediate surroundings in terms of racial composition, land use, and neighborhood quality, the survey responses also point to important similarities that may provide a unifying aesthetic quality or sensibility to Asian neighborhoods in disparate geographic locations.

One of the survey questions asked respondents to select neighborhoods deemed similar to their own. Although responding to this question is bound by the level of knowledge and/or familiarity with New York City neighborhoods, this question is nonetheless informative about which neighborhoods are part of the cognitive and social base of immigrant Asian New Yorkers.

The high level of cross-referencing of neighborhoods suggests that the concept of “nested neighborhoods” may be relevant to Asian communities as neighborhoods are frequently listed in similar groupings. An overwhelming majority of Chinatown respondents selected Flushing and Sunset Park, respectively, as similar neighborhoods. Sunset Park respondents similarly selected Chinatown and Flushing, indicating the recognition or perception of shared demography and/or concerns and interests. Based on the responses to the survey questions on neighborhood concerns and perceptions of racial/ethnic and linguistic composition, the linkages that define this set of nested neighborhoods include a large Chinese immigrant population, extensive enclave economies, and extensive transportation networks that include private vans providing an alternative and more direct mode of connecting the neighborhoods.

In addition to Chinatown, Flushing respondents selected Elmhurst and Jackson Heights as similar neighborhoods. Flushing therefore appears to be part of two neighborhood groupings—one represents a tri-borough network of nested neighborhoods in Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn while the second grouping links various neighborhoods in Queens. Although Flushing was among the top five similar neighborhoods, a greater share of Elmhurst respondents selected adjacent Jackson Heights and Woodside as similar neighborhoods. In addition to geographic proximity as these neighborhoods are all located in Queens and are linked by the number 7 train also dubbed the International Express,<sup>13</sup> the similarities that define this set of nested neighborhoods are based on the tremendous diversity of Asian ethnicities reflected in the neighborhood composition, and concerns with access to affordable and quality health care especially pronounced for Elmhurst and Jackson Heights respondents.

### Implications for Redistricting and Beyond

The community survey project provided a timely and rich resource to investigate how Asians define the spatiality of their neighborhoods, the issues that are important in shaping the quality of neighborhood life, and the socioeconomic features that differentiate established and emergent Asian neighborhoods from the surrounding environment. A key finding is that neighborhoods are a viable unit of identity for Asians. Immigrants have a strong sense of what defines their neighborhood, which is frequently centered on a local economy that provides ethnic-specific goods and services, and serves as a cultural, religious or institutional center. While Asian neighborhoods comprise distinct spatial units, they are not ethnically homogenous since a concentrated ethnic and/or economic enclave comprise only a small part of a neighborhood. Community survey project findings illustrate how the definition of neighborhood typically encompasses a broader area that includes but is not solely defined by an enclave economy. Finally, Asian community stakeholders perceive similarities between their neighborhoods and other concentrated Asian neighborhoods.

Based on these findings, AALDEF advocated a redistricting strategy that keeps Asians in a neighborhood together and advances the opportunity for Asian political representation. In District 1 in Manhattan Chinatown and District 38 in Sunset Park,



AALDEF recognized the shared socioeconomic status of Asians and their Latino neighbors. To promote city council district boundaries that represent the class-based interests and needs of a working poor Chinatown, AALDEF advocated, as they had done in the last round of redistricting ten years ago, for a Chinatown district reflecting the shared socioeconomic concerns of Asians and Latinos in the neighboring Lower East Side. These shared concerns include affordable housing, employment conditions and opportunities, education, health care, and immigrant rights.

Ten years ago, the boundaries of District 1 was drawn to include Chinatown with the high-income, predominantly white neighborhoods of Battery Park City, Tribeca, Soho, and the Financial District. Despite the argument of some prominent Asian community groups that whites would be more likely than Latinos to vote for an Asian candidate, District 1 has failed to elect an Asian city councilor despite the participation of Asian candidates of a variety of party designations. The findings from the community survey project and Census data analysis underscore a common socioeconomic status and challenges facing immigrant Asians and Latinos. The goal of electing a city councilor that represents the needs and concerns of Chinatown could be better served by recognizing the “community of interest” among Asians and Latinos in the neighborhoods of Lower Manhattan.

Sunset Park is home to one of the fastest growing Asian communities in New York City. The predominantly Chinese population is split into two city council districts—District 38 and District 39. Based on the survey respondents’ definition of neighborhood boundaries, an overwhelming majority identified an eastern street boundary for Sunset Park that is located well into District 39, which is largely comprised of affluent white neighborhoods such as Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Carroll Gardens, and Kensington. To keep the Asian community of Sunset Park together, AALDEF advocated for the inclusion of these dominant Asian census tracts in District 38.

The New York City Redistricting Commission proposed to include several census tracts with a growing Asian population in the surrounding neighborhoods of Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst, while reducing the numbers of Sunset Park Latinos in District 38. Census data analysis, however, indicated that the socioeconomic profile of Sunset Park’s Asian population is similar to the neigh-

borhood's largely working poor immigrant Latino population. AALDEF argued to keep the Asian and Latino residents of Sunset Park in one district rather than shifting the boundaries of District 38 to include the more affluent Asians in Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst. The shared socioeconomic characteristics of Asians and Latinos who reside in Sunset Park formed a common community of interest based on similar class positions and neighborhood concerns regarding neighborhood quality, employment, and housing.

In District 25, AALDEF sought to keep the pan-Asian communities of Elmhurst together in one district. Data and mapping analysis conducted for the community survey project indicated that the Asian population was expanding into census tracts along the western and southern parts of Elmhurst. In an effort to keep the multiethnic Asian population intact and whole, AALDEF advocated the full inclusion of several majority Asian census tracts in Elmhurst that was split into different city council districts. AALDEF's proposed boundaries for District 25 also included multiethnic census tracts in neighboring Woodside that was split into city council District 26. As noted by the community survey project, Woodside was frequently cited by Elmhurst respondents as a similar neighborhood. Recognizing the common interests that transcend spatial boundaries linking various Asian neighborhoods, AALDEF advocated boundaries for District 25 that were inclusive of the growing pan-Asian population in and around Elmhurst, Queens.

Findings from the community survey project substantiated class-based concerns and issues in Chinatown and Sunset Park that made Asian-Latino shared interests an important consideration in drawing political district boundaries that would ensure fair representation for Asians. Moreover, survey respondents' spatial definitions of the Sunset Park and Chinatown neighborhoods encompassed many census tracts with significant and/or majority Latino populations. In Elmhurst, AALDEF's strategy employed a concept of "nested" neighborhoods in that the Asian concentrated census tracts of neighboring Woodside shared similar socioeconomic characteristics and interests as those in Elmhurst and hence, should be represented in a single district.

While the community survey project informed the immediate task of political redistricting, the findings on neighborhood concerns and issues also have implications for a community de-

velopment agenda for Asian Americans. The synthesis of these findings underscores a set of shared concerns and issues that transcend spatial boundaries as they are common to several geographically distinct Asian neighborhoods. Many of these issues pertain to the quality of daily life for working-class immigrant populations and include concerns with affordable housing, quality public education, employment conditions and accessibility, youth issues, and health care costs and availability. As Ferguson and Dickens (1999) note, "Quality of life ideals in this vision entail social justice, political efficacy, and economic vitality" (2). In other words, these interests are not intrinsically ethnic-specific; in fact, they reflect general concerns about neighborhood contexts and resources as well as economic opportunity.

In conclusion, this paper proposes that the survey findings point to two research and policy implications for community development practices in Asian neighborhoods. First, the quality of economic opportunity in immigrant neighborhoods need further study. Secondly, while the presence of an Asian core concentration is a central defining quality of an Asian neighborhood, Asians largely reside in neighborhoods that are racially and ethnically diverse. Hence, Asian community development needs to address building community in a multiethnic, multiracial context.

Limited "neighborhood opportunity structures" in immigrant enclaves were recently examined by George Galster and his colleagues (1999a, 1999b). They found evidence to suggest "higher residential exposure to other members of one's immigrant group is associated with greater increases in poverty, and perhaps, smaller gains in employment for that group" (123). This finding highlights the importance of examining the local spatial and economic context of immigrant neighborhoods in order to identify the "neighborhood effects" of enclaves in structuring economic opportunities and mobility strategies (Galster et al. 1999a). Recent research by John Mollenkopf, Phil Kasinitz, and Mary Waters (1997) on second-generation immigrants suggests that ethnically concentrated neighborhoods may offer jobs for low-skill workers, but they are also characterized by weak schools and poor public services which affects the quality of institutions that shape the life chances of local residents. The survey findings suggest more research is necessary to examine the costs and benefits of residence in concentrated immigrant neighborhoods.

The demographic and spatial patterns of Asian New Yorkers based on Census 2000 suggests a need for a new typology of immigrant settlements as the residential patterns of Asians include ethnic enclaves as well as multiethnic, multiracial neighborhoods. Notably, as the neighborhood profiles indicate, with the exception of Manhattan Chinatown, Asian-concentrated neighborhoods contain sizable populations of Latinos. Although Asian neighborhoods represent “communities of interest,” community development practices are often place-based, and it is imperative to examine if similar experiences and concerns affect other neighborhood residents, i.e., do Asians and Latinos residing in a neighborhood share concerns and interests? Community development in Asian neighborhoods will benefit from identifying those issues and concerns that transcend ethnic boundaries.

While ethnicity remains an important basis for identity formation and neighborhood definition, the notable socioeconomic differences among Asians, as well as the frequency of shared neighborhood spaces with other immigrant groups, suggests that it is necessary to explore alternative conditions for defining “communities of interest” that may include common class position and neighborhood resources that link the fates of all neighborhood residents. As a Sunset Park respondent noted, “Hispanics and Asians are suffering from problems,” and community development in Asian neighborhoods should entail further study of those problems.

## Notes

1. New York City is made up of five counties or boroughs—Kings [Brooklyn], Queens, New York [Manhattan], Bronx, and Richmond [Staten Island].
2. The survey was funded and coordinated by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF). I worked as a project consultant helping to design the survey, train volunteer interviewers, and conduct interviews. I authored the final report titled *Asian Neighborhoods in New York City: Locating Boundaries and Common Interests*, which include individual neighborhood profiles and general findings. The report is available from AALDEF’s website, <<http://www.aaldef.org>>.
3. These four neighborhoods account for 57 percent of the 458 completed surveys. The number of cases for each neighborhood is: eighty-nine in Flushing and forty-eight in Elmhurst, Queens, eighty-seven in Manhattan’s Chinatown, and thirty-six in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

4. AALDEF Executive Director Margaret Fung Statement to the New York State Legislative Task Force For Demographic Research and Reapportionment, May 17, 2001.
5. AALDEF Community Survey Project commenced before the release of the redistricting data by the Census Bureau. This was used to conduct the demographic analysis of neighborhoods and was included in the final report.
6. Refer to the Appendix for a detailed description of the survey respondents.
7. The remaining three majority Asian census tracts are located in the neighborhoods of Bayside, Queens (2) and Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn (1).
8. Survey respondents' hand-drawn neighborhood boundaries were entered into an Excel spreadsheet to calculate the north, west, south, and east boundaries of greatest consensus. These boundaries were then mapped to locate the census tracts contained within them. The census tracts represent the greatest area of agreement among the respondents as comprising their neighborhood. Refer to the full report for a listing of census tracts by surveyed neighborhoods.
9. Nearly all of the survey respondents in Flushing (93 percent), Elmhurst (81 percent), Chinatown (94 percent), and Sunset Park (100 percent) completed a map.
10. Refer to *New York Daily News* article on Thursday, January 11, 2001, "Blvd. of Death Takes Tragic Toll in Queens: One killed on Queens Blvd every 6 weeks," Roberto Santiago and Pete Donohue.
11. Albert Hunter's 1979 article, "The Urban Neighborhood: Its Analytical and Social Contexts," was reprinted in a 1983 volume, *Neighborhood Policy and Planning*, edited by Philip Clay and Robert Hollister, Lexington Books.
12. For many of the neighborhoods surveyed, a few respondents note that there are no differences between their neighborhood and surrounding areas. Since these respondents are so small in number, it is difficult to do a comparative analysis to determine if there are notable differences among respondents who listed differences relative to those who did not.
13. Refer to February 16, 1997 *New York Times* article, "On the No. 7 Subway Line in Queens, It's an Underground United Nations," Norimitsu Onishi.

## Appendix A

### Survey Respondent Profile

The community survey project sought to interview representative community stakeholders that include residents as well as volunteers and staff of community-based organizations,

and local business owners. A total of 458 surveys were completed—60 percent by neighborhood residents and the remaining include staff and volunteers of key agencies, service, and advocacy organizations that address the needs of New York City's Asian population. In addition to neighborhood residents, these individuals and organizations have extensive knowledge and experience in the issues and concerns of their Asian constituents and communities. The gender composition of the survey respondents is comparable with a slightly greater share of male respondents at 53 percent. Clearly, the majority of respondents (88 percent) are foreign-born, and this is reflective of the nativity status of Asian New Yorkers at large. Similarly, the ethnic composition of the respondents, with 48 percent Chinese, 12 percent Korean, and 30 percent South Asian which includes Asian Indian, Bangla-deshi, Pakistani, and Indo-Caribbean, also mirrors the ethnic composition of the Asian population. It is notable that this question was open-ended, with respondents self-identifying their ethnicity, hence, some respondents gave multiple ethnic identities, a pan-ethnic identity, or a racial identity.

Overall, the survey respondents have attained a high level of education. However, it is notable that nearly one in four respondents has completed high school or fewer years of education, suggesting a bifurcated pattern of educational attainment among Asians. Moreover, approximately one-third of the foreign-born respondents did not complete any of their education in the United States. This finding implies that the high educational attainment level of Asians does not necessarily correlate with a high occupational status due to the difficulties in transferring credentials and skills (Min 1996). A full 18 percent of survey respondents do not speak English well or at all. Correspondingly, 11 percent of the surveys were conducted in Chinese or Korean.

Contrary to common perceptions that Asian immigrants are newcomers, it is notable that over half (56 percent) of the respondents are long-term residents having lived in their neighborhoods for six years or more. More than half (54 percent) are renters and/or live in a house suggesting that a sizable share of renters rent houses rather than apartments. Three-quarters (76 percent) of the respondents are employed and among those who are not, the greatest share (42 percent) are students followed by those who are retired (29 percent). Notably, one in ten respondents is unemployed and looking for a job. Among the resident survey respondents who are

employed, many commute to Manhattan while nearly two-fifths (37 percent) work in Queens.

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