International Journal of Asian Social Science
ISSN(e): 2224-4441/ISSN(p): 2226-5139

journal homepage: http://www.aessweb.com/journals/5007

A BASIC SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OF JAPANESE AMERICANS FROM THE 1910, 1920, AND 1930 U.S. CENSUS DATA

Isao Takei[1†] **--- Arthur Sakamoto**[2]

[1]*College of International Relations, Nihon University, Mishima, Shizuoka, Japan*

[2]*Department of Sociology, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, USA*

ABSTRACT

This study provides a socioeconomic profile of Japanese Americans using the 1910, 1920, and 1930 U.S. Census data. Systematic evidence on the socioeconomic characteristics of the Japanese American population has not been investigated using Census data before 1940. Japanese American communities back in the early twentieth century America were mostly organized by the Issei, the foreign-born immigrant Japanese. Despite their efforts toward agricultural cultivation, railroad construction, and hard labor in various kinds of low-paid service jobs, Japanese Americans often faced harsh anti-Japanese movements and sentiments from the mainstream European white society. Although the 1910, 1920, and 1930 Census data do not provide extensive information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Japanese Americans, our analysis nonetheless yields several notable results. First, compared to native-born non-Hispanic whites, Japanese Americans tend to be younger (especially in the case of native-born), never-married (especially for men), have lower rates of fertility, literacy, English speaking ability, metropolitan residence, and business ownership. Second, Japanese Americans tend to be concentrated in California and Hawaii. Third, there is a large disparity in occupational status scores between Japanese American Issei and whites in terms of the Duncan Socioeconomic Index, even after controlling for age, literacy, English ability, metropolitan residence, and residential region. On the other hand, occupational status somewhat improves among the native-born portion of Japanese Americans. Overall, our findings suggest a substantial cost associated with being Japanese American during this period when harsh anti-Asian policies and sentiments were in full swing.

Keywords: Japanese Americans, Asian Americans, 1910, 1920, 1930 U.S. Census, Racial inequality, Occupational attainment.

† Corresponding author
DOI: 10.18488/journal.1/2015.5.10/1.10.570.584
ISSN(e): 2224-4441/ISSN(p): 2226-5139

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Previous Studies of Asian Americans during the Early 20th Century

During their early immigration history in the U.S., Asian Americans faced severe discrimination due to their distinctive cultural background as well as anti-Asian sentiments among the working-class mainstream population who feared that these hard-working, unskilled laborers would take away jobs. This concern was especially evident in California where Asian Americans were highly concentrated (Kitano and Daniels, 2001).

For example, Chinese were initially welcomed to work at gold mining, in agriculture, at various urban occupations, and as the builders of the first transcontinental railroad (Kitano and Daniels, 2001). However, the Chinese soon became the targets of both legal and extralegal harassment and, beyond that, for all kinds of violence, ranging from casual abuse on city streets to mass murder (Boswell, 1986; Kitano and Daniels, 2001). Thus, white workers promoted racist antagonism and intimidation that limited the wages and jobs that Chinese Americans could obtain (Boswell, 1986). Chinese Americans were denied citizenship as well as union membership, and prevented from owning any land (McLemore, 1994; Kitano and Daniels, 2001). Various taxes and special laws were enacted to restrict their employment opportunities (Lyman, 1974).

In the case of Japanese Americans (who mostly immigrated to the U.S. after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882), there seems to be widespread agreement that they faced direct and overt racial discrimination in the labor market before World War II (Bonacich, 1972; 1973; Lieberson, 1980; Makabe, 1981; Portes and Manning, 1986). For example, Bonacich (1972; 1973) argues that a split labor market developed between Japanese Americans and the higher-paid white labor force in California. Japanese Americans were excluded from union membership in the American Federation of Labor which adopted an explicitly racist policy, and as early as 1905, labor union representatives formed the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League which was dedicated to excluding Asian immigrants (McLemore, 1994). The Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 greatly curtailed the immigration of Japanese laborers. Japanese immigrants were prohibited from becoming American citizens (which prevented them from developing any political power), and in 1913 their agricultural competitiveness was challenged by the Alien Land Law which formally prevented them from owning any land in California (McLemore, 1994).

Japanese American communities back in the early twentieth century America were mostly structured by the Issei, first generation who were born in Japan and who immigrated to the U.S. before the Immigration Act of 1924 which prohibited all immigration from Asia (except the Philippines which at the time was a U.S. possession). Japanese Issei were typically motivated by economic opportunity as is common among immigrants even today. They brought with them to the U.S. the cultural heritage of a traditional Japanese society (associated with the Meiji era of the 19th century) having roots in Buddhism and Confucianism. The cultural heritage of the Issei emphasized group obligation over individualism, and behavioral obedience to authority over personal expression. The Issei family may be characterized by "interaction based on obligation, strong involvement in family relationships, priority of filial bond over conjugal bond, male dominance, rigid division of labor by sex, emotional restraint with emphasis on compassion, respect, consideration, stability, and little verbal communication" (Kitano and Kitano, 1998). In comparison

to other American families (even at that time) the Issei family was more hierarchical, authoritarian, and patriarchal.

Through intimidation and racist antagonism, white workers were able to protect their higher wages by reducing or eliminating competition from Japanese Americans who were typically willing to work for lower wages. These exclusionary practices led to the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908 which prohibited the immigration of Japanese male workers. Then a total ban on any Asian (including Japanese) immigration was instituted with the Immigration Act of 1924 (McLemore, 1994).

Ichihashi (1932) argues that the Nisei faced severely restricted opportunities when in their employment. Other evidence for racist sentiment against Japanese Americans is cited by Kitano (1976). Thus, Japanese Americans in the pre-World War II era likely faced extensive and persuasive occupational discrimination by companies that were run by whites, despite their high rate of college completion (Mears, 1928; Ichihashi, 1932; Kitano, 1976; Bonacich and Modell, 1980; Chin, 2005).

1.2. Some Previous Studies of the Socioeconomic Attainments of Japanese Americans during the Early 20th Century

As historical and qualitative studies mentioned above show, there seems to be widespread agreement that Asian Americans faced direct and overt racial discrimination in the labor market before World War II (Levine and Montero, 1973). Due to the lack of survey data, few statistical studies have investigated the socioeconomic attainment of Asian Americans before World War II. The results of the analyses that are available, however, generally concur with the historical studies which suggest that Japanese Americans were severely disadvantaged in the labor market. For example, Cain (1991) and Levine and Montero (1973) find comparatively low levels of occupational attainment for the Nisei before World War II even among those who were highly educated.

Using data from the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) from the 1940 Census, Sakamoto *et al.* (1998) find that Chinese and Japanese American men are clearly disadvantaged in obtaining higher status occupations after controlling for schooling, experience, and region of residence. Sakamoto *et al.* (1998) findings show that "relative to white men, Chinese and Japanese American men in 1940 were less likely to be employed in the corporate sector and were more likely to be employed in the low-wage sector." Using the same data (i.e., the 1940 PUMS), Sakamoto and Kim (2003) find that the wages of Asian American men are considerably lower than are those of comparable white men in 1940—even lower than those for African American men. Finally, even using data from the 1950 PUMS, Sakamoto *et al.* (2000) find substantial wage disadvantages for Japanese Americans (-36.9 percent) and Chinese Americans (-43.7 percent) compared to non-Hispanic whites, net of age, schooling, military service, region, and metropolitan status. These prior studies collectively indicate that Asian Americans were disadvantaged in the labor market before World War II.

2. METHODS

2.1. Data and Target Population

The data for the analysis come from the 1910 (1.4%), 1920 (1%), and 1930 (5%) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of the U.S. Census. Although information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics is greatly limited in contrast to recent surveys, these earlier Census data are some of the few nationally representative household surveys that could be used to investigate some aspects of the socioeconomic situations of Japanese Americans during the first part of the twentieth century. We combine these years in order to increase the available sample size for Japanese Americans. These years from 1910 and 1930 are also compatible as they are likely to be representative of an era of harsh racial antagonism against Asian Americans (including Japanese Americans) as was discussed earlier.

Unfortunately, the 1910, 1920, and 1930 Census data do not include information on commonly studied socioeconomic variables such as education, wages and earnings. Therefore, we substitute literacy and English ability for educational level (usually measured in terms of years of schooling completed and the highest level of education completed). To investigate labor market outcomes without data on income, we are able to use the Duncan Socioeconomic Index (SEI) which during that era is a reasonably informative indicator of job rewards (Blau and Blau, 1967).

In terms of race and ethnicity, our analysis considers the following groups: (1) foreign-born Japanese; (2) native-born Japanese; (3) foreign-born Chinese; (4) native-born Chinese; (5) foreign-born Filipinos; (6) native-born Filipinos; and the reference category of (7) native-born non-Hispanic whites. We further limit the sample to non-institutionalized individuals between the ages of 18 and 64 who were not enrolled in school at the time of the survey. Because gender interactions in labor market processes are well established (Marini, 1989), statistical models are estimated separately by gender.

Although our major focus is Japanese Americans, Chinese and Filipino Americans are also included in the analysis for enhancing our understanding of socioeconomic disadvantage of Asian Americans during the period between 1910 and 1930. Filipino history in the U.S. date back primarily to the Spanish-American War of 1898 after which the Philippines was annexed as American colonial territory (Kitano and Daniels, 2001). Due to the American colonial heritage, many Filipino immigrants often have better English language skills than other immigrants from Asia which facilitates employment and social acclimation in the U.S.

2.2. Variables

Our outcome variable of interest is occupational status measured in terms of the Duncan Socioeconomic Index (also known as the Duncan SEI). A large score is indicative of higher occupational prestige or higher average socioeconomic rewards obtained via one's occupational employment. The scale is the oldest one used in modern social stratification research (Blau and Blau, 1967). Occupational attainment is one of the traditional indictors of socioeconomic attainment in much of the literature on social stratification, and the Duncan SEI is likely to be very appropriate measure for studying occupational attainment in the 1910, 1920, and 1930 PUMS data.

The control variables refer to years of age; a dichotomous variable to indicate whether literate; a dichotomous variable to indicate whether speaks English; a dichotomous variable to indicate whether married; the number of own children; a dichotomous variable to indicate metropolitan residence; two dichotomous variables to indicate state of residence (i.e., California and Hawaii versus other states as the reference category); two dichotomous variables to indicate survey year (i.e., the year 1910 and 1920 versus year 1930 as the reference category); and two dichotomous variables to indicate generational statuses (i.e., 2.5-generation and third-generation versus first-generation or second-generation as the reference category).

Generational status is determined by one's country of birth, his/her mother's country of birth, and his/her father's country of birth. "First generation" refers to those who were born outside the United States. "Second generation" includes those who were born in the United States, but both of his/her parents were foreign-born. "2.5 generation" includes those who were born in the United States, but one of their parents was foreign born. "Third-generation" refers to those who were U.S.-born, and both of their parents were U.S.-born as well. For this time period, these categories are mostly successive generations except that some intermediate cases do arise since foreign-born persons sometimes intermarry with native-born persons. Finally, our regression models include four interactions between generational statuses and ethnic categories (i.e., 2.5 generation and Japanese American; third generation and Japanese American; 2.5 generation and Chinese American; and third generation and Chinese American) as control variables. This approach yields more precise and informative results about Asian American inequalities during the first part of the twentieth century.

3. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics and sample sizes for whites and the three Asian American ethnic groups are shown separately by gender in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 for men indicates that there are 1,722,368 non-Hispanic whites, 14,596 foreign-born Japanese, 661 native-born Japanese, 5,934 foreign-born Chinese, 1,275 native-born Chinese, 4,010 foreign-born Filipino, and 77 native-born Filipino Americans. These sample sizes indicate that the great majority of Japanese Americans are foreign-born immigrants, and the native-born population is considerably smaller. The much larger number of immigrant Japanese compared to Chinese and Filipino Americans may reflect the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 which did not impose restriction on women and family members of Japanese male workers who were already in the U.S. Kitano and Daniels (2001).

Regarding Duncan SEI, Table 1 for men shows that except for native-born Chinese who have a higher mean score of occupational status than whites, the scores for the other Asian groups are lower than whites. Regardless of nativity status (i.e).

Table-1. Descriptive Statistics for Men

Variable	Native-Born Non-Hispanic White	Foreign-Born Japanese	Native-Born Japanese	Foreign-Born Chinese	Native-Born Chinese	Foreign-Born Filipino	Native-Born Filipino
Age	36.33	37.64	24.44	43.87	35.20	28.00	34.66
Literacy	0.98	0.85	0.97	0.77	0.89	0.73	0.94
English Ability	0.97	0.57	0.95	0.57	0.87	0.63	0.97
Married	0.64	0.54	0.29	0.49	0.47	0.27	0.38
Number of Children	1.25	0.94	0.52	0.28	0.50	0.19	0.76
Metropolitan Residence	0.42	0.30	0.13	0.58	0.61	0.24	0.57
Living in California	0.04	0.34	0.16	0.35	0.36	0.29	0.13
Living in Hawaii	0.00	0.41	0.77	0.17	0.18	0.56	0.04
Year 1910	0.28	0.40	0.03	0.47	0.24	0.00	0.00
Year 1920	0.33	0.34	0.17	0.30	0.32	0.21	0.64
Year 1930	0.39	0.26	0.80	0.24	0.44	0.79	0.36
Foreign-Born or Second-Generation	0.20	1.00	0.96	1.00	0.83	1.00	0.21
2.5-Generation	0.09	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.08	0.00	0.08
Third-Generation	0.72	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.71
Class of Work							
Unknown	3.68	0.92	6.96	2.34	4.55	1.30	14.29
Employer	7.21	4.80	2.72	7.52	7.45	0.22	3.90
Working on Own Account	19.58	11.28	7.87	15.15	17.18	1.12	6.49
Works for Wages	67.63	82.88	80.48	74.55	69.80	96.78	75.32
Works on Salary (1920)	0.25	0.02	0.00	0.03	0.16	0.00	0.00
Unpaid Family Worker	1.65	0.10	1.97	0.40	0.86	0.57	0.00
Duncan SEI	28.08	15.52	24.19	24.00	28.35	9.03	21.65
Total	1,722,368	14,596	661	5,934	1,275	4,010	77

Source: 1910 1% PUMS, 1920 1.4% PUMS, and 1930 5% PUMS.
Note: The statistics are weighted.

whether foreign-born or native-born), Chinese Americans have a higher average score of Duncan SEI than do Japanese and Filipinos. Such findings suggest an advantage for Chinese due to their longer immigration history in the U.S. Although the mean scores for Japanese and Filipinos

are lower than those for whites and Chinese, they experience some upward mobility in terms of Duncan SEI across first-generation and U.S.-born generations. For example, although the mean occupational score for immigrant Japanese (15.52) is much lower than that for whites (28.08), the average score greatly increases among native-born Japanese (24.19). The same trend applies to both foreign-born and native-born Filipinos. Compared to foreign-born immigrants, native-born Asian Americans in general attain higher English speak ability and literacy, and thus may be more familiar with working culture in the U.S.

In terms of literacy, the mean for foreign-born Japanese men (85 percent) is lower than that for whites (98 percent), but the mean for native-born Japanese American men (97 percent) is very close to the level of white men. Similarly, literacy rates for native-born Chinese and Filipino Americans (89 percent and 94 percent, respectively) are higher than their foreign-born counterparts (77 percent and 73 percent, respectively). Similar trend holds true for English ability; although English ability is limited among foreign-born immigrants, it significantly improves among native-born population. Among men, Filipino immigrants have the highest mean for English ability. Many Filipino immigrants may often have better English language skills than other immigrants from Asia due to the American colonial heritage.

Regarding the number of children, Table 1 shows that the Asian American groups generally have much smaller average numbers of children than whites. All of the Asian groups are also much more likely than whites to be unmarried. These figures may suggest that a large number of immigrant labors entered the U.S. for temporary work rather than living in the U.S. forever or for a long period of time. Among foreign-born Asians, the percentage married is the highest for Japanese Americans. This might be due to the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 which curtailed the immigration of Japanese male labors but did not impose restriction on women.

Regarding metropolitan residence, both foreign-born and native-born Japanese Americans are less likely than whites to reside in metropolitan areas, while foreign-born and native-born Chinese, and native-born Filipinos are more likely than whites to reside in metropolitan area. Such ethnic differentials in the rates of metropolitan residence may be associated with employment situations of the racial/ethnic groups. Although work classifications of the U.S. Census at that time are very simple (there are only five categories including unknown classification, employer, working on own account, works for wages, and unpaid family worker), Table 1 shows that there are 68 percent of whites who work for wages, followed by working on own account (about 20 percent) and employer (about 7 percent). The category "working on own account" mainly indicates producers who reside in rural areas and are engaged in agriculture, hunting, and home production for just their own consumption. This type of work would not be regarded as an occupation today, but it not uncommonly existed in the countryside during that period. Since work for one's own household is not counted in the GDP, this type of work is simply regarded as being "not in the labor force" according to today's definition.

In regard to Japanese Americans, over 80 percent of them work for wages regardless of nativity status, and there are 11 percent foreign-born and 8 percent native-born Japanese Americans working on own account. Images about Japanese Americans during the period may conjure up pictures of service jobs in inner cities and family business in farming. Yet, as Table 1 shows, the

percentage in the employer category is only about 5 percent among foreign-born, and only about 3 percent for native-born Japanese Americans. It is said that more foreign-born immigrant Japanese became small business owners in large cities after the 1913 Alien Land Law which formally prevented them from owning any land in California (Minamikawa, 2007). Nevertheless, as the Census data show, there is actually only a very small proportion of Japanese Americans working as employers or managers.

A similar trend applies to Chinese Americans; about 75 percent of foreign-born Chinese and about 70 percent of native-born Chinese Americans work for wages. Furthermore, there are about 15 percent of foreign-born Chinese working on own account, and about 17 percent of native-born Chinese Americans in this occupational category. As for Filipinos, almost all foreign-born immigrants (about 97 percent) are engaged in paid work. On the other hand, among native-born Filipino Americans, about 75 percent of them work for wages.

Regarding residential state, Table 1 shows that almost all white men live outside of California or Hawaii. In regard to immigrant Japanese, 34 percent of them reside in California and 41 percent of them reside in Hawaii. On the other hand, while the great majority of native-born Japanese Americans (77 percent) reside in Hawaii, there are only 16 percent of them living in California. Regarding foreign-born and native-born Chinese Americans, the proportions of those who reside in California are higher than Japanese Americans. Unlike Japanese Americans, their motivation to immigrate to the U.S. is not plantation in Hawaii, but gold mining in California. Moreover, it is suggested from Table 1 that about half of Chinese Americans, regardless of nativity status, reside in outside of California or Hawaii, maybe due to their higher levels of assimilation into the U.S. society compared to Japanese Americans. Finally, more than half of Filipino immigrants (56 percent) live in Hawaii while only about 30 percent of them in California. For native-born Filipino Americans,

Table-2. Descriptive Statistics for Women

Variable	Native-Born Non-Hispanic White	Foreign-Born Japanese	Native-Born Japanese	Foreign-Born Chinese	Native-Born Chinese	Foreign-Born Filipino	Native-Born Filipino
Age	36.12	34.59	23.60	37.70	30.76	30.45	35.98
Literacy	0.97	0.70	0.96	0.49	0.80	0.50	0.96
English Ability	0.95	0.36	0.92	0.33	0.81	0.44	0.88
Married	0.69	0.93	0.62	0.90	0.69	0.91	0.67
Number of Children	1.48	2.10	1.24	3.12	1.79	1.78	1.29
Metropolitan Residence	0.46	0.31	0.14	0.54	0.44	0.14	0.41
Living in California	0.04	0.35	0.17	0.39	0.36	0.12	0.04
Living in Hawaii	0.00	0.52	0.79	0.33	0.37	0.78	0.03
Year 1910	0.32	0.19	0.03	0.25	0.20	0.00	0.00
							Continue

Year 1920	0.30	0.42	0.18	0.28	0.25	0.32	0.75
Year 1930	0.38	0.40	0.79	0.47	0.54	0.68	0.25
Foreign-Born or Second Generation	0.25	1.00	0.94	1.00	0.62	1.00	0.26
2.5-Generation	0.09	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.02
Third-Generation	0.66	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.21	0.00	0.71
Class of Work							
Unknown	74.94	63.23	64.07	85.34	70.69	80.75	68.75
Employer	0.40	0.25	0.50	0.16	0.86	0	0
Working on Own Account	2.09	5.57	3.64	2.77	2.59	3.11	6.25
Works for Wages	21.97	30.07	31.62	11.73	25.86	16.15	23.44
Works on Salary (1920)	0.10	0.00	0.00	0	0	0	0
Unpaid Family Worker	0.50	0.88	0.17	0	0	0	1.56
Duncan SEI	8.09	4.32	9.98	2.73	9.15	3.36	6.51
Total	1,781,471	5,550	604	614	464	322	64

Source: 1910 1% PUMS, 1920 1.4% PUMS, and 1930 5% PUMS.
Note: The statistics are weighted.

the great majority of them (83 percent) reside in outside of California or Hawaii.

Table 2 for women indicates that same as the case of Japanese American men, the great majority of Japanese American women are foreign-born immigrants—the native-born portion counts for only about 11 percent. In addition, same as Japanese American men, the average age of foreign-born Japanese women (34.59) is close to that for white women (36.12). On the other hand, the average age of native-born Japanese American women (23.60) is very young. Furthermore, the average age of Chinese American women is younger than that of Chinese American men regardless of nativity, but it is still higher than the mean age of Japanese American women. In regard to Filipino women, their average age is higher than that of Filipino men, regardless of nativity. It has to be also noted that compared to Japanese Americans, the proportions of women are very low for Chinese and Filipino Americans, regardless of nativity.

The mean scores of Duncan SEI for native-born Japanese (9.98) and native-born Chinese women (9.15) are slightly higher than that for white women (8.09). Moreover, same as the case for men, although the mean scores of Duncan SEI for Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino immigrant women are all lower than that of white women, they experience upward mobility in terms of Duncan SEI across first-generation and native-born generations. These descriptive statistics suggest that occupational discrimination may be more relevant for Asian American male workers. Namely, the Duncan SEI score gaps are not large between white women and Asian American women, as

white women back in that time might have generally worked as housekeepers, which in turn decreases the racial/gender gaps in occupational status.

In regard to literacy, Table 2 shows that foreign-born Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino women all have lower rates of literacy than their male counterparts. Nevertheless, native-born Asian American women attain much higher rates of literacy, and there is no longer large disparity in comparison to white women. The same trend applies to English speaking ability—although English ability is considerably lower among Asian immigrant women than their male counterparts, native-born Asian Americans attain much closer English speaking ability to their male counterparts. Although speculative, we suppose that many Asian immigrant women back in these decades are highly dependent on their husbands even when many of them are engaged in different kinds of low-paid unskilled jobs.

In regarding to the number of children, foreign-born Asian groups have more children than their native-born counterparts and white women. Furthermore, the distribution of generational status for the native-born looks similar to that for men. For example, in the case of native-born Chinese American women, the percentages in the 2.5-generation and third-generation are greater than those for men. On the other hand, for native-born Filipino American women, the percentage in the 2.5-generation is smaller than that for native-born Filipino American men.

Table 2 also shows that regardless of nativity, Asian American women tend to have higher rates of married people than men. For example, although native-born Japanese and Chinese American women are on average younger than their male counterparts, they have higher percentages in married. As such, it may be suggested that Asian women back in that time tended to get married at relatively younger ages, partly due to Asian traditions about conventional gender roles.

In regard to metropolitan residence, although native-born Chinese and both native-born and foreign-born Filipino American women tend to have lower levels of metropolitan residence than their male counterparts, other groups show similar results as men. Regarding the type or class of worker, large gender disparities are evident. The great majority of men are workers for wages, followed by those who work on own account and employers. In contrast, the great majority of women tend to be in unknown classifications.

3.2. Regression Results for Duncan Socioeconomic Index

Tables 3 and 4 show the estimates of the regression models for which the dependent variable is Duncan SEI, again shown separately for men and women. The estimated coefficient for an independent variable refers to the score change in Duncan SEI resulting from a unit change in that independent variable net of the other variables in the model. Model 1 includes only dichotomous variables to indicate the different racial/ethnic groups (with non-Hispanic whites serving as the reference category) without any other covariates. Model 1 thus serves as the baseline specification that indicates the overall bivariate differences relative to non-Hispanic whites (i.e., without any control variables).

Table-3. Estimates of OLS Regression of Duncan SEI (Men)

	Model1		Model2		Model3		Model4	
Foreign-Born Japanese	-4.991	***	-11.473	***	-12.177	***	-11.327	***
Native-Born Japanese	-4.124	***	-1.447	**	-2.175	*	-1.320	
Foreign –Born Chinese	-7.911	***	-4.782	***	-6.433	***	-5.596	***
Native –Born Chinese	0.874		2.366	***	-0.448		0.509	
Foreign –Born Filipino	-19.730	***	-14.471	***	-15.620	***	-14.927	***
Native –Born Filipino	-7.649	**	-5.163	*	-7.642	**	-7.538	**
Age			0.084	***	0.089	***	0.089	***
Literacy			14.331	***	11.287	***	11.217	***
English Ability			-0.007		0.987	***	0.988	***
Marreid			8.161	***	7.850	***	7.812	***
Number of Own Children			-1.708	***	-1.236	***	-1.229	***
Metropolitan Residence					11.547	***	11.573	***
Living in Califorina					1.540	***	1.465	***
Living in Hawali					3.693	***	5.710	***
Year 1910							-0.229	***
Year 1920							-0.295	***
2.5-Generation							2.595	***
Third-Generation							0.728	***
2.5-Generation*Japanese American							-0.358	
Third - Generation*Japanese American							-10.180	
2.5-Generation*Chinese American							0.707	
Third - Generation*Chinese American							-6.431	**
Intercept	28.727	***	8.402	***	4.595	***	3.978	***
R-Square	0.006		0.045		0.106		0.107	

*p<.001;** p<.01; *p<.05 (two-tailed tests).

The estimates for this short model in Table 3 indicate that Asian Americans are disadvantaged in terms of Duncan SEI in reference to whites, although the coefficient for native-born Chinese Americans is not statistically significant. While foreign-born Asian Americans are greatly disadvantaged, the racial gaps decrease among native-born Asian Americans which suggest their upward occupational mobility. As descriptive statistics indicate, the disadvantage of Asian Americans might derive

Table-4. Estimates of OLS Regression of Duncan SEI (Women)

	Model1		Model2		Model3		Model4	
Foreign-Born Japanese	-4.612	***	2.006	***	-1.923	***	-1.459	***
Native-Born Japanese	-0.425		-4.489	***	-8.592	***	-9.335	***
Foreign –Born Chinese	-6.537	***	1.877	**	-1.833	*	-1.498	*
Native –Born Chinese	1.391		1.058		-2.414	**	-1.524	
Foreign –Born Filipino	-6.928	**	-1.933	*	-6.082	***	-7.410	***
Native –Born Filipino	-4.368		-3.675		-4.176	*	-4.276	*
Age			-0.193	***	-0.192	***	-0.194	***
Literacy			4.391	***	3.863	***	2.768	***
English Ability			-0.380	***	0.016		0.067	
Marreid			-18.883		-18.713	***	-18.873	***
Number of Own Children			-1.230	***	-1.098	***	-1.048	***
Metropolitan Residence					3.223	***	3.234	***
Living in Califorina					1.872	***	1.678	***
Living in Hawali					6.242	***	7.529	***
Year 1910							-3.139	***
Year 1920							-1.342	***
2.5-Generation							1.520	***
Third-Generation							0.829	***
2.5-Generation*Japanese American							-4.061	
Third - Generation*Japanese American							2.272	
2.5-Generation*Chinese American							-3143	
Third - Generation*Chinese American							-2.879	
Intercept	9.602	***	27.591	***	25.774	***	26.895	***
R-Square	0.000		0.270		0.277		0.282	

*p<.001;**p<.05 (two-tailed tests).

from their younger age (and labor force experience has significant economic returns), lower levels of literacy and English ability in addition to harsh anti-Asian movements and sentiments from the mainstream European white society. On the other hand, Model 1 in Table 4 indicates that while foreign-born Asians are significantly disadvantaged in terms of occupational status in reference to white women, the coefficients for native-born Asian American women are not statistically significant. As was noted above, these results seem to suggest a greater gender discrimination toward white women in the labor force and a strong gender discipline that women are supposed to work in the household rather than working outside during these decades, which mask racial gap in occupational status between Asian American and white women. Model 2 in Table 3 indicates that, after controlling for age, literacy, English ability, marital status and the number of own children, the racial gap in Duncan SEI decreases compared to Model 1. Native-born Chinese Americans indeed have a higher mean score on Duncan SEI than comparable whites. Such findings suggest that relatively young mean age of Asian Americans served as a factor in the background of lower occupational status, due to their relatively short immigration history in the U.S. In addition, the statistically significant and positive coefficient for literacy (14.331) indicates the importance of literacy in the U.S. labor market during these decades.

Model 2 in Table 4 indicates that, in contrast to men, controlling for age, literacy, English ability, marital status and the number of own children, Duncan SEI for native-born Japanese American women decreases compared to Model 1. This finding is surprising, but may suggest that some other factors that are not included in this statistical analysis (e.g., strict tradition of gender division of labor among their ethnic communities) are strongly associated with Duncan SEI for native-born Japanese American women. Model 3 in Tables 3 and 4 further controls for metropolitan residence, and state of residence in California and Hawaii. Findings show that further controlling for these covariates slightly increases the racial gaps in Duncan SEI except the case for native-born Chinese American men. Such findings suggest that living in metropolitan areas or living in states with high cost of living may be associated with more employment opportunities and occupational attainment for Asian Americans. Findings for Model 3 in Table 4 also indicate that further controlling for these covariates slightly increases the racial gap in Duncan SEI, similar to the case for men. Further controlling for survey year and interactions between generational statuses and either Japanese or Chinese Americans in Model 4 in Table 3, the racial gap in occupational status slightly decreases compared to Model 3. In regard to native-born Japanese and Chinese Americans, the mean scores for Duncan SEI statistically do not differ from that for whites. From these results that are obtained net of survey year and generational status among native-born population, it is suggested that occupational status of Asian Americans generally improves as years of stay in the U.S. lengthen and native-born population increases. Model 4 in Table 4 indicates that unlike men, even after controlling for all covariates in the model, native-born Japanese, foreign-born and native-born Filipino American women indeed face slightly larger gaps in Duncan SEI in reference to comparable white women. In sum, findings indicate that there is relatively large net disadvantage of being a foreign-born Japanese man, foreign-born Chinese man, native-born Japanese American woman, and Filipino American regardless of nativity and gender. These results suggest that beyond the effects of covariates in the models which are associated with occupational status, racial status as "Asian American" per se is significantly associated with their lower levels of Duncan SEI scores. The cost of being an Asian American is the greatest for Filipino Americans regardless of nativity and gender. Although speculative, many Filipinos immigrated to the U.S. at this period lack selectivity as the Philippines was already under U.S. rule.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated some basic socioeconomic characteristics of Asian Americans with a focus on Japanese Americans using the 1910, 1920, and 1930 U.S. Census data. Although these Census data do not give detailed information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Japanese Americans, the analysis of this study indicates the following significant results. First, compared to native-born non-Hispanic whites, the great majority of Japanese American men and women are foreign-born immigrants and tend to be younger (especially in the case of native-born), never-married (especially for men), have lower rates of fertility, literacy, English speaking ability, metropolitan residence, and business ownership. Over 80 percent of Japanese American men work for wages regardless of nativity, and there are 11 percent of foreign-born and 8 percent of native-born Japanese American men working on own account. There is a very small proportion of

Japanese American men working as employers or managers. Second, Japanese Americans tend to be concentrated in California and Hawaii, particularly in the latter state. Third, there is a large disparity in occupational status scores between Japanese Issei and white men in terms of Duncan Socioeconomic Index, even after controlling for age, literacy, English ability, metropolitan residence, and residential region. Therefore, overall findings of this study suggest a substantial cost attached to Japanese Americans during the period when harsh anti-Asian policies and sentiments were in full swing. On the other hand, occupational status somewhat improves among the native-born portion of Japanese Americans. As descriptive statistics indicate, the disadvantage of Asian Americans might derive from their younger age, lower levels of literacy and English ability in addition to harsh anti-Asian movements and sentiments from the mainstream European white society. Finally, some shortcomings of this study should be mentioned. First, this study focused on occupational status measured in terms of Duncan Socioeconomic Index, but this variable is only modestly correlated with income and is not a perfect measure of labor market rewards. In addition, because the work classification of the U.S. Census at that time are very simple (i.e., there are only five categories including unknown classification, employer, working on own account, works for wages, and unpaid family worker), this study was not able to investigate detailed occupational distributions of Japanese Americans. For example, Japanese immigrant farmers back in the period were said to have generally improved their status from unskilled, percentage pay, to tenant farmer over time (Yamamoto, 1997), but the 1910-1930 U.S. Census data do not allow us to investigate such career mobility. Second, although educational attainment and wages are critically important socioeconomic outcomes associated with the demography of race/ethnicity, this study was not able to investigate these variables due to the lack of information in the Census data. Third, although findings of this study show some improvement in occupational status across foreign-born immigrant Japanese and native-born Japanese Americans, it should be noted that the sample size of the latter group is small and the great majority of them resided in Hawaii rather than California. Thus, intergenerational mobility of Japanese Americans in terms of Duncan Socioeconomic Index suggested in this study should not be exaggerated as the available sample size of native-born Japanese Americans is limited.

REFERENCES

Blau, O.D. and P.M. Blau, 1967. The American occupational structure. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Bonacich, E., 1972. A theory of ethnic antagonism: The split labor market. American Sociological Review, 37(5): 547-559.

Bonacich, E., 1973. A theory of middleman minorities. American Sociological Review, 38(5): 583-594.

Bonacich, E. and J. Modell, 1980. The economic basis of ethnic solidarity. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Boswell, T., 1986. A split labor market analysis of discrimination against Chinese immigrants, 1850-1882. American Sociological Review, 51(3): 352-371.

Cain, G.G., 1991. The uses and limits of statistical analysis in measuring economic discrimination. In E. P. Hoffman (Eds). Essays on the economic discrimination. Kalamazoo: W.E. Upjohn Institute. pp: 115-144.

Chin, A., 2005. Long-run labor market effects of Japanese American internment during world wwar II on working-age male internees. Journal of Labor Economics, 23(3): 491-525.

Ichihashi, Y., 1932. Japanese in the United States. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kitano, H.H.L., 1976. Japanese Americans: The evolution of a subculture. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall.

Kitano, H.H.L. and R. Daniels, 2001. Asian Americans: Emerging minorities. 3rd Edn., Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Kitano, K.J. and H.H.L. Kitano, 1998. The Japanese-American family. In C. H. Mindel, R. W. Habenstein, and R. Wright Jr. (Eds). Ethnic families in America. 4th Edn., Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall. pp: 311-330.

Levine, G.N. and D.M. Montero, 1973. Socioeconomic mobility among three generations of Japanese Americans. Journal of Social Issues, 29(2): 33-48.

Lieberson, S., 1980. A piece of the pie. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lyman, S.M., 1974. Chinese Americans. New York: Random House.

Makabe, T., 1981. The theory of the split labor market: A comparison of the Japanese experience in Brazil and Canada. Social Forces, 59(3): 786-809.

Marini, M.M., 1989. Sex differences in earnings in the United States. Annual Review of Sociology, 15: 343-380.

McLemore, D.S., 1994. Racial and ethnic relations in America. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Mears, E.G., 1928. Resident orientals on the American pacific coast. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Minamikawa, F., 2007. Historical sociology of Japanese Americans: Ethnicity, race, and nationalism. Tokyo: Sairyusha.

Portes, A. and R.D. Manning, 1986. The immigrant enclave: Theory and empirical examples. In S. Olzak and J. Nagel (Eds). Competitive ethnic relations. New York: Academic. pp: 47-68.

Sakamoto, A. and C. Kim, 2003. The increasing significance of class, the declining significance of race, and Wilson's hypothesis. Asian American Policy Review, 12: 19-41.

Sakamoto, A., J. Liu and J.M. Tzeng, 1998. The declining significance of race among Chinese and Japanese American men. Social Stratification and Mobility, 16: 225-246.

Sakamoto, A., H.H. Wu and J.M. Tzeng, 2000. The declining significance of race among American men during the latter half of the twentieth century. Demography, 37(1): 41-51.

Yamamoto, T., 1997. Urban community and ethnicity: The development and change of Japanese American community. Kyoto: Minerva.