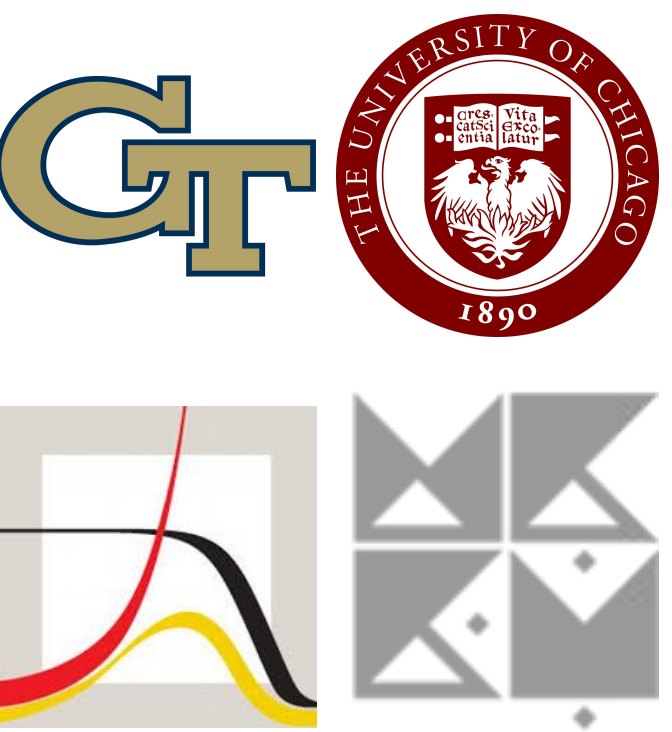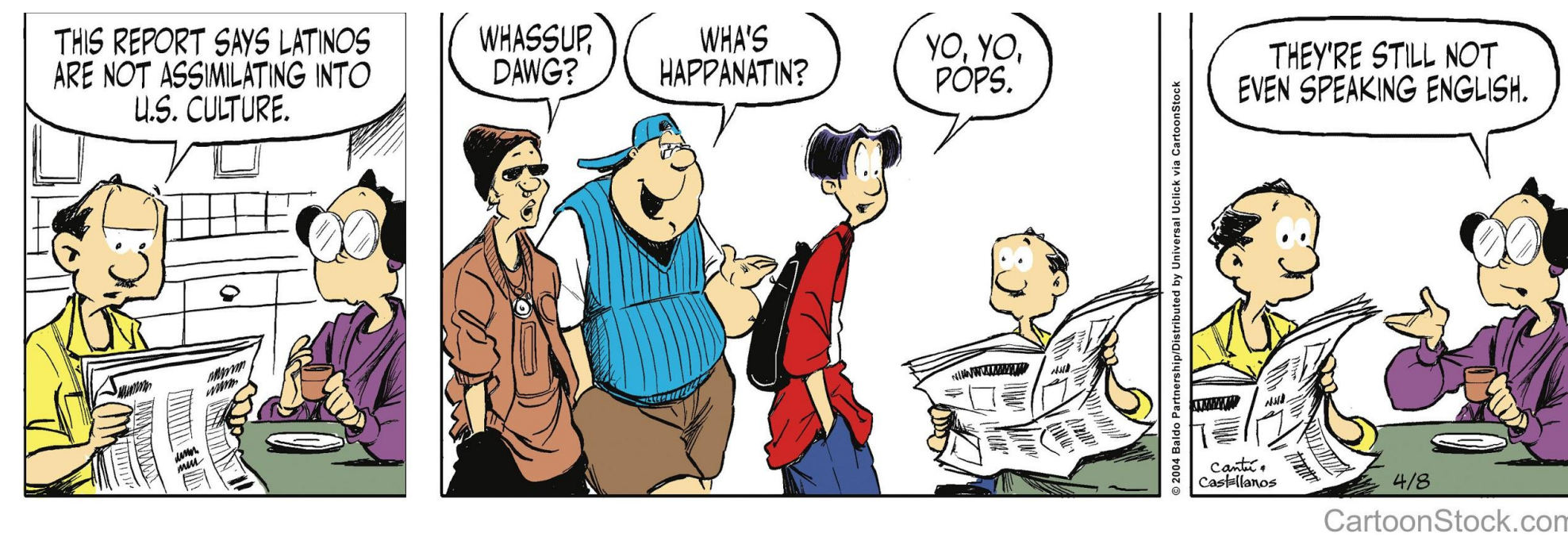# Rock, Rap or Reggaeton? Assessing Mexican Immigrants' Cultural Assimilation Using Facebook Data

Ian Stewart, René Flores, Tim Riffe, Ingmar Weber, Emilio Zagheni

@alethioguy @timriffe1 @ingmarweber @ezagheni

istewart6@gatech.edu renedf@uchicago.edu riffe@demogr.mpg.de iweber@hbku.edu.qa zagheni@demogr.mpg.de

Motivation

Immigrants are a major demographic in the United States (~14%), but their pattern of **assimilation** remains poorly understood.

Typical model: immigrants enter country and adopt native culture, including language, food, fashion and music.

We can measure economic, educational and political assimilation, but how do we measure **cultural assimilation**?

Sociologists use surveys, which suffer from reporting bias, top-down approach and limited sample size.

Digital trace data such as **Facebook interests** provide rich, bottom-up information about cultural assimilation!
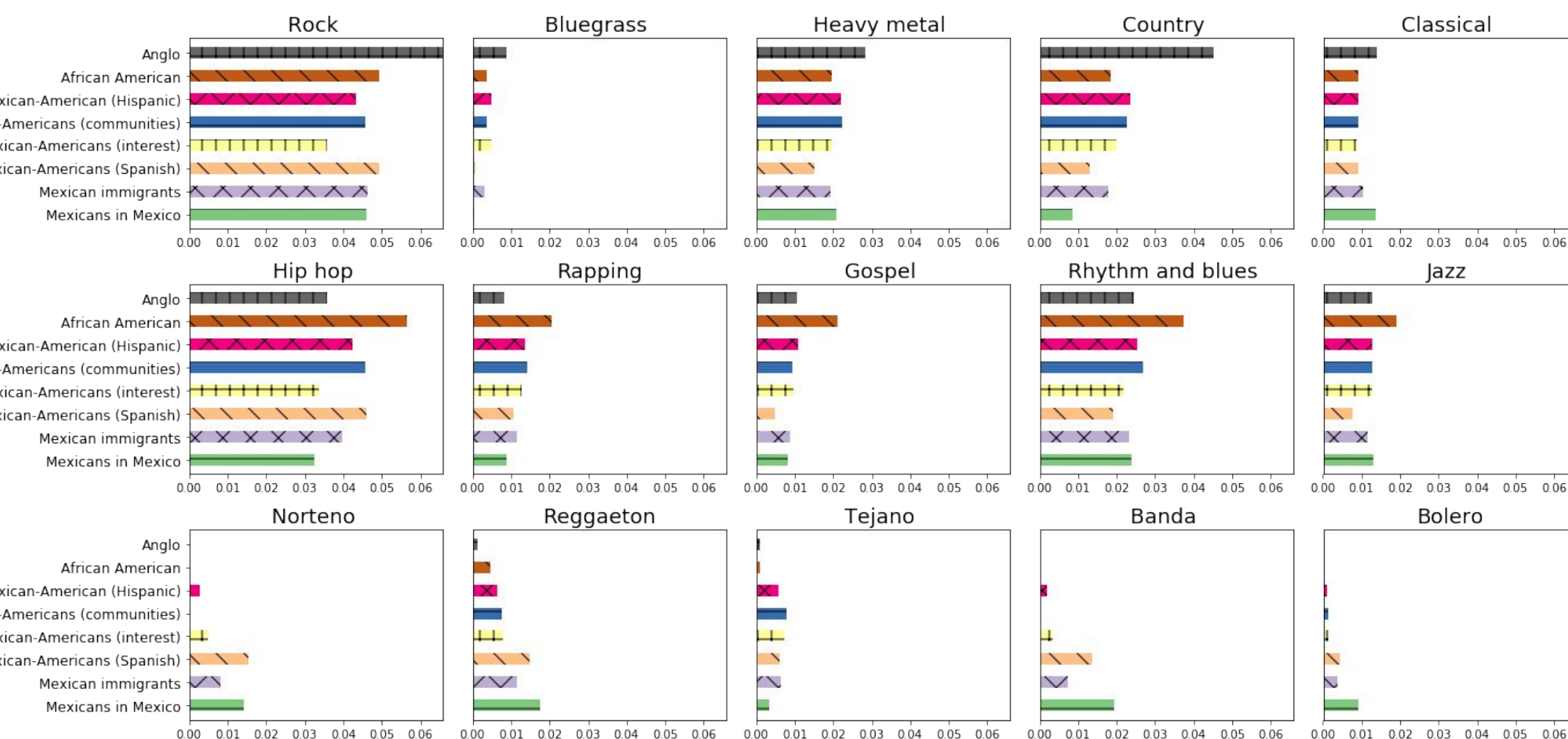

Method

Targeted advertising platform provides **aggregate estimates** of user populations, e.g. "Mexican men who like Rock music."

We target 1st and 2nd generation immigrant groups, e.g. Hispanic non-immigrants with interest in Mexico, and American native groups, e.g. Anglo Americans.
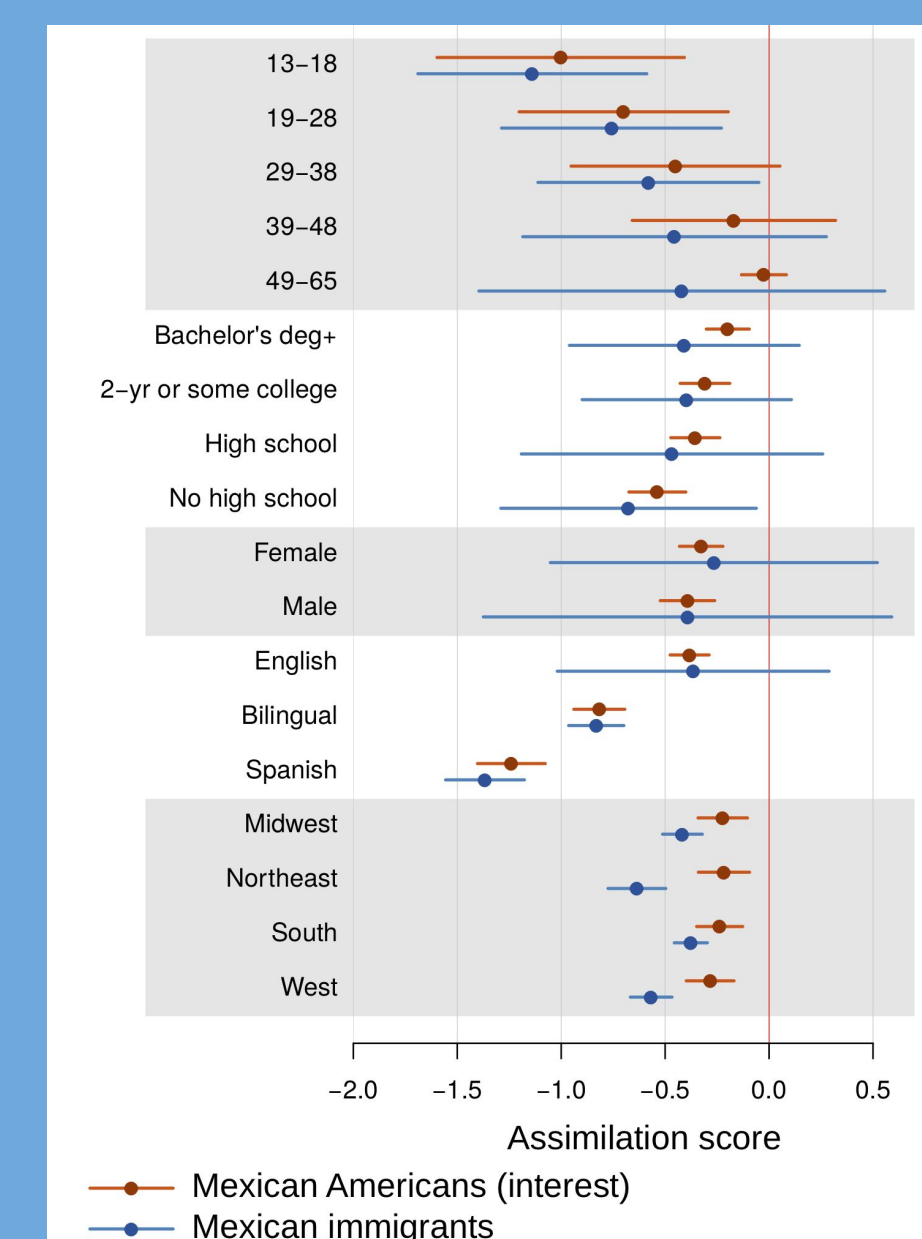
We compare the immigrants' relative degree of interest in "typical" American musical genres such as rock and rap.
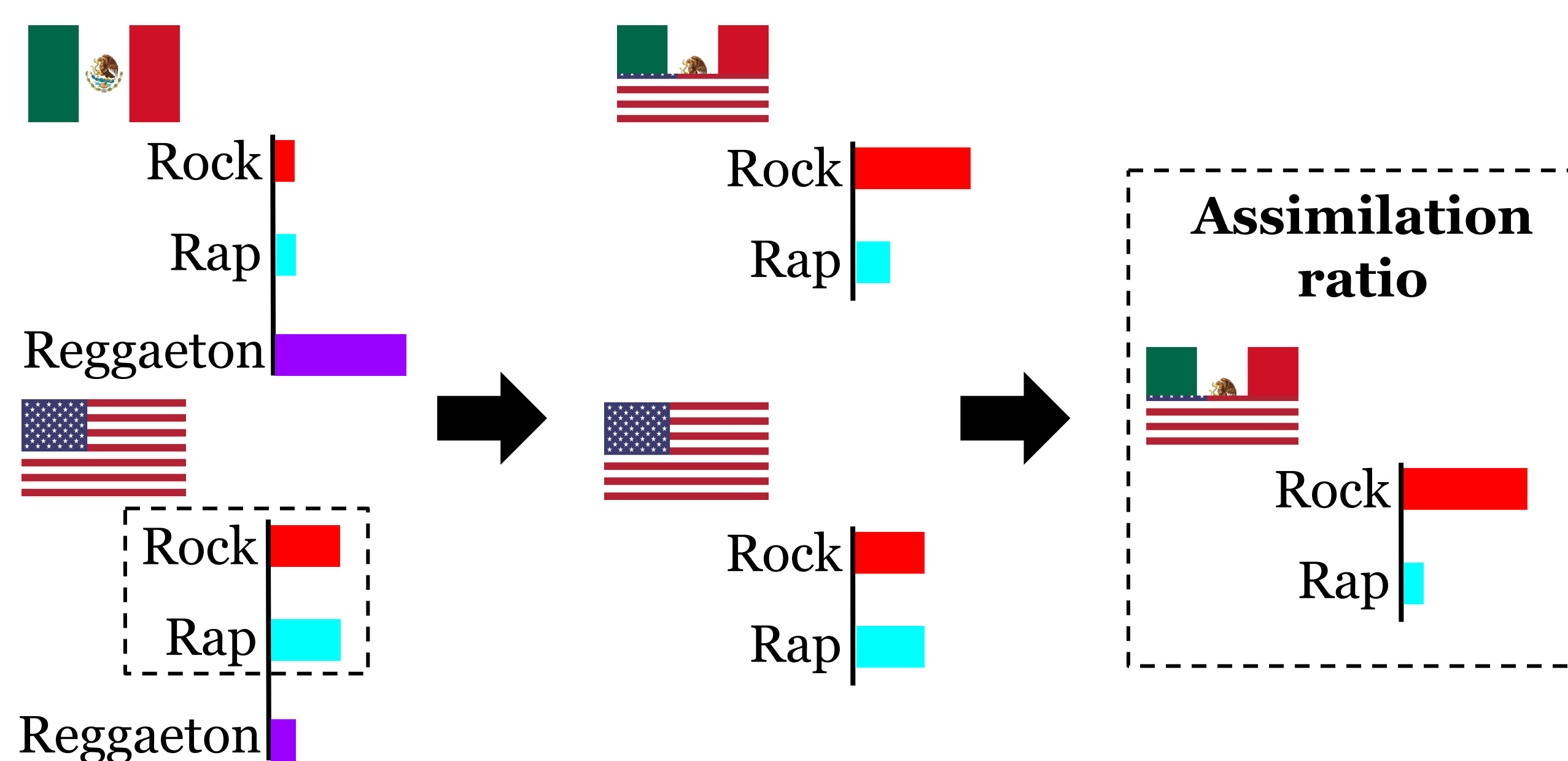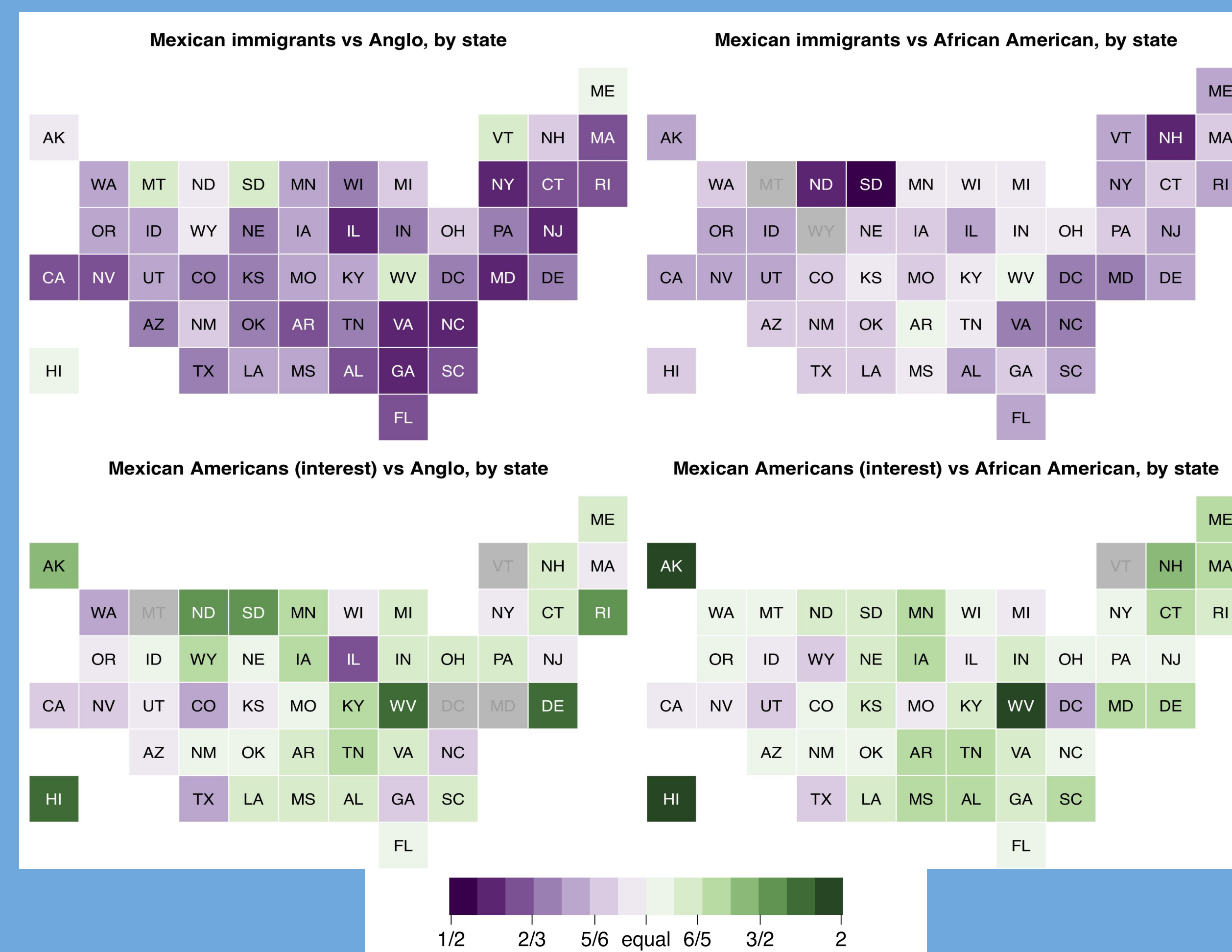

Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans show **high assimilation** to Anglo American and especially African American **musical interests**.
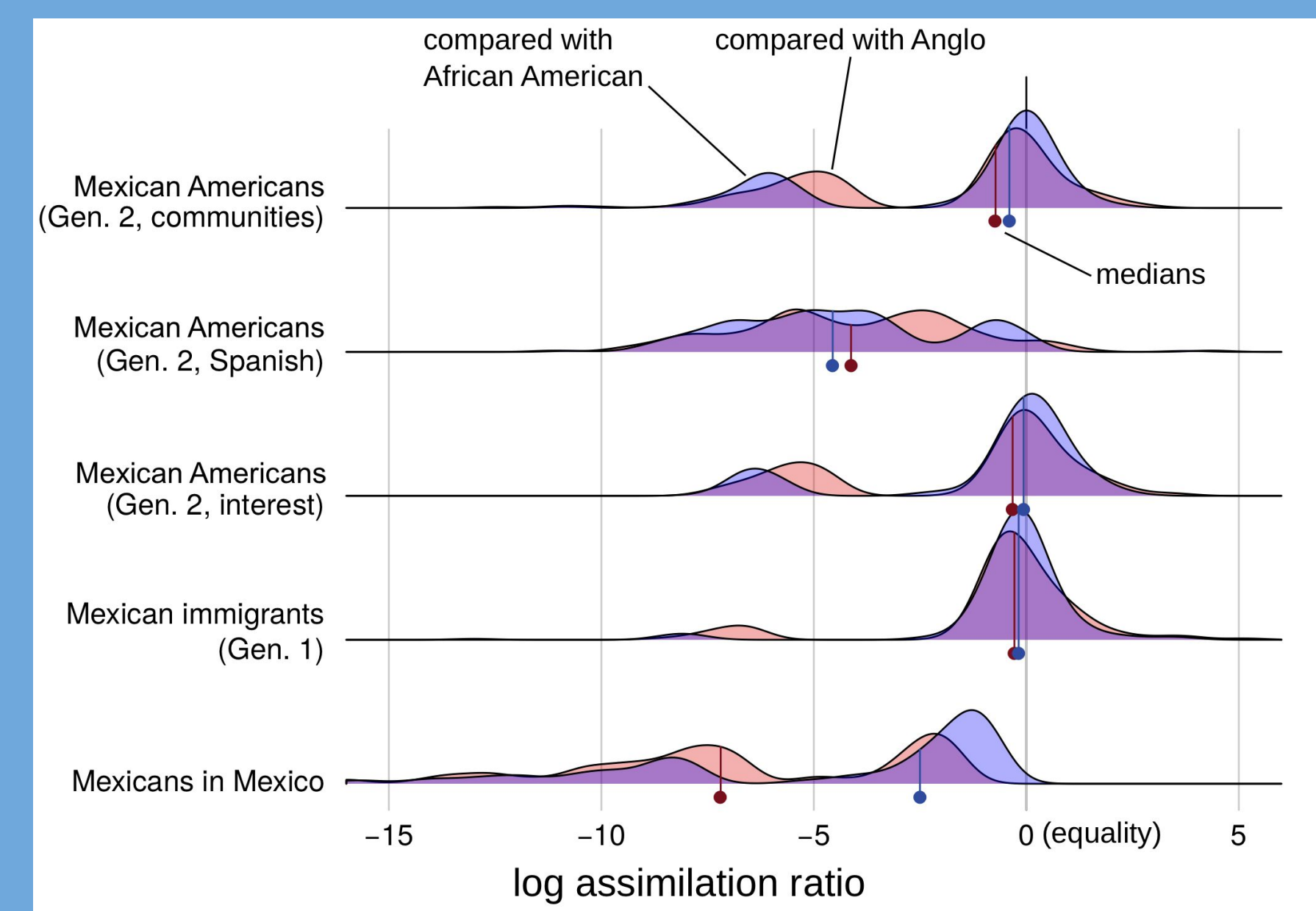
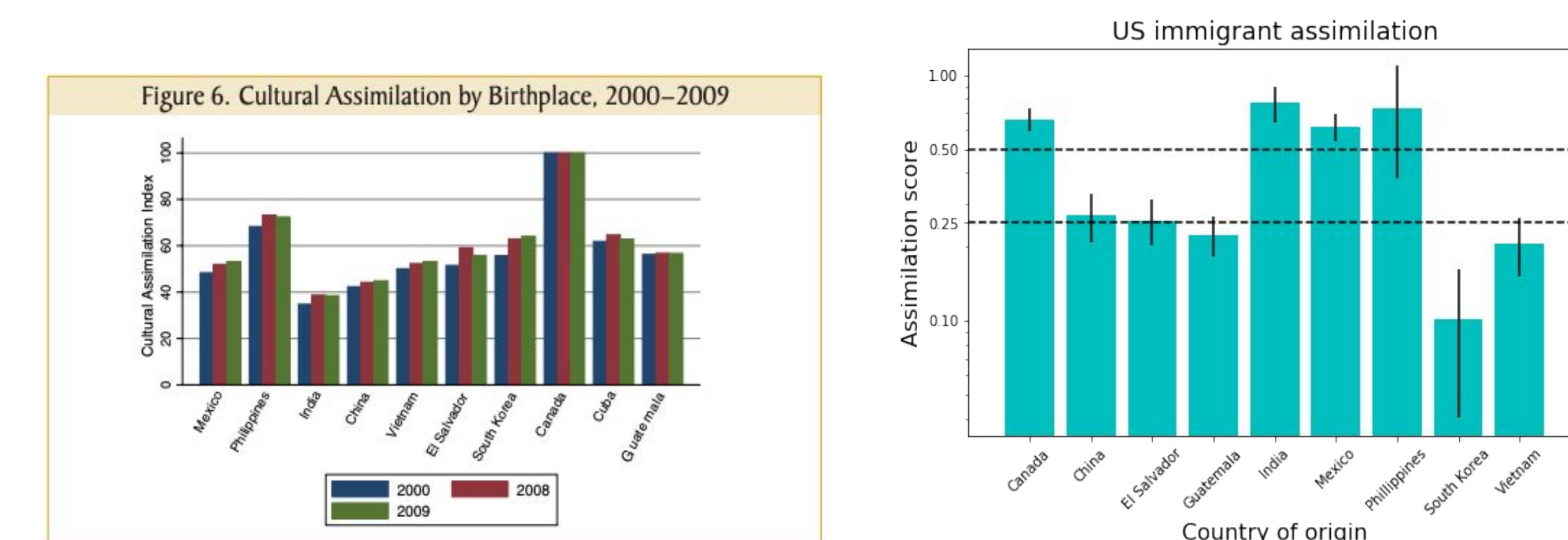High assimilation among 1st and 2nd generation, except for Spanish-speaking.

High assimilation among English-speaking, older, higher-educated 2nd generation.

1st and 2nd generation show higher assimilation to African American interests at state level.

Results

Assimilation metric correlates with ground-truth estimates of assimilation (Vigdor 2011).

Similar levels of assimilation between 1st and 2nd generation, except in **Spanish-speaking 2nd gen.** (potential language barrier issues).

Segmented assimilation: in aggregate 1st generation has higher assimilation, but at state-level 2nd generation has higher assimilation.

Multiple regression: **English-lang., younger, higher educated, female, Southern** immigrants have higher assimilation.

Interaction effects: higher education x mid-age, English-speaking x old, 2nd gen. x young correlate with higher assimilation.

Future Work

Limitation: Facebook interests may be confounded with self-presentation of identity.

We plan to launch a survey on Facebook to assess self-reported assimilation in musical interests among 1st, 2nd generation immigrants.

Future work will examine other aspects of **culture** including film, sports, fashion, media.

Full paper:
http://tiny.cc/immigrantWWW