

Internet Research Projects

Chapter 2: Assimilation and Pluralism: From Immigrants to White Ethnics

Measuring Assimilation with Census Data

American society incorporates scores of ethnic and racial groups. In this exercise, you will use the U.S. Census to gather information about the relative assimilation of several different groups. You will choose one Hispanic American group, one Asian American group, and two white ethnic groups. See Table 8.1 for a partial list of Hispanic American groups and Table 9.1 for a similar list of Asian American Groups. Review Chapter 2 for suggestions of the white ethnic groups you might select. Also, see Figure 2.5.

Get information by following these steps

1. Go to the official U.S. Census Bureau website at www.census.gov
2. Click “Data” from the list of options at the top of the home page and then click “Data Tools and Apps”
3. Click “The American Fact Finder” – the top selection in the list on the page that opens
4. On the next page,
 - a. Click “Advanced Search”
 - b. Click “Show Me All”
5. On the next page, in the box in the middle of the page,
 - a. Click the button next to “Race/Ethnicity”
 - b. Enter the name of your first group (e.g., Chinese) in the box under “race, ancestry, or tribe.” Some group names will appear on the screen as you type – pick the name of your group. If given a choice, select the group “alone or in any combination”
 - c. Click “Go”
6. The next screen will list a number of datasets. Look in the right-hand column and find the data set called 2012 ACS 3-year estimates. Click on “Selected Population Profile in the United States” for this data set
7. The Population Profile for your first group will appear. Scroll down the table until you get to “Place of Birth, Citizenship Status and Year of Entry” and “Language Spoken at home and Ability to Speak English.”
8. Write the name of your first group in column 1 of the table below and add the information for this group. Data for the “Total Population” have already been entered.
9. When you have entered all data, use your browser’s “Back” button to return to the previous screen.
10. Find the “Your Selections” box in the upper left of the screen and click the “x” next to the name of your first group. You will be returned to selection screen and the button next to “race/ancestry” should still be checked. If not, click on it to re-select it.

11. Repeat steps 5-10 for each of your groups until the table below is completely filled in.¹

	Variables	Total Population*	Your Groups			
			1	2	3	4
1	Number Foreign-Born	40,450,505				
2	Percent of Foreign-born who are naturalized citizens (Divide the number of Foreign-Born who are naturalized by the total number of Foreign-Born and multiply by 100)	44.7%				
3	Percentage of Foreign-born that entered the U.S. before 2010	95.6%				
4	Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English:					
	Percent who Speak English Only	79.2%				
	Percent who speak English Less Than "Very Well"	8.7%				

* Results are from the 2012 American Community Survey, Three Year estimates

Questions for Research and Discussion:

1. How do these variables measure assimilation? What stage of Gordon’s model (see Table 2.1) do they relate to?
2. Which of your groups is most / least assimilated? Based on this chapter and what you know about these groups at this point, what factors might explain their relative position?
3. Compare the percentage of each group that entered the U.S. after 2000 with the percentage of the group that speaks only English. Do you see any trends here? Are the newest arrivals least likely to speak English only? Is there evidence that language acculturation is taking place?

¹ If you cannot find your group, see the “Alternative Instructions for Locating the American Community Survey 2012, Three-Year Estimates”

Optional Group Discussion: Bring the information on your five groups to class and compare with groups collected by others. Consider the issues raised in the question above and in the chapter and develop some ideas about why the groups are where they are relative to each other.