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INSTITUTE FOR URBAN RESEARCH

Prophetic City: Houston on the Cusp of a Changing America

Tracking Responses to the Economic and Demographic Transformations through 37 Years of Houston Surveys

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Marcus & Millichap / IPA Multifamily
Forum - Houston, 8 May 2018.

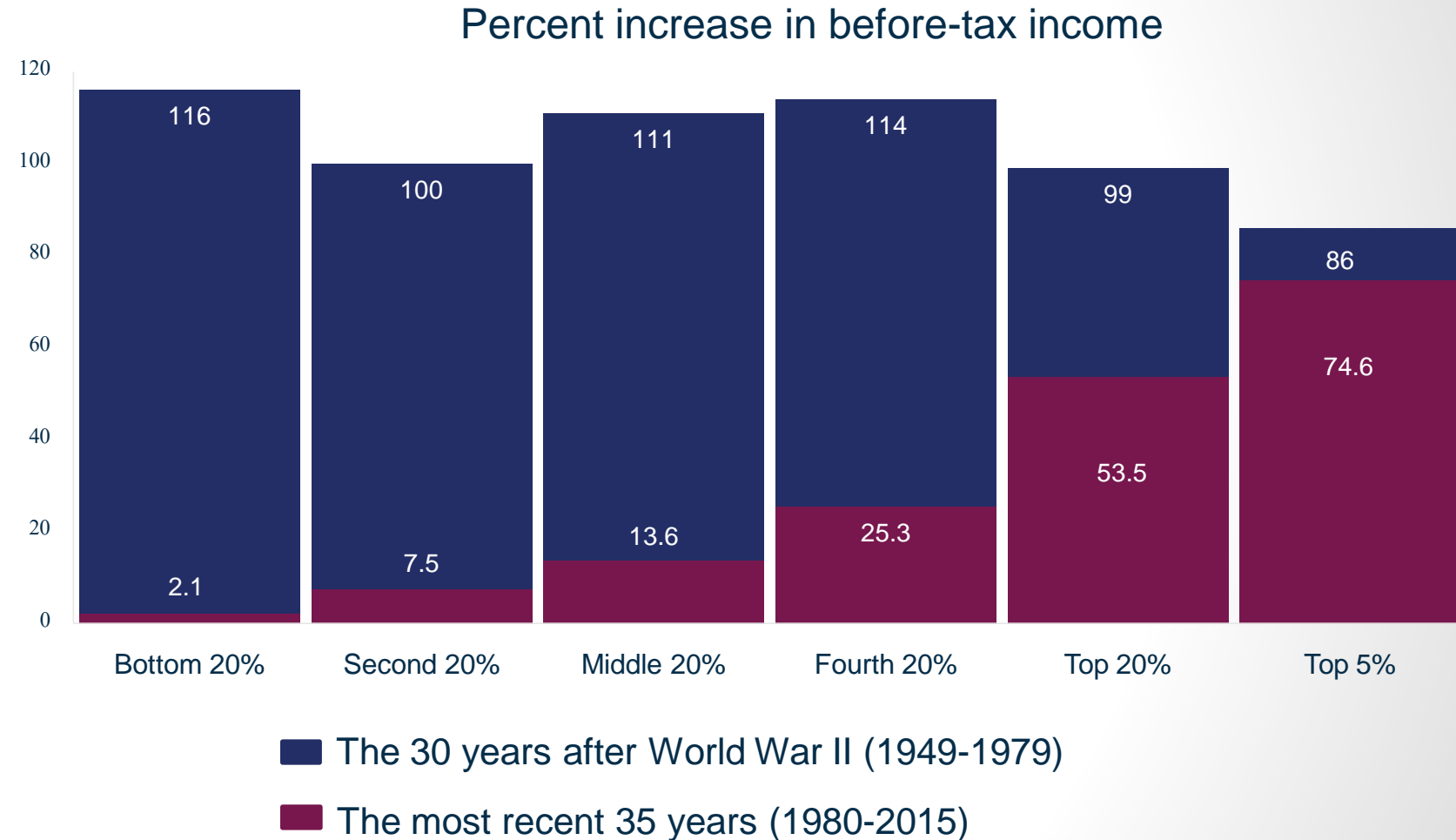
The Kinder Houston Area Survey (1982-Present)

The 37 years of systematic interviews with successive representative samples of Harris County residents have emphasized three fundamental new realities:

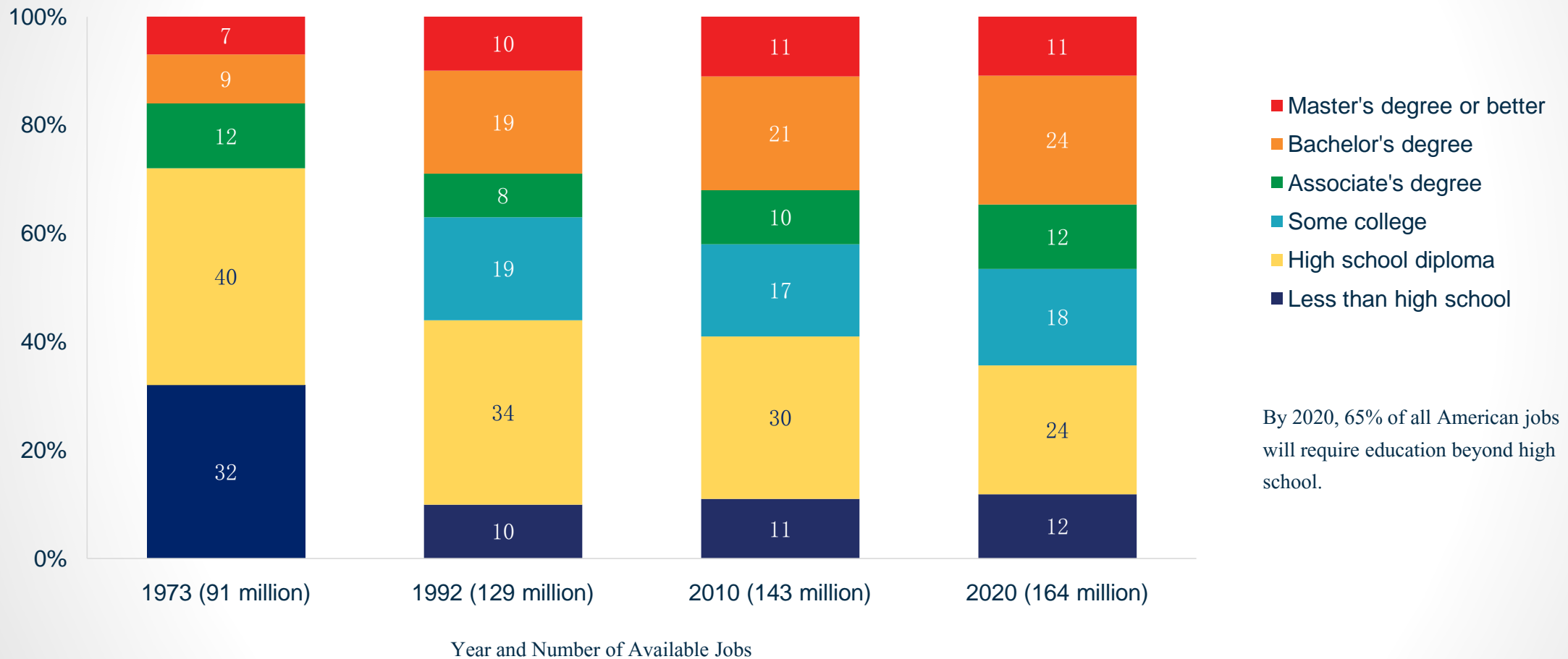
Two contrasting economic eras (1949 to 1979 and 1980 to Present)

The 30 years after World War II were a period of broad-based prosperity.

The most recent 35 years have been marked by increasing inequalities.

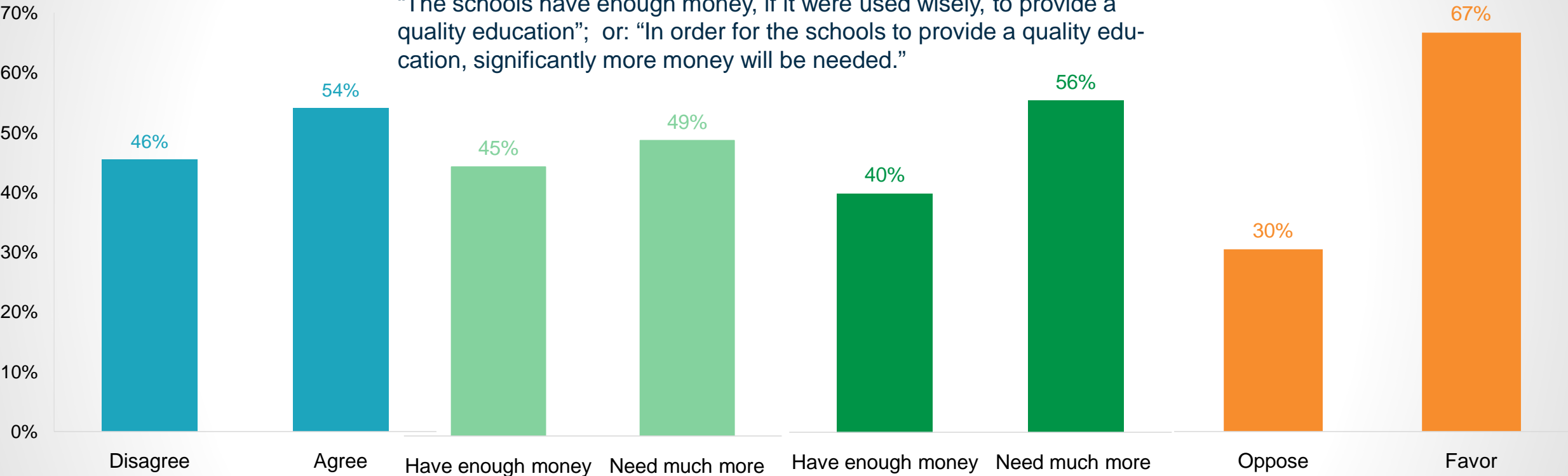


The educational prerequisites for jobs in America (1973-2020)



The requirements for a good job, the need for more school funding, the importance of preschool

Which comes closer to your opinion about the public schools in Houston:
“The schools have enough money, if it were used wisely, to provide a quality education”; or: “In order for the schools to provide a quality education, significantly more money will be needed.”



“To get a job that pays more than \$35,000 a year, you need at least one or two years of education beyond high school.”

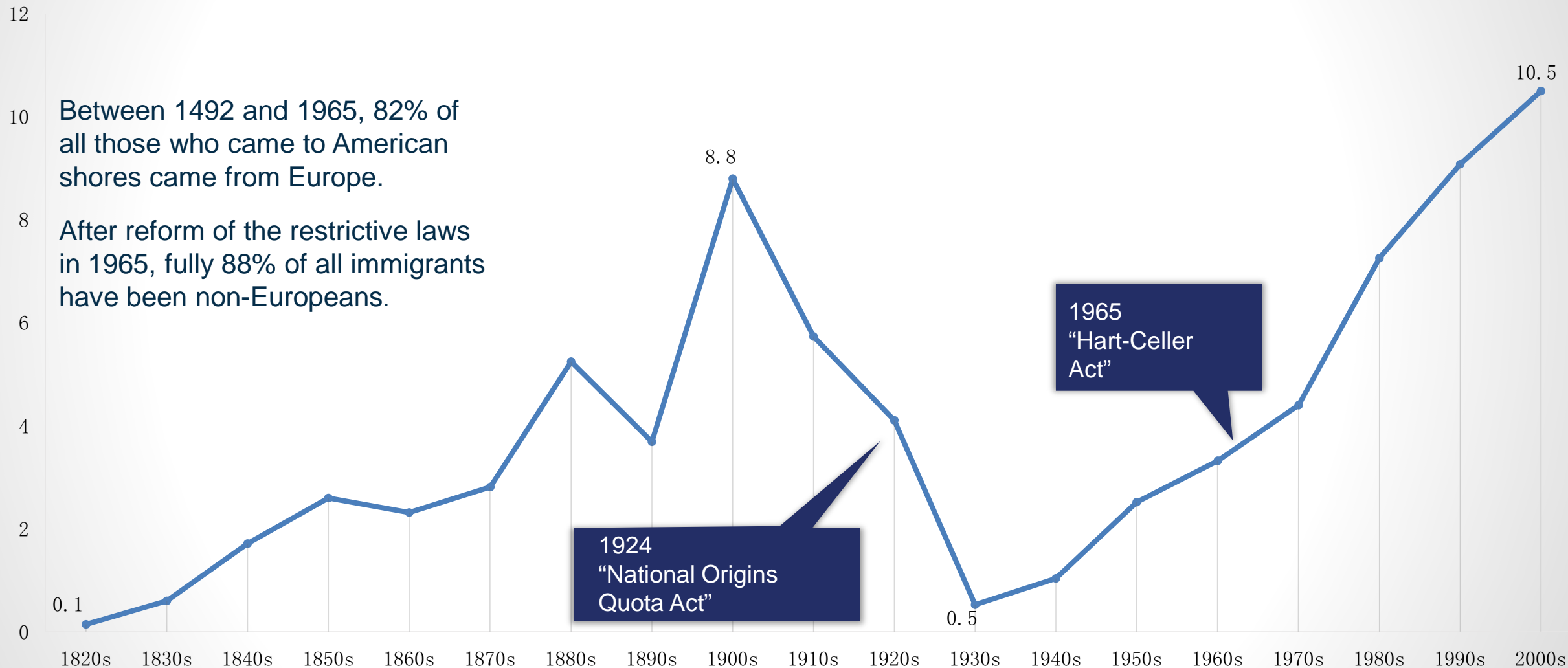
(February 2009)

(February 2018)

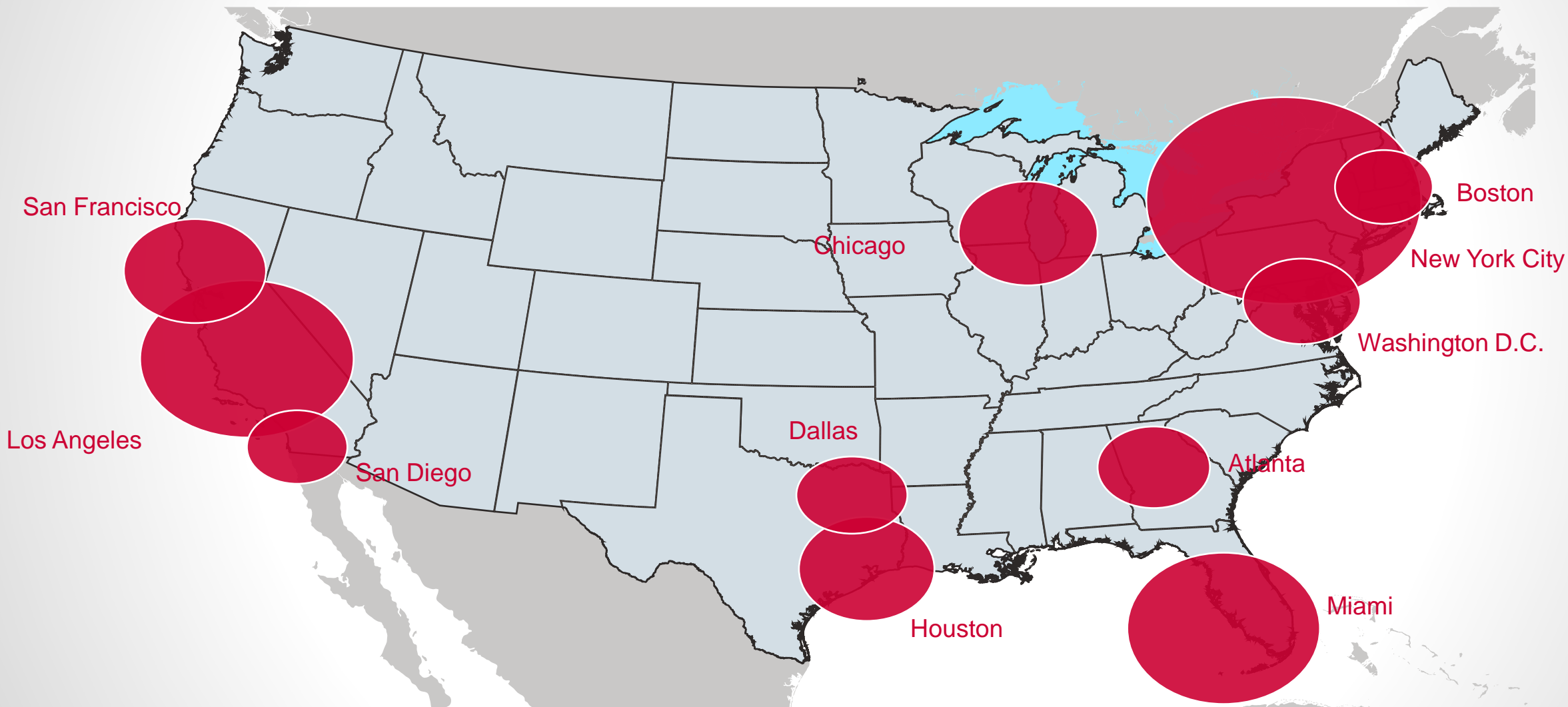
“What about increasing local taxes to provide universal preschool education for all children in Houston?”



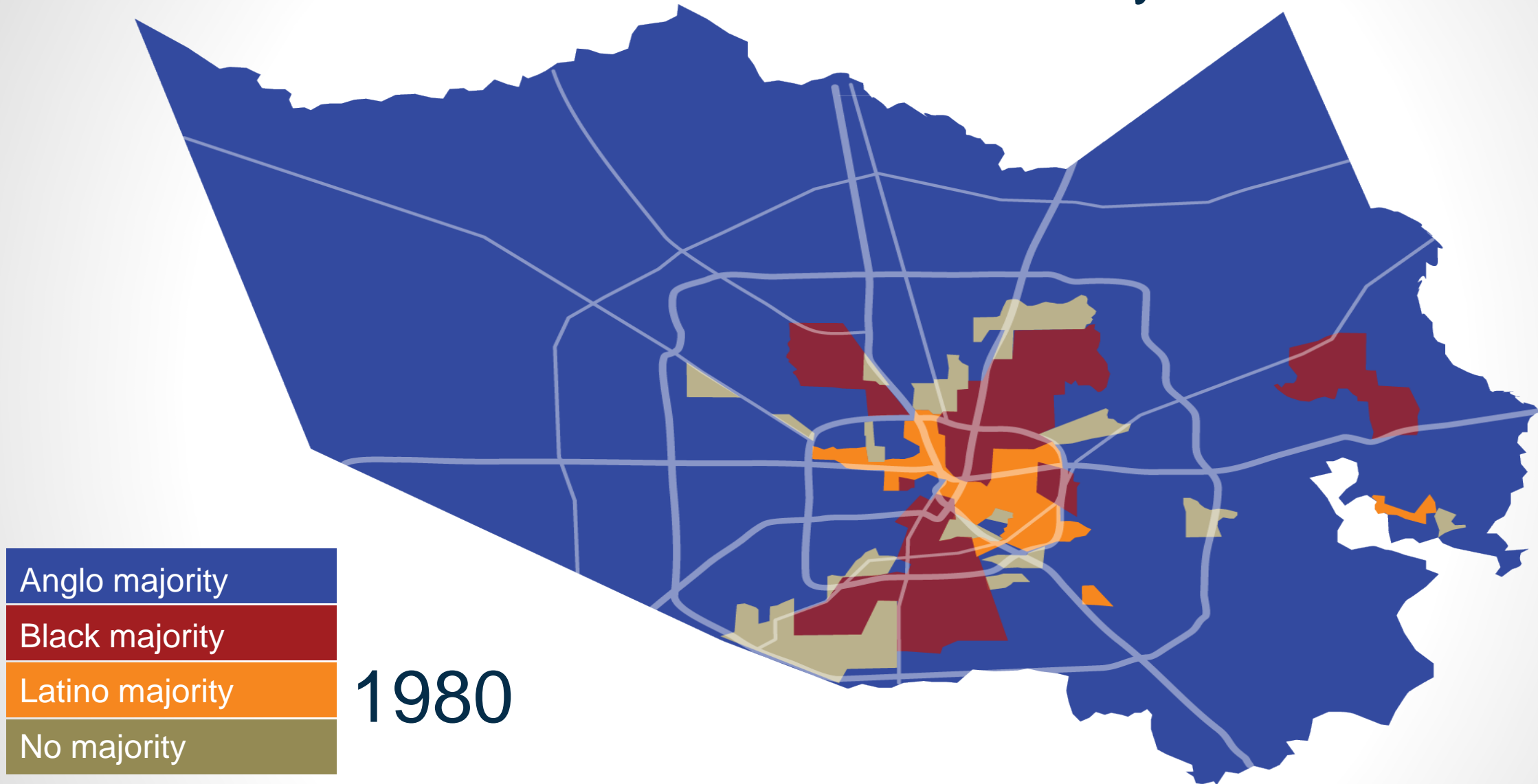
The number of documented U.S. immigrants, by decade (1820-2010)



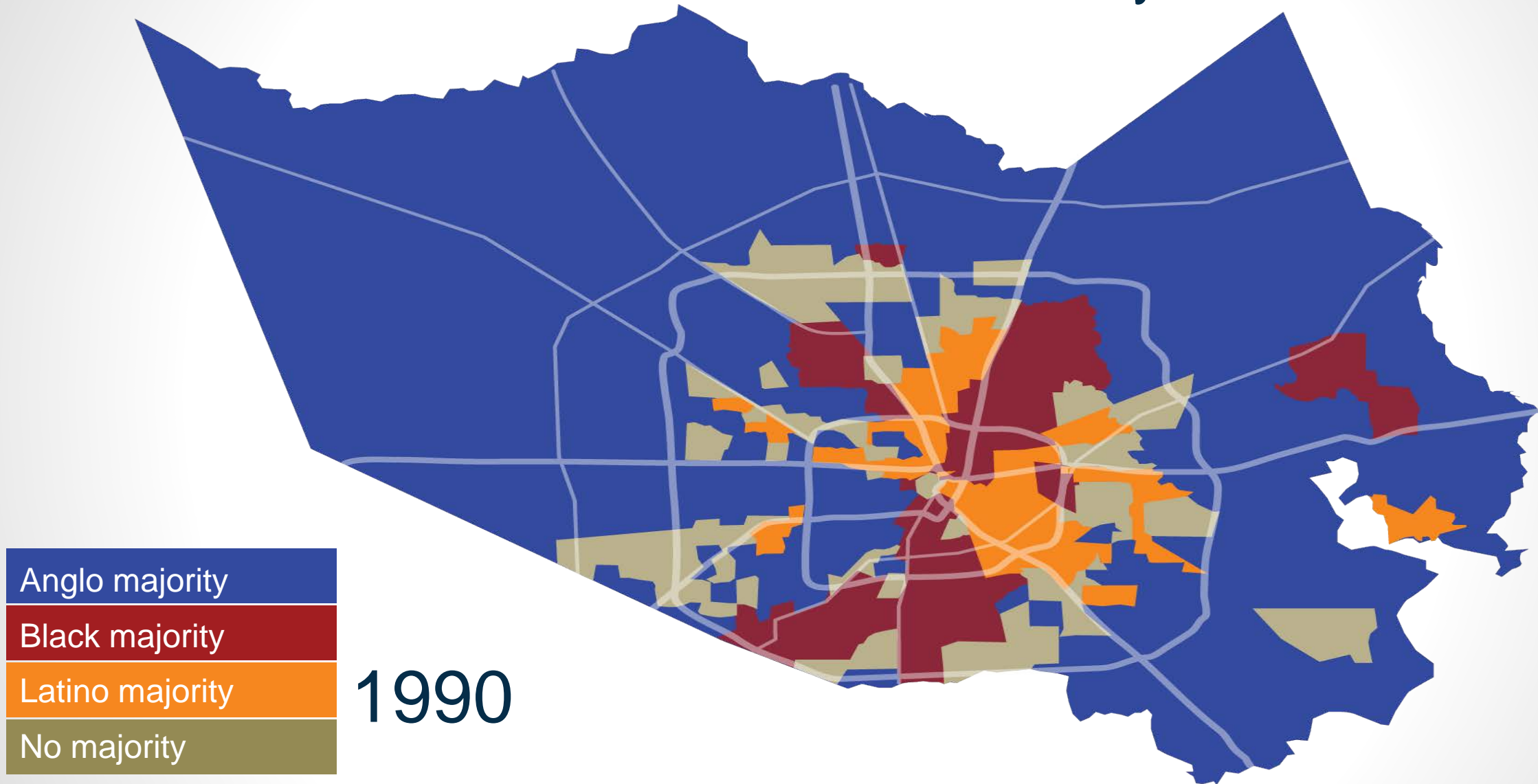
Cities with large numbers of foreign born residents (2010-2014)



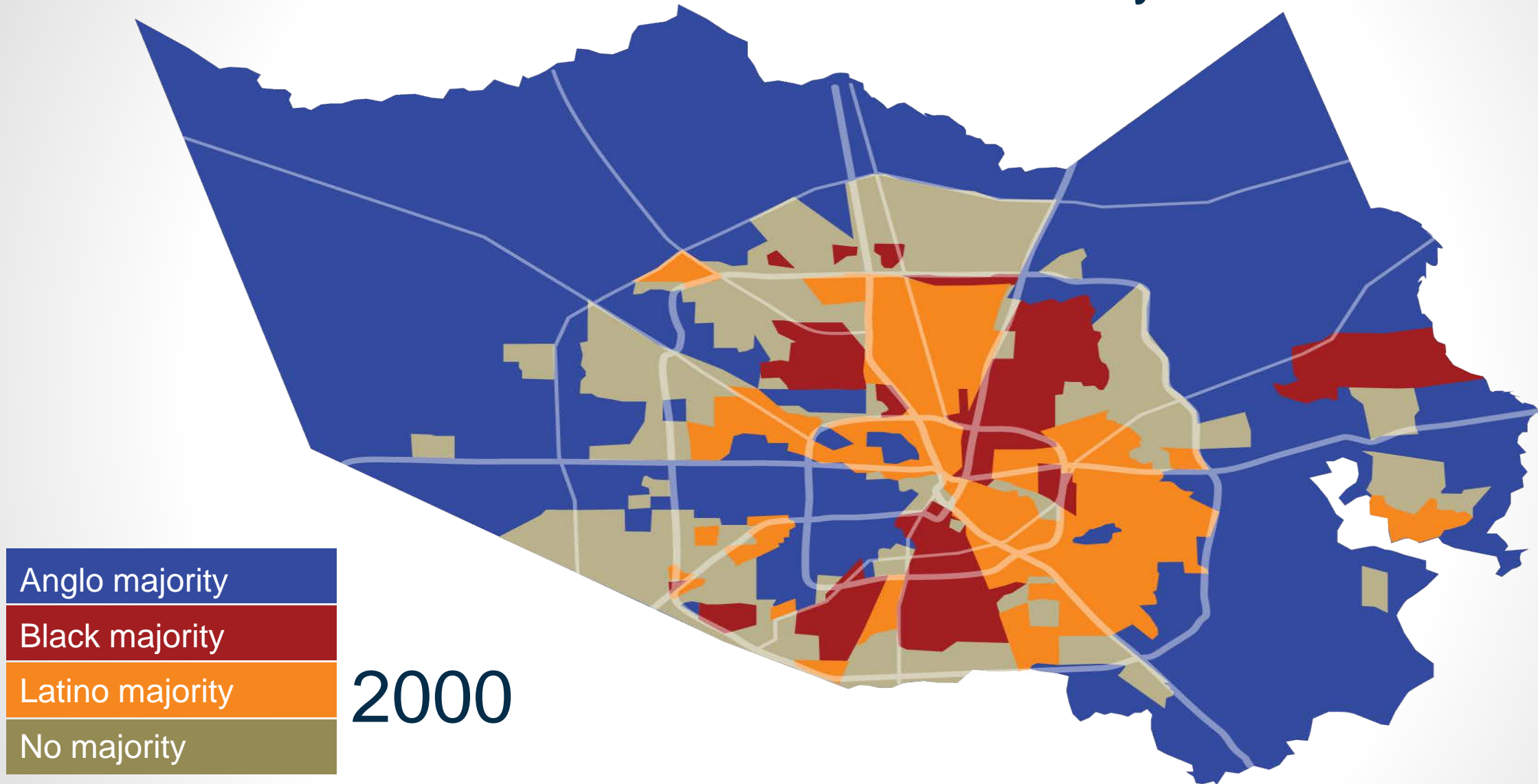
The ethnic distribution across Harris County



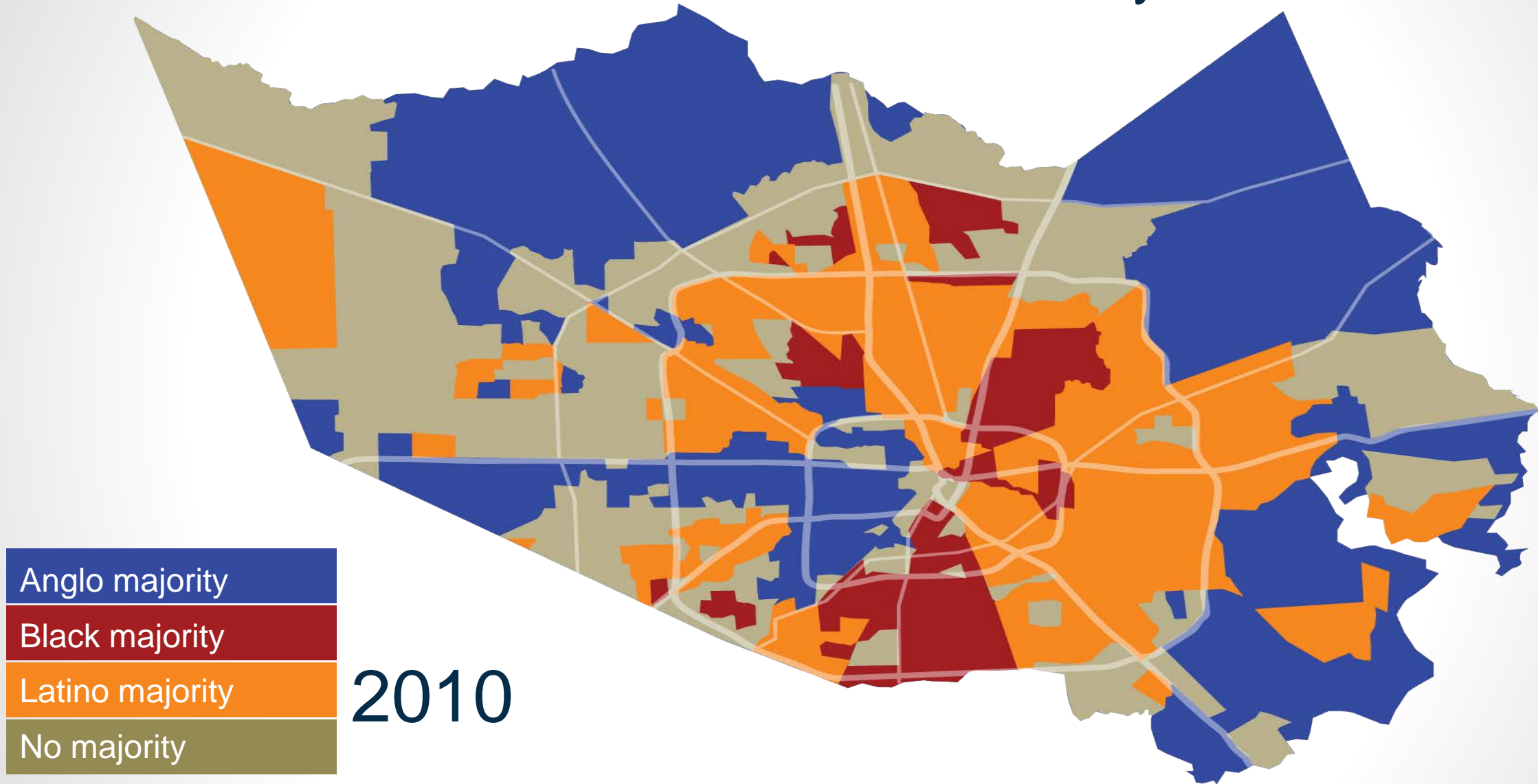
The ethnic distribution across Harris County



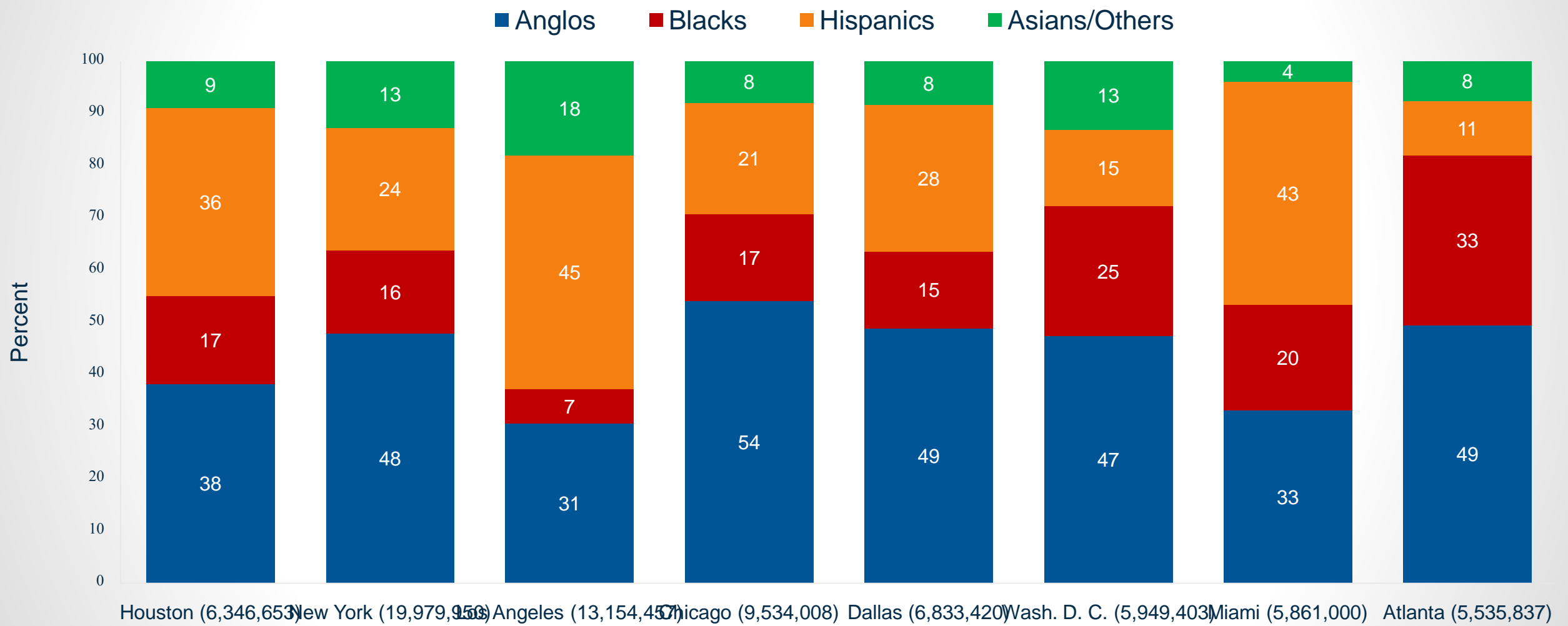
The ethnic distribution across Harris County



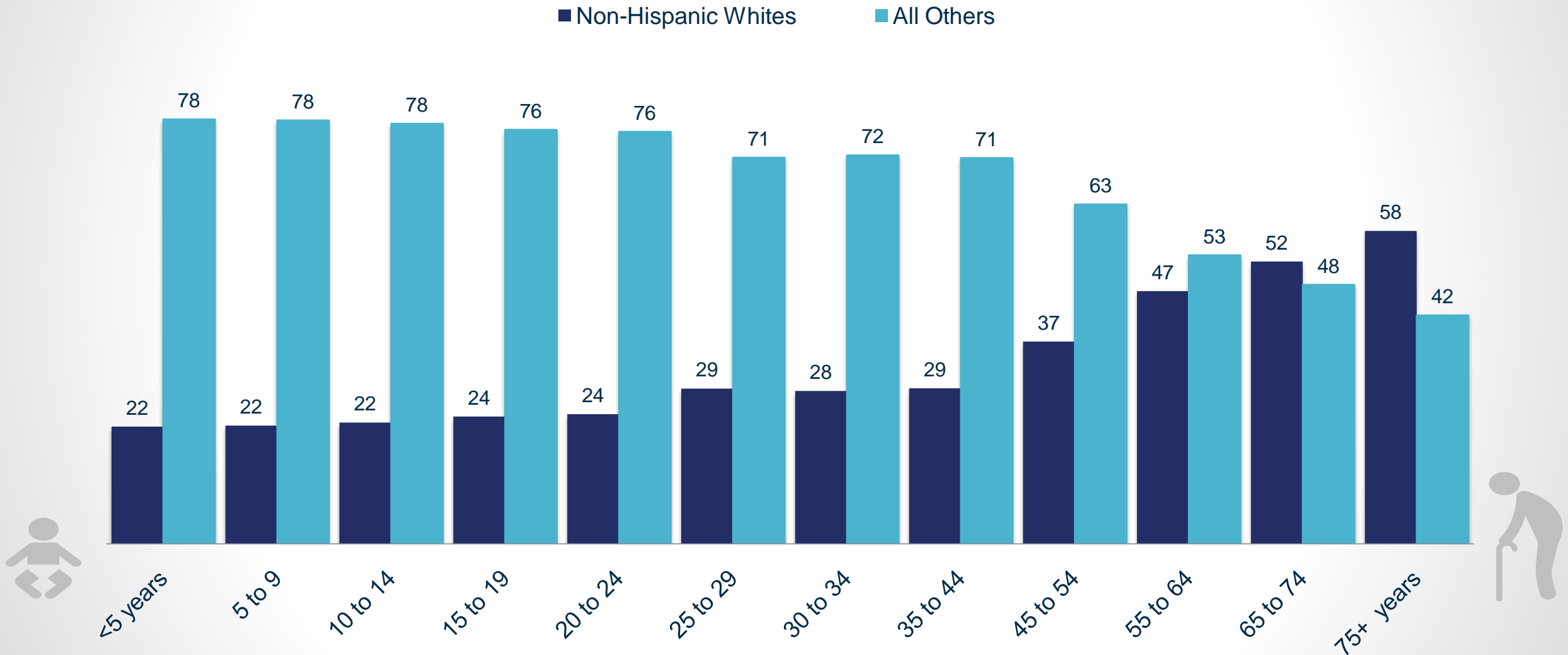
The ethnic distribution across Harris County



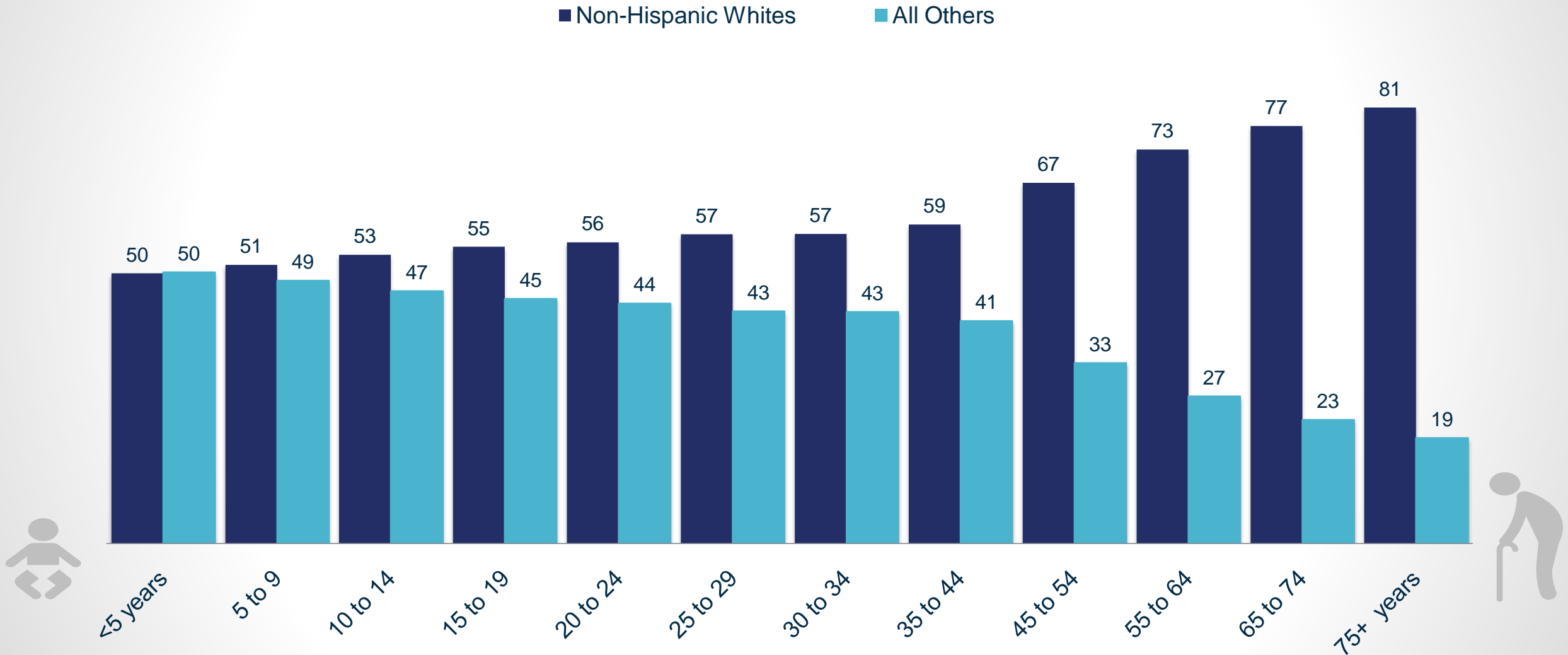
The demographics of the eight most diverse large metro areas in America (ACS, 2011-2015)



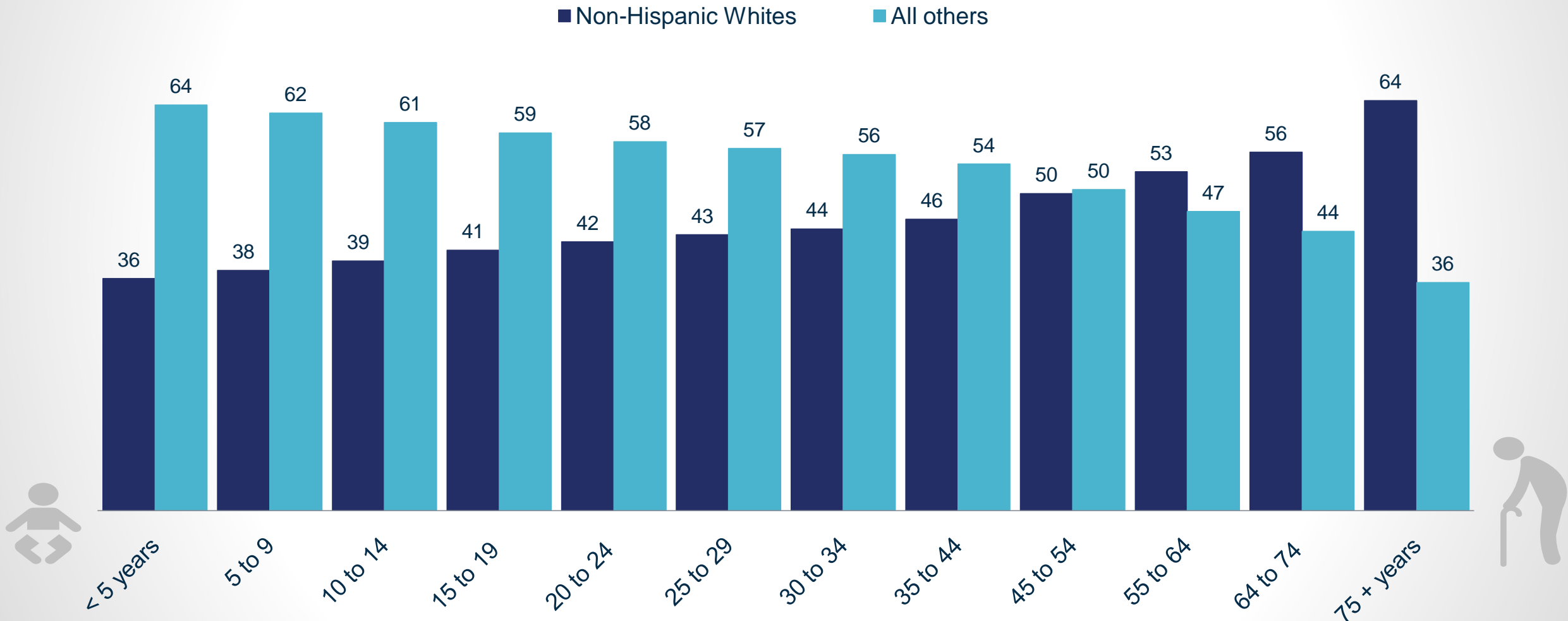
The current population of Harris County by age group and ethnicity (ACS, 2011-2015)



The current population of the United States by age group and ethnicity (ACS, 2011-2015)

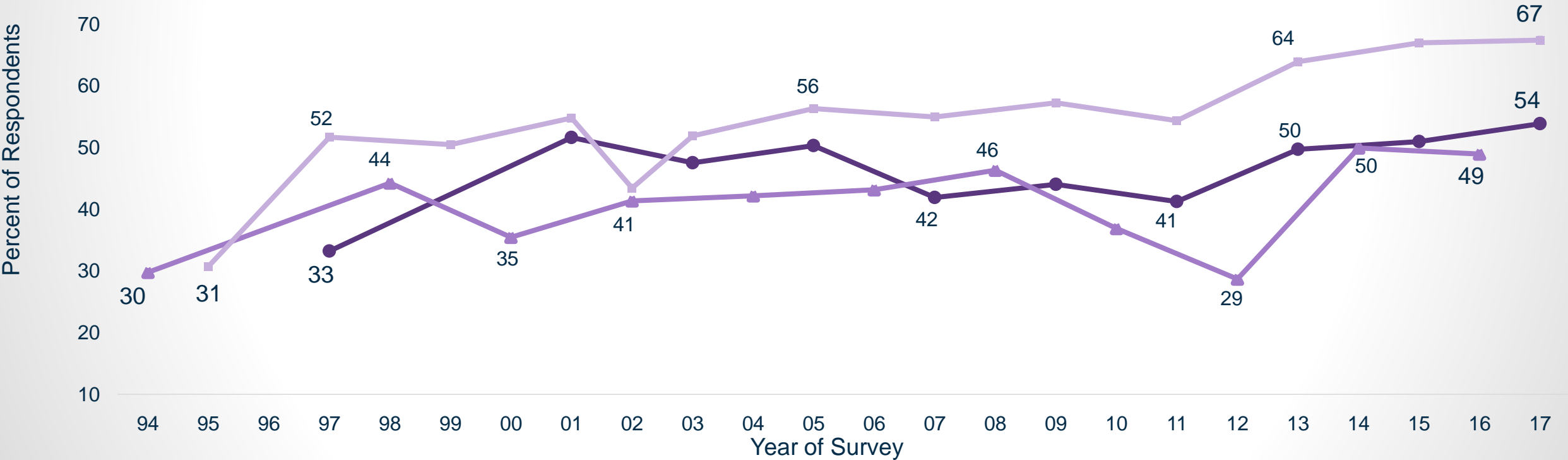


The projected population of U.S. by age group and ethnicity in 2050, assuming no change in immigration



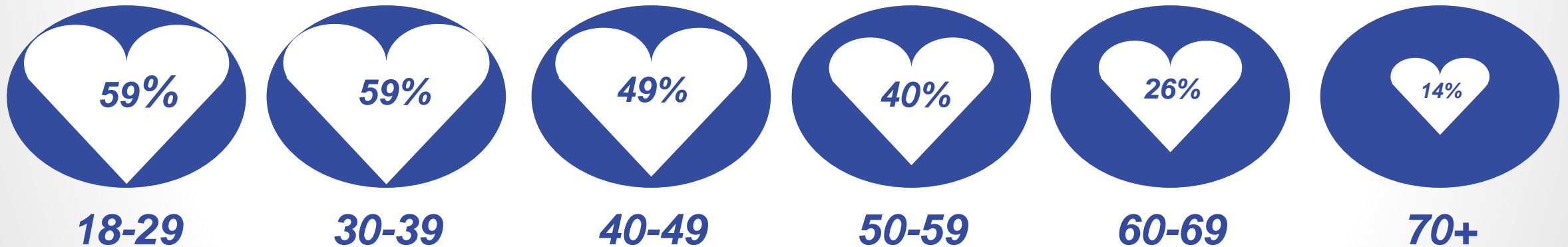
Attitudes toward immigration among Harris County U.S.-born Anglos from 1994 to 2017

- "The increasing immigration into this country today mostly strengthens American culture."
- ▲ "Immigrants to the U.S. generally contribute more to the American economy than they take."
- "The U.S. should admit more or the same number of legal immigrants in the next ten years."



Interethnic romantic relationships by age among Anglos (2007, 2011, 2014, 2016 combined)

“Have you ever been in a romantic relationship
with someone who was not Anglo?”





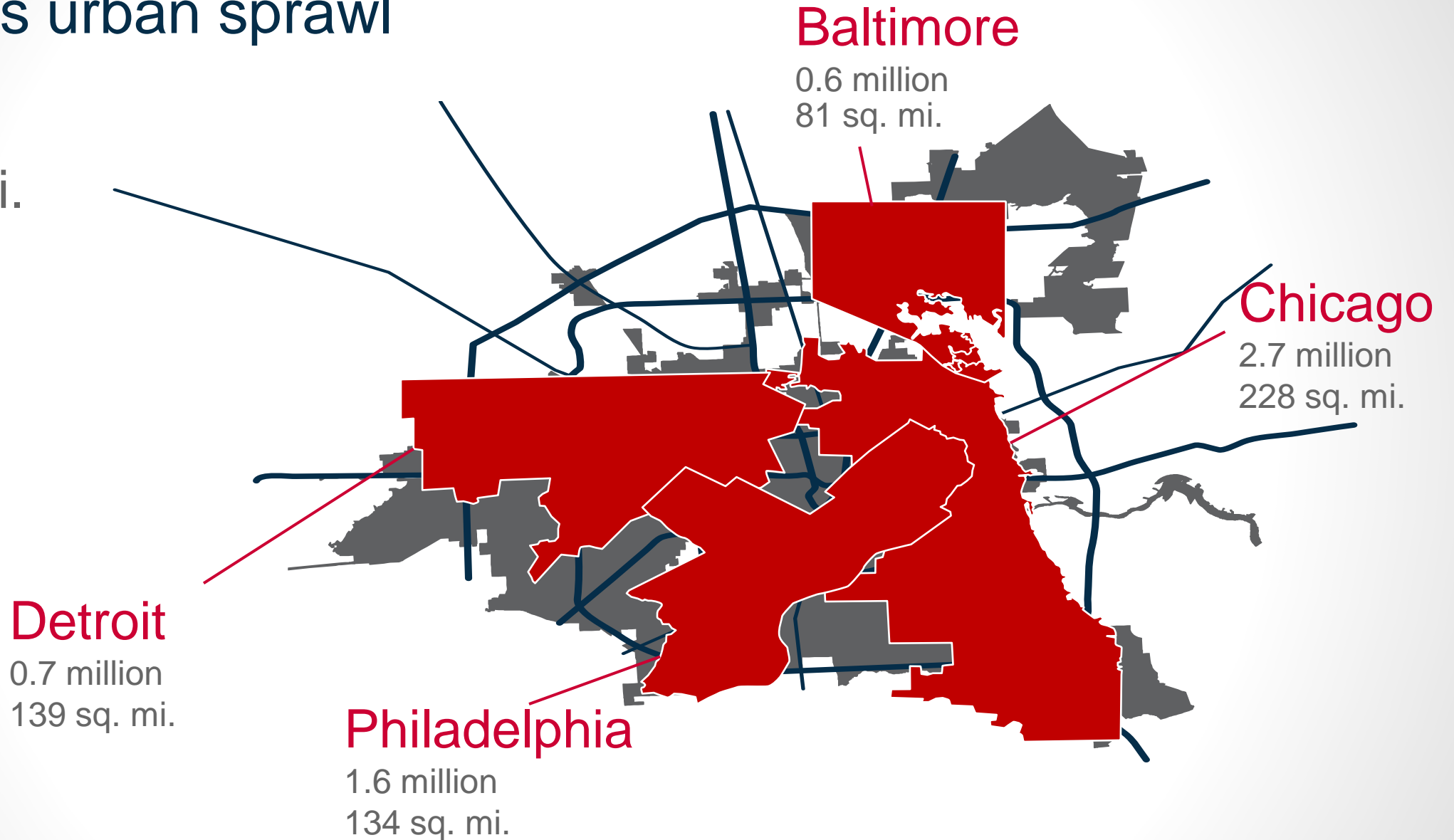
Some “wake-up calls” that have recently gotten the attention of Houston’s business community

- (1) October 1999. Houston surpassed Los Angeles in the number of dangerously polluted days: “Houston, cough, cough ... We’ve got a problem, cough, cough!”
- (2) January 2004. Houston campaigned to be the American city to host the 2012 Olympics, but it did not receive a single vote: “Houston is Ugly!”
- (3) August 2017. Will the after-effects of Hurricane Harvey turn out to be a wake-up call of equivalent consequence in shaping today’s “progrowth” agenda?

The key insight: “It is not a question of alternatives to growth, but of alternative ways of growing” (John McHale).

Houston's urban sprawl

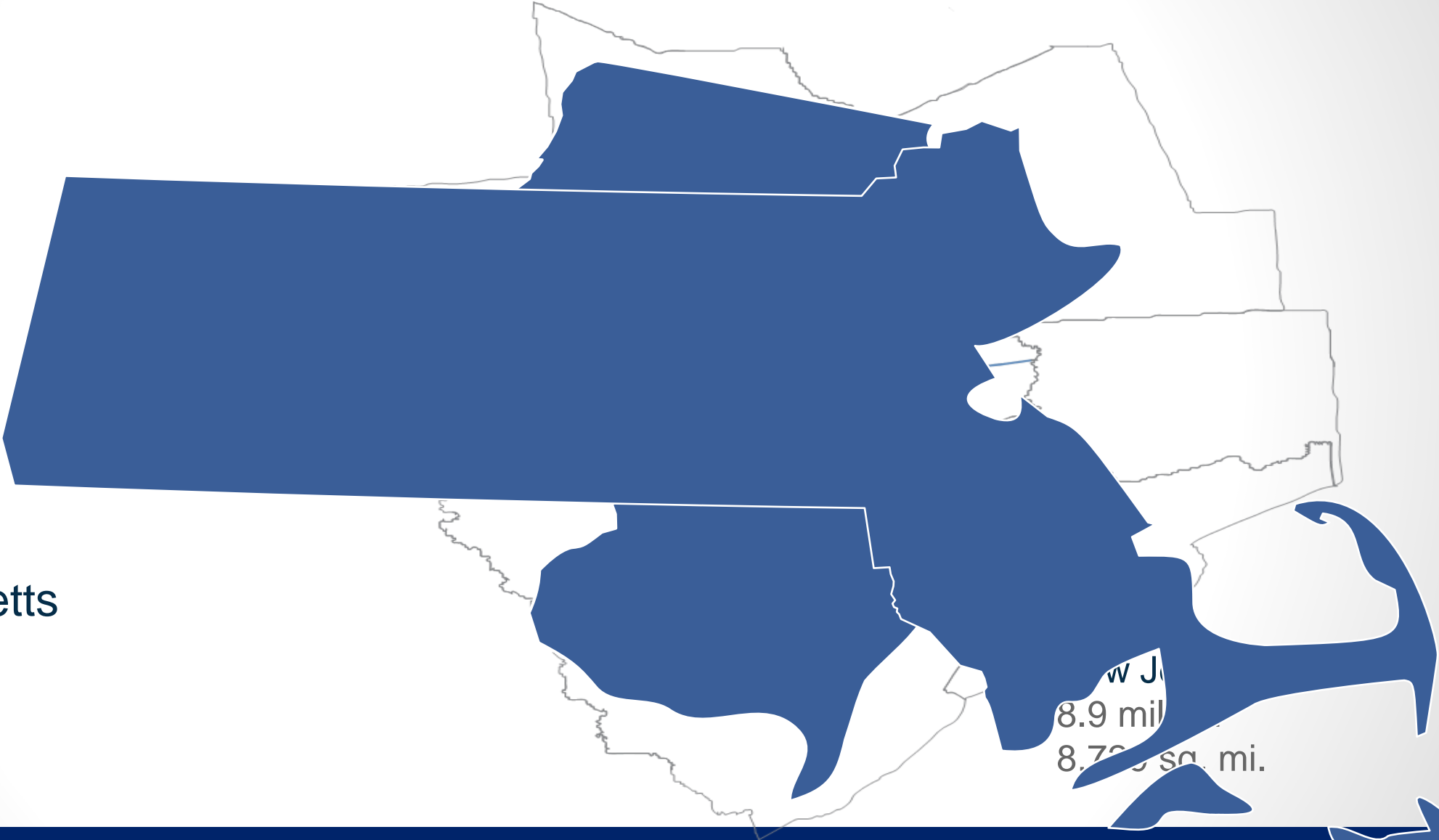
2.2 million
600 sq. mi.



The nine-county Houston metropolitan area

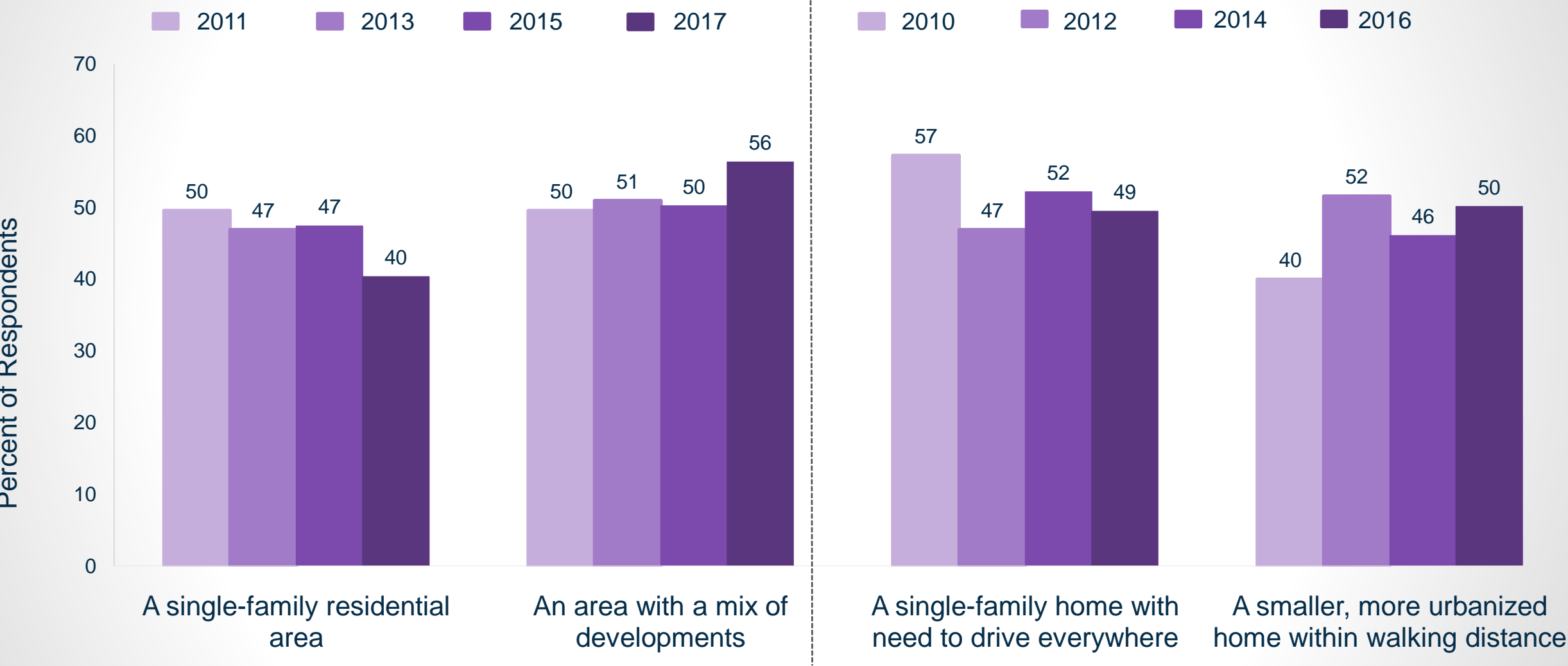
6.5 million
10,072 sq. mi.

Massachusetts
6.7 million
10,550 sq. mi.



New Jersey
8.9 million
8,725 sq. mi.

The preference for “walkable urbanism” among Harris County residents (2010-2017)



Conclusion:

- Hidden beneath the political divides, Houston-area residents are embracing the diversity and are increasingly in favor of policy initiatives to reduce the region's income inequalities, improve the public schools, and strengthen resiliency and urban amenities.
- They seem to be more prepared today than at any time in the past 37 years to support the many ongoing efforts by Houston's business and civic leadership to address the new realities and to position the Houston region for competitive success in the years ahead.



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