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The Integration of Immigrants into American Society

Committee on Population

Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education

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Panel Charge

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

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Integration

- Immigrant groups and host societies come to resemble each other.
 - Two-way exchange
- Measured across time and intergenerationally
- Across various dimensions:
 - Socioeconomic outcomes & participation in social institutions
 - Social acceptance
- Effects on well-being

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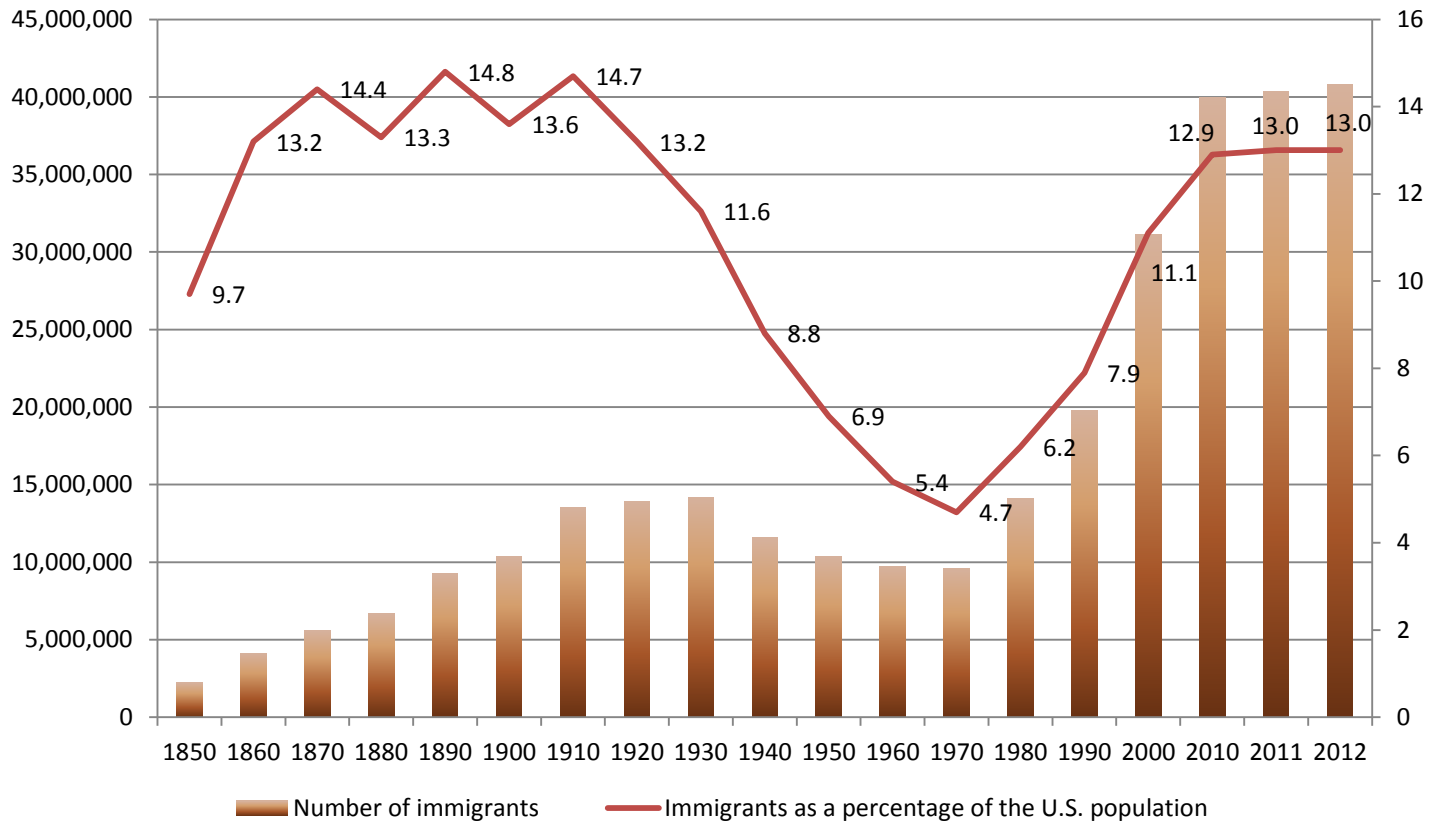
Quick Summary

- Immigrants and their children (the second generation) represent one of every four U.S. residents.
- Immigrants and their descendants are integrating into American society. Integration as a process unfolds with increased time in the U.S. for immigrants, as well as across the generations of their descendants.
- On the whole, integration increases the well-being of immigrants and their descendants, e.g., in schooling, labor-market position, and residential situation.
- However, this is not true in every domain. Exceptions include health, crime and family form.

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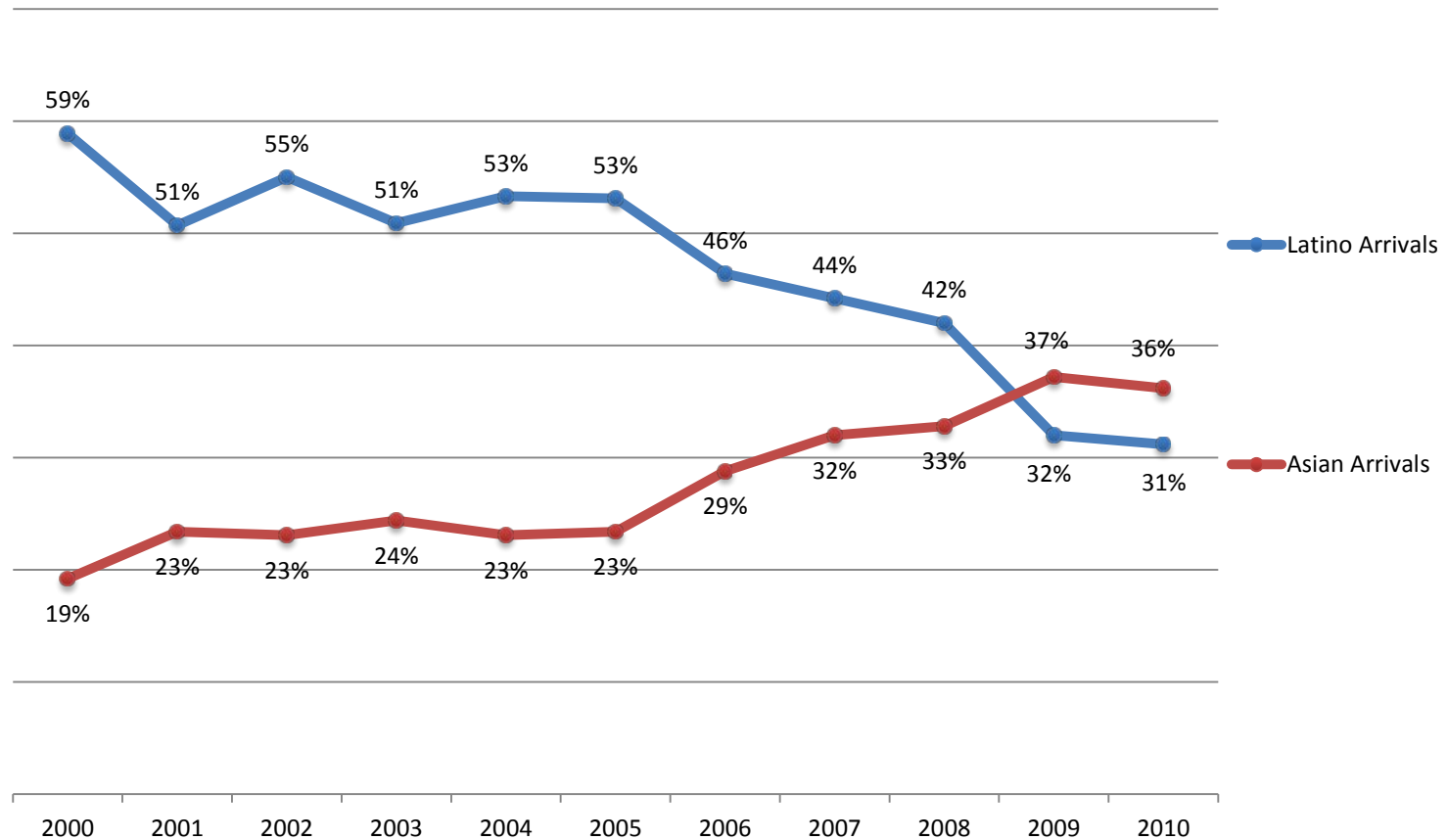
Demographic Change in Context



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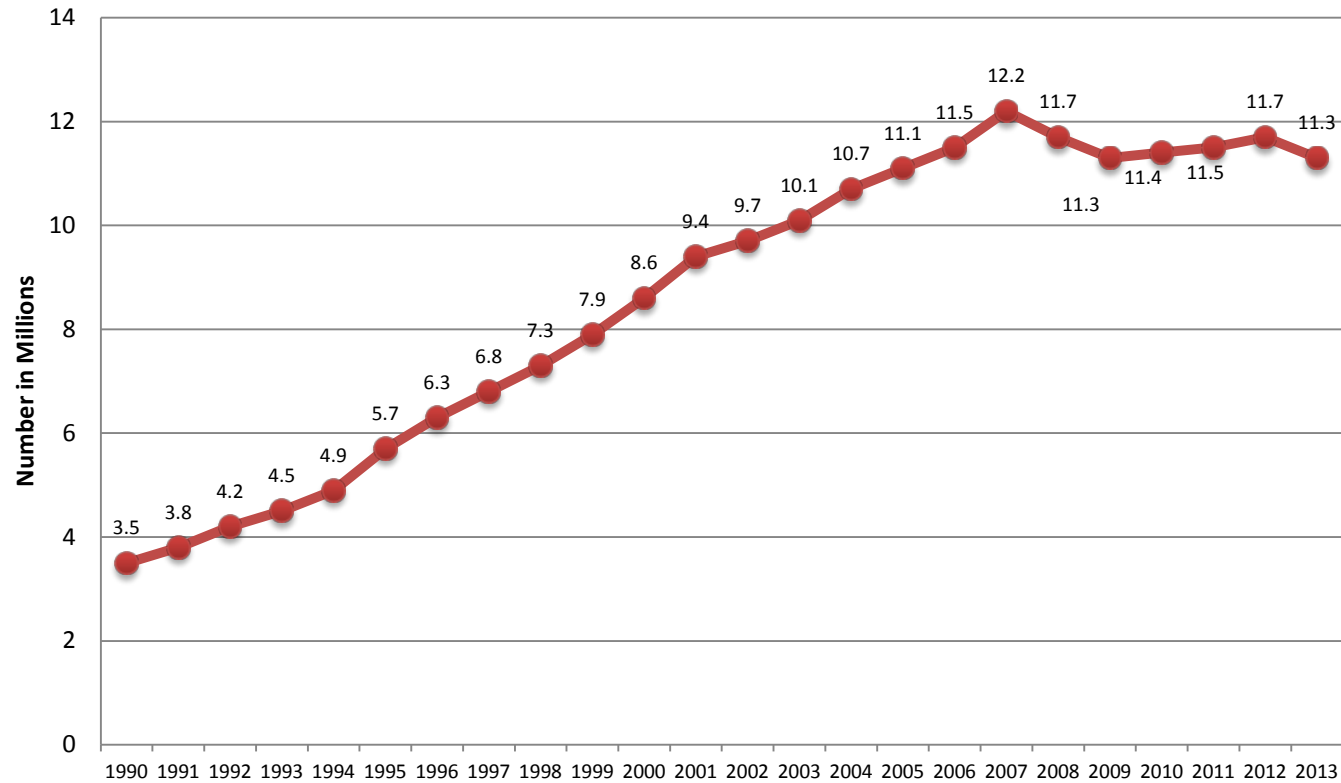
Recent Shift in Immigrant Flows



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Undocumented Migration Plateau



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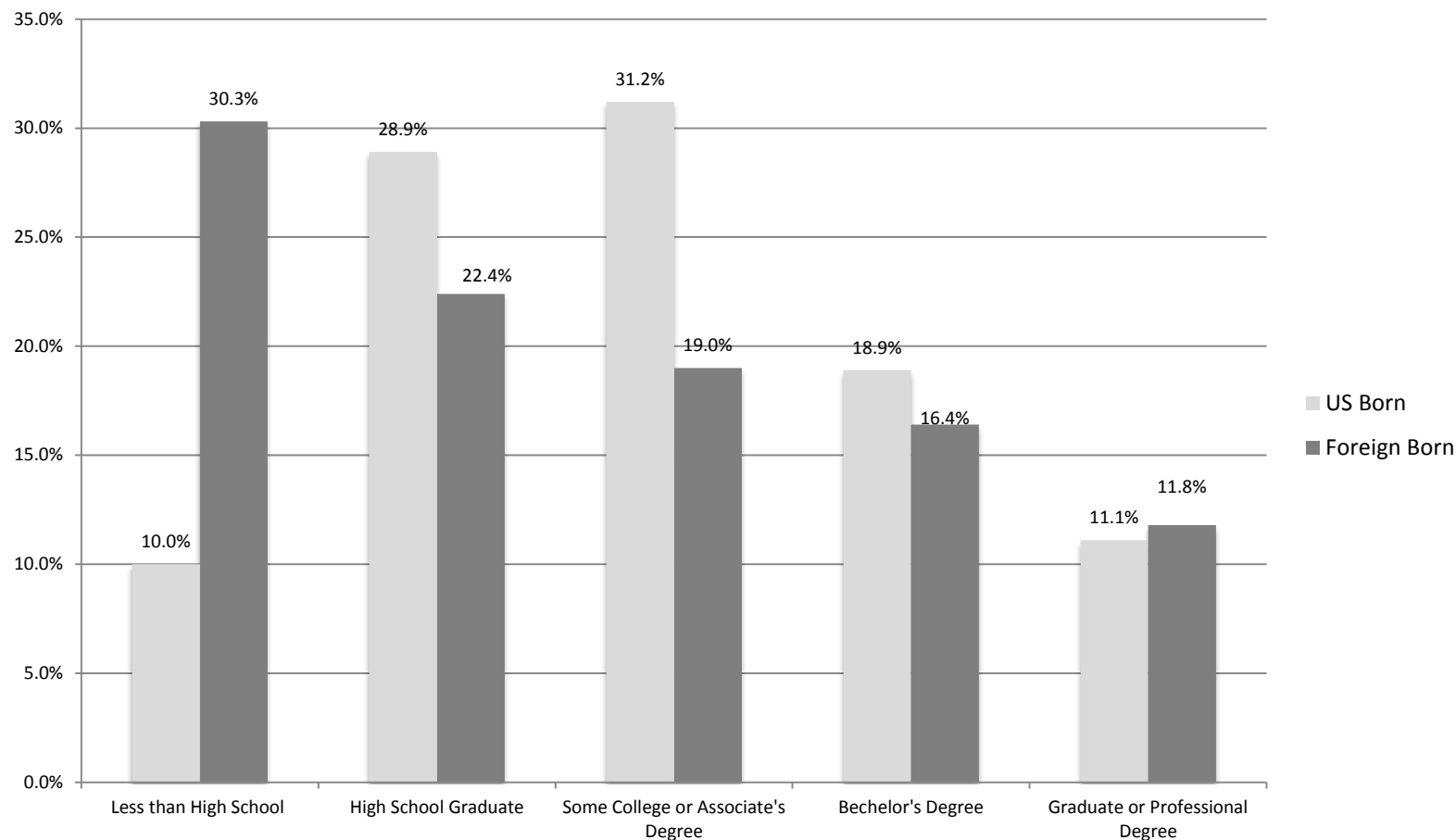
Integration across Dimensions

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

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Educational Attainment (age 25+), 2013



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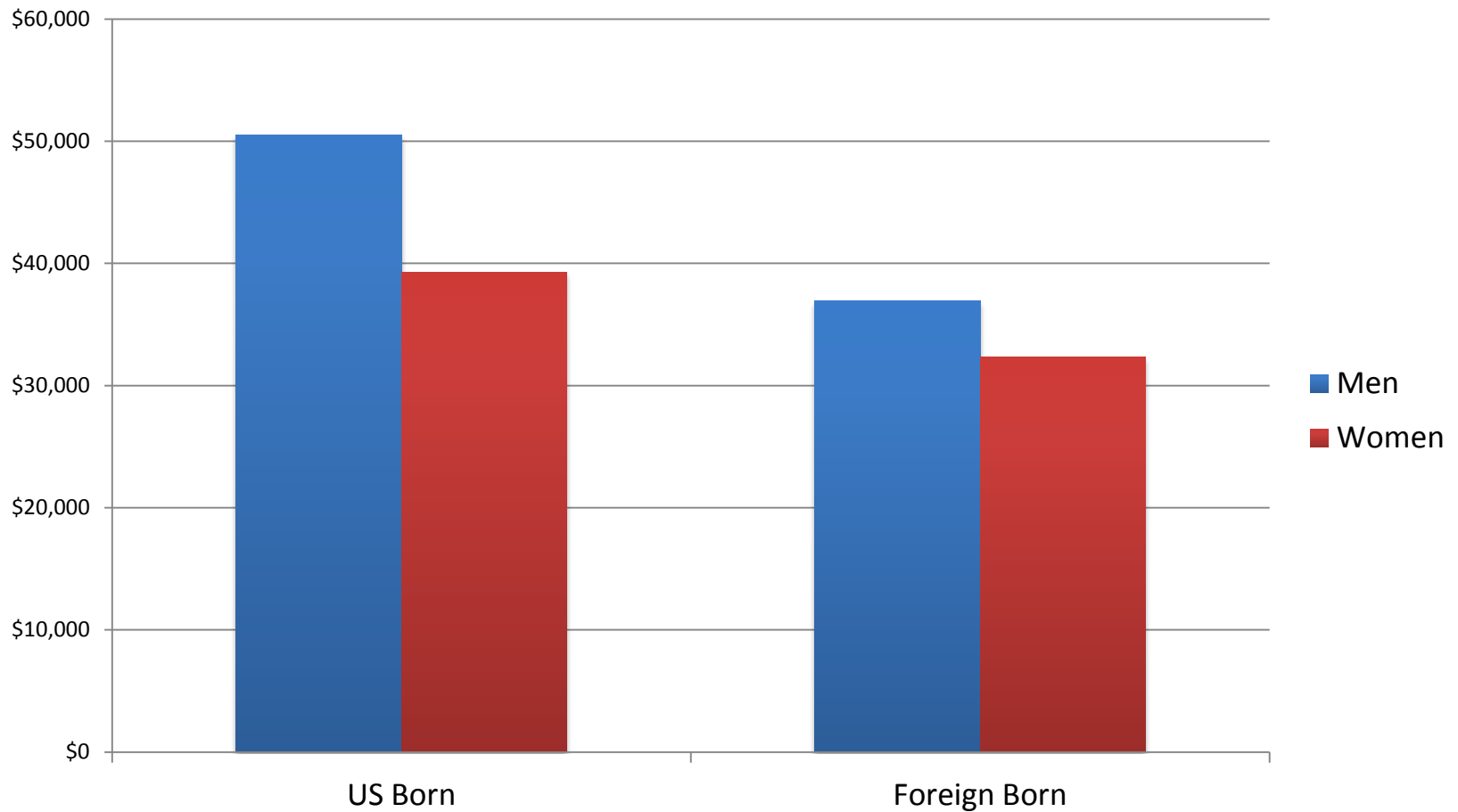
Employment

- Immigrant men have higher employment rates than native born; immigrant women lower
- Least educated immigrants much more likely to be employed than comparable native born men
- Second + generation employment rates vary by race/ethnicity and gender

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Earnings by Nativity and Gender, 2013



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Occupation

- Similar positive trajectories as employment and earnings
- Second-gen women narrowing gap faster than men
- U.S. workforce welcoming immigrants and second-gen across occupational spectrum

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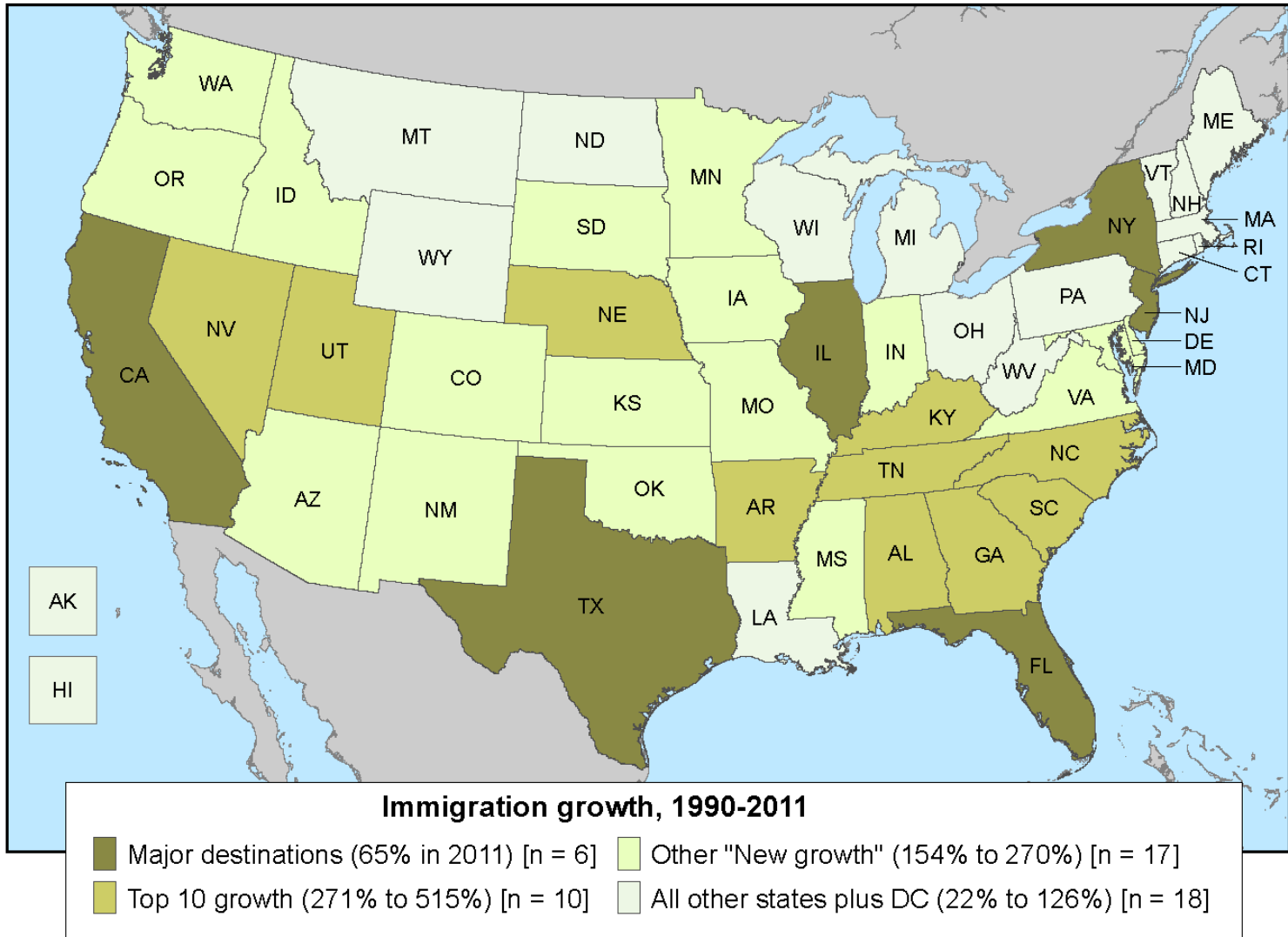
Poverty

- 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 first & second-gens
 - Rise in black second-gen
 - Asian stalling between second and third-gens

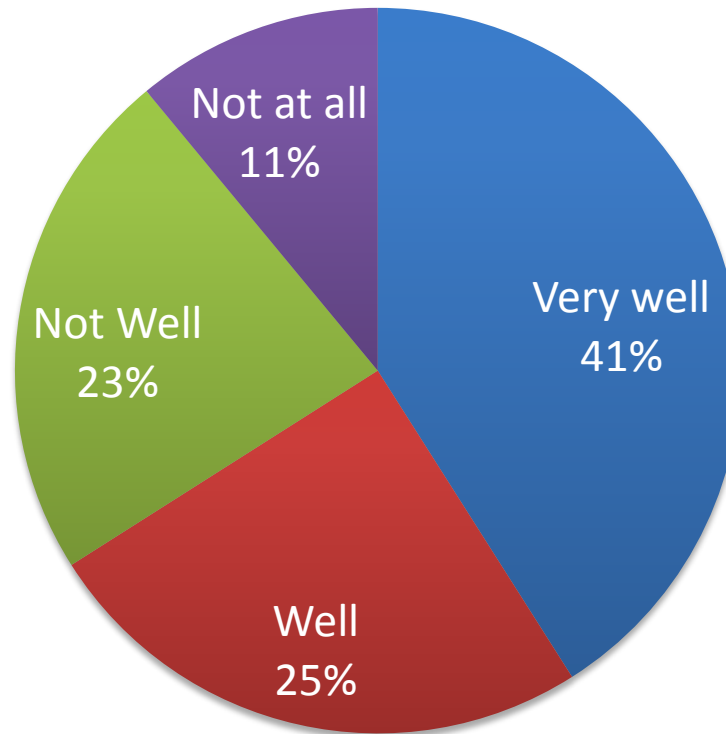
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Geographic Dispersal and Spatial Integration



Language



English Speaking Ability of the Foreign-born Who Speak Language
Other Than English at Home, 2012

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Declines in Well-Being

- **Health, Crime, and Children in Two-Parent Households**
 - Immigrants have better health outcomes, but less access to health care & insurance
 - LESS likely to commit crime, incarcerated at ¼ rate of native-born
 - Immigrants less likely to divorce, immigrant children more likely to live with both parents
 - Over time & generations these advantages decline as second and third+ gens converge with native-born

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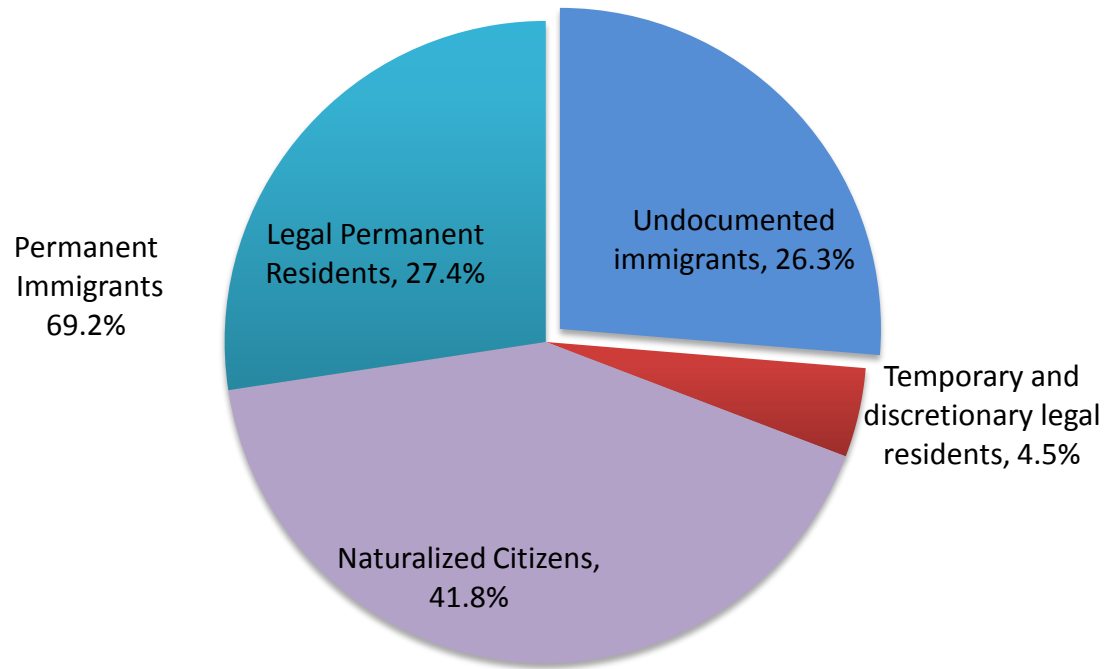
Areas of Concern

- Legal Status
- Racial and ethnic disparities
- Naturalization Rates

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Legal Status



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Legal Status

- Key factor in integration trajectory
- Many statuses are transitional and temporary
- Disproportionately impacts certain immigrant groups
- Undocumented status slows but does not fully impede integration
- Variation from state-to-state
- Multi-generational effects. 4.5 million citizen children have an undocumented immigrant parent

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Racial & Ethnic Disparities

- 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

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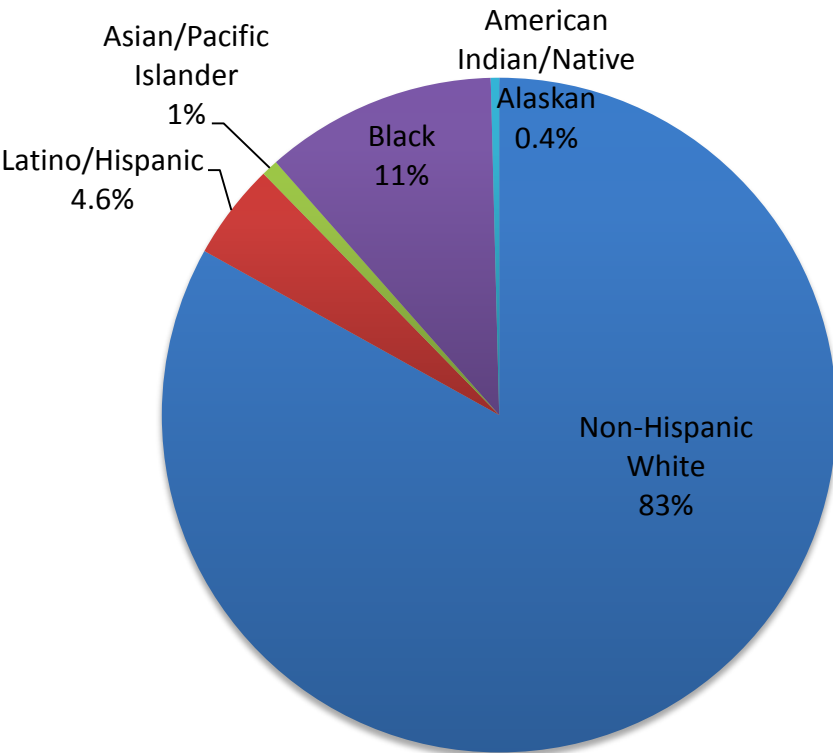
Naturalization & Citizenship

- Citizenship rate in US 50% vs. 61% OECD average;
- Adjusting for undocumented population, still well below Canada, Australia, Sweden
- Most immigrants want to naturalize
- Birthright citizenship is a powerful mechanism of integration
- Major barrier to political integration

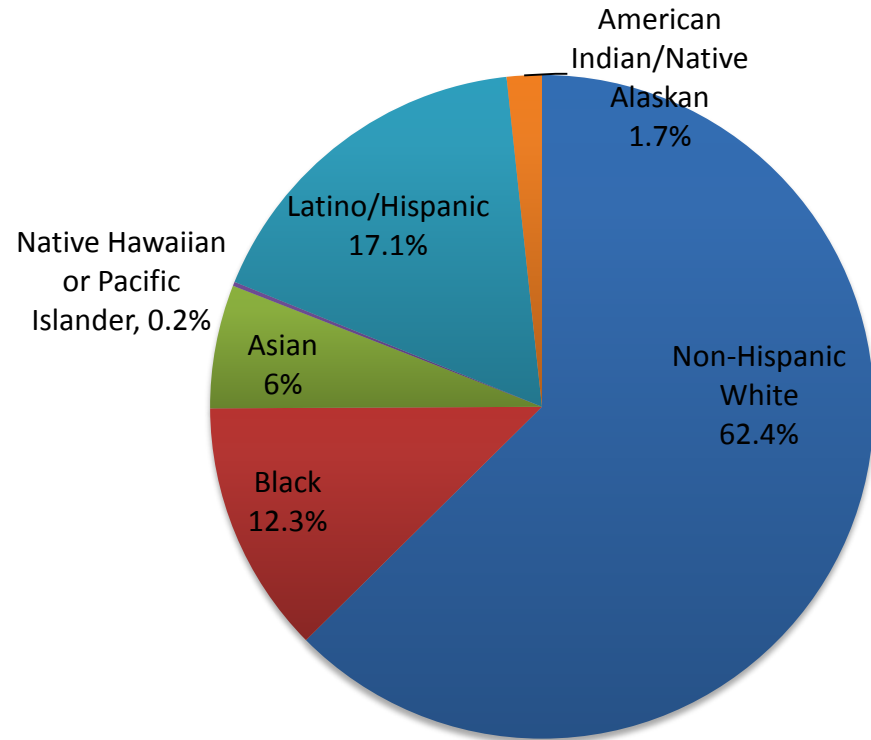
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Effects of Immigration on Society: Demographic Change



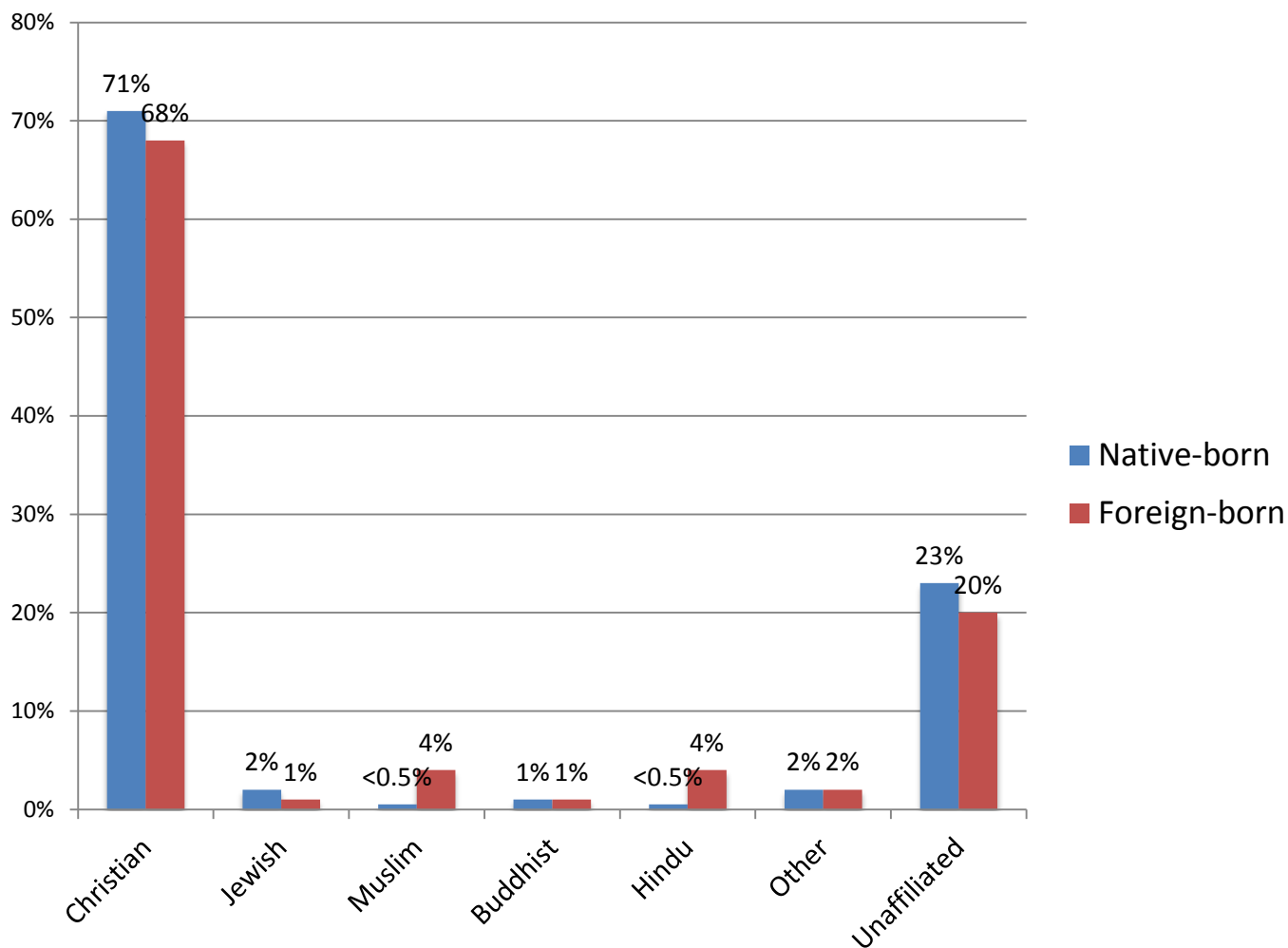
1970



2013

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Religion



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Intermarriage

- Native-born and immigrant marriages increasing
- 1 in 7 marriages today interracial/interethnic
- More mixed race children
- Changing racial & social boundaries

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Data Recommendations

- Add birthplace of parents question to American Community Survey
- Test & add question about legal status on Current Population Survey
- Immigration legislation include longitudinal survey provision
- Administrative data at USCIS be linked to other gov't data

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Thank you to our sponsors:

- Carnegie Corporation of New York
- National Science Foundation
- Russell Sage Foundation
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

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