Assessing the Socioeconomic Mobility and Integration of U.S. Immigrants and Their Descendants

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Studying the Socioeconomic Mobility of Immigrants

To a large extent, data and methods useful for studying social mobility in the native population are also useful for studying immigrants.

Some unique challenges and opportunities arise in studying immigrants, however, which I will focus on.

"Generation" can mean something different for immigrants than natives.

Having **very large samples** is essential for studying immigrants, because we want to disaggregate by country of origin, years in the U.S., etc.

Therefore, it might be ideal to piggyback a supplementary survey on the CPS, ACS, or SIPP.

Studying the Socioeconomic Mobility of Immigrants

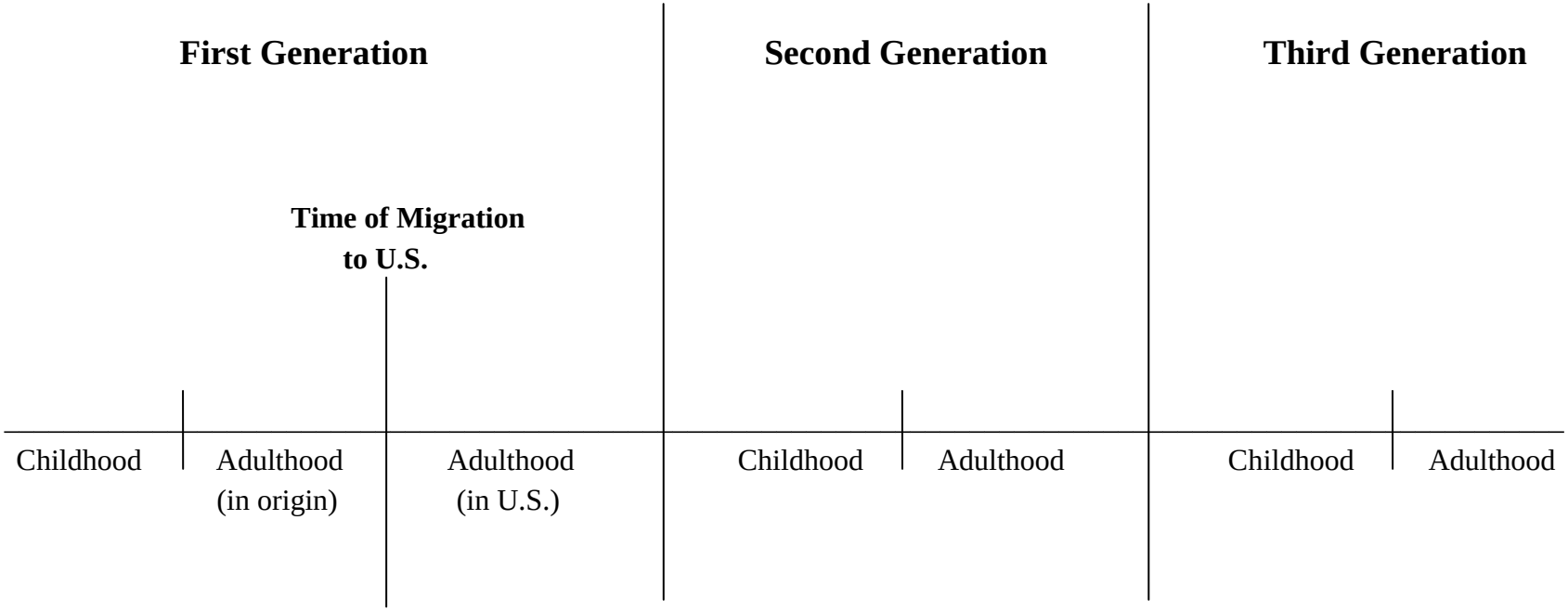
Different aspects of immigrant socioeconomic mobility:

1. Mobility of the immigrant himself
   A. **Intra**generational mobility in the U.S (i.e., assimilation)
   B. **Intra**generational mobility relative to own or siblings' or peers' experiences in the source country
   C. **Inter**generational mobility relative to parents
2. **Inter**generational mobility of the immigrant's U.S.-born descendants (i.e., second and third generations)

Outcomes to study: income, earnings, employment, occupational attainment, education, language proficiency, etc.

See "generational timeline" **on next slide**.

Figure 1: Generational Time Line for an Adult Immigrant and Descendants



*Intra*generational Mobility of Immigrants

Available data sets (CPS, ACS, SIPP) are well-suited for studying the U.S. experiences of immigrants, so we know a substantial amount about this topic.

Particularly advantageous for this purpose to have longintudinal data over a long period of time:

e.g., CPS and SIPP data matched to repsondents' social security earnings histories (Duleep and Dowhan 2002; Lubotsky 2007, 2011).

Also would be useful to collect more detailed information on immigrant status: permanent resident, refugee or asylee, non-immigrant (e.g., student, business visitor), and "other" (primarily undocumented).

SIPP asks non-citizens about their immigration status at time of migration to U.S. and whether this status was subsequently changed to permanent resident.

*Intra*generational Mobility of Immigrants

Other information to possibly collect:

Clarify duration of U.S. residence (e.g., multiple trips)

Pre-migration vs. post-migration schooling, training, and work experience

Retrospective information on “first job in U.S.” (to compare with current outcomes)

Better measures of English proficiency

Measures of proficiency in source country language (e.g., Spanish)

Pre-migration labor market experiences of immigrant in the source country

Experiences of siblings or peers who remained in the source country

*Inter*generational Mobility of Immigrants

Immigrant generations (e.g., the U.S.-born second and third generations) are complicated by:

- Interethnic marriage
- Cross-generational marriage
- Selective ethnic attrition

Because of these complications, it would be advantageous to gather information allows more precise identification of the descendants of immigrants: **the countries of birth of the respondent and each of his parents and grandparents**.

Also important to recognize that **Hispanics** are an especially interesting group to study, because of both their size and their possibly slower integration.

Evidence on the Intergenerational Mobility of Immigrants

How much socioeconomic progress occurs *across* (rather than *within*) generations for U.S. immigrant groups? Answering this question is important for assessing the long-term integration of immigrants.

Irish, Italian, and other relatively unskilled immigrants arrived in large numbers at the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s. For these groups, the American "melting pot" seemed to work amazingly well. The large differences in educational attainment, occupation, and earnings that initially existed across European national origin groups have largely disappeared among the modern-day descendants of these immigrants.

Are the descendants of present-day Hispanic and Asian immigrants following this same trajectory of intergenerational integration?

Average Education of 2nd-Generation Men, by National Origin

Source Country/Region	Avg Yrs Educ
India	15.9
China	15.3
Korea	15.0
Africa	14.7
Europe	14.5
Philippines	14.3
Cuba	14.3
South America	14.3
Japan	14.2
Vietnam	14.2
Haiti	14.1
Canada	14.1
Jamaica	14.0
3rd+-Generation Anglos	**13.8**
Central America	13.4
Dominican Republic	13.3
Puerto Rico	12.6
Mexico	12.6

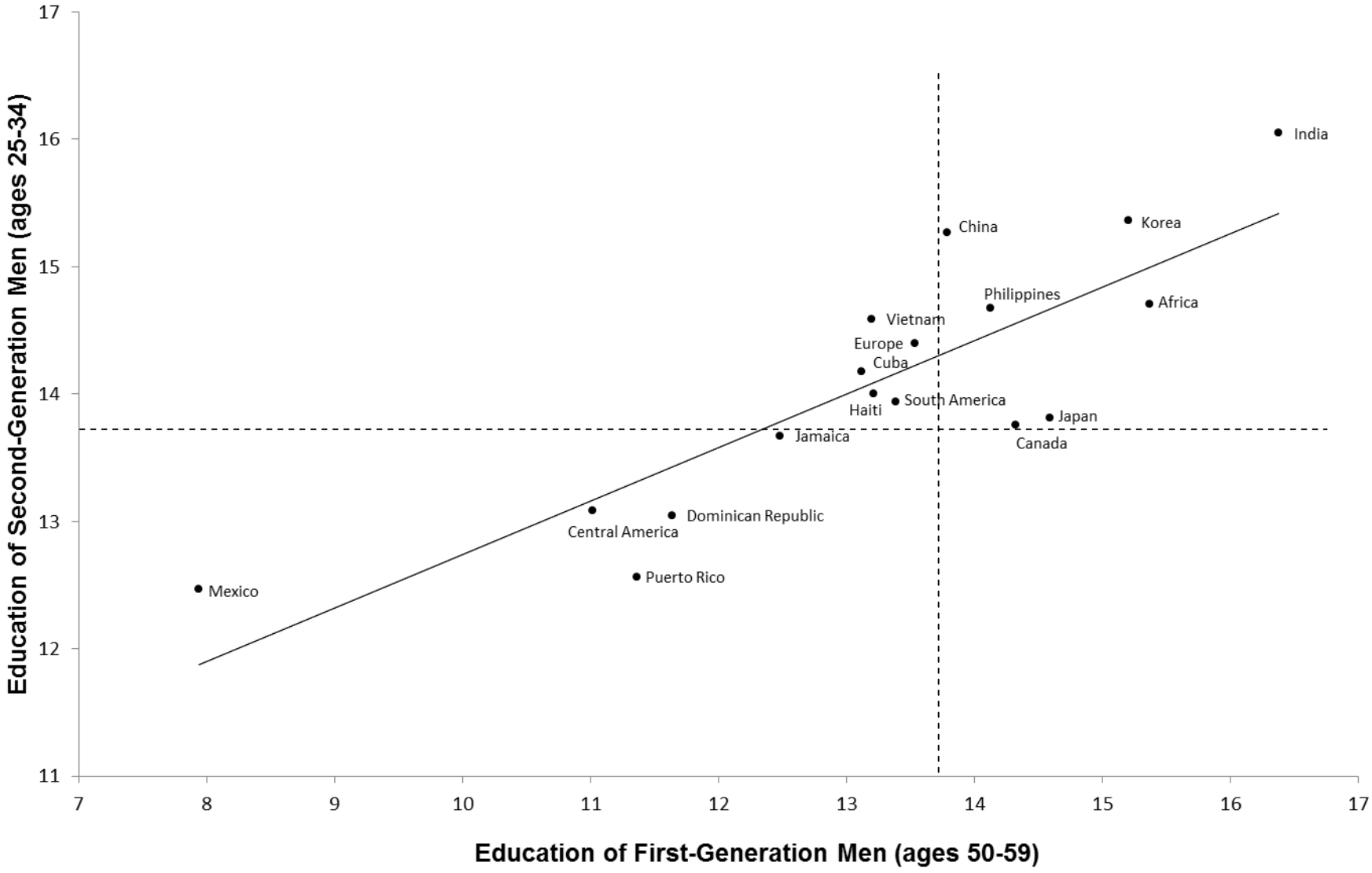
Source: 2003-2011 CPS data.
Note: The samples include men ages 25-59.

Average Education of 1st- and 2nd-Generation Men, by National Origin

Source Country/Region	1st Generation	2nd Generation
India	16.3	15.9
China	14.6	15.3
Korea	15.3	15.0
Africa	14.3	14.7
Europe	14.5	14.5
Philippines	14.5	14.3
Cuba	12.6	14.3
South America	13.0	14.3
Japan	15.8	14.2
Vietnam	12.4	14.2
Haiti	12.5	14.1
Canada	15.2	14.1
Jamaica	12.7	14.0
3rd+-Generation Anglos	**13.8**	
Central America	9.3	13.4
Dominican Republic	11.4	13.3
Puerto Rico	11.8	12.6
Mexico	9.1	12.6

Source: 2003-2011 CPS data.
Note: The samples include men ages 25-59.

Average Education (in Years) of First- and Second-Generation Men



Educational Integration

With regard to educational attainment, a key determinant of economic success, health, and life opportunities:

1. By the 2nd generation, most contemporary immigrant groups meet or exceed the U.S. average.

2. The primary exceptions are several Hispanic groups: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Central Americans.

3. Part of the issue for the U.S.-born, 2nd-generation members of these Hispanic groups is that their 1st-generation immigrant ancestors came to the U.S. with particularly low levels of education, English proficiency, and other forms of human capital.

Because they start out farther behind, will it just take these Hispanic groups an extra generation or two to catch up?

Objective vs. Subjective Ethnic Identification

To tackle this issue, we must confront the question of how, empirically, to identify immigrant groups beyond the 2nd generation?

In CPS data, the national origins of 1st- and 2nd-generation immigrants can be identified "objectively" using the reported information about the countries of birth of the respondent and his parents.

The national origins of 3rd+-generation immigrants, however, can only be identified from their "subjective" responses to the Hispanic origin or race question.

Virtually all studies of the later-generation descendants of immigrants rely on the Hispanic origin or race question (or something similar) to identify the populations of interest.

Selective Ethnic Attrition

Do many later-generation descendants of Hispanic and Asian immigrants fail to self-identify as such in CPS, Census, and other standard data sets? If so, and if this "ethnic attrition" is selective on socioeconomic characteristics, it could distort comparisons between generations.

Ideally, we would want to know the family tree of each individual, so that we could identify which individuals are descended from a particular immigrant group and how many generations have elapsed since that immigration took place (**see next slide for data close to ideal for Hispanics**).

Hispanic Identification of Individuals with Ancestors from a Spanish-Speaking Country

(1970 Census Content Reinterview Study)

Hispanic Ancestry Classification in Reinterview	Percent Who Identified as Hispanic in the Census	Sample Size
Most recent ancestor from a Spanish-speaking country:		
Respondent (1st generation)	98.7	77
Parent(s) (2nd generation)	83.3	90
Grandparent(s) (3rd generation)	73.0	89
Great grandparent(s) (4th generation)	44.4	27
Further back (5th+ generation)	5.6	18
Hispanic ancestry on both sides of family	97.0	266
Hispanic ancestry on one side of family only	21.4	103
Father's side	20.5	44
Mother's side	22.0	59
All individuals with Hispanic ancestry	75.9	369

Source: Table C of U.S. Bureau of the Census (1974, p. 8).
Note: Information regarding the generation of the most recent ancestor from a Spanish-speaking country was missing for 68 respondents who nonetheless indicated that they had Hispanic ancestry on one or both sides of their family.

Implications of Preceding Table

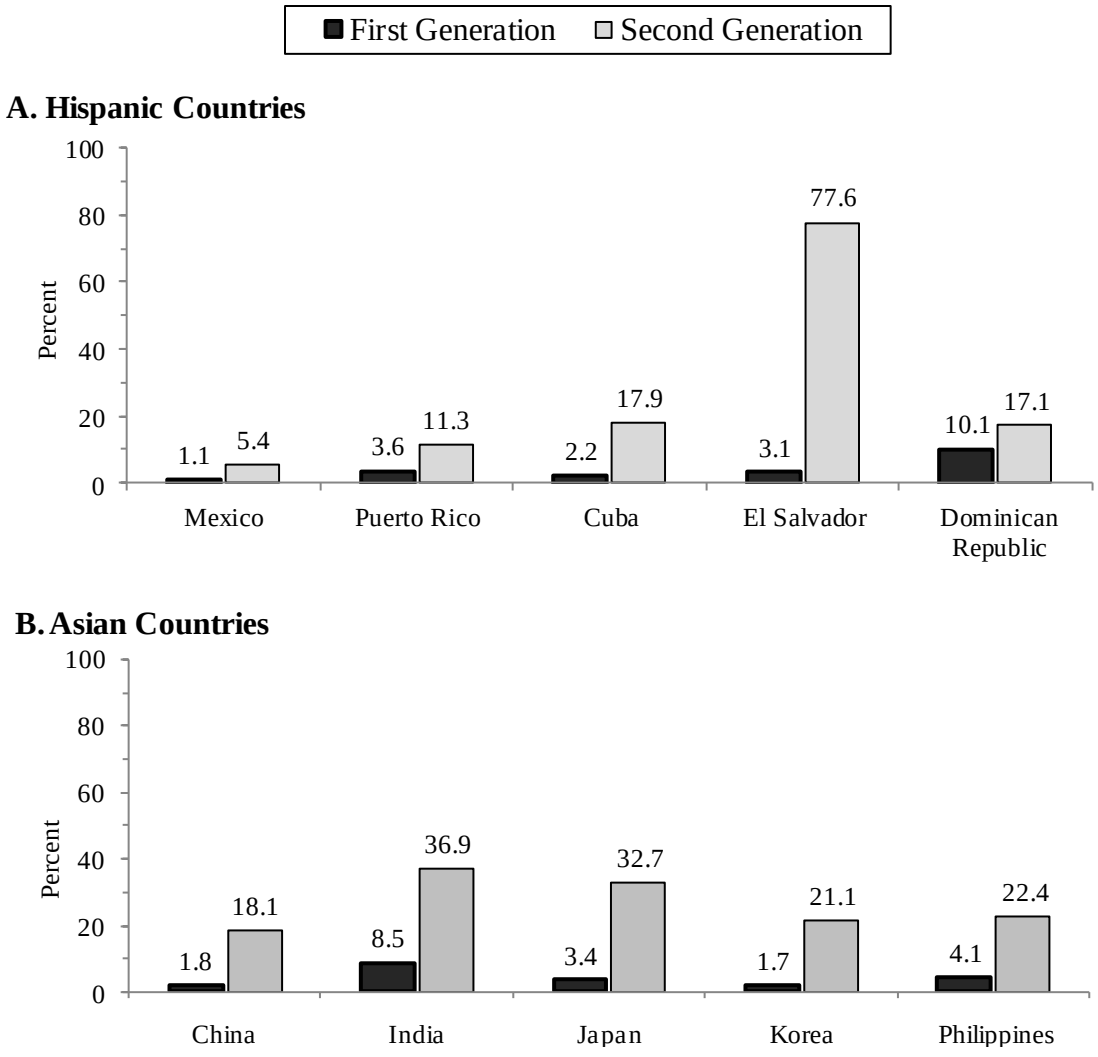
Unfortunately, the microdata underlying the preceding table no longer exist. Otherwise, it would be straightforward to analyze how selective ethnic attrition impacts generational comparisons for Hispanics.

Two important implications of the preceding table:

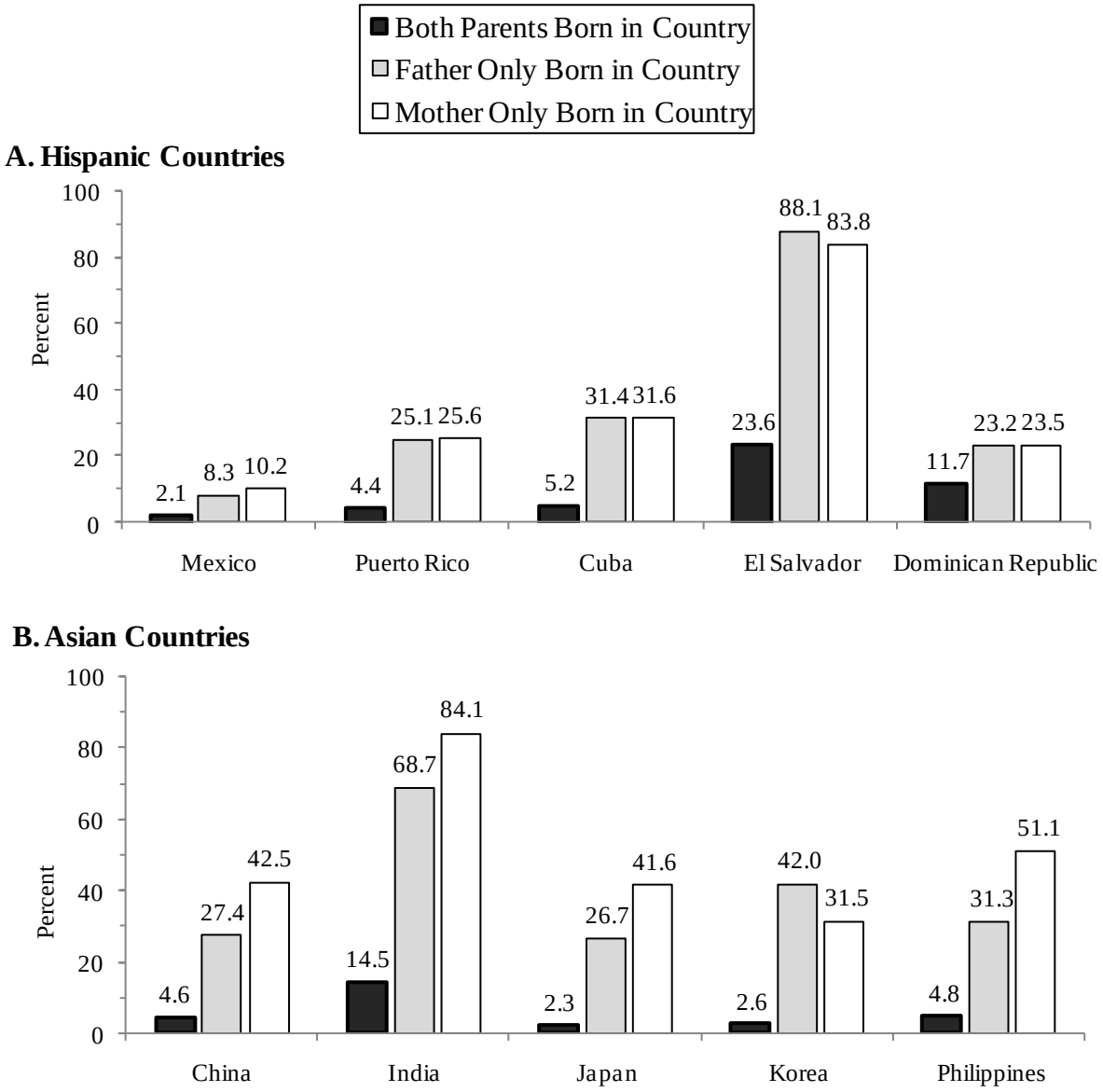
1. Ethnic attrition could be substantial.
2. Intermarriage may be a fundamental source of ethnic attrition.

Lacking data similar to those in the preceding table, we are forced to adopt alternative strategies for assessing selective ethnic attrition among Hispanics and Asians.

Ethnic Attrition Rates of First- and Second-Generation Adults



Ethnic Attrition Rates of Second-Generation Adults, by Parental Countries of Birth



Education of Second-Generation Adults, by Ethnic Identification

A. Hispanic Countries

	Mexico	Puerto Rico	Cuba	El Salvador	Dominican Republic
Average years of education:					
Identified as Hispanic	12.41	12.64	14.26	13.15	13.44
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.07	(0.14)	(0.10)
Not identified as Hispanic	13.35	13.35	14.36	13.42	13.42
	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.13)	(0.07)	(0.17)
All	12.46	12.72	14.28	13.36	13.43
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.09)

B. Asian Countries

	China	India	Japan	Korea	Philippines
Average years of education:					
Identified as Asian	15.65	16.66	14.43	15.02	14.09
	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.05)
Not identified as Asian	15.02	15.23	13.99	14.36	14.06
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.09)	(0.18)	(0.09)
All	15.53	16.13	14.29	14.88	14.08
	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.09)	(0.04)

Source: 1994-2010 CPS data.
Note: The samples include U.S.-born individuals ages 25-59 who have at least one parent born in the relevant source country.

Third-Generation Children from Hispanic Source Countries, by Nativity of Grandparents

	Mexico	Puerto Rico	Cuba	El Salvador	Dominican Republic
Percent with:					
3 or 4 grandparents born in country	20.6	21.9	11.3	1.4	10.1
2 grandparents born in country	33.4	40.2	37.4	5.5	43.1
1 grandparent born in country	46.0	37.9	51.3	93.1	46.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent identified as Hispanic:					
3 or 4 grandparents born in country	97.5	93.8	91.5	33.3	90.5
	(0.4)	(1.10)	(2.9)	(12.6)	(6.6)
2 grandparents born in country	85.6	59.3	55.8	48.3	76.7
	(0.7)	(1.5)	(2.8)	(6.5)	(4.5)
1 grandparent born in country	70.4	45.7	39.8	8.4	59.2
	(0.8)	(1.6)	(2.4)	(0.9)	(5.0)
All	81.1	61.7	51.6	11.0	69.9
	(0.5)	(1.0)	(1.7)	(0.9)	(3.2)
Sample size	6,818	2,564	829	1,086	209

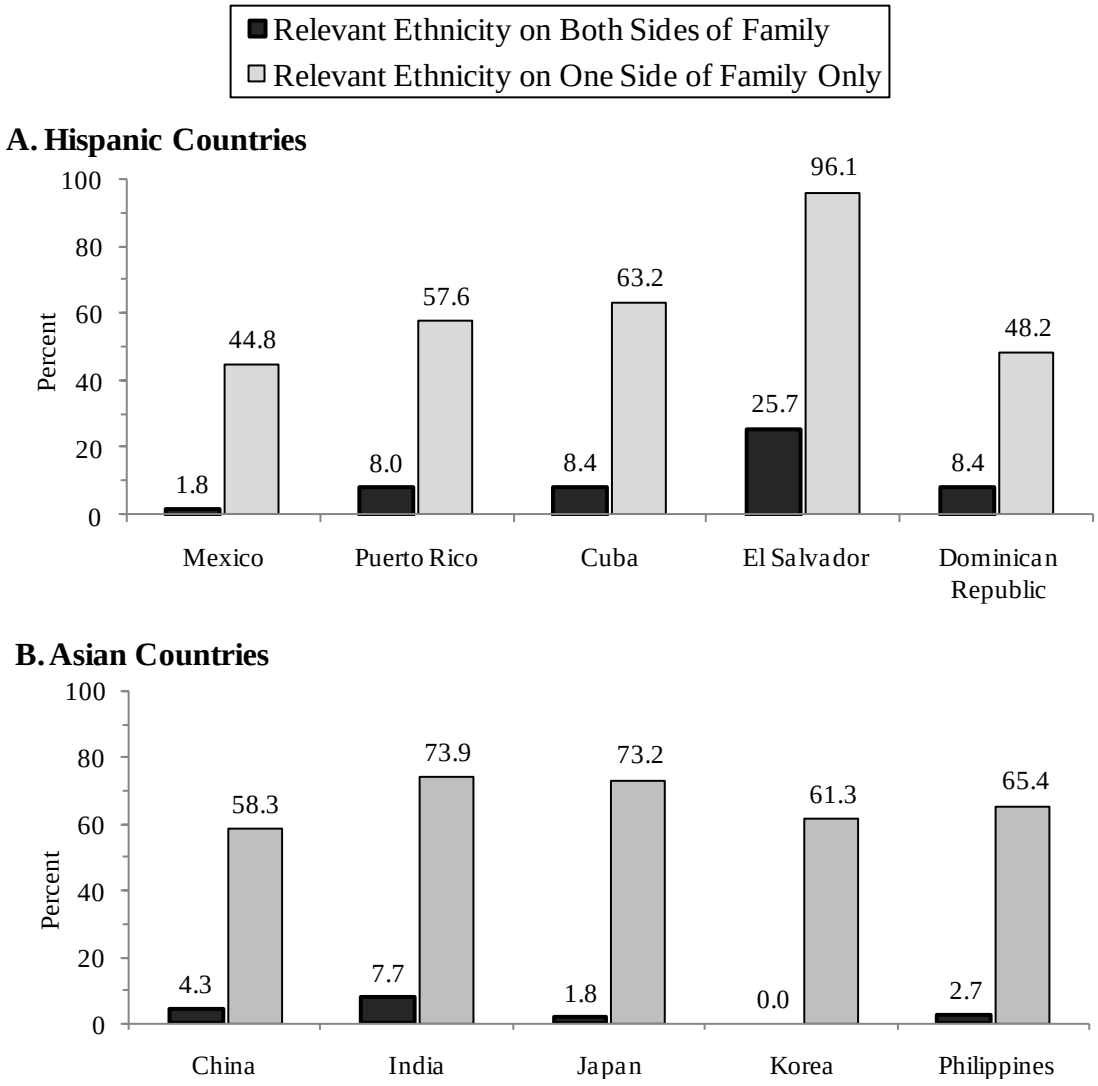
Source: 1994-2010 CPS data.
Note: The samples include U.S.-born children ages 17 and below who live in intact families and have two U.S.-born parents but at least one grandparent born in the relevant source country.

Third-Generation Children from Asian Source Countries, by Nativity of Grandparents

	China	India	Japan	Korea	Philippines
Percent with:					
3 or 4 grandparents born in country	11.2	5.9	1.2	2.2	8.2
2 grandparents born in country	36.5	42.4	6.8	14.1	33.1
1 grandparent born in country	52.4	51.8	92.0	83.6	58.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Percent identified as Asian:					
3 or 4 grandparents born in country	90.0	90.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(3.6)	(10.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)
2 grandparents born in country	72.9	48.6	76.0	86.8	71.9
	(2.9)	(5.9)	(6.1)	(5.6)	(2.2)
1 grandparent born in country	40.4	10.2	40.0	40.9	36.6
	(2.7)	(3.2)	(1.9)	(3.3)	(1.8)
All	57.8	31.2	43.2	48.7	53.5
	(2.0)	(3.6)	(1.8)	(3.1)	(1.4)
Sample size	628	170	739	269	1,226

Source: 1994-2010 CPS data.
Note: The samples include U.S.-born children ages 17 and below who live in intact families and have two U.S.-born parents but at least one grandparent born in the relevant source country.

Ethnic Attrition Rates of Third-Generation Children, by Source of Ethnicity



Third-Generation Children from Hispanic Source Countries: Parental Education by Child's Ethnic Identification

	Mexico	Puerto Rico	Cuba	El Salvador	Dominican Republic
Average education of fathers:					
Child identified as Hispanic	12.53	12.98	14.37	12.76	13.58
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.11)	(0.19)	(0.17)
Child not identified as Hispanic	13.57	13.54	14.63	13.59	13.59
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.29)
All	12.73	13.20	14.50	13.50	13.58
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.14)
Average education of mothers:					
Child identified as Hispanic	12.59	13.07	14.25	13.02	13.89
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.11)	(0.16)	(0.17)
Child not identified as Hispanic	13.38	13.46	14.15	13.39	13.41
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.11)	(0.07)	(0.23)
All	12.74	13.22	14.20	13.35	13.75
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.14)

Source: 1994-2010 CPS data.
Note: The samples include U.S.-born children ages 17 and below who live in intact families and have two U.S.-born parents but at least one grandparent born in the relevant source country.

Third-Generation Children from Asian Source Countries: Parental Education by Child's Ethnic Identification

	China	India	Japan	Korea	Philippines
Average education of fathers:					
Child identified as Asian	15.95	17.04	14.78	15.18	14.01
	(0.10)	(0.24)	(0.13)	(0.20)	(0.08)
Child not identified as Asian	15.53	15.56	13.89	14.30	14.18
	(0.16)	(0.21)	(0.11)	(0.19)	(0.09)
All	15.77	16.02	14.28	14.72	14.09
	(0.09)	(0.17)	(0.08)	(0.14)	(0.06)
Average education of mothers:					
Child identified as Asian	15.79	17.17	14.87	14.90	14.26
	(0.10)	(0.22)	(0.13)	(0.21)	(0.07)
Child not identified as Asian	15.28	15.64	13.79	14.30	14.00
	(0.15)	(0.21)	(0.10)	(0.18)	(0.09)
All	15.57	16.12	14.26	14.59	14.14
	(0.09)	(0.17)	(0.08)	(0.14)	(0.06)

Source: 1994-2010 CPS data.
Note: The samples include U.S.-born children ages 17 and below who live in intact families and have two U.S.-born parents but at least one grandparent born in the relevant source country.