

Generational Differences in the Socioeconomic Attainments of Korean Americans

ChangHwan Kim
University of Kansas

The 4th Annual Conference of the Research Center for Korean Community

April 2013

Introduction

- Korean American population grew 20 times between 1965 and 2010 (from 70,000 to 1.6 millions).

Introduction

- Korean American population grew 20 times between 1965 and 2010 (from 70,000 to 1.6 millions).
- The 2nd generation now accounts for around 1/3 of the Korean American population.

Introduction

- Korean American population grew 20 times between 1965 and 2010 (from 70,000 to 1.6 millions).
- The 2nd generation now accounts for around 1/3 of the Korean American population.
- Socioeconomic status of the 2nd generation and its comparison with the 1st generation and other racial/ethnic groups are important, because

Introduction

- Korean American population grew 20 times between 1965 and 2010 (from 70,000 to 1.6 millions).
- The 2nd generation now accounts for around 1/3 of the Korean American population.
- Socioeconomic status of the 2nd generation and its comparison with the 1st generation and other racial/ethnic groups are important, because
 - ① Immigration scholar: Assimilation. Is it different by racial/ethnic groups?

Introduction

- Korean American population grew 20 times between 1965 and 2010 (from 70,000 to 1.6 millions).
- The 2nd generation now accounts for around 1/3 of the Korean American population.
- Socioeconomic status of the 2nd generation and its comparison with the 1st generation and other racial/ethnic groups are important, because
 - ① Immigration scholar: Assimilation. Is it different by racial/ethnic groups?
 - ② Race & stratification scholar: Is a new color-line (new racial hierarchy) emerging in the US.

Introduction

- “Foreign-born immigrants inevitably set the stage for determining how US racial boundaries will be redrawn ... but it is the native-born offspring who will ultimately set the future course” (Bean et al. 2010).

Introduction

- “Foreign-born immigrants inevitably set the stage for determining how US racial boundaries will be redrawn ... but it is the native-born offspring who will ultimately set the future course” (Bean et al. 2010).
- This study is an attempt to provide a brief yet broad portrayal of the relative socioeconomic status of the 2nd generation Korean Americans.

Data

- The 2007–2011 American Community Survey (5 year combined IPUMS sample)
- Korean Americans
 - ① 1st, 1.5, and 2nd Generations
 - ② Single Ethnic Koreans and Multi Racial/Ethnic Koreans
- Compared with
 - ① Other US-born racial groups: non-Hispanic whites; non-Hispanic blacks; and Hispanics
 - ② Other 2nd generation Asian ethnic groups: Chinese; Japanese; Filipino; Asian Indian; Vietnamese; Cambodian/Hmong/Laos; Other South Asians; and Other Asians.

Korean American Population Size (2007-2011)

	Est. Pop Size	%
All Koreans	1,618,487	100.0
Single Ethnic Koreans	(1,429,026)	(88.3)
- 1st Generation	773,387	47.8
- 1.5 Generation	313,558	19.4
- 2nd Generation	342,081	21.1
Multi Racial/Ethnic Koreans	(189,461)	(11.7)
- 1st Generation	6,050	0.4
- 1.5 Generation	25,604	1.6
- 2nd Generation	157,807	9.8

Notes: US Population is 315 millions. Korean Americans account for slightly more than 0.5%.

Age

- Mean age:
 - SE Koreans: 1st G (50); 1.5 G (25); 2nd G (20)
 - MR Koreans: 1st G (49); 1.5 G (30); 2nd G (16)
- Working age (25-64) pop (%):
 - SE Koreans: 1st G (75); 1.5 G (50); 2nd G (25)
 - MR Koreans: 1st G (69); 1.5 G (65); 2nd G (24)
 - Whites (54); Hispanics (32); Chinese (29); Japanese (52); Asian Indian (16)

% Single Household (Among Household Heads)

Korean Americans	%	Other Groups	%
All Koreans	30.5	Whites	37.8
		Blacks	32.6
Single Ethnic Koreans		Hispanics	40.7
- 1st Generation	25.2		
- 1.5 Generation	36.4	Chinese	43.7
- 2nd Generation	49.4	Japanese	36.7
		Filipino	44.3
Multi Racial/Ethnic Koreans		Asian Indian	48.8
- 1st Generation	37.8	Vietnamese	41.9
- 1.5 Generation	32.6	Cam/Hmong/Laos	29.8
- 2nd Generation	40.7	Other South Asians	41.4

Other Demographic Variables

- 2nd G single-ethnic Koreans are less likely to be married, tend to have less children, and have smaller family size than 1st/1.5 generation Koreans or other racial/ethnic groups.

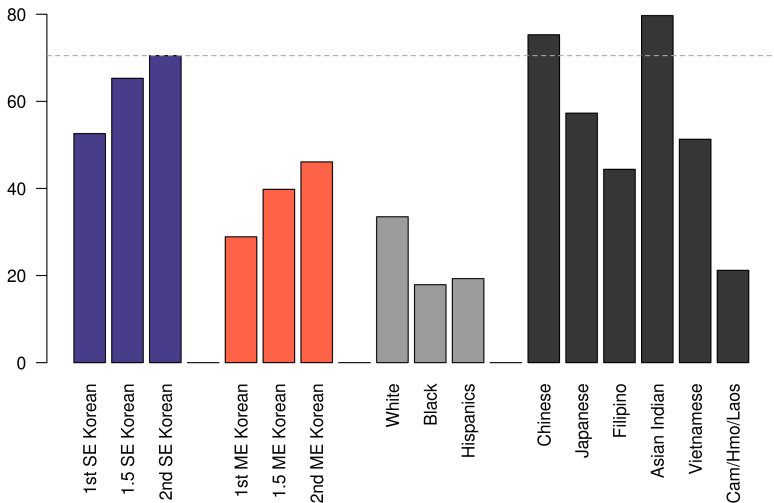
Other Demographic Variables

- 2nd G single-ethnic Koreans are less likely to be married, tend to have less children, and have smaller family size than 1st/1.5 generation Koreans or other racial/ethnic groups.
- % female headed household has slightly increased in 2nd G (45%) compared to 1st G (40%). Around 52-3% of HH among multi racial/ethnic Koreans are female headed. Whites (44%), Blacks (63%), Chinese (42%), Cam/Hmong/Laos (53%).

Other Demographic Variables

- 2nd G single-ethnic Koreans are less likely to be married, tend to have less children, and have smaller family size than 1st/1.5 generation Koreans or other racial/ethnic groups.
- % female headed household has slightly increased in 2nd G (45%) compared to 1st G (40%). Around 52-3% of HH among multi racial/ethnic Koreans are female headed. Whites (44%), Blacks (63%), Chinese (42%), Cam/Hmong/Laos (53%).
- In terms of residential areas, no difference across generations. Metro (65-70%). West (41-49%). Multi-racial/ethnic Koreans are more geographically dispersed than single-ethnic Koreans.

% Bachelor or Higher (Age 25-64)



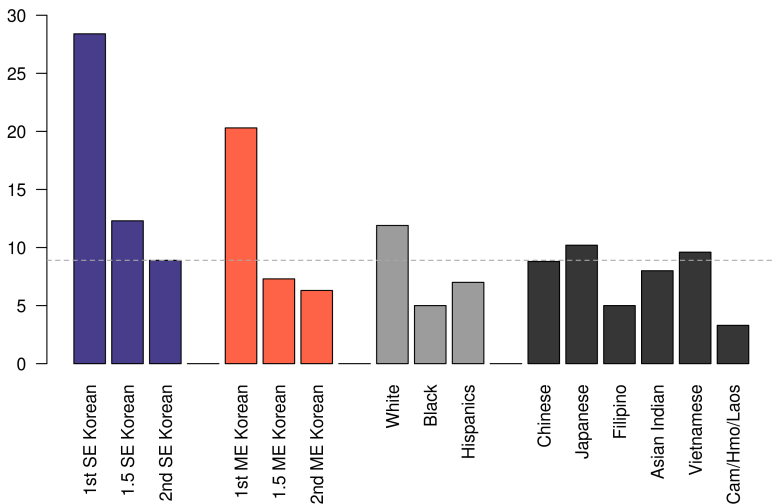
Educational Attainments (Age 25-64)

- No difference between men and women.
- 1st G SE Korean: 34% BA, 19% Grad.
- 2nd G SE Korean: 43% BA, 28% Grad.
- LTHS + HSG among 2nd G SE Koreans is only 9%. (Whites: 34%; Blacks 49%; Hispanics 45%).

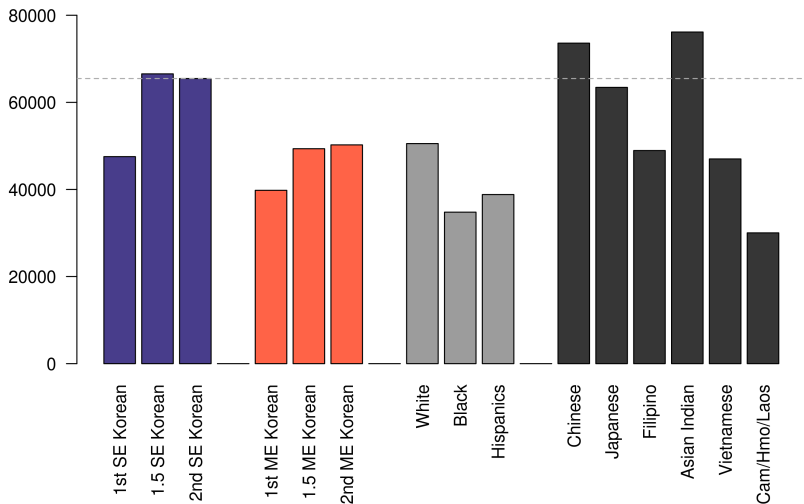
Language Usage

	Speak English Very Well		Speak Korean at Home		Speak English at Home	
	5-17	25-64	5-17	25-64	5-17	25-64
All Koreans	84.9	50.3	52.4	72.8	44.2	23.9
Single Ethnic						
- 1st Gen	37.3	28.7	88.2	90.9	8.2	5.8
- 1.5 Gen	75.5	89.8	63.1	50.6	33.8	46.9
- 2nd Gen	86.8	94.0	66.9	35.0	30.0	62.4
Multi R/E						
- 1st Gen	-	50.2	-	54.0	-	24.3
- 1.5 Gen	92.9	97.8	32.1	9.8	59.6	85.8
- 2nd Gen	98.3	99.1	7.2	5.9	88.6	90.0

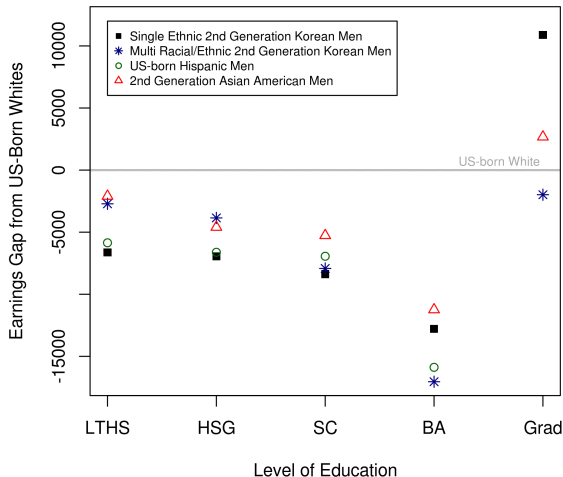
% Self Employment (Age 25-64, Currently Working)



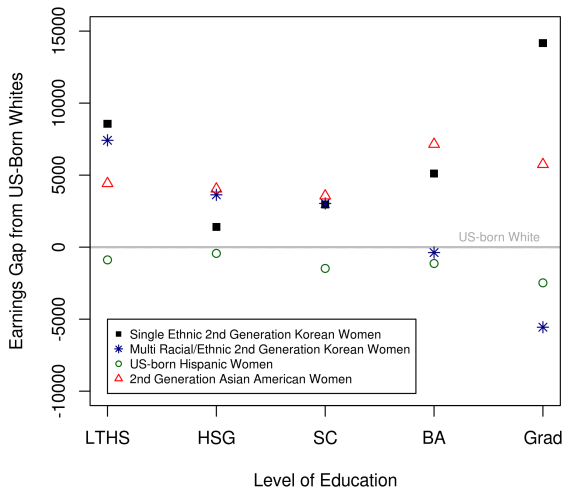
Annual Earnings (Age 25-64, Currently Working)



Net Earnings (Dis)Advantage of 2nd Generation Korean American Men Compared to Whites



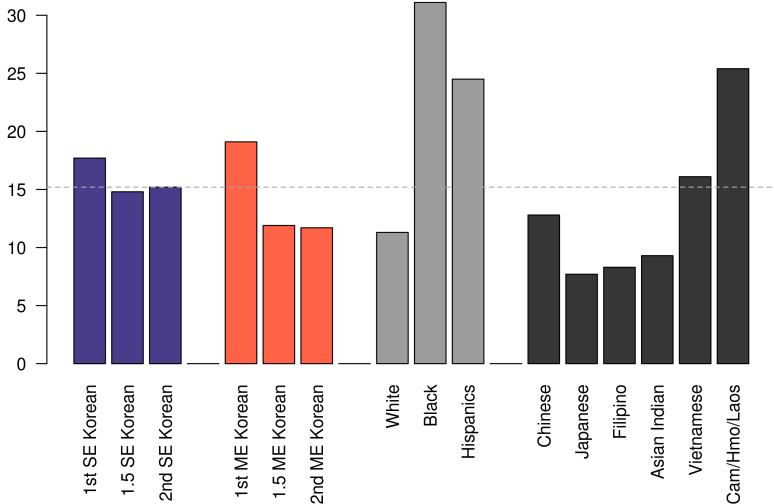
Net Earnings (Dis)Advantage of 2nd Generation Korean American Women Compared to Whites



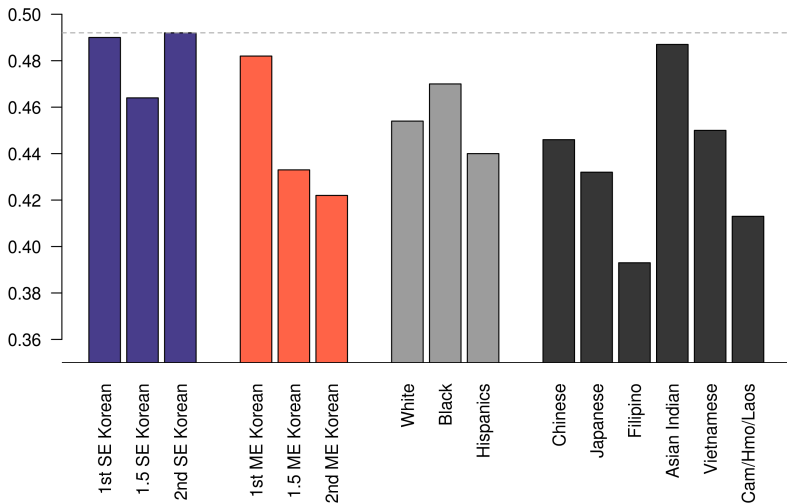
% White Collar Occupation vs. % Blue Collar Occupation

	Single-ethnic Korean		Multi-ethnic Korean		Non-Hispanic White	
	White Collar	Blue Collar	White Collar	Blue Collar	White Collar	Blue Collar
A. Men						
- Less Than High School	53.6	46.4	39.1	60.9	24.8	75.2
- High School Graduate	57.9	42.1	58.8	41.2	35.6	64.4
- Some College	79.3	20.7	73.1	26.9	59.3	40.7
- Bachelor Degree	94.8	5.2	87.8	12.2	89.0	11.0
- Graduate Degree	98.9	1.1	98.2	1.8	96.9	3.1
B. Women						
- Less Than High School	82.3	17.7	70.6	29.4	78.5	21.5
- High School Graduate	87.4	12.6	88.2	11.8	85.8	14.2
- Some College	93.2	6.8	95.1	4.9	93.1	6.9
- Bachelor Degree	97.5	2.5	96.7	3.3	95.4	2.6
- Graduate Degree	99.3	0.7	99.3	0.7	99.1	0.9

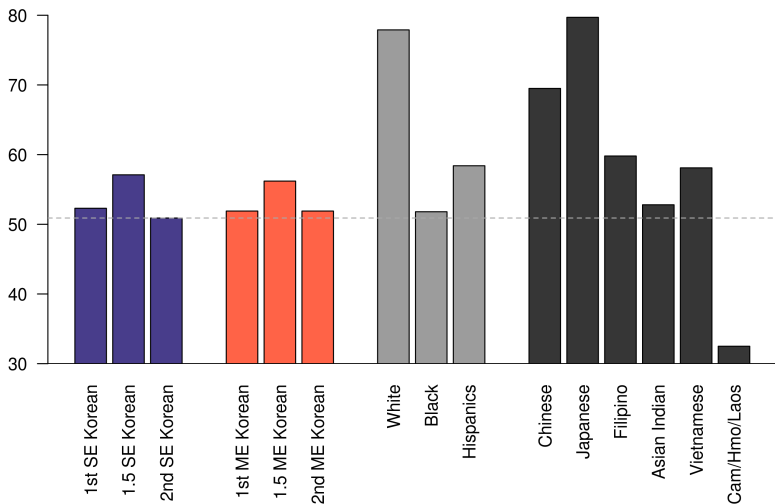
% Under Poverty Line (All respondents)



Gini Inequality Index of Annual Household Income



% Home Owner (Household heads)



Conclusions: 1st vs 2nd Generations

- The socioeconomic attainments of Korean Americans have substantially improved between the 1st and 2nd generations.

Conclusions: 1st vs 2nd Generations

- The socioeconomic attainments of Korean Americans have substantially improved between the 1st and 2nd generations.
- Comparing the 1st generation Korean immigrants, the 2nd Generation's
 - ① % college educated was up by 35%.
 - ② labor market participation rates grew by 25%.
 - ③ the mean annual earnings was up by 38%.
 - ④ those who work as professionals or managers increased by 45%.
 - ⑤ while, the self-employment rate went down by 69%.

Diversity within Korean Americans

- Diversity within Korean Americans has increased.
 - ① More than 99% of the 1st generation Korean immigrants are single-ethnic Koreans.
 - ② while 31% of the 2nd generation Korean Americans are multi-racial or multi-ethnic Korean Americans.

Diversity within Korean Americans

- Diversity within Korean Americans has increased.
 - ① More than 99% of the 1st generation Korean immigrants are single-ethnic Koreans.
 - ② while 31% of the 2nd generation Korean Americans are multi-racial or multi-ethnic Korean Americans.
- The extent of socioeconomic achievements of multi-racial/ethnic Korean Americans seems to be lower than single-ethnic Koreans.

Diversity within Korean Americans

- Diversity within Korean Americans has increased.
 - ① More than 99% of the 1st generation Korean immigrants are single-ethnic Koreans.
 - ② while 31% of the 2nd generation Korean Americans are multi-racial or multi-ethnic Korean Americans.
- The extent of socioeconomic achievements of multi-racial/ethnic Korean Americans seems to be lower than single-ethnic Koreans.
- Nonetheless, multi-racial/ethnic Korean Americans experienced a similar upward socioeconomic mobility over generations like single-ethnic Korean Americans.

Relative Socioeconomic Status of the 2nd Gen Koreans

The 2nd Korean Americans

- are substantially more educated than native-born non-Hispanic whites let alone blacks and Hispanics.

Relative Socioeconomic Status of the 2nd Gen Koreans

The 2nd Korean Americans

- are substantially more educated than native-born non-Hispanic whites let alone blacks and Hispanics.
- earn more than whites (30% higher than whites on average), partially due to high educational attainments.

Relative Socioeconomic Status of the 2nd Gen Koreans

The 2nd Korean Americans

- are substantially more educated than native-born non-Hispanic whites let alone blacks and Hispanics.
- earn more than whites (30% higher than whites on average), partially due to high educational attainments.
- are acquiring more prestigious occupations than whites.

Relative Socioeconomic Status of the 2nd Gen Koreans

The 2nd Korean Americans

- are substantially more educated than native-born non-Hispanic whites let alone blacks and Hispanics.
- earn more than whites (30% higher than whites on average), partially due to high educational attainments.
- are acquiring more prestigious occupations than whites.
- are the 3rd highest income earners among Asian ethnic groups (after Asian Indian and Chinese).

Despite these high socioeconomic achievements,

- Korean American men still seem to endure some (probably race-related) disadvantages in American labor markets.

Despite these high socioeconomic achievements,

- Korean American men still seem to endure some (probably race-related) disadvantages in American labor markets.
- Comparing to equally educated white counterparts, Korean American men earn 17% less unless they have a graduate degree.

Despite these high socioeconomic achievements,

- Korean American men still seem to endure some (probably race-related) disadvantages in American labor markets.
- Comparing to equally educated white counterparts, Korean American men earn 17% less unless they have a graduate degree.
- This is a similar extent of disadvantage that Hispanic American men have in American labor markets.

Despite these high socioeconomic achievements,

- Korean American men still seem to endure some (probably race-related) disadvantages in American labor markets.
- Comparing to equally educated white counterparts, Korean American men earn 17% less unless they have a graduate degree.
- This is a similar extent of disadvantage that Hispanic American men have in American labor markets.
- **Contrary to men, Korean American women do not suffer from earnings disadvantage compared to whites.**

Within-group Inequality is a concern.

- High poverty rate.
- Highest within-group inequality than any other racial/ethnic groups.

Within-group Inequality is a concern.

- High poverty rate.
- Highest within-group inequality than any other racial/ethnic groups.
- A new challenge that Korean Americans and Asian Americans in general face in the 21st century is likely to be rising class inequalities within the same ethnic group.

Thank you!

chkim@ku.edu