Trends and Determinants of Extended Family Living Arrangements of Hispanic and Asian Elderly in the United States: The Roles of Resources and Assimilation

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In many societies extended family living arrangements constitute a major form of family support of elders; however, such living arrangements are relatively uncommon in the United States, at least among the native-born population. Only 20 percent of native-born white elderly in the United States were living in extended households in 2000. Extended living, however, was the dominant arrangement for most Asian and Latin American origin groups. Close to two-thirds of immigrant elderly from those origins lived in extended households, although this figure masks considerable variation in extended living levels across Asian and Latin American origins. While the special circumstances faced by immigrants contribute to high levels of extended living, Asian and Latin American levels are considerably higher than those of immigrants from other origins (32%). The tendency for Asian and Latin American elderly to reside in extended households appears strongly imbedded in the broad social situation and culture of these origin groups given that they come from countries where families are the main caregivers for elders.

As a consequence of large-scale immigration, immigrant elderly form a large and growing segment of the U.S. elderly population. Nevertheless, elder immigrants have received relatively little systematic research attention. This lack of attention may change, however, as researchers and policymakers realize that Asians and Hispanics are the most rapidly growing segment of the U.S. elderly population (Passel and Cohn 2008, Pitkin and Simmons 1996) and bring not only ethnic diversity to that population but also raise questions about whether foreign-born and native-born elders place similar demands on government support systems. There is already concern that public support services may not be adequate to provide Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid assistance at current levels to aging native-born baby boomers in the years ahead. Since many seniors need health, nursing, and in-home services that meet their special needs, it is important to identify structures within the elderly population that shape group differentials in service demands. In this paper we look at two questions pertinent to these issues, namely how did the living arrangements of older Asian and Hispanic immigrants change in the 1990s and what were the major sources of differences in extended family living between Asians, Hispanics, and native whites?

In 2000, 10 percent of U.S. elders were foreign born and this share will increase rapidly in the years ahead as immigrants who have already arrived age and as immigrant families arrange to bring elder parents

to the United States. Changes are also underway in the age structure of immigrant elders. In 1970, the majority of them were aged 74 years or older and most had immigrated as children in the early decades of the 1900s. As such, their numbers were declining. In 2000, in contrast, most immigrant elders were in the 65 to 74 age group and recent immigrants whose numbers were rising rapidly. From 2000 to 2005, for instance, the native-born and foreign-born components of the elderly population grew by 4.3 and 9.4 percent, respectively. Passel and Cohn (2008, Tables 3a and 3c) estimate that 20 percent of elders 65 and older will be foreign born in 2050 if current immigration trends continue. Asians and Hispanics already form the largest subcomponent of native- and foreign-born elders and large percentages of them are foreign born. In 2000 about half of Hispanics and 80 percent of Asians aged 65-74 were foreign-born (Myers 2005, Box 4).

In the past 20 years the ethnic composition of Asians and Hispanics has also changed greatly due to heavy U.S. immigration and differentials across nativity groups in the size of immigrant flows from different countries in their origin regions. In 2000, for instance, Japanese constituted 59 percent of native-born Asian elders but only 6.4 percent of foreign-born Asian elders because they have immigrated in smaller numbers in recent years than Asians from other origins. Thus studies focused on native-born and foreign-born Asian elders are problematic because they largely compare Japanese who have relatively low percentages living in extended households and foreign-born Asians of Filipino, Indian, Vietnamese or other origins who have higher percentages in that living arrangement. For this and several other reasons it is important to consider the extent to which findings vary for different origin groups.

Immigrant selectivity can also underlie group differences. Some migrations are driven by refugee flows while others are responses to labor market differences. Of the latter, some flows predominantly include highly skilled workers and students while others are composed of low-skilled workers. Similarly, some migrations consist of high proportions of illegal or improperly documented persons while others have very low proportions with legal issues. Some flows, including that from Mexico, constitute relatively large shares of the origin country populations, while other large flows, such as those from India and China, constitute very small shares of their origin country populations. As migrations mature, the selectivity of the flow can change. For instance, the number of elderly immigrants from Mexico increased from 158,000 in 1970 to

565,000 in 2000 and those from the Philippines increased from 15,000 to 241,000. Some of this increase is due to the overall growth of the immigrant population, but some results from selectivity shifts including the growth of elderly family reunification. With increases of this magnitude in most Asian and Hispanic groups, it becomes important to assess whether and how living arrangements and their determinants are changing for both foreign-born and native-born components.

In this analysis we examine the determinants of extended family living arrangements for Asian and Hispanic elders from several origins using 2000 census data. We first compare how the living arrangements of the largest groups of older Asian and Latin American foreign-born elders changed from 1990 to 2000 and then focus on the determinants of extended family living arrangements in 2000. We also examine how foreign-born and native-born Asians and Hispanics from the same origins differed in 2000 and the sources of their differences with native whites. We look at a larger number of Asian and Hispanic groups than has been examined in previous studies, including Hispanic elders from 7 origins (Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Salvador) and Asian elders from 6 origins (China, India, Japan, Korea, Philippines, and Vietnam). We focus on foreign-born Asians and Latin Americans from several origins rather than taking a pan-ethnic approach because there is considerable heterogeneity among elderly immigrants from different origins. Although Hispanics and Asians are often treated as pan-ethnic populations, they differ considerably from each other in socioeconomic characteristics, settlement patterns, and living arrangements (see Table 2). We also plan to explore interactions between origin and other covariates and estimate separate group models in order to identify group differences in determinants of extended living.

Wolf and others (Wolf and Soldo 1988) (Wolf 1990) have documented trends toward independent living arrangements among American elderly and declining co-residence with kin. These trends are usually explained as reflecting shifting individual preferences given that most elders now have greater access to socio-economic resources from Social Security, Medicare, and savings than they did historically (Soldo et al. 1990). Studies show that age, sex, socioeconomic status, functional limitations, and availability of kin are important correlates of independent living (Burr and Mutchler 1992, 1993, Himes et al. 1996, Waite and

Hughes 1997, Zsembik 1993). In addition, research indicates that independent living arrangements have become the norm for native whites but Asians and Hispanics remain more likely than non-Hispanic whites to live in extended households (Burr and Mutchler 1992, 1993; Kamo and Zhou 1994; Lubben and Becerra 1987; Mutchler and Frisbie 1987; Zsembik 1993). A few studies focus specifically on immigrants (Boyd 1991, Wilmoth 2001, Wilmoth et al. 1997) and identify additional factors that influence their living arrangements. Wilmoth (2001) found, for instance, that immigrants who arrive at older ages, have lower education levels, and speak English poorly are more likely to live in extended households. While these and other studies of ethnic and immigrant living arrangements provide persuasive evidence of ethnic group differences with native whites, conclusions were based on 1980 or 1990 census data and Asians and Hispanics as a whole or a few origin groups. In this study, we examine whether patterns are similar in 2000 and hold up for a larger number of immigrant groups than previously studied.

Our preliminary analysis suggests stability across time. Table 1 illustrates that extended living arrangement remained stable between 1990 and 2000 for Asian and Hispanic groups. The Table also indicates that while extended living is less common for the U.S. born component of these origin groups, extended living remains the dominant elder living arrangement for the native-born of most groups.

In our examination of the forces shaping group differentials in elder extended living, we will draw on three theoretical perspectives: assimilation theory, family survival strategy, and cultural values theory. According to assimilation theory, immigrants and their descendants adjust to their new homelands in a series of stages. First, they acculturate by learning English and adopting the dress and speech patterns of natives. Spatial assimilation follows as immigrants move out of their ethnic communities and into neighborhoods where they have greater opportunity to interact with natives and lead to structural assimilation as immigrants and their descendants intermarry with natives and increase their participation in political and civic society. Immigrants and ethnics that assimilate are expected to adopt living arrangements and other behaviors characteristic of the majority population in their host society.

Family survival theory, in contrast, focuses on economic and social structure dimensions that slow the assimilation process or that prevent immigrants and ethnics from assimilating spatially. Deterrents to

assimilation could include factors that make it difficult for minorities to obtain access to income and resources that would allow them to improve their social and economic status in their host societies. There could also be ascribed characteristics such as race that allow dominant society members to discriminate against immigrants and their descendants. Scholars working from this theoretical perspective often focus, for instance, on the large numbers of immigrants and their native-born descendants who work in unskilled jobs and receive low wages. Others point to crowded housing conditions in segregated neighborhoods that immigrants and ethnics often experience in large urban areas. According to survival theory, extended family living is not a cultural preference but encouraged by poverty and race, and is a coping strategy that enables "outsiders" to husband economic resources while remaining socially distant from host society members.

Other theorists focus on the importance of cultural values and preferences of immigrants and ethnics themselves to remain apart from host society norms and maintain their own cultural values and ways of life. In the United States, the Amish are an example of a long established ethnic group that has maintained a separate way of life for a couple of centuries. According to this perspective, group differentials derive from normative values and cultural preferences of ethnic groups (Angel and Tienda 1982, Blank and Torrecilha 1998, Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1989, Worobey and Angel 1990). With respect to elderly extended living arrangements, for instance, Asians and Hispanics come from cultures with strong family values that have traditional family structures characterized by multi-generational living (Blank and Torrecilha 1998, De Vos 1990, Kamo and Zhou 1994). We know relatively little, however, about whether immigrants and their descendants will retain their traditional family values and structures in the United States. Religious beliefs are another dimension that differentiates immigrant and ethnic groups that may lead some to retain their own family structures.

In this analysis we will attempt to sort out the relative importance of these three competing theoretical perspectives about the sources of group differences. These perspectives emphasize different dimensions of the social processes experienced by ethnic groups and are not mutually exclusive. Assimilation processes can influence economic strategies and, in turn, be influenced by economic success or its absence. Cultural values can constrain assimilation processes. Our task is to use the perspectives to guide

the analysis of the forces leading to different levels of elders living in extended households with other family members and to assess the degree to which one or more perspectives appear most relevant to the experience of some or all groups. While other studies have examined the relative importance of these approaches, we do so by examining them for a large number of Hispanic and Asian foreign-born elderly and for their second and higher generation counterparts. In addition, we focus on the immigrant elderly as a whole rather than on men or women only, or married or unmarried subgroups of the elderly. Finally, we extend the assimilation perspective to include indicators of spatial assimilation. There are two analytical issues to be tackled. First, what are the factors that can account for the dramatic differences in group tendencies to reside in extended households? Second, what factors, if any, influence the differences between origin group extended living levels and those of the native-born whites?

Data and Measurement

The latest wave of U.S. immigration began in the late 1960s following decades of very low levels of immigration. Thus while a few immigrant groups such as Mexicans and the Japanese, which already had established migration flows, have large native-born elder populations, the elderly component of the immigrant population remains relatively small for most Hispanic and Asian origin groups. This means that an analysis of the foreign-born and native-born components of a large number of Asian and Latin American origin groups requires a large sample. The 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 2000 U.S. Census is the only data source that provides adequate native-born samples for several Latin American and Asian groups. While this analysis focuses mainly on the 2000 Census, in order to assess change in living arrangements from 1990 to 2000, we also use the 5% PUMS file from the 1990 Census.

We utilize multiple indicators to assign individuals to country of origin groups. For the foreign born, exclusive of persons born abroad to U.S. citizens, country of birth is the sole indicator. But we use several indicators to classify the native-born component of each origin group into comparable categories. To do so for Asians we utilize the detailed race variable, two ancestry variables and a language measure. Confirmation of origin group membership is achieved if a positive result occurs for any of these items. For Hispanics, in contrast, we use only the Hispanic identity measure and two ancestry variables in the census. Since Spanish

is the dominant language of Hispanics, by definition, it cannot be used to distinguish origins of native-born Hispanics. Some persons have both Asian and Hispanic ancestries and thus are of multiethnic origin. When this occurs, the person is assigned to the ancestry category that has the smallest native-born elder population. Census data provide no other basis to favor classification to one group over another and thus assigning multiethnic persons to the origin category with the smallest population has the advantage of increasing the sample size of that group.

For descriptive purposes, we initially disaggregate the total elderly population into one of four living arrangements: living alone with no other person present; living with spouse and no other person present; living with child or others, or living in group quarters or an institution. A spouse may be present in households of elderly who live with a child or others but we classify these households as extended based on the assumption that other persons present could provide some assistance to elders, if needed. Some scholars argue that there are important cultural differences between Asian elderly who live with adult children versus others (Kamo and Zhou 1994). While our initial analysis will utilize a broad definition of extended households, we will explore the robustness of our findings using several alternative measurement strategies.

Most of our analysis will focus on estimating differentials in extended living arrangements among Asian and Hispanic immigrant elders with relevant reference categories and determining sources of observed differentials. We use logistic regression to estimate the odds that ethnic elderly lived in an extended family arrangement. We will explore possible short-term future scenarios by estimating probabilities of residing in extended households given a range of trajectories for resource and assimilation variables. While the core analysis will focus on all elders over the age of 59, we will also examine family living arrangements and their determinants for elders over 74 years of age. Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for the core measures utilized in this analysis.

Table 1: Extended living arrangements of elderly foreign- and native-born by selected Asian and Latin American origins, 2000 and 1990

	1990		2000	
	FB	**NB**	**FB**	**NB**
Chinese	61.4	36.8	58.3	32.2
Japanese	34.8	39.3	28.4	35.6
Filipinos	77.7	51.5	73.7	47.4
Koreans	67.2	32.6	50.2	37.0
Indians	77.3	35.0	70.6	35.2
Vietnamese	85.3	34.2	80.9	50.1
Other Asia	68.6	50.2	64.1	52.0
Mexicans	64.2	50.2	71.0	47.1
Cubans	51.3	35.9	50.0	32.4
Dominicans	78.8	52.9	74.1	46.3
Colombians	68.6	52.3	64.3	31.5
Peruvians	67.4	47.0	67.8	44.4
Salvadorans	80.5	62.0	79.9	52.0
Other Latin American	58.3	32.5	59.9	33.7
Puerto Ricans	49.4	43.5	46.4	39.4

Sources: 1990 and 2000 5% PUMS of the U.S. Census

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Asian and Hispanic Elderly (60+) for groups with the largest elderly populations by nativity status, 2000

GROUP (a)		Sample N	Demographic Characteristics						Social & Economic Resources							Assimilation Indicators				
			% female	% 75 & over	% married	% disrupted	% never married	% with limited mobility	% college grad	% HS grad or some college	% less than HS grad	% with no SS income	Mean Income	% English only	% English Well or Very Well	% Naturalized Citizen	% Arrived Prior 10 Years	% in Gateway	% in Mini Gateway	% in Dispersed area
Native-born whites	NB	190,132	57	38	60	35	4	19	18	56	27	55	18,143	96	4	-	-	8	15	77
Chinese	NB	2,716	54	35	62	30	8	17	32	50	19	32	34,889	57	38	-	-	34	40	26
	FB	11,656	53	30	70	28	2	20	24	26	50	60	17,191	6	28	67	27	60	24	16
Japanese	NB	7,987	53	43	64	28	8	18	19	60	20	24	30,709	60	34	-	-	55	18	27
	FB	3,206	85	16	60	38	2	18	14	57	28	36	21,300	20	58	72	4	28	24	47
Filipinos	NB	1,716	52	22	61	32	6	18	16	54	30	42	25,644	68	28	-	-	40	20	40
	FB	11,991	59	27	64	32	4	25	34	34	32	68	19,126	6	74	73	25	43	30	27
Koreans	NB	10,417	54	35	60	35	5	22	22	47	32	36	28,322	48	43	-	-	24	33	43
	FB	104,230	60	22	66	33	2	21	28	34	30	69	19,572	6	34	64	20	51	25	24
Indians	NB	413	58	36	52	38	9	37	19	39	42	42	20,189	67	28	-	-	20	19	60
	FB	4,431	46	18	72	26	2	21	44	22	35	76	29,310	10	59	54	27	27	33	40
Vietnamese	NB	176	44	36	58	35	7	34	20	41	39	53	25,480	23	65	-	-	24	18	58
	FB	4,758	53	20	63	33	3	28	9	27	64	81	11,062	4	24	58	31	46	27	26
Other Asian	NB	270	55	27	55	38	7	25	12	53	35	38	23,871	81	15	-	-	10	46	44
	FB	12,613	52	23	64	33	3	24	25	30	44	70	22,371	8	43	58	26	39	27	34
Mexicans	NB	35,941	56	27	58	36	6	23	5	33	61	35	17,913	19	69	-	-	24	32	44
	FB	29,310	56	25	57	37	6	26	3	14	84	52	11,471	9	29	52	14	36	31	32
Cubans	NB	760	55	40	56	35	9	28	16	40	44	36	21,330	41	49	-	-	50	17	33
	FB	14,872	57	32	56	38	6	27	14	27	59	42	16,634	7	35	80	9	77	14	9
Dominicans	NB	139	54	28	46	40	13	23	14	38	48	42	17,066	37	40	-	-	56	10	33
	FB	3,164	63	22	46	45	9	27	4	17	79	62	11,243	9	23	53	16	79	14	7
Colombians	NB	82	63	20	44	46	11	11	23	45	32	44	24,367	43	44	-	-	38	29	32
	FB	2,796	64	20	51	39	10	22	13	35	52	59	17,793	6	40	65	19	53	28	19
Peruvians	NB	42	57	31	62	32	6	20	22	34	44	46	40,056	53	32	-	-	13	43	43
	FB	1,637	57	22	60	34	7	20	16	41	42	65	16,380	9	40	55	26	45	28	27
Salvadorans	NB	47	52	26	44	33	22	22	4	37	58	52	18,614	53	35	-	-	53	24	23

	FB	2,172	66	24	39	43	18	26	4	19	76	70	10,000	9	24	42	24	55	30	14
Puerto Ricans	NB	1,726	55	22	52	38	45	22	12	47	41	39	22,257	44	54	-	-	34	20	46
	FB	12,185	59	27	46	45	8	30	6	27	68	38	14,368	10	55	-	-	50	23	27
Other Hispanic	NB	15,847	58	31	56	39	5	22	10	44	46	32	21,410	47	49	65	13	10	25	66
	FB	8,294	63	24	52	39	9	22	14	36	50	55	18,143	12	47	-	-	49	19	32
Other Native Born	NB	20,619	60	31	41	52	7	28	9	38	52	36	18,112	96	3	-	-	18	23	59
Other Foreign Born	FB	11,440	61	37	58	38	4	22	18	44	38	35	25,654	45	40	77	9	29	24	47

(a) Native-born whites in this analysis are native-born, non-Hispanic non-Asian whites. This is quite similar to native-born, non-Hispanic Whites due to the presence of Asian categories in the Census race item. We exclude all Asians using the ancestry and language variables. NB Puerto Ricans are those born on the U.S. mainland while FB Puerto Ricans are those born in Puerto Rico.

(b) For each group we ranked all metropolitan areas in terms of the population size of a particular group (native born and foreign born). Gateway metropolitan areas consist of the 5 metro areas with the largest share of a group's national population. Mini-gateways consist of the next 15, and Dispersed areas are the remainder.

Data sources: All estimates reported in this table are from an IPUMS extract from the 2000 Census 5% PUMS.