

Immigrant Generation

This memo discusses the immigrant generation measures. This memo quickly reviews the concept of immigrant generation, the questions used to measure immigrant generation in the UW-BHS survey, and it reviews logic guiding the creation of the immigrant generation variables made available in the UWBHS dataset.

Immigrant Generation—Concise Overview

Immigrant generation is a central sociological variable that is hypothesized to influence the assimilation of immigrants and their descendants. It combines the traditional census measures of nativity (birthplace), birthplace of parents, and duration of residence of the foreign born (used to measure the 1.5 generation, which is not addressed in this memo). The general logic is to distinguish between 1st generation (the foreign born), 2nd generation (the native born children of foreign born (or mixed) parents) and 3rd and higher generations (the native born children of native born parents). The UW-BHS measurement and coding of Immigration Generation is complicated by considerations of several issues: each child has two parents (considering only biological), missing data, and Census Bureau conventions about nativity.

A classic study of immigrant generations is Stanley Lieberson's *A Piece of the Pie* (1980). A more recent, more nuanced, measurement of immigration generation is presented by Ruben Rumbaut in "Ages, Life Stages, and Generational Cohorts: Decomposing the Immigrant First and Second Generations in the United States." (*International Migration Review* 38: 1160-1205.)

Original Survey Items

163) Where were you born?

State or Country _____

166) What is your biological/ birth mother's ancestry or ethnic origin?

(For example: Italian, Jamaican, Russian, African Am., Cambodian, Cape Verdean, Norwegian, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Amer. Indian, Dominican, French Canadian, Haitian, Korean, Lebanese, Polish, Nigerian, Mexican, Taiwanese, Ukrainian, and so on.)

167) Where was she born?

State or Country

169) What is your biological/ birth father's ancestry or ethnic origin?

(For example: Italian, Jamaican, Russian, African Am., Cambodian, Cape Verdean, Norwegian, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Amer. Indian, Dominican, French Canadian, Haitian, Korean, Lebanese, Polish, Nigerian, Mexican, Taiwanese, Ukrainian, and so on.)

170) Where was he born?

State or Country

Note in 2000 the wording on questions 167 and 170 varied slightly. In 2000, these questions asked: "Where was your MOTHER/ FATHER or female/male guardian born?" However they were followed up with a question that asked.

168) Did you answer questions 166 and 167 about your biological mother? Or were you referring to a woman who is not your biological mother, that is your step-mother, foster-mother, or guardian?

- Biological mother
- Not my biological mother

171) Did you answer questions 169 and 170 about your biological father? Or were you referring to a man who is not your biological father, that is your step-father, foster-father, or guardian?

- Biological father
- Not my biological father

Using the information in questions 167/170 and 168/170 from 2000 it is possible to make these questions equivalent to questions 167 and 170 in the 2002 to 2005 versions of the survey.

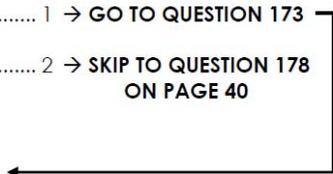
165) Are you a United States citizen?

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Don't Know 3

172) Do you speak a language other than English at home? (Circle one)

- Yes..... 1 → GO TO QUESTION 173
- No 2 → SKIP TO QUESTION 178 ON PAGE 40

173) What language is that?



Operationalization

One of the first steps in creating the immigrant generation measure was to create a measure (variable: snat) that captures the respondents' nativity. For present purposes, respondent's nativity was coded into the following three categories based on the responses to Q163:

1. Foreign Born (not born in the US or American territory)
2. Native Born (born in the 50 states, Washington, DC, Puerto Rico, American Samoa or other US territory)
3. Not reported

Note that persons born in American territories are considered to be native born.

Another initial step is to create a measure (variable: pnat) that captures the birth place of both parents (biological), using categories similar to those used for the respondent. Parental (biological) birthplace is coded into the following categories based on Q167 and 170:

1. Both parents are foreign born
2. Both parents are native born (including American territories)
3. One parent is native born, one parent is foreign born
4. One parent is native born, the other is not reported
5. One parent is foreign born, the other is not reported
6. Neither parental birthplace is reported

At first blush the information on the respondents' and their parents' birthplace appears adequate to create an immigrant generation measure. However, there is an additional complication in creating Immigrant Generation, namely the Census Bureau convention that assumes all persons who are American citizens at birth are considered native born. In addition to those born in the US or a US territory, the children of an American citizen living outside the US are American citizens at birth, and are thus considered to be "native born" according to the Census rule. For example, the children of American servicemen who are born abroad are "native born" as well as any other children born in foreign countries of American parentage.

As individuals may or may not want to utilize the US census convention, the UWBHS data set contains two measures of immigrant generation: Immigrant Generation Standard (variable: ImmStatS) and Immigrant Generation Census (variable: ImmStatC), both of which are based upon nativity and parental birthplace. Immigrant Generation Standard is based only on Nativity and Parental Birthplace without consideration of the census convention. Immigrant Generation Census attempts to capture the spirit of the Census convention that all persons who are American citizens at birth are considered to be native born, although it is only an approximate measure.

The coding logic of the two variables is as follows:

Immigrant Generation Standard:

1. 1st Generation: if Nativity =1
2. 2nd Generation: if Nativity =2 and Parental Birthplace = 1 or 3
3. 3rd Generation: if Nativity = 2 and Parental Birthplace =2
4. Likely 2nd Generation if Nativity =2 and Parental Birthplace = 5
5. Likely 3rd Generation if Nativity =2 and Parental Birthplace = 4
6. Unknown Generation: (If Nativity =3) OR (IF Nativity =2 and Parental Birthplace =6)

Note that 2nd generation includes persons with 2 or 1 foreign born parent (the usual label is Native Born of Foreign or Mixed Parentage – NBFMP). If there are missing data for one parent, then the respondent is coded as "likely" based on the one parent for whom birthplace is known. Unknown generation includes respondents for whom their birthplace is unknown or if both parents' birthplaces are unknown

Immigrant Generation Census is a more complex variable that attempts to approximate the Census Bureau definition that all persons who are American citizens at birth are native born. For example, some UW-BHS respondents were born overseas while their parents were in the military service or temporarily abroad. The UW-BHS survey did not ask citizenship at birth, but it contained questions 165, 172 and 173 that probably capture most persons who are the children of American citizens.

Immigrant Generation Census is based on Immigrant Generation Standard, but with the following changes. If respondents were born outside the United States, but are now American citizens (when high school seniors) and speak English at home, then they are considered:

- 3rd generation if both parents were (or are likely to be) born in the US
- 2nd generation if both or 1 parent were (or are likely to be) born outside the US

The small number of respondents with an unknown birthplace, but with complete information on all qualifying variables (parental birthplace, American citizen, speaks English at home) are coded as 2nd or 3rd generations according to the prior rules.

More formally, **Immigrant Generation Census** is coded as:

1. Immigrant Generation Census = Immigrant Generation Standard
2. If Immigrant Generation = 1 or 6 and
 - a. if both parents are native born (Parental Birthplace =2 or 4)
 - b. respondent is an American citizen
 - c. respondent speaks English at home
 then respondent is 3rd generation
3. If Immigrant Generation = 1 or 6 and
 - a. if Parental Birthplace is 1, 3, or 5)
 - b. respondent is an American citizen
 - c. respondent speaks English at home
 then respondent is 2nd generation

To review, the variables discussed in this memo are:

1. Student Nativity: Snat "Student Nativity, not including any information about parents"
2. Parental Nativity: Pnat "Parent Nativity"
3. Immigrant Generation Standard: ImmStatS "Immigrant Generation: Standard: based on Nativity and Parental Birthplace"
4. Immigrant Generation Census: ImmStatC "Immigrant Generation: Census"

Frequency distributions

ImmStatS Immigrant Generation: Standard: based on Nativity and Parental Birthplace

Percent		Frequency	
Valid	-99797.00 No more valid answers (possibly incomplete student survey)	227	2.4
1.00	1st gen, Student Foreign Born (born outside US or US Terr)	1369	14.2
2.00	2nd gen, Student Native Born, 1+ parents foreign born	1489	15.4
3.00	3rd gen, Student Native Born, Both Par Native Born	5248	54.4
4.00	Likely 2nd gen, Student FB, 1 Par FB, 1 no report	112	1.2
5.00	Likely 3rd gen, Student FB, 1 Par NB, 1 no report	619	6.4
6.00	Generation Unknown, No report on student or parents	588	6.1
Total		9652	100.0

ImmStatC Immigrant Generation, Census

Percent		Frequency	
Valid	-99797.00 No more valid answers (possibly incomplete student survey)	227	2.4
1.00	1st gen, Student Foreign Born (born outside US or US Terr)	1145	11.9
2.00	2nd gen, Student NB/Unk, 1+ Par foreign born, Cit+Eng at hom	1620	16.8
3.00	3rd gen, Student NB/Unk, 1+ Par Native Born, Cit+Eng at home	5362	55.6
4.00	Likely 2nd gen, Student FB, 1 Par FB, 1 no report	112	1.2
5.00	Likely 3rd gen, Student FB, 1 Par NB, 1 no report	619	6.4
6.00	Generation Unknown, No report on student or parents	567	5.9
Total		9652	100.0