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# The Integration of Immigrants into American Society

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# Panel Charge

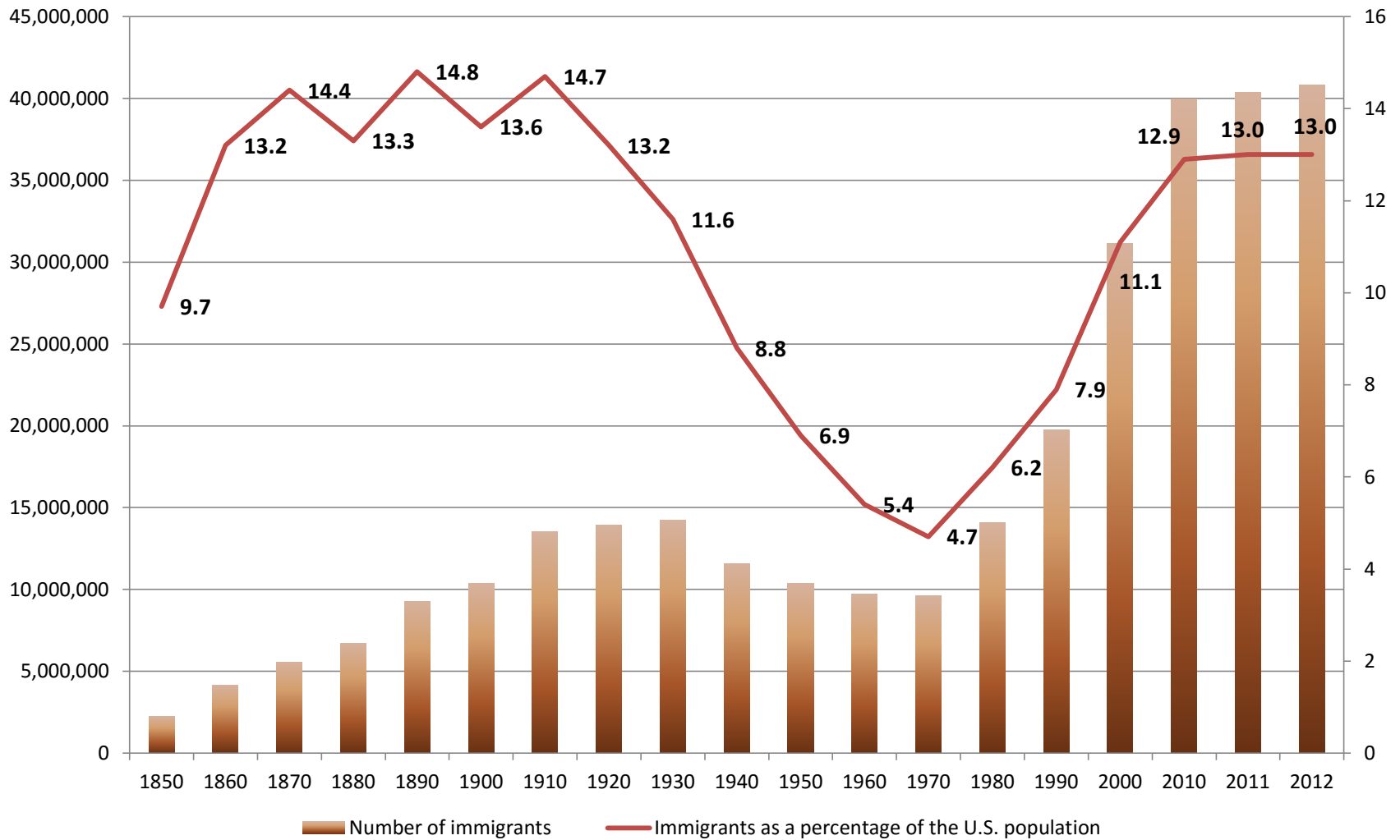
1. Summarize what is known about how immigrants and their descendants are integrating into American society;
2. Discuss the implications of this knowledge for informing policy options;
3. Identify any important gaps in existing knowledge and data availability.

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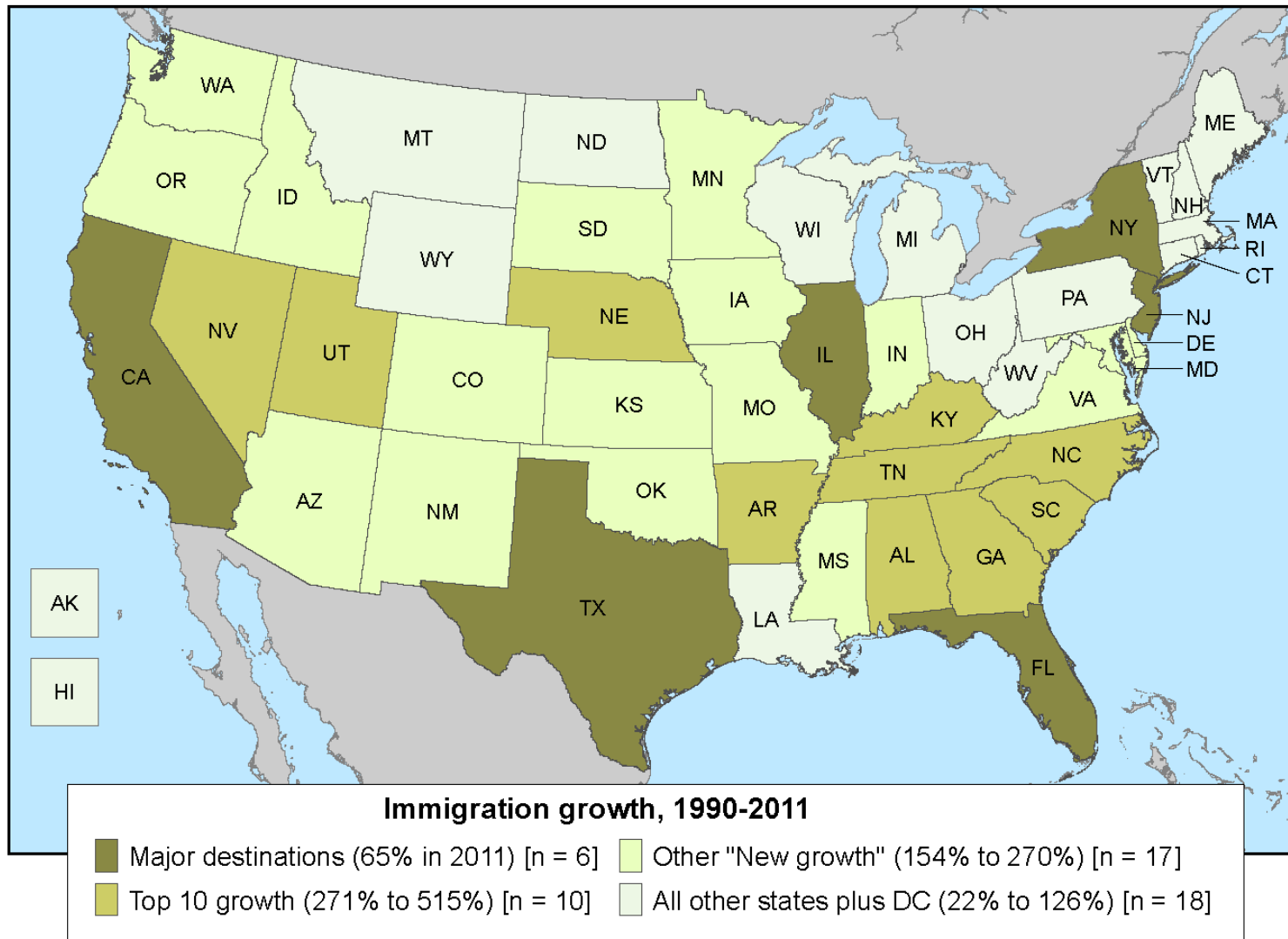
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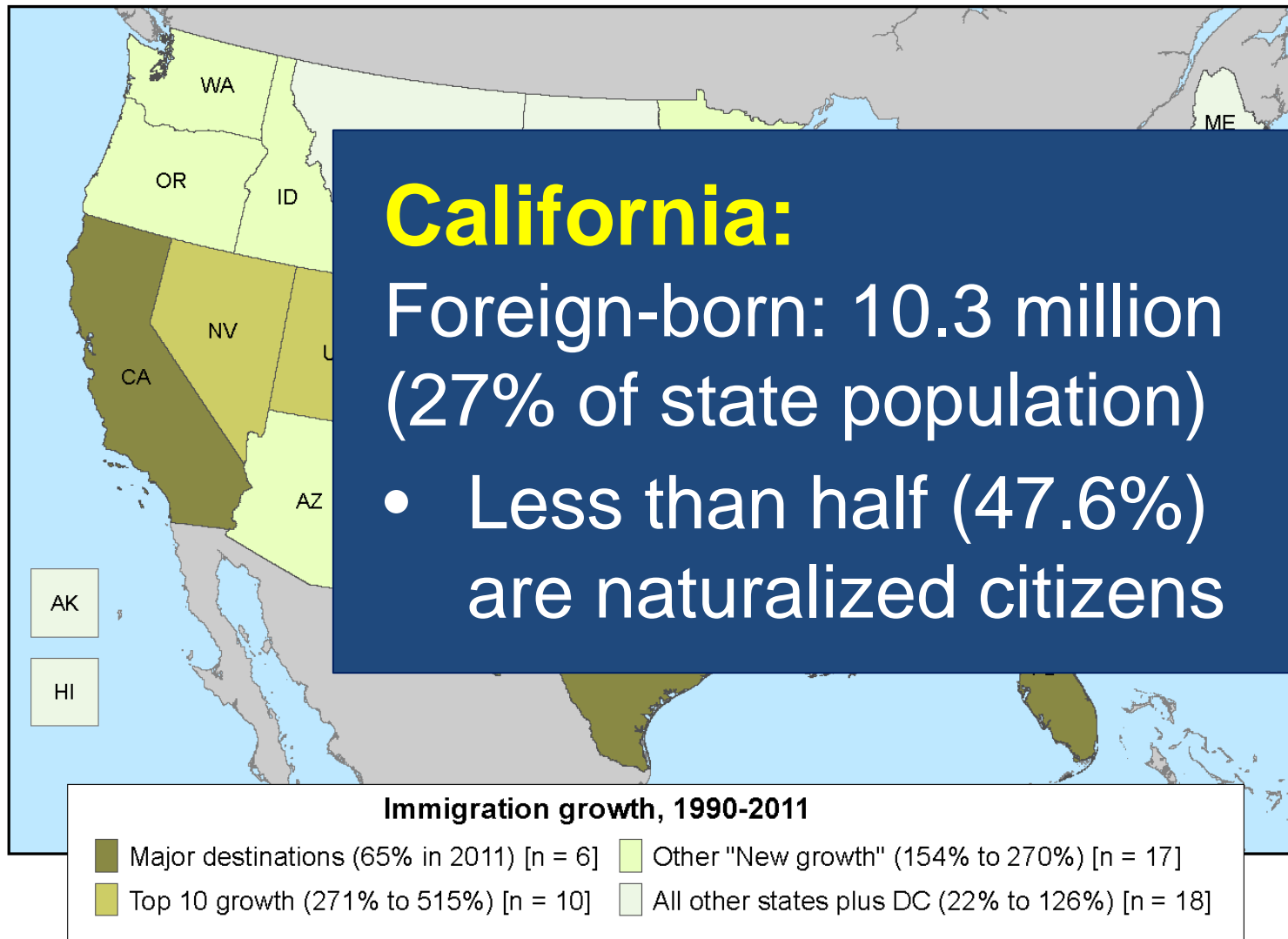
# Demographic Change in Context



# Geographic Dispersal and Spatial Integration



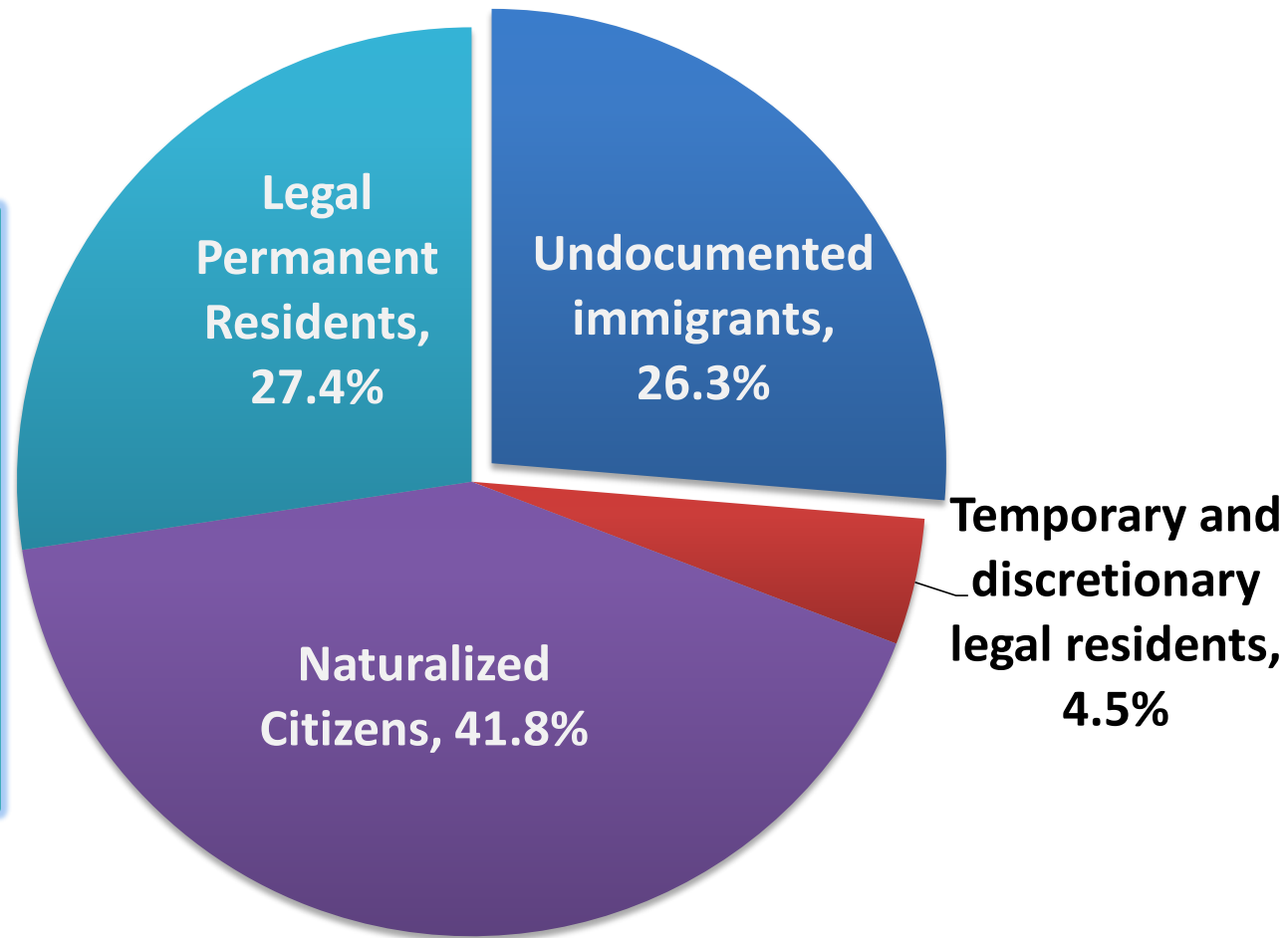
# Geographic Dispersal and Spatial Integration



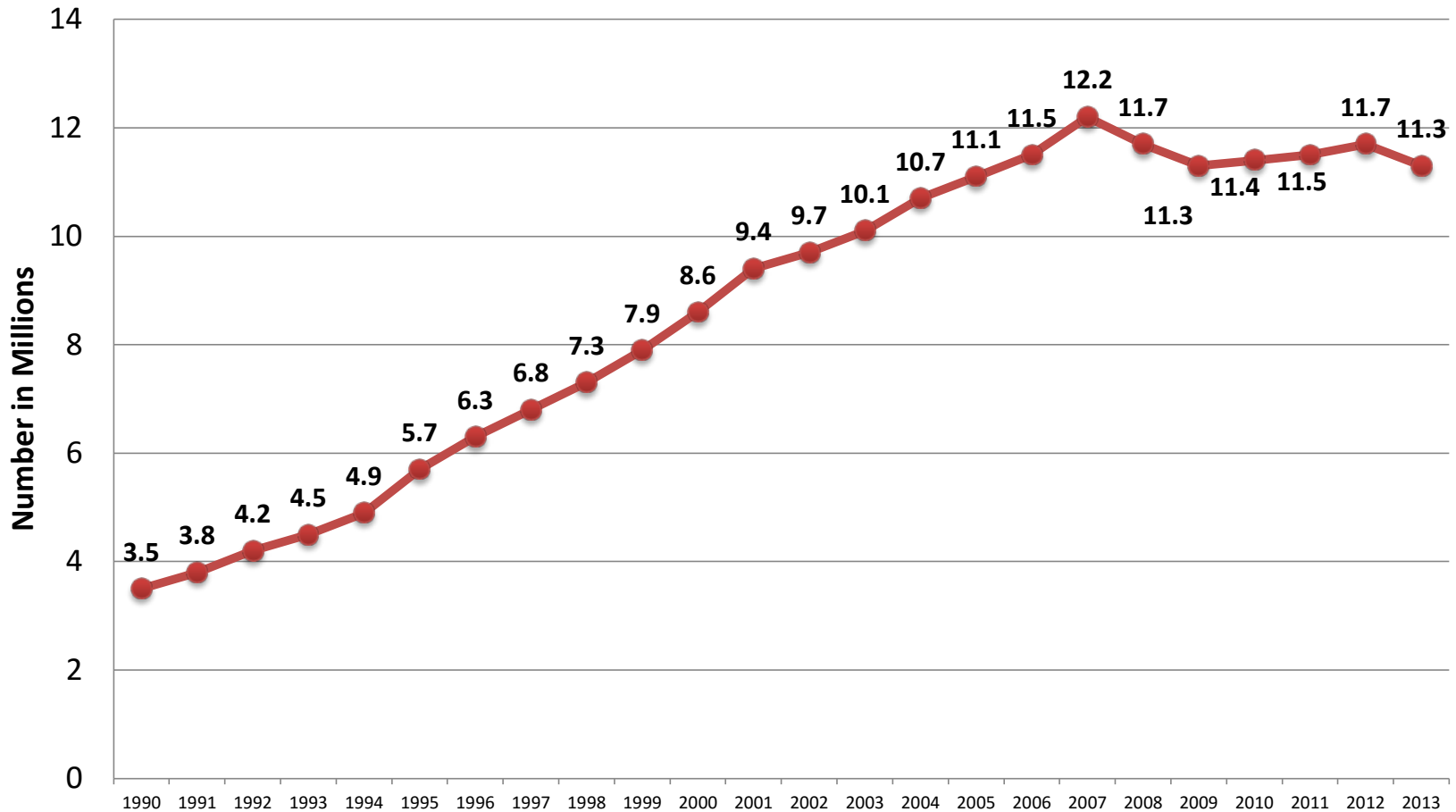
# Immigrants, by general legal category, 2012

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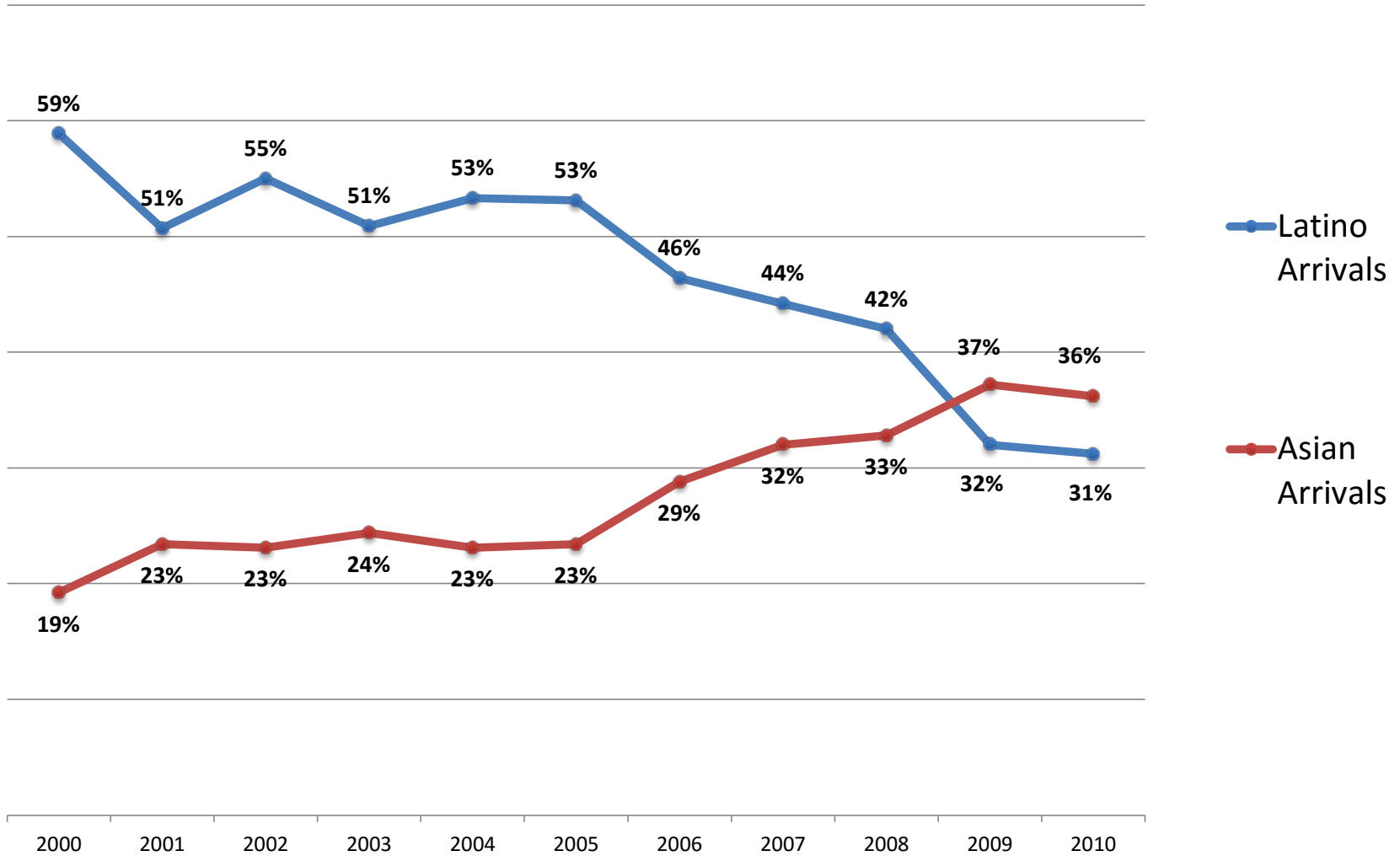
- Large group without legal status
- Uneven impact across national origin groups, U.S. states



# Undocumented Migration Plateau



# Recent Shift in Immigrant Flows





# Integration

- Immigrant groups and host societies come to resemble each other.
  - Two-way exchange
- Measured across time and generation
- Focused on well-being

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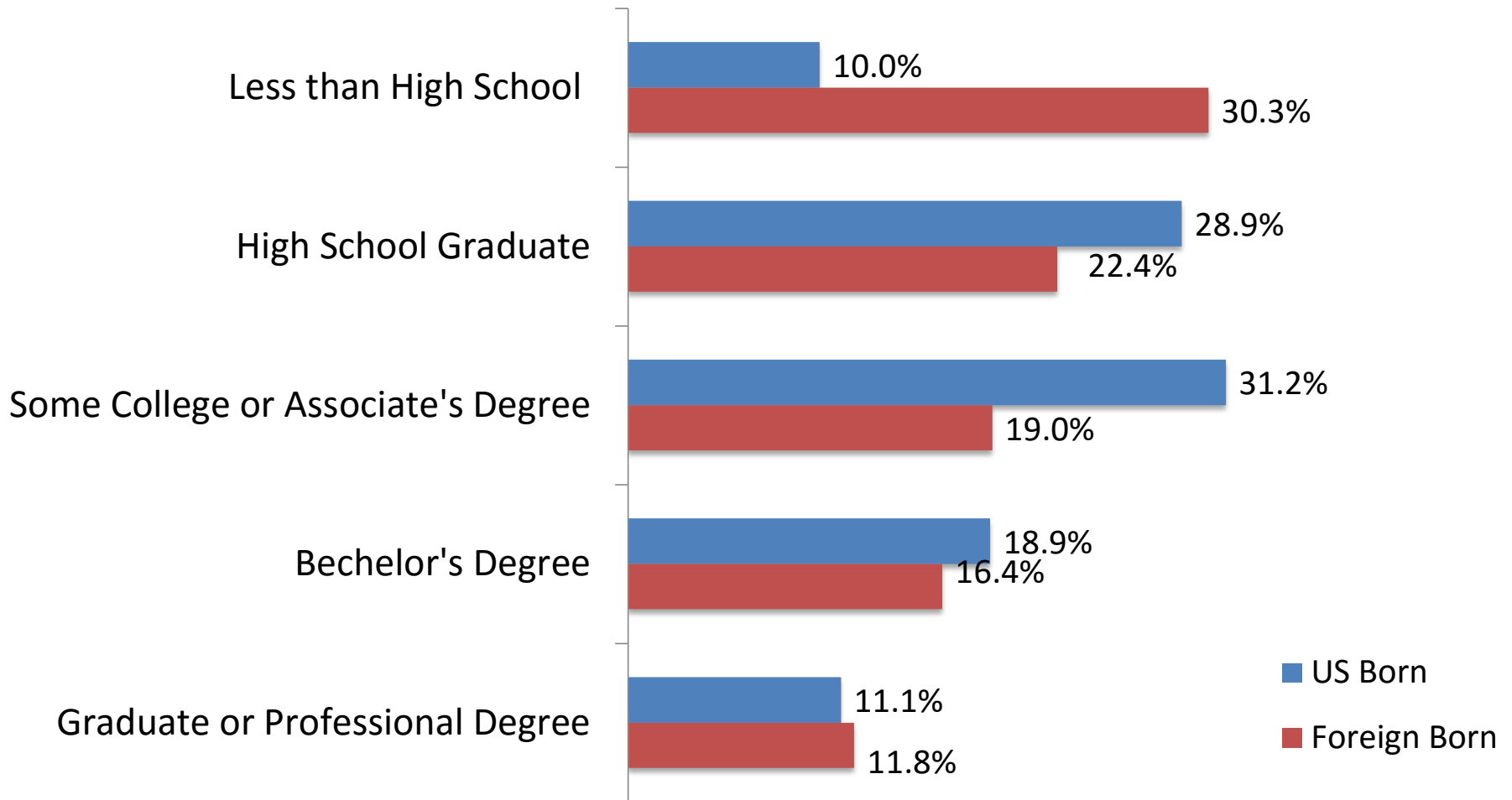
# Many Dimensions of Integration

- **Socioeconomic**
  - **Education**
  - **Occupation**
  - **Income**
  - **Poverty**
- **Political**
  - **Naturalization**
  - **Civic Participation**
- **Sociocultural**
  - **Language**
  - **Crime**
  - **Religion**
  - **Attitudes**
  - **Intermarriage**
- **Spatial**
- **Familial**
- **Health**

# Quick Summary

- **KEY ISSUE:** Immigrants and their children represent one of every four U.S. residents.
- **POSITIVE:** Immigrants and their children are integrating across dimensions; the pace and outcomes depend on very different starting points.
- On the whole, integration increases the well-being of immigrants and their children, e.g., in schooling, income, occupations, residential situation, English language ability.
- **EXCEPTIONS:** health, crime and family form.

# Educational Attainment (age 25+), 2013

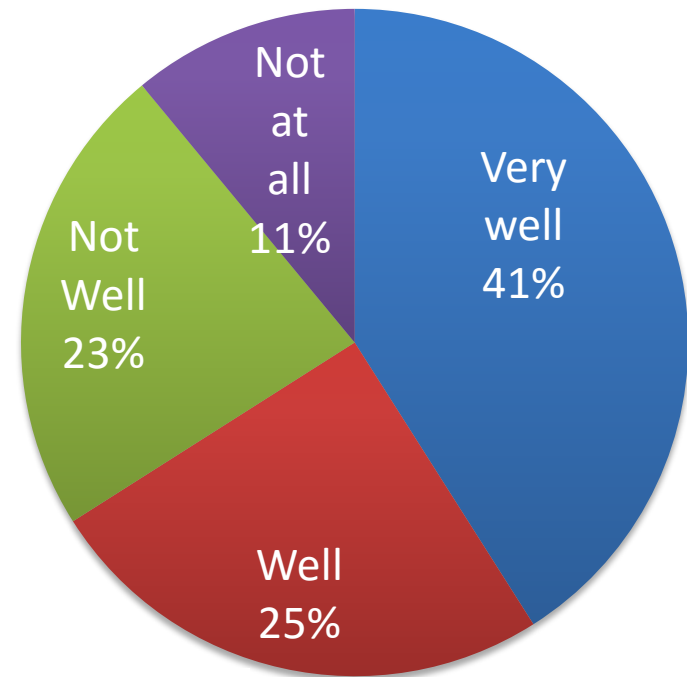


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# Language Diversity

- 85% of first-generation immigrants speak another language (62% Spanish)
- But most report speaking English “well” or “very well”

**English ability among those speaking a non-English language at home, 2012**



# Quick Summary: **Areas of Concern**

- Declines in well-being
- Racial and ethnic disparities
- Legal Status
- Naturalization Rates

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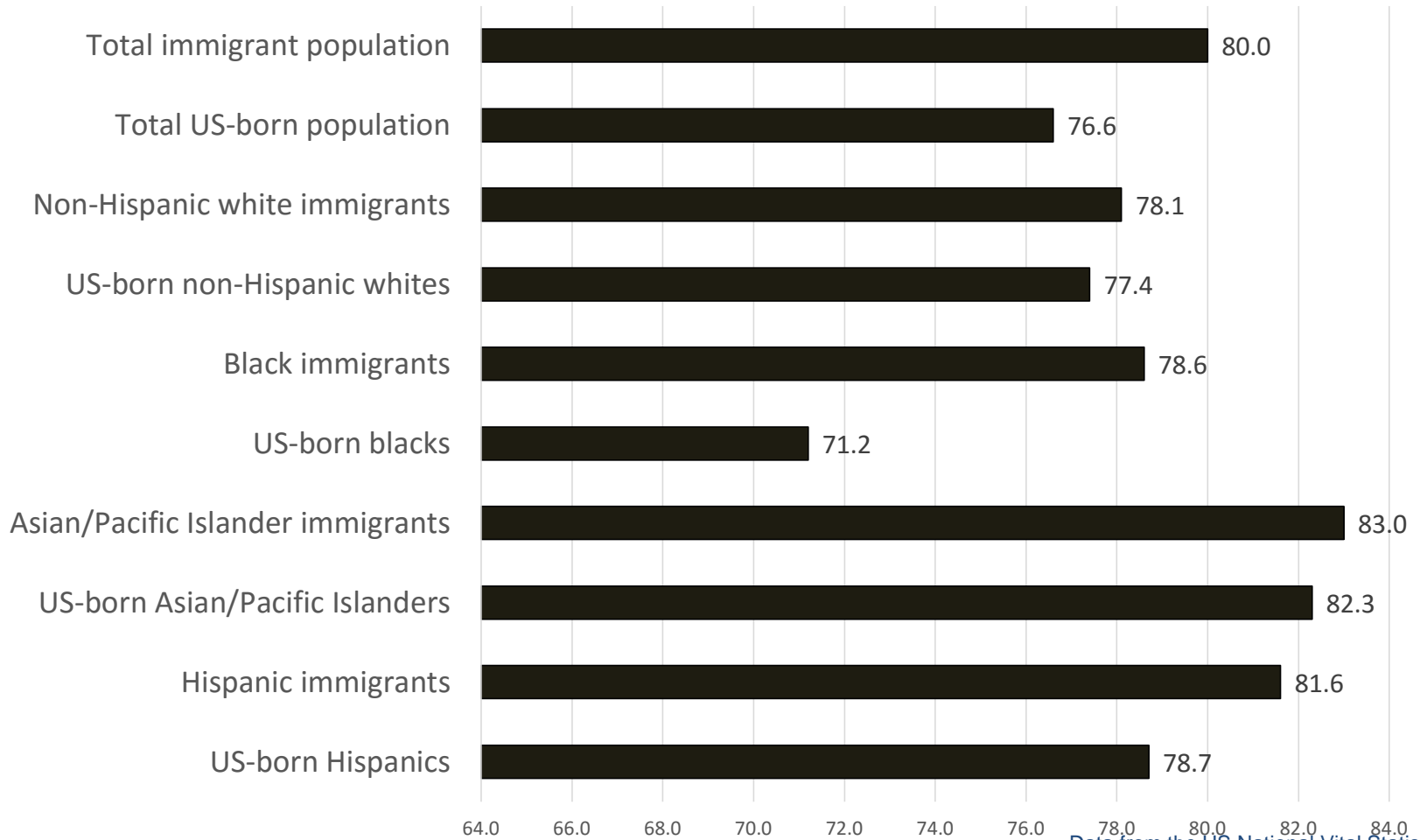
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# Declines in Well-Being

- **Health, Crime, and Two-Parent Households**
  - Immigrants have better health outcomes, but less access to health care & insurance
  - LESS likely to commit crime, incarcerated at  $\frac{1}{4}$  rate of native-born
  - Immigrants less likely to divorce, immigrant children more likely to live with both parents
  - Over time & generations these advantages decline: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations converge with native-born

# Life Expectancy at Birth (Average Lifetime in Years) by Race/Ethnicity and Immigrant Status

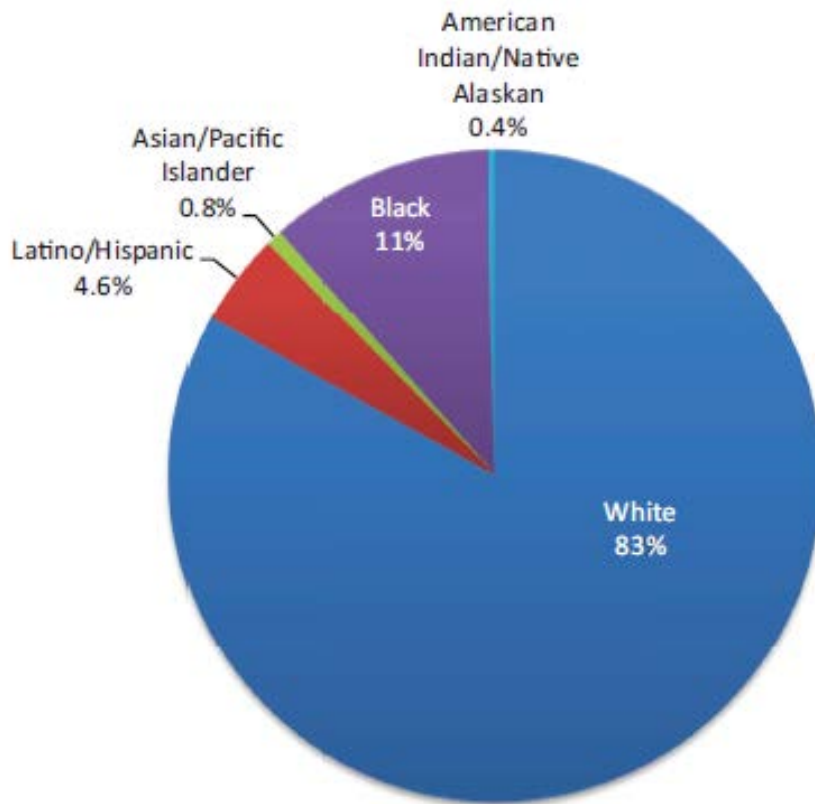


Data from the US National Vital Statistics System, 1989-2001. (Singh et al., 2013)

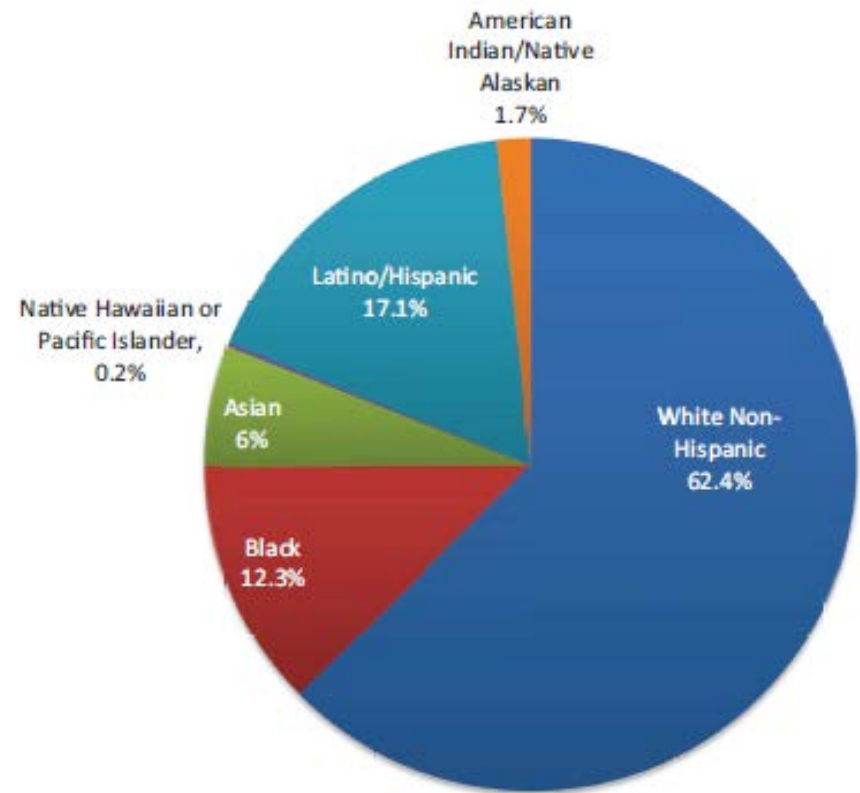


# Changing Ethno-racial diversity

## US population, 1970



## US population, 2013



**Source:** US Census Bureau, 1970 Census & 2013 American Community Survey

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# Key Findings:

## Impact of **racial and ethnic disparities**

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- Immigrant integration shaped by race & ethnicity
- Black immigrants & their children integrating more slowly with non-Hispanic whites despite higher human capital
- Some evidence of discrimination impeding Latino integration
- Racial discrimination or undocumented status?

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# Ethnic & Racial Disparities

- Poverty rates higher for foreign-born
- Poverty generally declines over generations, 18% → 13.6 → 11.5
- Racial & ethnic disparities:
  - First-gen Hispanics highest rates but progress between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> gen.
  - Rise in black poverty among 2<sup>nd</sup> gen.
  - Asian poverty is lower than the overall U.S. rate

# Key Findings:

## Impact of **legal status**

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- Key factor in integration trajectory
- Undocumented status, but also rise in multiple temporary or transitional statuses
- Disproportionately effects some groups
- Undocumented status slows but does not fully impede integration
- BUT multi-generational effects and impact on US-born through mixed-status families

# Citizenship and Naturalization: Maximum Security and Rights

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- Birthright citizenship is a powerful mechanism of formal integration
- Lack of citizenship → **7.1%** of total US pop.
  - Is a major barrier to political integration
  - Exposes one the possibility of deportation
  - Limits access to some jobs, benefits, resources, and makes sponsoring family harder
- Yet most immigrants want to naturalize

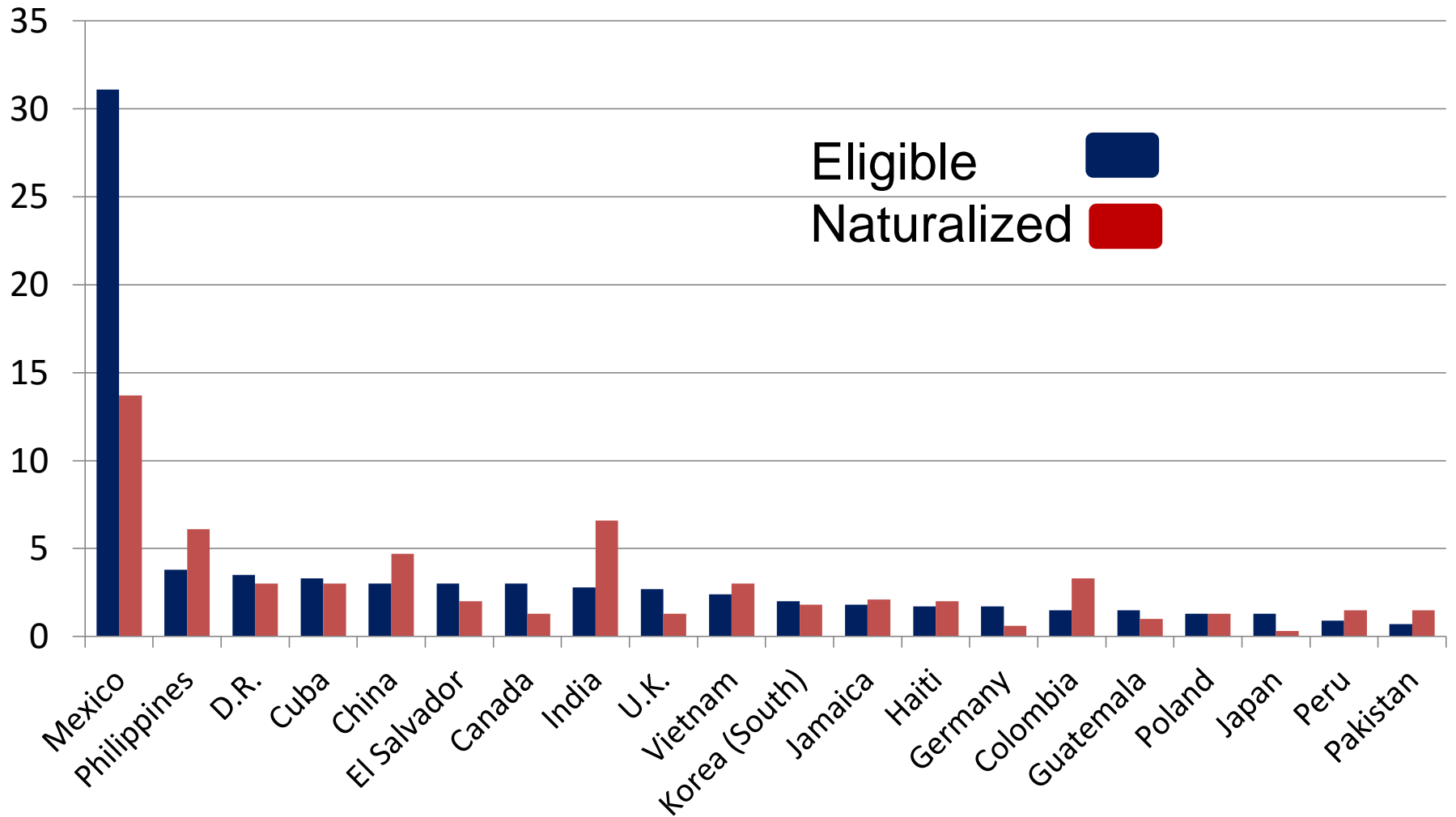
# Key Findings:

## Integration challenges - **naturalization**

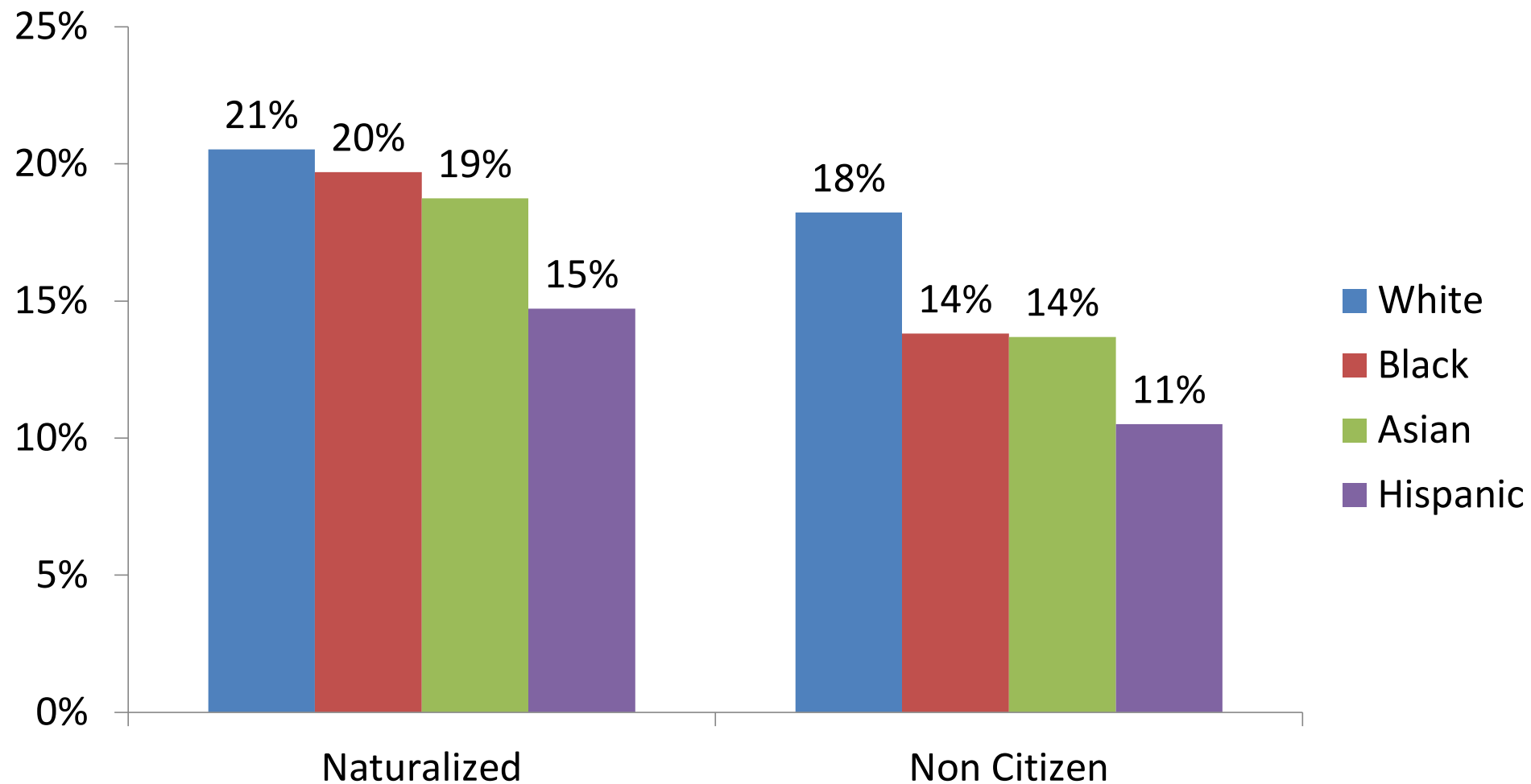
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- Citizenship among working age immigrants:  
**US 50%** vs. **61% OECD** average
- Adjusting for undocumented population, US still well below Canada, Australia, Sweden
- Citizenship take-up varies by education, national origin, and legal entry status

# National-origin proportions among those eligible and naturalized, 2011



# Citizenship Matters for Volunteerism



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# The Integration of Immigrants into American Society

To get a copy of the report:

[www.nationalacademies.org/ImmigrantIntegration](http://www.nationalacademies.org/ImmigrantIntegration)