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Importance of Country of Origin as well as Country of Destination**

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**Economic Assimilation of Japanese Immigrants in North America:
The Importance of Country of Origin as Well as Country of Destination**

**A Paper Presented to the Conference “Changing Japanese Identities in Multicultural Canada,”
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I. Introduction

How successful have Japanese immigrants been in North America? The argument advanced in this paper is that as a group the Japanese immigrant community has done well. Why? The answer lies in the fact that both North America and Japan have done well economically over the last 140 years. The reasons lie on both sides of the Pacific.

Underlying my conclusion is a somewhat unconventional approach to measuring economic assimilation. Typically, economic assimilation is measured by comparing the earnings of immigrants with natives. Since an immigrant usually earns lower wages and/or generates lower earnings than the average native upon arrival, he or she is likely to start off at a disadvantage. But, historically, the increase in wages and earnings enjoyed by the average immigrant exceeds that of the native, for comparable age and gender groups. The immigrant catches up over time. There is a crossover point at which immigrant wages and earnings equal those of the native. The length of time from initial entry into the labor force of the country of settlement, and the year of crossover, is known as the assimilation period for the immigrant. Low entry earnings followed by economic assimilation is the story.¹

To be sure, this approach is useful calculating the economic flows associated with immigration. Policy makers, concerning with the economic demands that immigrant flows place on society are surely concerned with the degree to which entry wages for immigrants fall short of those for natives, and with the length of time that assimilation eats up. But, is this the best way to measure economic assimilation? In this paper, I argue that examining the long-run experience of the ethnic community associated with immigration from a particular nation or geographic region offers a useful alternative measure of economic assimilation.

The advantage of this approach is two-fold: (1) as a practical matter, it allows us to estimate economic assimilation for groups like the Japanese in North America, whose actual immigration experience is largely historical, mainly completed in the past (when data on earnings by age and years since immigration is unavailable); and (2) it takes into account the economic performance of the descendants of immigrants – children, grandchildren – which is an important facet of immigration. Moreover, it takes into account a practical facet of immigration since the

¹ See Borjas (1999) for a discussion of the standard calculations used in the literature on economic assimilation. To compute economic assimilation using this approach, one needs figures on age, earnings, and year of entry into the country. Such data is regularly generated today in censuses, but was not generated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a rule.

descendants of immigrants help support their aged immigrant parents in many cases. In effect, the economic success of immigrants is directly linked to the economic success of their offspring.

II. Japanese Emigration and Immigration into North America

In assessing the economic assimilation of Japanese immigration, three points about the character of the migration flow must be made at the outset: relative to the population of Japan, emigration rates are very low; moreover, relative to the populations of North America, the volume of Japanese immigrants coming in is also low; but - because Japanese immigration was mainly concentrated in Hawaii and on the West Coast of the continent, areas whose mass settlement was merely commencing in the post-1870 period - the volume of incoming Japanese immigrants relative to domestic population was far more substantial and visible than at the level of the national jurisdictions; and, immigration rates dropped off rapidly after the early 1900s, largely due to various accords reached between the Japanese government and the United States and Canadian governments, and, subsequently due to unilateral restrictions imposed by the countries of settlement.² Documentation on a number of the points just offered appears in Table 1.

² On Japanese emigration rates, see Chapter 2 of Mosk (forthcoming). On restrictions on Asian immigration imposed by the four major countries of settlement - the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand - see Coolidge (1968), Huttenback (1976), Iyenaga and Sato (1921), McClatchy (1978), McKenzie (1927), Price (1974), and Young and Reid (1938). The emergence of eugenics - scientific racism - played an important role in shaping legislation restricting and limiting immigration from Asia in the four countries of settlement. On the rise and demise of scientific racism, see Barkan (1992). A fuller account of the forces underpinning restriction to Asian immigration in the countries of settlement is given in Chapter 10 of Mosk (forthcoming), which also treats the reasons underlying the abandonment of restrictions to Asian immigration during the 1960s and 1970s.

Table 1: Population (in 1000s), Population Density (population per square mile), and Percentage of Population in Various Asian Ethnicities: States of Hawaii, California, Oregon, and Washington; Province of British Columbia and City of Vancouver in Canada (Legal City Boundaries) (a)

Panel A: Hawaii, California and Oregon

Year	Hawaii				California				Oregon		
	P	D	C%	J%	P	D	C%	J%	P	D	C%
1850	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	93	0.6	n.e.	n.e.	12	n.e.	n.e.
1860	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	380	2.4	9.2	n.e.	52	0.5	n.e.
1870	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	560	3.6	8.8	0.1	91	1.0	0.8
1880	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	865	5.5	8.7	0.1	175	1.8	2.6
1890	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	1,213	7.8	6.0	0.7	318	3.3	5.5
1900	154	24.0	16.7	39.7	1,485	9.5	3.1	1.7	414	4.3	3.0
1910	192	30.0	11.3	41.5	2,378	15.3	1.5	2.1	673	7.0	2.5
1920	256	39.9	9.2	42.7	3,427	22.0	0.8	n.e.	783	8.2	1.1
1930	368	57.5	n.e.	n.e.	5,677	36.2	n.e.	n.e.	954	9.9	0.4
1940	423	66.0	n.e.	n.e.	6,907	44.1	n.e.	n.e.	1090	11.3	n.e.
1950	500	78.0	n.e.	n.e.	10,586	67.5	n.e.	n.e.	1521	15.8	n.e.
1960	633	98.5	6.8	28.3	15,717	100.4	n.e.	n.e.	1769	18.4	n.e.
1970	769	119.6	n.e.	n.e.	19,953	127.6	0.9	n.e.	2091	21.7	n.e.
1980	965	150.2	n.e.	n.e.	23,668	151.7	n.e.	n.e.	2633	27.4	n.e.

Panel B: Washington State, British Columbia and Vancouver

Year	Washington State					British Columbia					Vancouver			
	P	D	C%	J%	F%	P	D	C%	J%	A%	P	C%	J%	A%
1850	1	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	55	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
1860	12	0.1	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	51.5	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
1870	24	0.4	1.0	n.e.	n.e.	36.2	.10	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
1880	75	1.1	4.3	0.001	n.e.	49.5	.14	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
1890	357	5.3	0.9	0.1	n.e.	98.2	.27	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	13.7	n.e.	n.e.	7.8+
1900	518	7.8	0.7	1.1	n.e.	178.7	.50	n.e.	n.e.	10.9	27.0	n.e.	n.e.	10.5+
1910	1,142	17.1	0.2	1.1	0.001	392.5	1.09	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	123.9	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
1920	1,357	20.3	0.2	1.3	0.1	524.6	1.46	4.2	2.9	7.1	117.2	5.0	2.5	7.6
1930	1,563	23.3	0.1	1.1	0.2	694.3	1.93	3.9	3.2	n.e.	246.6	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
1940	1,736	25.9	0.1	0.8	0.1	817.9	2.28	2.3	2.7	n.e.	275.4	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
1950	2,379	35.6	0.1	0.4	0.2	1,165.2	3.24	1.4	0.6	n.e.	344.8	n.e.	n.e.	5.2
1960	2,853	42.8	0.2	0.6	0.3	1,629.1	4.53	1.5	0.6	2.5	384.5	4.0	0.8	5.2
1970	3,409	51.2	0.3	0.6	0.4	2,184.6	6.34	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	426.3	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
1980	4,132	62.1	0.4	0.6	0.6	2,836.5	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	414.3	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.
1990	4,867	73.1	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	3,379.8	n.e.	5.4	n.e.	8.0+	471.8	21.8	n.e.	26.0+

Notes: (a) P = population; D = population density; C% = percentage of population Chinese; J% = percentage of population Japanese; F% = percentage of population Filipino; A% = percentage of population Asian. For the Canadian figures the dates are 1851, 1861, etc. n.e. = not estimated (or not available). A “+” after a number indicates that the figure is above the stipulated numerical value.

Sources: Canada. Ministry of Industry, Trade and Commerce (various years); Coolidge (1968): various tables; Iyenaga and Sato (1921): pg. 92; Leacy (1983): various tables; Ong, Fujita and Chin (1976): various tables; Price (1974): pg. 277; Statistics Canada (various years); United States. Department of Commerce. Census Bureau (1975): various tables; United States. Department of Commerce. Census Bureau (various years): various tables; Urquhart and Buckley (1965): various tables; and Young and Reid (1938): pg. 23.

As the reader can see, the proportion of population that is Asian – particularly the proportion that is Chinese or Japanese – tends to drop off after the turn of the twentieth century. As can also be seen, the proportion Asian in Hawaii is quite substantial. In particular, Hawaii is crucial to the story of Japanese immigration to North America, because Japanese were recruited as indentured servants by Japanese emigration companies – iminguisha – who contracted out the services of the emigrants to pineapple and coffee plantation owners in Hawaii. Once Hawaii was incorporated into the United States (following the Spanish-American War in which Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States), Japanese immigrants and their descendents began to make their way to the Pacific coast of North America, especially to California. Not surprisingly, resistance to Asian immigration was mainly concentrated on the West Coast of North America, where populations were thin, and thus even a small Asian presence loomed large.

After the United States and Canada began to severely limit immigration from Japan – with Gentlemen’s Agreements in and after 1907/8 – the Japanese government entered into agreements with Peru and the State of Sao Paulo in Brazil. Thus, emigration to the Americas continued, but increasingly it was directed at Latin America, especially South America. In addition, after World War I, Japan became increasingly involved in economically integrating itself with its growing Asian Empire consisting of Taiwan, Korea, portions of Northern China, and Manchuria. As a result, emigration to the Empire increased, and emigration to the Americas tended to fall off. But, even possessing a massive Empire, Japanese emigration rates remained relatively low. Loss of Empire during and after the Pacific War led to wholesale repatriation of Japanese nationals living abroad in Asia and the Pacific. Thus, by the 1950s, relatively few Japanese resided abroad, and those who did so were mainly concentrated in South America. This point can be seen from Table 2 from the figures for Japanese living abroad in 1960.

A capsule summary of postwar emigration and repatriation is also contained in Table 2. As can be seen, the proportion of Japanese living permanently abroad has dramatically dropped in South America. Many Japanese and their descendents living in Brazil, Peru, and Paraguay have repatriated, especially since the early 1970s, when Japanese immigration policy was amended to encourage the immigration of Japanese and their descendents living abroad. This policy was aimed at addressing labor shortages, especially felt in the automobile assembly industry and in small and medium sized companies that were first significantly felt during the 1970s. Equally apparent is while Japanese are abandoning South America, the proportion of Japanese permanently living abroad has been increasing in Oceania, Europe and North America.

Table 2: Japanese Living Abroad, 1964-1994**Panel A: Percentage of Japanese Living Abroad by Region, 1960-1994 ^(a)**

Year(s)	Asia	Oceania	North America	South America	Europe	Africa
	All Japanese Living Abroad (%)					
1960	1.8	0.3	19.8	76.6	1.2	0.04
1970	6.3	0.9	20.9	64.9	5.2	0.9
1973-1974	9.4	1.0	30.0	49.4	8.6	1.3
1975-1979	12.5	1.1	30.9	44.1	9.5	1.7
1980-1989	14.4	2.0	35.5	32.4	14.1	1.5
1990-1994	15.8	4.0	42.2	18.7	18.4	0.8
Years	Permanent (Expatriate) Residents of Other Countries (%)					
1973-1974	2.5	0.1	27.5	69.1	0.3	0.001
1975-1979	2.6	0.2	28.9	67.6	0.7	0.002
1980-1989	3.0	1.0	33.2	60.2	2.8	0.1
1990-1994	3.2	4.0	40.2	46.3	6.2	0.1
Years	Temporarily Resident in Other Countries (%)					
1973-1974	24.5	3.1	35.5	6.4	26.8	4.0
1975-1979	28.2	2.4	34.1	6.5	23.7	4.5
1980-1989	26.4	3.1	37.6	3.8	25.7	3.1
1990-1994	23.6	4.0	43.4	1.7	25.9	1.2

Panel B: Growth Rate for Japanese Populations Living Abroad, 1975-1979 (Average Annual Rates Based on Five Year Moving Averages)

Period	Total	Asia	Oceania	North America	South America	Europe	Africa
	All Japanese Living Abroad (%)						
1975-79	2.5	8.6	7.8	2.8	-0.9	7.1	9.6
1980-84	1.9	1.7	10.6	4.6	-2.3	7.3	-2.8
1985-89	4.8	5.0	17.0	8.2	-3.3	9.6	-5.8
1990-94	3.5	9.7	9.5	2.9	-2.5	3.6	5.1
Period	Permanent (Expatriate) Residents of Other Countries						
1975-79	-0.5	1.3	12.7	0.2	-1.1	22.5	42.6
1980-84	-0.3	0.2	21.4	2.4	-2.3	17.6	36.7
1985-89	0.1	2.5	31.5	2.5	-3.2	14.1	19.5
1990-94	1.4	1.0	3.9	3.9	-2.6	7.2	10.1
Period	Temporarily Resident in Other Countries						
1975-79	7.3	9.8	7.2	6.5	3.5	6.4	9.6
1980-84	4.6	1.9	8.7	6.9	-2.2	6.4	-3.0
1985-89	8.9	5.3	12.0	12.6	-4.4	9.1	-6.2
1990-94	4.6	10.4	6.7	2.4	-1.3	3.0	4.9

Notes: (a) North America includes the Central American countries; the U.S.S.R. (and the countries of the former U.S.S.R.) are not included in the figures for Europe, but other Eastern European countries are included in Europe.

Sources: Mosk (forthcoming): Table 2.8.

What about Japanese living in Asia? As can be seen from the table, the proportion of Japanese temporarily living abroad – largely for purposes of business – has been increasing in Asia as Japanese companies have expanded their commercial ties and their networks of subsidiaries in the region. But, temporary residence is not permanent residence. What is apparent from the table is that Japanese who choose to settle abroad in the post-1970 period are principally choosing to reside in North America, Oceania, and Europe. Why?

IV. The Standard of Living, Human Development, and the Shift from Extensive to Intensive Economic Development

Surely the shift of permanent Japanese emigration to North America, Oceania and Europe reflects changing agendas governing immigration in these countries to a degree. About this there is little doubt. For instance, the United States completely revamped its Immigration Law in 1965, abandoning the National Origins quotas that were introduced in 1924 with the aim of severely limiting immigration from non-European countries. Canada changed its law in 1965, substituting a point system for an ethnically contoured program. Australia abandoned its White Australia policy a few years later. But policies alone do not account for what we observe. Relative income per capita and wages matter as well. This can be seen from Table 3.

Table 3: Income Per Capita, Wages, Relative Population Sizes, and the Human Development for Selected Countries, 1850-1994

Panel A: Income per Capita, 1850-1994							
Year(s)	Income per Capita (in 1990 Geary-Khamis Dollars) ^(a)						
	UK	Germany	Italy	Canada	Mexico	Japan	China/India
1850	2,362	1,476	n.a.	1,280	668	n.a.	547
1870-99	3,806	2,378	1,538	1,987	850	966	576
1900-19	4,882	3,277	2,355	3,692	1,327	1,312	664
1920-39	5,112	3,951	2,888	3,994	1,458	1,948	687
1940-59	7,156	5,345	3,673	7,158	2,270	2,374	689
1960-79	10,664	11,599	9,147	12,065	3,748	8,455	944
1980-94	14,767	17,245	14,691	18,057	5,091	16,458	1,677
	Income per Capita Relative to That of US = 100 (Geary-Khamis Dollars)						
1850	129.9	81.1	n.a.	70.4	36.7	n.a.	30.1
1870-99	121.1	75.3	49.3	62.7	29.0	28.0	20.0
1900-19	99.3	66.9	47.4	74.7	28.1	26.5	13.6
1920-39	86.3	66.3	48.8	66.9	24.5	32.9	11.7
1940-59	71.2	52.6	36.5	70.7	22.1	23.6	6.8
1960-79	72.3	78.0	61.2	81.0	25.2	55.4	6.4
1980-94	72.1	84.3	71.8	88.4	25.1	80.1	8.2

Panel B: Relative Hourly Wages

Year	Relative Average Hourly Wages (Relative to U.S. = 100) ^(b)			
	U.K.	Germany	Japan	China/India
1870	81.7	48.8	19.7	21.1
1913	61.9	54.4	16.3	13.9
1929	60.8	62.8	22.4	11.5
1950	57.4	30.7	14.4	5.9
1973	68.0	71.0	44.8	5.3

Panel C: Percentage of World Population, Western Offshoots (WO), Europe and Asia

Year	Percentage of World Population ^(c)				Population of Region		
	WO	Europe	Asia	China/India	Relative to that of WO = 1 ^(c)		
					Europe	Asia	China/India
1870	4.0%	27.7%	61.5%	50.1%	6.9	15.3	12.5
1913	6.9	29.9	55.3	42.9	4.3	8.0	6.2
1929	7.7	28.4	54.7	41.7	3.7	7.1	5.4
1950	7.9	25.5	55.1	40.4	3.2	7.0	5.1
1970	7.4	22.1	57.1	41.9	3.0	7.7	5.6
1990	6.5	18.1	60.7	43.4	2.8	9.3	6.7

Panel D: The Human Development Index (HDI) for the United States

Year	Costa-Steckel Human Development Index					Crafts HDI Index (6)	United Nations HDI (7)	Combined Estimated HDI (8)
	Adult Male Standing Heights (cm) (1)	Literacy (%) (2)	HDI Estimated by Costa & Steckel (3)	Index for HDI with 1870 =100 (4)	Index for HDI with 1950 = 100 (5)			
1800	172.9	0.72	0.58	82.6	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.41
1810	173.0	0.73	0.59	83.8	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.42
1820	172.9	0.74	0.60	85.9	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.44
1830	173.5	0.75	0.62	88.9	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.45
1840	172.2	0.76	0.62	87.9	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.45
1850	171.1	0.78	0.63	90.0	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.46
1860	170.6	0.80	0.67	94.2	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.48
1870	171.2	0.80	0.70	100.0	n.e.	0.51	n.e.	0.51
1880	169.5	0.83	0.74	104.7	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.53
1890	169.1	0.87	0.75	106.8	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.54
1900	170.0	0.89	0.80	114.2	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.58
1910	172.1	0.92	0.87	123.2	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.62
1913	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.64	n.e.	n.e.
1920	173.1	0.94	0.88	n.e.	93.0	n.e.	n.e.	0.75
1930	173.4	0.96	0.89	n.e.	94.0	n.e.	n.e.	0.75
1940	176.1	0.97	0.94	n.e.	98.4	n.e.	n.e.	0.79
1950	177.1	0.97	0.95	n.e.	100.0	n.e.	n.e.	0.80
1960	177.3	0.98	0.96	n.e.	100.4	n.e.	n.e.	0.81
1970	177.5	0.99	0.96	n.e.	101.2	n.e.	n.e.	0.81
1975	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.80	0.84	0.84
1980	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.85	0.85
1985	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.85	0.85
1990	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.87	0.87
1998	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	0.92	0.92

Panel E: The Human Development Index (HDI) for Japan

Year	Human Development Proxy Variable (HDIA)						Estimated HDI (HDIE)
	Educational Variable (E2)			Life Expectancy/Health Variable (L2)			
	cenr(t)	eadv(t)	E2	shm 18	IMR	L2	
1900	.82	0.07	0.57	160.0	155.0	0.89	0.57
1910	.98	0.09	0.69	160.0	161.2	0.89	0.61
1920	.99	0.16	0.71	161.2	165.7	0.89	0.64
1930	1.00	0.21	0.73	161.8	124.1	0.91	0.65
1940	1.00	0.37	0.79	163.2	90.0	0.93	0.70
1950	1.00	0.44	0.81	162.6	62.5	0.94	0.69
1960	1.00	0.61	0.87	166.3	33.7	0.97	0.75
1970	1.00	0.86	0.95	166.3	14.2	0.99	0.83
1975	1.00	0.99	0.99	168.6	10.8	0.99	0.85
1980	1.00	0.99	1.00	170.2	7.9	0.99	0.87
1985	1.00	n.e.	1.00	170.8	6.0	1.00	0.89
1990	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	170.8	n.e.	n.e.	0.90
1998	n.e.	n.e.	n.e.	170.8	n.e.	n.e.	0.92

Notes: (a) Figures for Mexico, China and India for 1870-99 are averages for 1870 and 1890 only; figures for Mexico in 1900-19 are for 1900-10 and 1913 only; figures for Japan in 1870-99 are for 1870 and 1885-1899 only. Figure for China/India is unweighted average of figures for each country taken separately.

(b) Based on per capita labour productivity and share of labour in total income.

(c) WO = Western offshoots = US plus Canada plus Australia plus New Zealand.

Sources: Maddison (1995): pp. 47, 114-5, 194-206, and 210; Mosk (forthcoming): various tables; and Ohkawa and Shinohara (1979): pg. 214.

As the figures show, income per capita has reached high levels in Japan, Europe and North America. Japanese wishing to permanently reside abroad tend to live in those countries that have comparable or higher standards of living than Japan has. For this very reason, Japanese and their descendents living in South America have tended to return to Japan. In those regions of the world where income growth has hit a plateau and stagnated, the Japanese emigrant community has weighed up its options, many opting to return to Japan. So it is clear that the standard of living is important.

Now, as panels D and E show – for the United States and for Japan – the surge in income per capita in the twentieth century for countries is intimately tied up with human development as realized in terms of improvements in health and investments in education.³ In the nineteenth century having coal, minerals, forests, and other natural resources was of prime importance for economic development and for the standard of living. Filling out frontiers of settlement, extracting resources, creating farms out of unimproved land, hunting and processing animal

³ A full discussion of the construction of the Human Development indices given here appears in Chapter 6 of Mosk (forthcoming).

products, is the stuff of extensive economic development that was paradigmatic of North America. But, increasingly, in the twentieth century, intensive growth centered around human capital using technological and organizational progress, coupled with dramatic drops in the costs of extracting and shipping raw materials and manufactures, has opened up economies to the possibility of growth through improvements in infrastructure, human capital enhancing, physical and financial.⁴ Thus, in the twentieth century, countries like Japan have achieved relatively high levels of income per capita, even absent a vast abundance of raw materials of the sort that grace North America. And, for this very reason, education plays an increasingly important role in doing well economically, at both the national, group and individual level.

That Japanese have succeeded in North America through the education route is apparent in Tables 4 and 5, culled from the micro-census data for the State of Washington in 1980 and 1990.

⁴ See Mosk (2001) on infrastructure-driven growth for Japan.

Table 4: Post-Secondary Schooling Amongst the Population Aged 20-64 with Positive Income: Washington State, 1980 and 1990 [Entire Population and Selected Asian Ethnic Groups]

Percentages with Some Post-Secondary Schooling for the Entire Population and Various Asian Ethnic Groups in the State of Washington, in the Greater Seattle SMSA (Sea) and in the State of Washington Outside of the Greater Seattle SMSA [Non-Sea], 1980, 1990, and Absolute Gain or Loss in % between 1980 and 1990 (1980/90)

Males												
Year(s)	Entire Population			Chinese			Korean			Japanese		
	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea
1980	50.3%	57.2%	45.7%	70.9%	70.2%	73.0%	65.0%	72.6%	52.8%	74.9%	77.2%	69.9%
1990	60.0	67.9	54.4	70.5	70.8	70.0	64.4	69.3	50.0	83.0	87.8	74.1
1980/90	+9.7	+10.7	+8.7	-0.4	+0.6	-3.0	-0.6	-3.3	-2.8	+8.1	+10.6	+4.4
Years (s)	Filipino			Vietnamese			Other Asian			Taiwanese		
	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea
1980	61.7%	66.5%	53.2%	54.1%	58.3%	50.0%	56.4%	45.5%	67.3%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1990	64.5	67.4	59.1	62.9	67.3	52.9	44.4	49.0	40.0	83.3	84.6	80.0
1980/90	+2.8	+0.9	+5.9	+8.8	+9.0	+2.9	C	C	---	C	C	---

continued.../

Table 4 Continued

Females												
Year(s)	Entire Population			Chinese			Korean			Japanese		
	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea
1980	44.5%	50.5%	40.3%	53.7%	56.2%	46.9%	32.6%	50.5%	20.4%	52.0%	56.7%	45.4%
1990	57.3	65.3	52.2	67.0	65.1	72.4	36.4	50.0	26.0	66.4	74.9	54.2
1980/90	+12.8	+14.8	+11.9	+13.3	+8.9	+25.5	+3.8	-0.5	+5.6	+14.4	+18.2	+8.8
Females												
Years(s)	Filipino			Vietnamese			Other Asian			Taiwanese		
	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea	State	Sea	Non-Sea
1980	59.3%	63.7%	51.8%	37.4%	40.0%	34.7%	36.9%	41.8%	32.8%	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1990	59.9	66.3	51.5	42.9	46.9	35.7	30.8	35.8	26.6	71.2	80.8	47.6
1980/90	+0.6	+2.6	-0.3	+5.5	+6.9	+1.0	---	---	---	C	C	---

Notes: n.a. = not available. C = not computed.

The ethnic composition of the Other Asian group changed between 1980 and 1990. For instance, in 1980 Taiwanese were part of the group. In 1990, Taiwanese constitute a separate ethnic group in the census, and Other Asian no longer includes them. For this reason, I do not compute changes in the percentage of Taiwanese or Other Asians getting some post-secondary schooling between 1980 and 1990.

Table 5: Income Distribution in the State of Washington, 1990 Individuals with Positive Income in Two Age Groups and for Selected Asian Ethnic Groups

Panel A: Population Aged 30-49

	Males					Females				
	Percentage in Income Class (US Dollars)				Skewness	Percentage in Income Class (US Dollars)				Skewness
	Below 5,000	5,000 – 19,999	20,000 – 49,999	50,000 & Over		Below 5,000	5,000 – 19,999	20,000 – 49,999	50,000 & Over	
Entire Population	4.3%	22.2%	57.2%	16.4%	0.145	16.9%	45.7%	34.6%	2.8%	0.189
Chinese	4.0	26.0	49.3	20.6	0.201	13.2	38.7	42.2	5.9	0.159
Japanese	4.1	13.9	58.4	23.7	0.142	13.7	34.9	45.7	5.8	0.181
Korean	5.3	31.8	47.7	15.2	0.184	18.1	55.9	24.0	2.0	0.243
Taiwanese	0.0	40.0	40.0	20.0	0.153	19.4	33.3	44.4	2.8	0.038
Filipino	3.6	31.2	58.0	7.2	-0.015	10.8	48.0	39.2	2.0	0.077
Vietnamese	7.8	31.4	52.0	8.8	0.127	9.3	62.8	25.6	2.3	0.143
Other Asian	9.0	56.7	29.1	5.2	n.e.	22.6	57.1	19.1	1.2	n.e.

Panel B: Population Aged 50 and Over

Population/ Ethnic Group	Males					Females				
	Percentage in Income Class (US Dollars)				Skewness	Percentage in Income Class (US Dollars)				Skewness
	Below 5,000	5,000 – 19,999	20,000 – 49,999	50,000 & Over		Below 5,000	5,000 – 19,999	20,000 – 49,999	50,000 & Over	
Entire Population	4.3%	23.3%	49.6%	22.8%	0.173	22.7%	45.6%	28.7%	2.9%	0.298
Chinese	12.3	38.4	30.1	19.2	0.289	16.0	48.0	34.0	2.0	0.255
Japanese	4.5	16.4	44.8	34.3	0.133	16.7	49.3	31.9	2.1	0.290
Korean	12.5	41.1	35.7	10.7	0.305	18.6	66.1	13.6	1.7	0.244
Taiwanese	33.3	16.7	33.3	16.7	0.205	40.0	40.0	20.0	0.0	0.510
Filipino	2.3	38.6	51.1	8.0	0.125	16.8	50.5	29.0	3.7	0.193
Vietnamese	13.0	30.4	43.5	13.0	0.110	24.0	60.0	12.0	4.0	0.271
Other Asian	15.6	46.9	34.4	3.1	n.e.	38.7	54.8	6.5	0.0	n.e.

None of this should surprise us. Education is of paramount importance to Japanese in Japan; it offers a road to advancement in North America as well. And if the Japanese community in North America was not doing well in pursuing the education route, its members could follow their brethren in South America and return to Japan. The fact is that the high standard of living of Japan keeps most Japanese in Japan and it attracts Japanese and their descendents living abroad. In effect, the Japanese standard of living sets a bar. If Japanese communities living abroad feel that their opportunities are limited – say by a failure to develop human capital enhancing infrastructure (as in Latin America) – they have options. Hence, they *must* be economically successful. Were they unsuccessful as a whole, they would see their ranks depleted by those returning to Japan. That is what happened in South America.

Of course, when the original Japanese immigrant groups arrived in North America in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, getting an education was less important – extensive development was still dominating North America expansion – and less possible. The infrastructure of education was relatively rudimentary. Thus Japanese went into agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining, the industries characteristic of nineteenth century frontiers.

But with the shift from extensive to intensive development, this all changed. Increasingly, technical education and the professions became the road to economic success. This is true in Japan. And it is true for the descendents of the original immigrant communities in North America whose fate, recall, is crucial in my calculations of economic assimilation.

In short, Japanese success in Japan is the mirror into which Japanese living abroad look. This is the most important point to cull from this brief account of the successful economic assimilation of Japanese in North America

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