



**THE CHANGING FACE OF HOUSTON:  
Tracking the Economic and Demographic  
Transformations Through 30 Years of Surveys**

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# **KINDER HOUSTON AREA SURVEY (1982-2011)**

**Supported by local foundations, corporations, and individuals, and now with a permanent home in the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, the annual surveys have interviewed 30 successive representative samples of Harris County residents.**

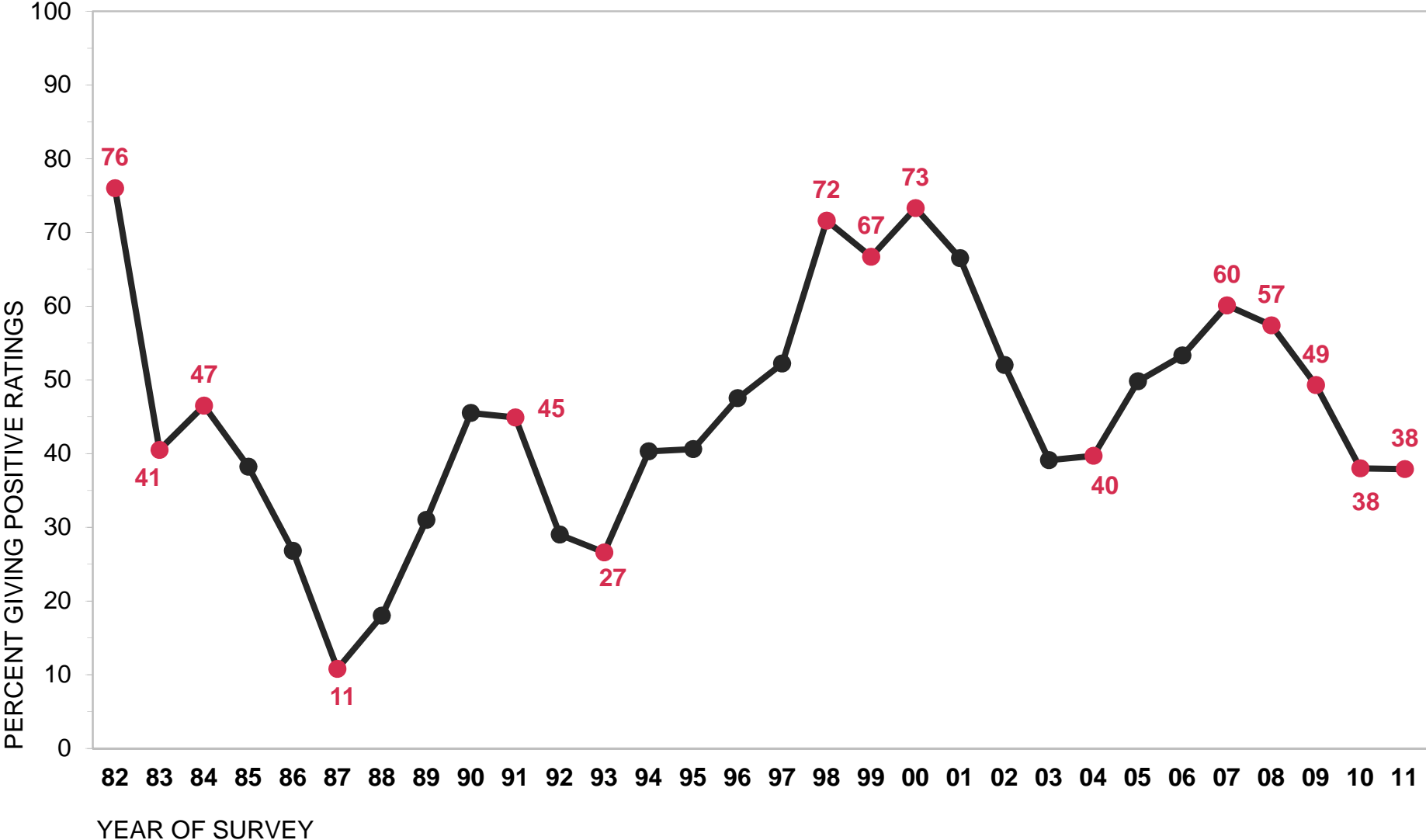
**In May 1982, just two months after the first Houston-area survey was completed, the 80-year oil boom suddenly collapsed.**

**The region recovered from the deep and prolonged recession of the mid 1980s to find itself squarely in the midst of ...**

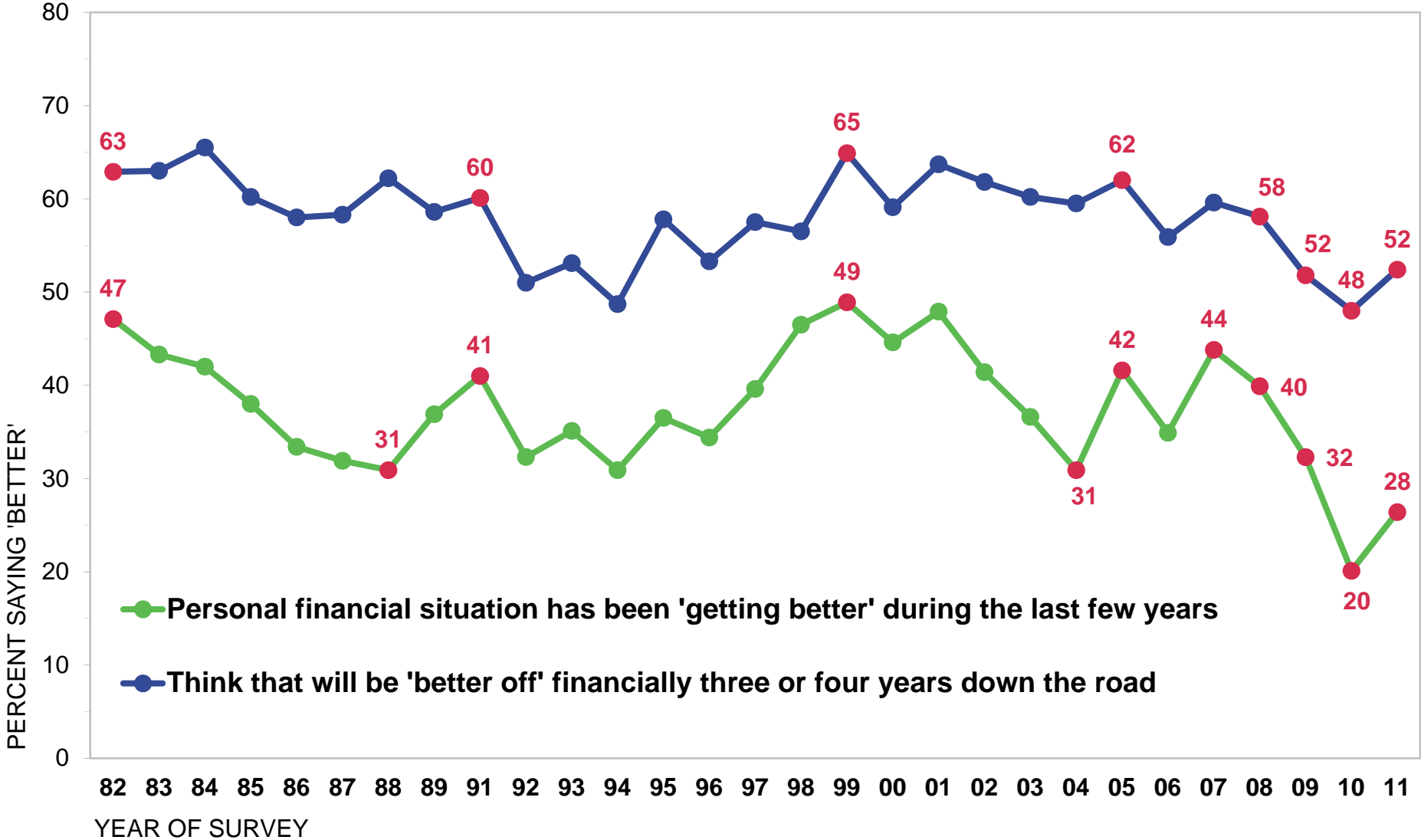
- a restructured economy and**
- a demographic revolution.**

**These are the same transformations that are refashioning all of American society. The Houston surveys have tracked area residents' changing perspectives on these remarkable trends.**

# POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN HOUSTON (1982-2011)



# PERCENT DOING BETTER IN LAST FEW YEARS AND EXPECTING TO DO BETTER IN NEXT FEW YEARS



# **THE RESTRUCTURED ECONOMY**

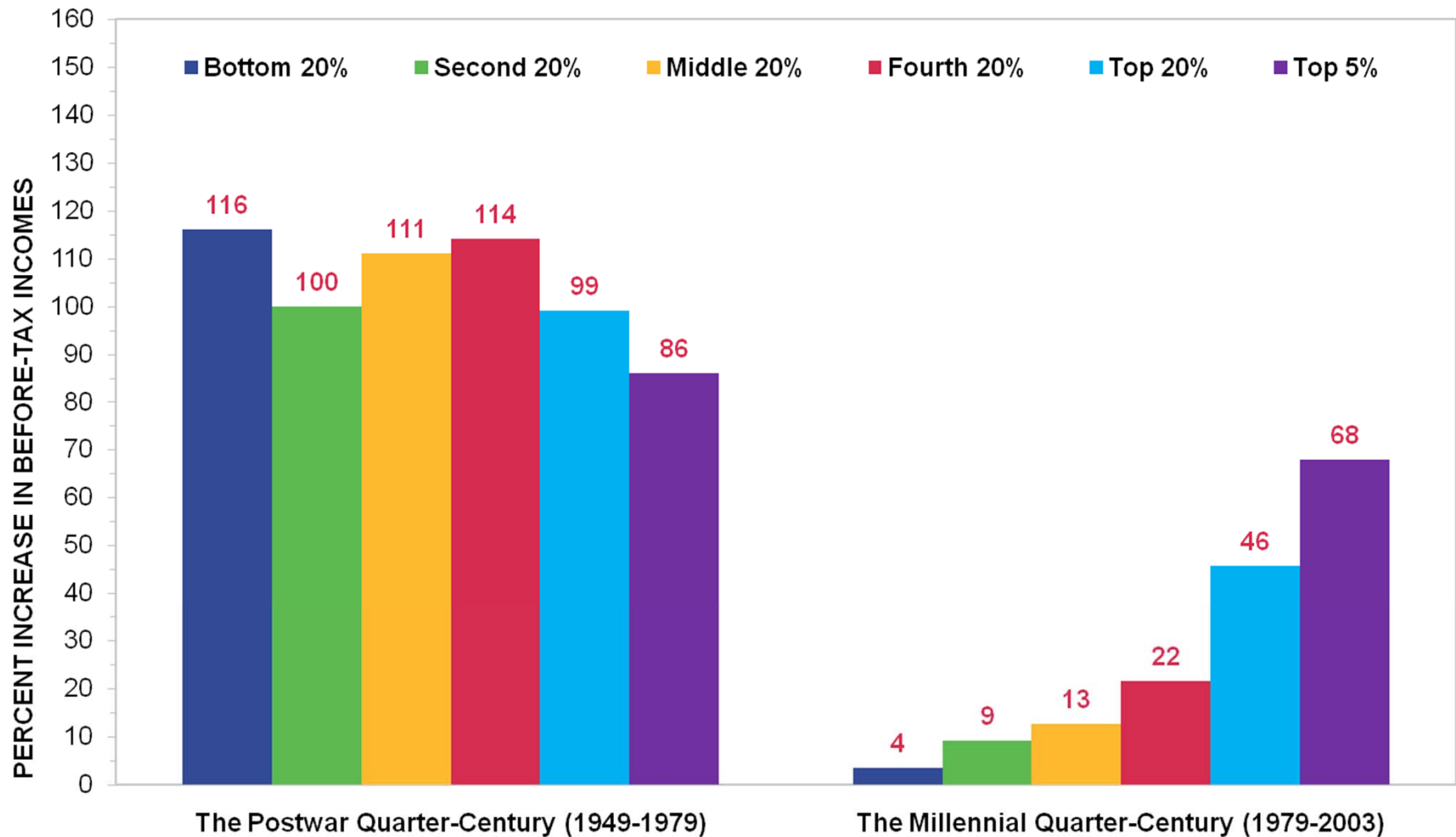
**The “resource economy” of the industrial era, for which this city was so favorably positioned, has been replaced by a new high-tech, knowledge-based, fully worldwide marketplace.**

**The traditional “blue collar path” to financial security has now largely disappeared. Almost all the good-paying jobs today require high levels of technical skills and educational credentials.**

**In the 2011 survey, 78% disagreed that “A high school education is enough to get a good job.” In 2010, 67% of the survey respondents agreed that “There are very few good jobs in today’s economy for people without a college education.”**

**In this increasingly unequal, hourglass economy, “What you earn,” as the saying goes, “depends on what you’ve learned.”**

# TWO CONTRASTING QUARTER-CENTURIES SINCE WORLD WAR II (NATIONAL DATA, 1949-2003)



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS; Robert H. Frank. 2007. *Falling Behind*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 10-11.

# WHY THE BURGEONING INEQUALITIES?

- **Since 1980, the middle class has been hit by a triple whammy:**
  - **Globalization**
  - **Automation**
  - **Government inaction**
- **Two “killer statistics” (Hacker and Pierson 2010):**
  - **In 2007, the richest 1% of all Americans received 23.5% of the nation's total income, up from 9% in 1977.**
  - **In the past 30 years (1979 to 2009), the top 1% received 36% of *all* the income gains; the top 0.1% received more of the nation's increased wealth than the bottom 60% combined.**
- **“We can have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we cannot have both” (Louis D. Brandeis, Supreme Court Justice).**

# ADDITIONAL PROVOCATIVE QUOTATIONS

- **“No country in the world, without undergoing military defeat or internal revolution, has ever experienced such a sharp redistribution of earnings as the U.S. has seen in the last generation” (Lester Thurow, MIT School of Management, 1995).**
- **“Gone forever are the days when a high school graduate could go to work on an assembly line and expect to earn a middle-class standard of living. Students who leave high school today without skills and unprepared for further learning are unlikely to ever earn enough to raise a family. They are being sentenced to a lifetime of poverty. A generation’s future is at stake” (Tony Wagner, *Making the Grade*, 2002).**
- **“Whoever out-educates us today is going to out-compete us tomorrow” (Barack Obama, 44<sup>th</sup> President of the U.S.).**



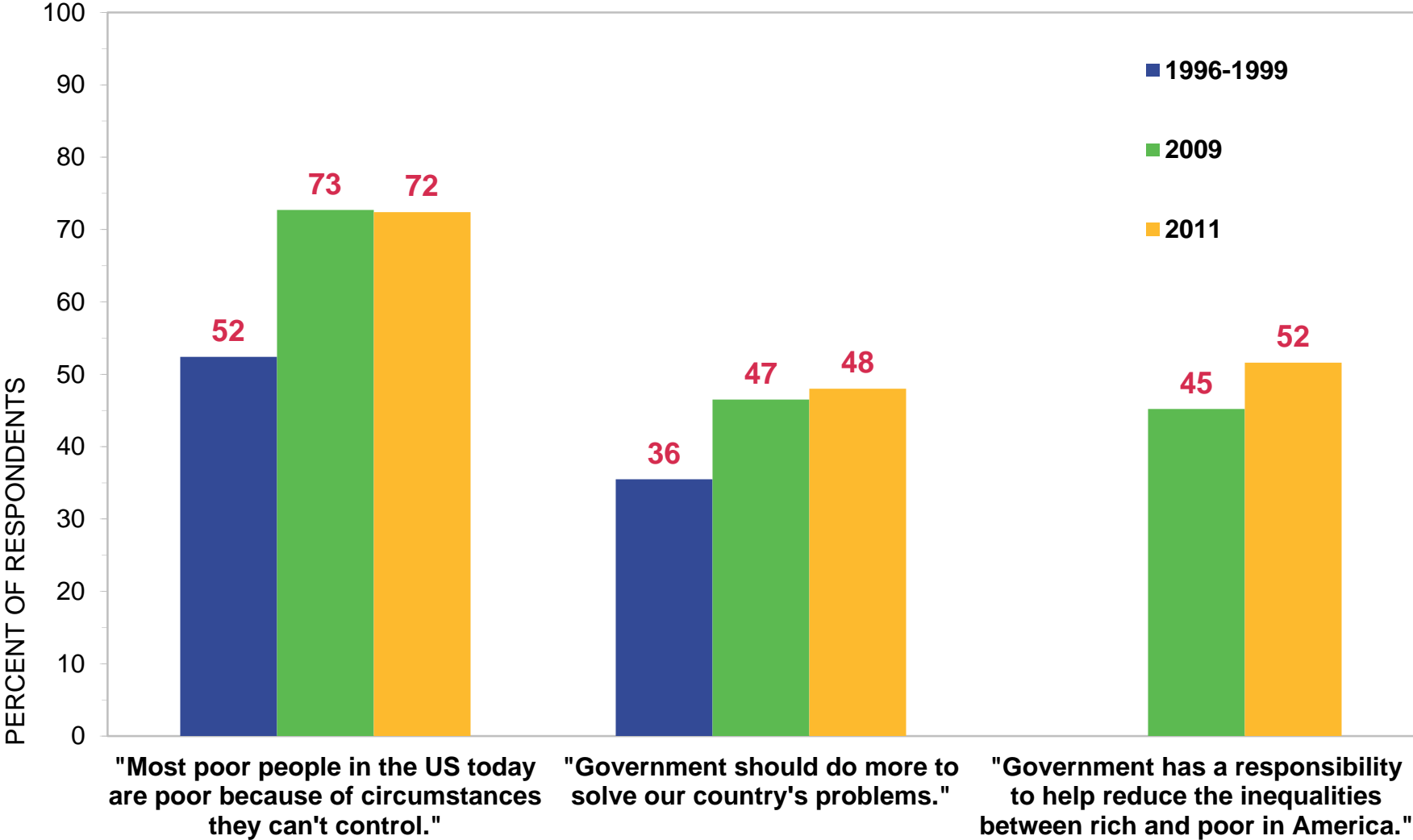
# **WHERE THE U.S. RANKS AMONG INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS TODAY**

- **16th in college completion rates**
- **22nd in broadband Internet access**
- **24th in life expectancy at birth**
- **11th in the percent of 25-34 year-olds with high-school diplomas.**
- **17th in the proportion of college students receiving degrees in science or engineering**
- **48th in the quality of K-12 math and science education**
- **29th in the number of mobile phones per 100 people**

**(Thomas Friedman, 2011).**

**Our world is changing rapidly, not because of the “Decline of the West,” but because of the “Rise of the Rest” (Fareed Zakaria).**

# SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE INEQUALITIES (1996-2011)



# **THE NEW IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY OF PLACE CONSIDERATIONS**

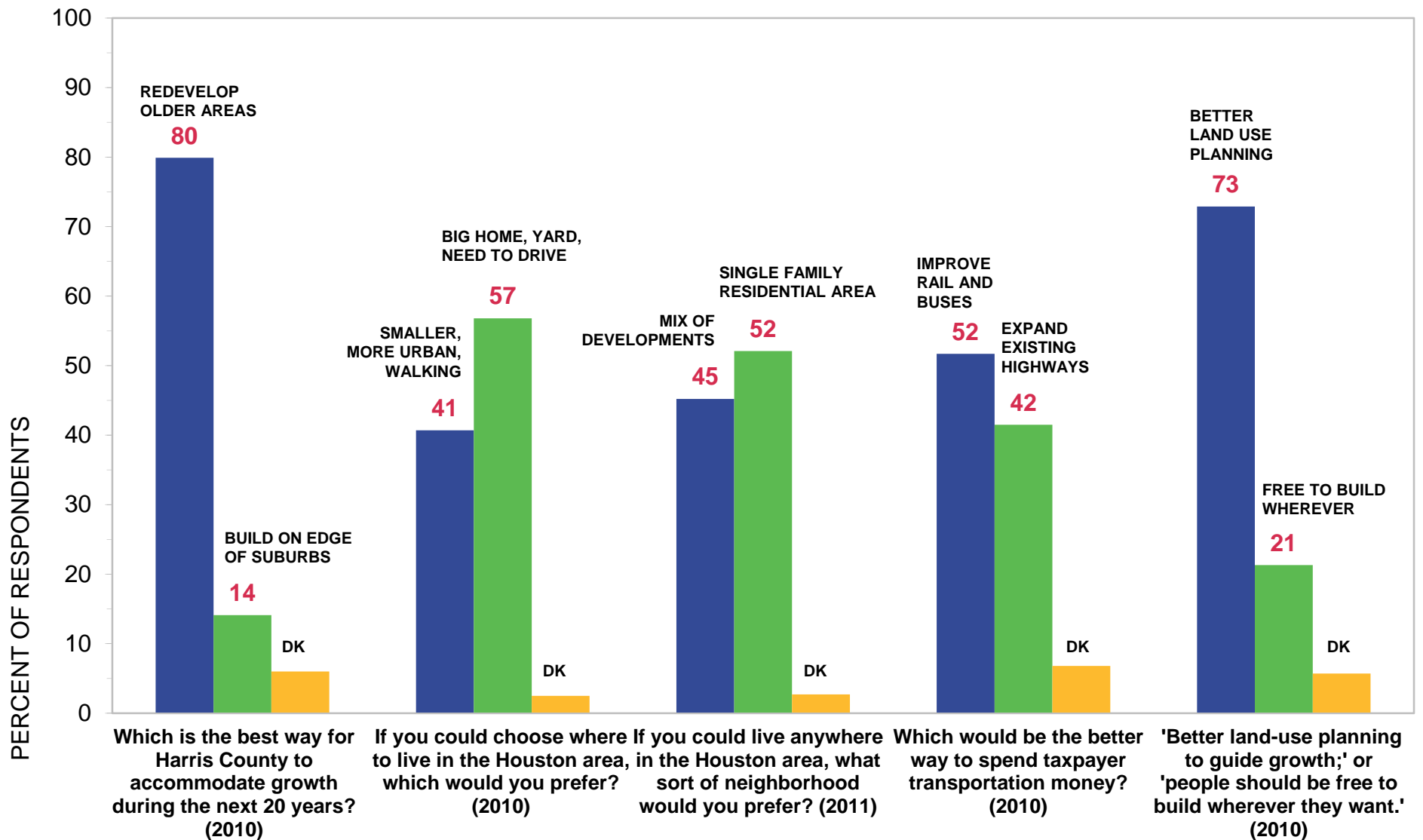
**Houston's prospects will now increasingly depend on the ability of the region to attract and retain the nation's most skilled and creative "knowledge workers" and high tech companies.**

**This will require continued significant improvements in ...**

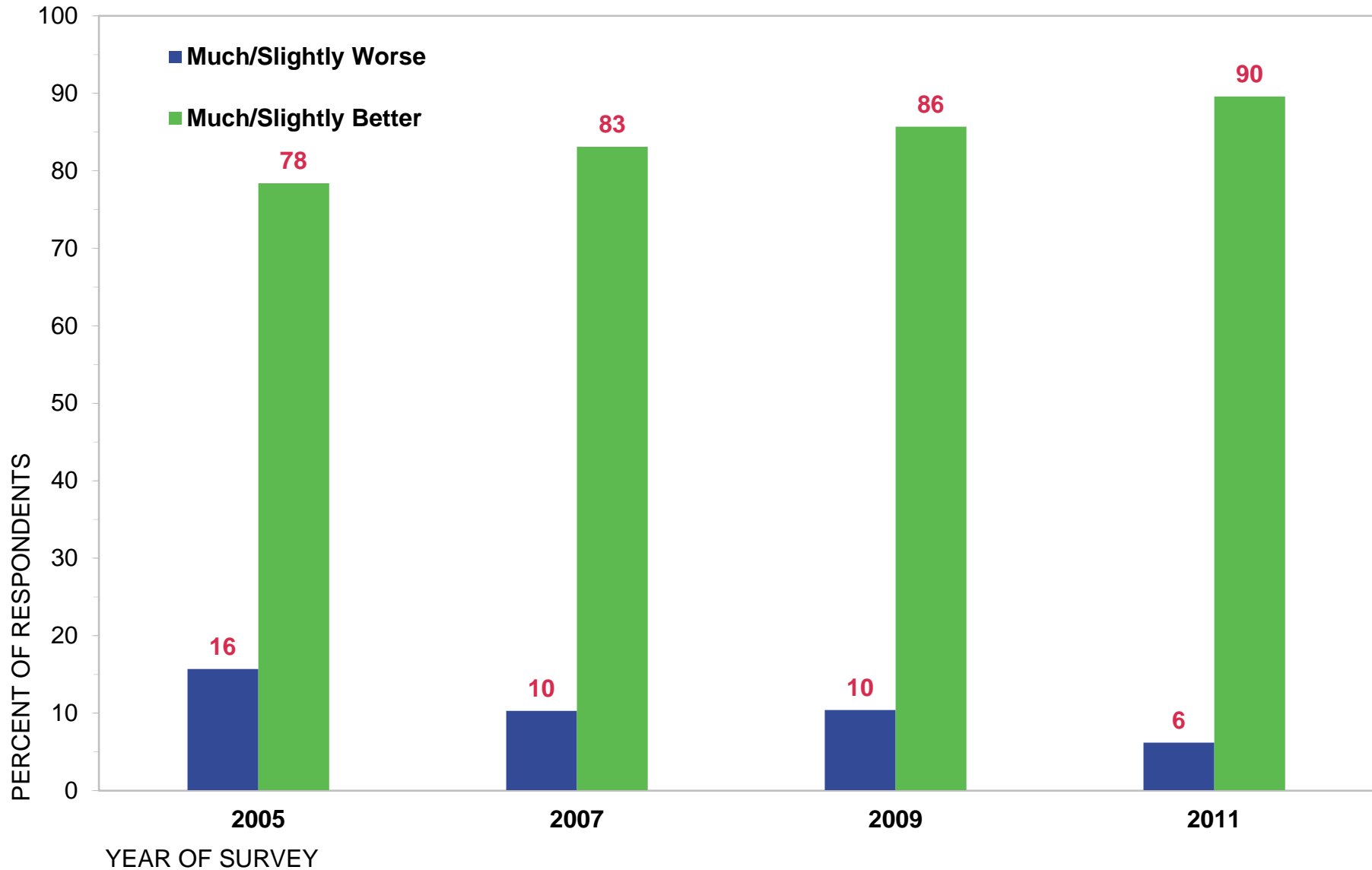
- the healthfulness of the region's air and water quality**
- the excellence of its venues for sports, arts, and culture**
- its overall physical attractiveness and aesthetic appeal**
- the enhancement of its green spaces, trees, and bayous**
- the revitalization and preservation of its urban centers**
- the region's mobility through its transportation systems**
- the richness of its hiking, boating, and birding areas**

**The public's support for new initiatives along these lines has remained firm or grown stronger across the years of surveys.**

# ATTITUDES TOWARD URBAN LIFESTYLES AND LAND-USE PLANNING (2010 AND 2011)



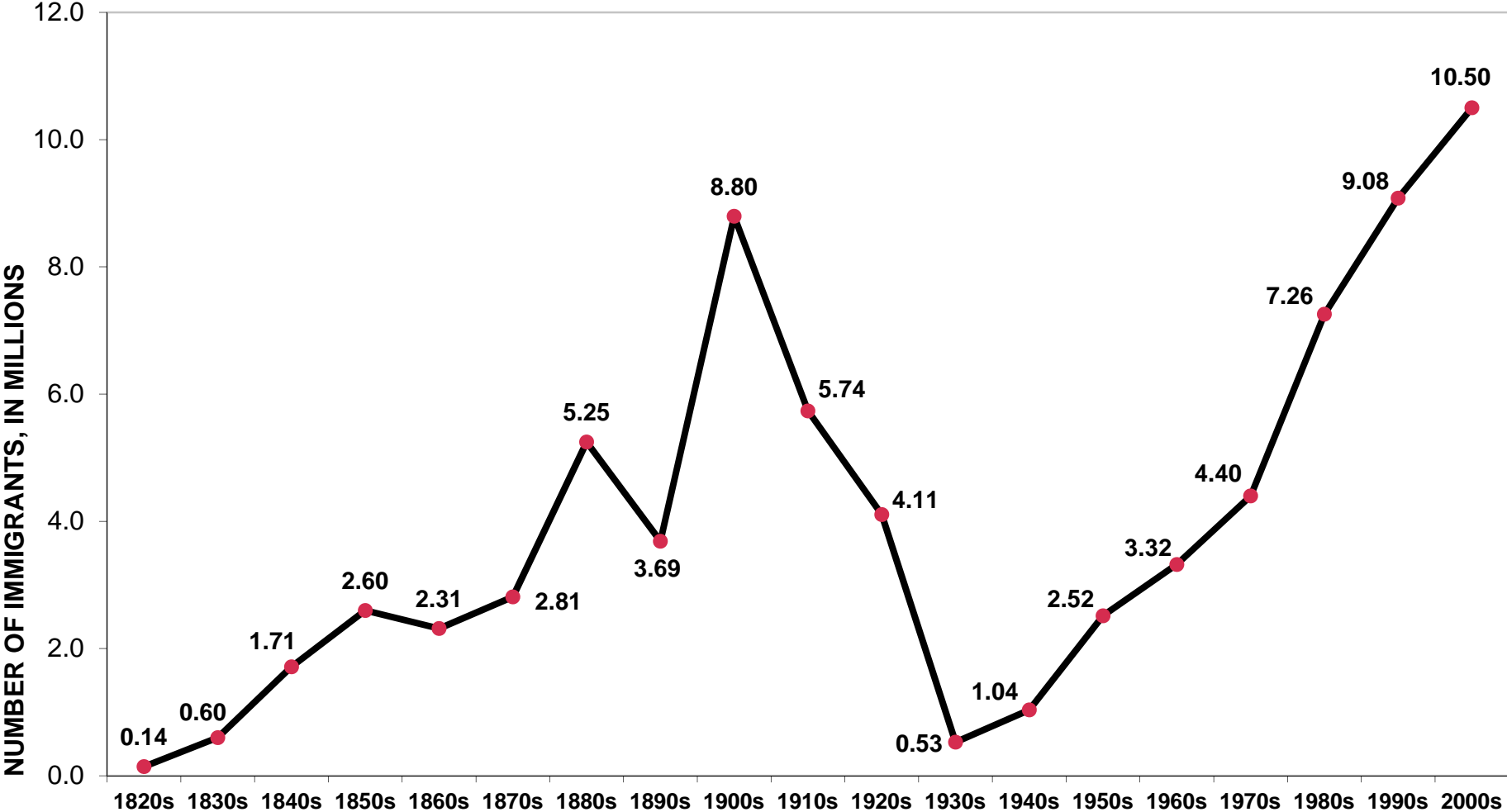
# LIFE IN HOUSTON COMPARED TO OTHER U.S. CITIES (2005–2011)



# **U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY BEFORE AND AFTER THE REFORM ACT OF 1965**

- **Between 1492 and 1965, 82 percent of all the people who came to American shores came from Europe.**
- **Under the notorious “National Origins Quota Act” of 1924, immigration was dramatically reduced, and newcomers were restricted almost entirely to the “Nordics” of Western Europe.**
- **The “Hart-Celler Act” in 1965 opened the door for the first time to large numbers of non-Europeans, based primarily on family reunification, professional skills, or refugee status.**
- **As a result, major new immigrant flows — non-European and of striking socioeconomic diversity — are rapidly transforming the composition of the Houston, and American, populations.**

# THE NUMBER OF DOCUMENTED U.S. IMMIGRANTS, BY DECADE (1820-2010)



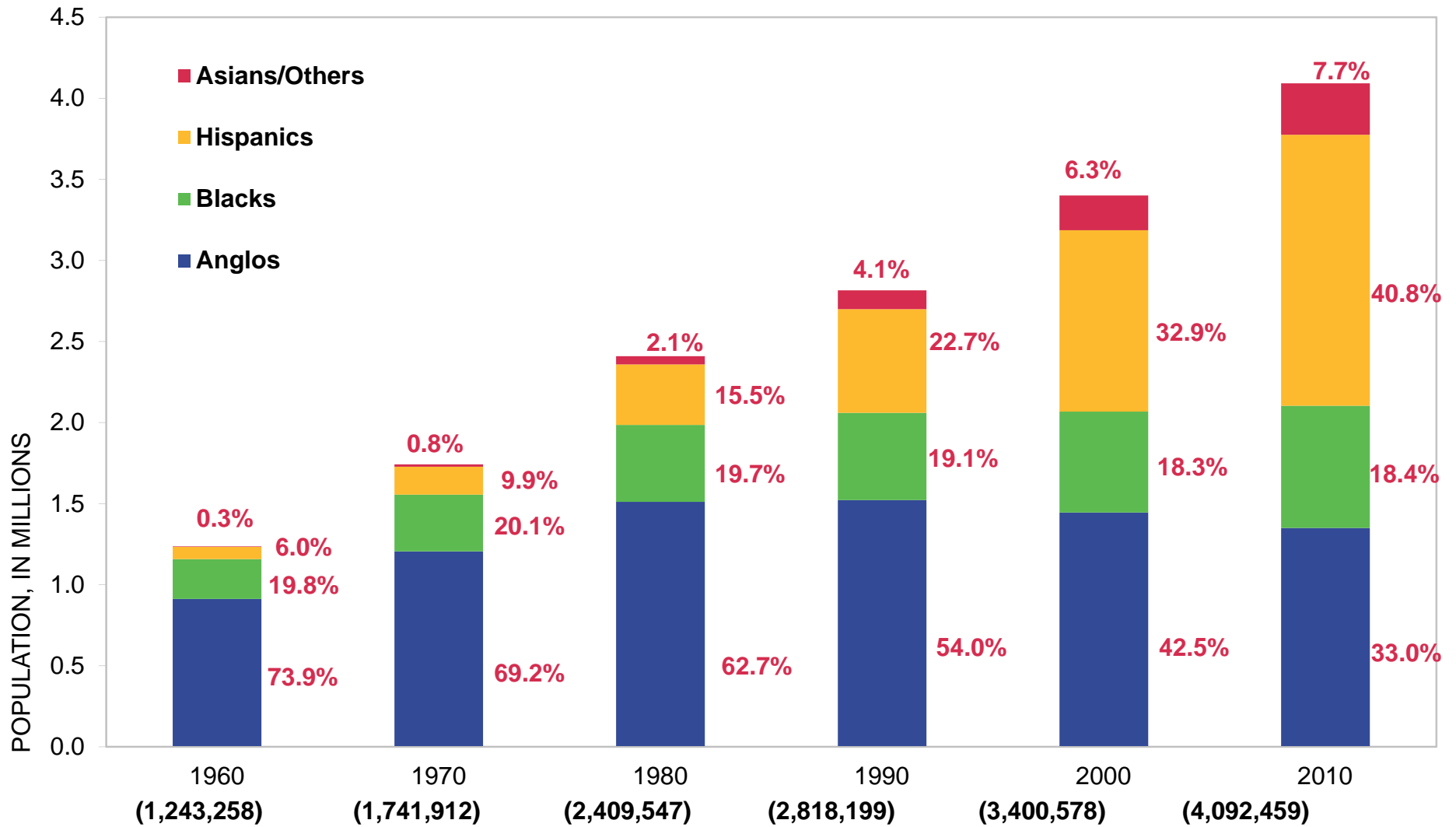
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Office of Immigration Statistics ([www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov))

# THE DEMOGRAPHIC REVOLUTION

- **Along with the major immigration capitals of L.A. and N.Y.C., and closely following upon Miami, San Francisco, and Chicago, Houston is at the forefront of the new diversity that is refashioning the socio-political landscape of urban America.**
  
- **Throughout all of its history ...**
  - **this was essentially a bi-racial Southern city,**
  - **dominated and controlled, in an automatic, taken-for-granted way, by white men.**
  
- **Today ...**
  - **Houston is one of the most culturally diverse metropolitan areas in the country, and**
  - **all of its ethnic communities are now “minorities.”**

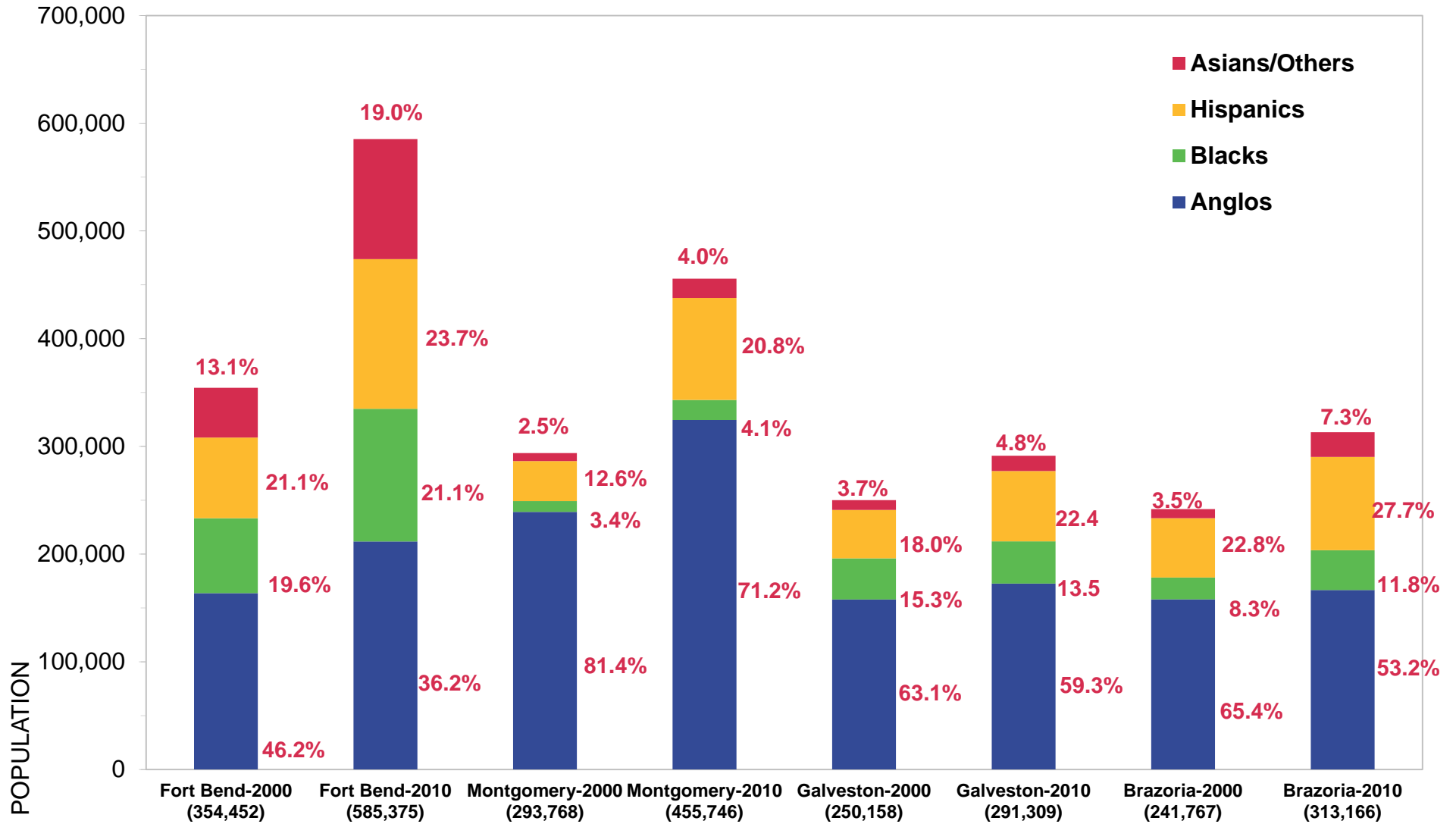


# THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATIONS OF HARRIS COUNTY (1960-2010)



SOURCE: US CENSUS. CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON TEXAS STATE DATA CENTER CONVENTIONS.

# THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN THE FOUR LARGEST SURROUNDING COUNTIES (2000-2010)

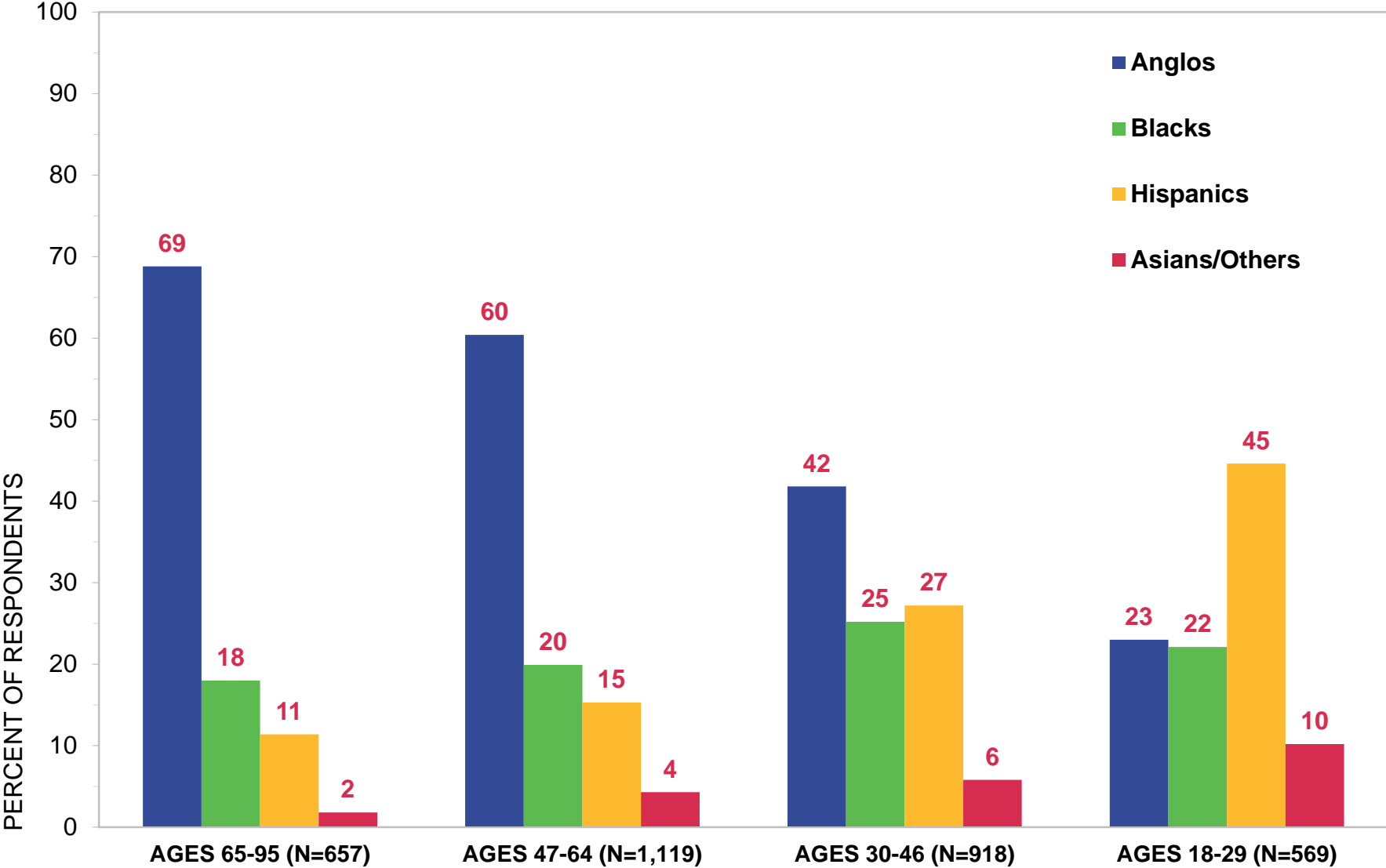


SOURCE: US CENSUS. CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON TEXAS STATE DATA CENTER CONVENTIONS.

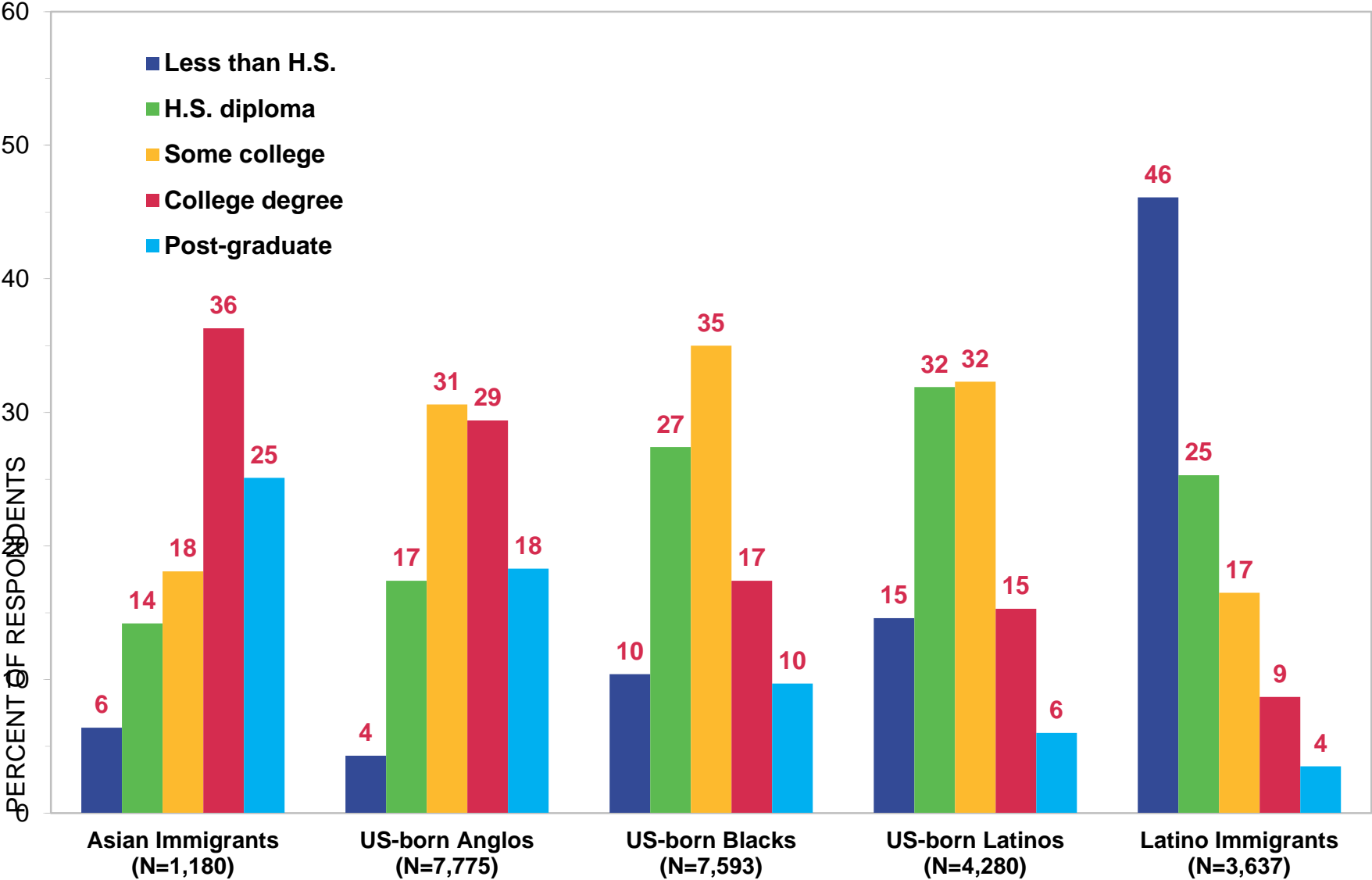
# **INTERACTIONS OF ETHNICITY AND AGE**

- **The other demographic revolution: the remarkable “aging,” or “graying,” of the American population.**
- **Today’s seniors are primarily Anglos, and so are the 76 million Baby Boomers, now aged 47 to 65. During the next 30 years, the numbers of Americans over the age of 65 will double.**
- **The younger generations are disproportionately non-Anglo and generally far less privileged, in terms of their levels of income, education, health status, and life chances.**
- **Nowhere is this ongoing transformation more clearly seen than in the age distributions of Harris County’s population.**

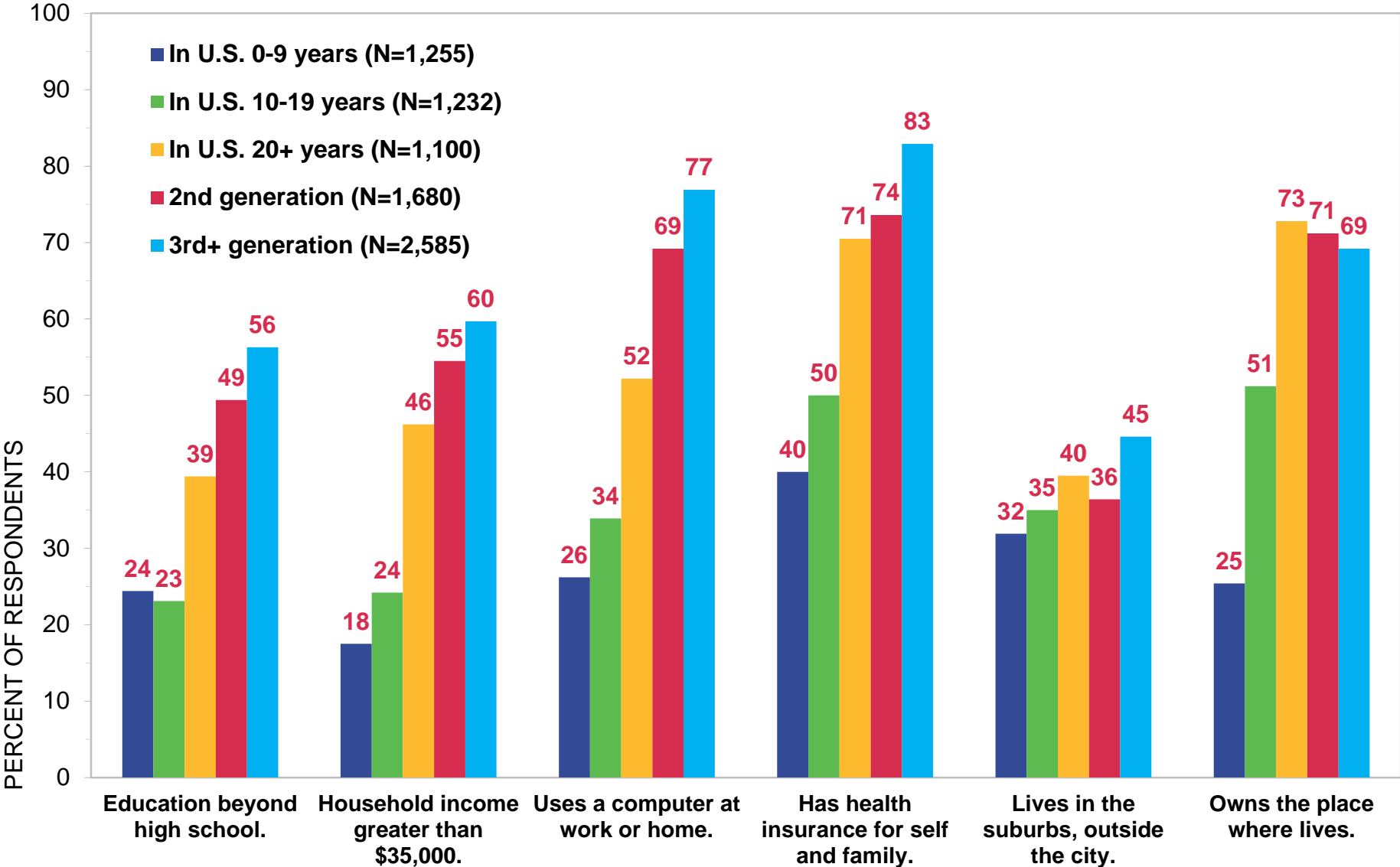
# ETHNICITY BY AGE IN HARRIS COUNTY (2007-2011, COMBINED)



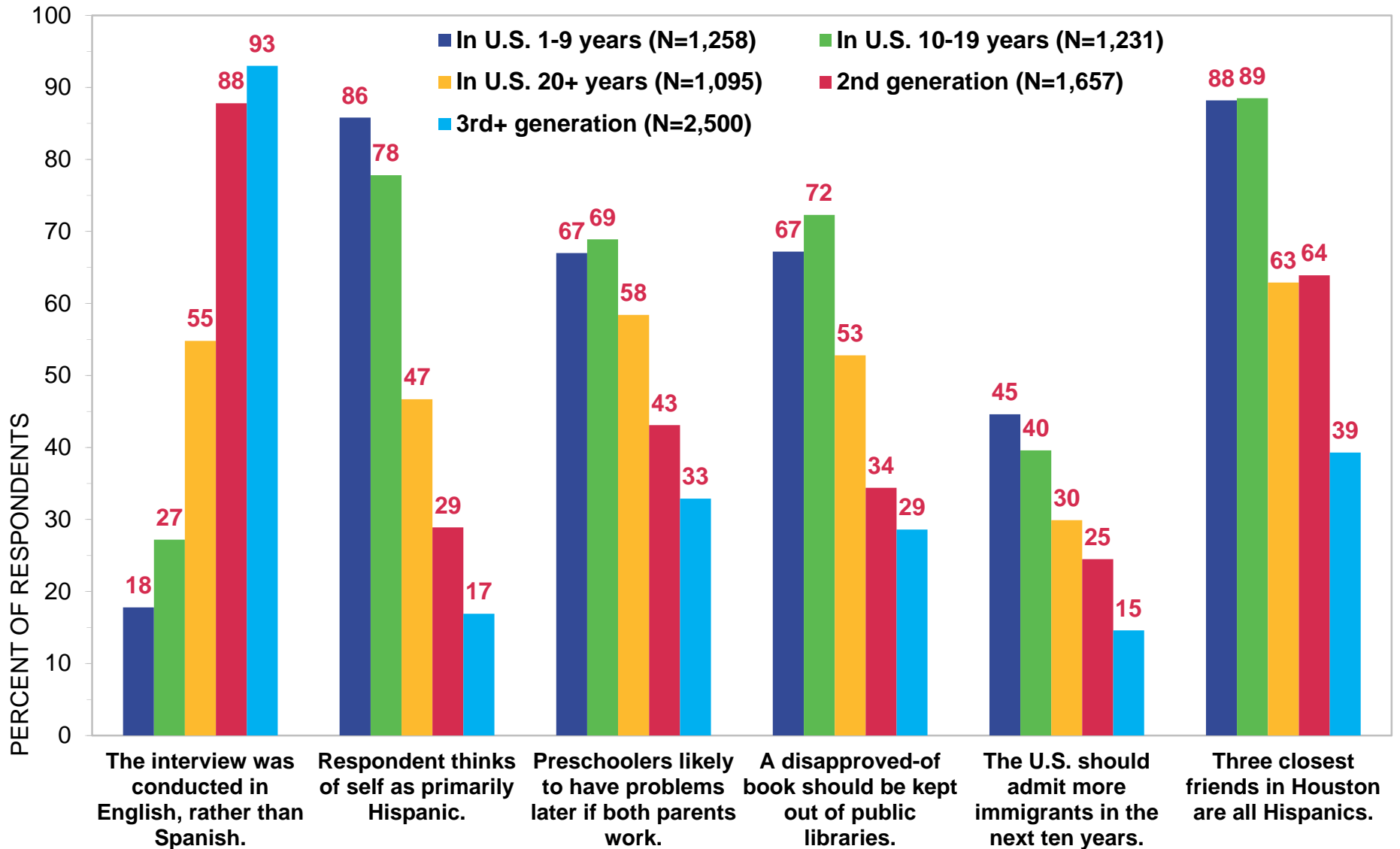
# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN FIVE HOUSTON COMMUNITIES (1994-2011, COMBINED)



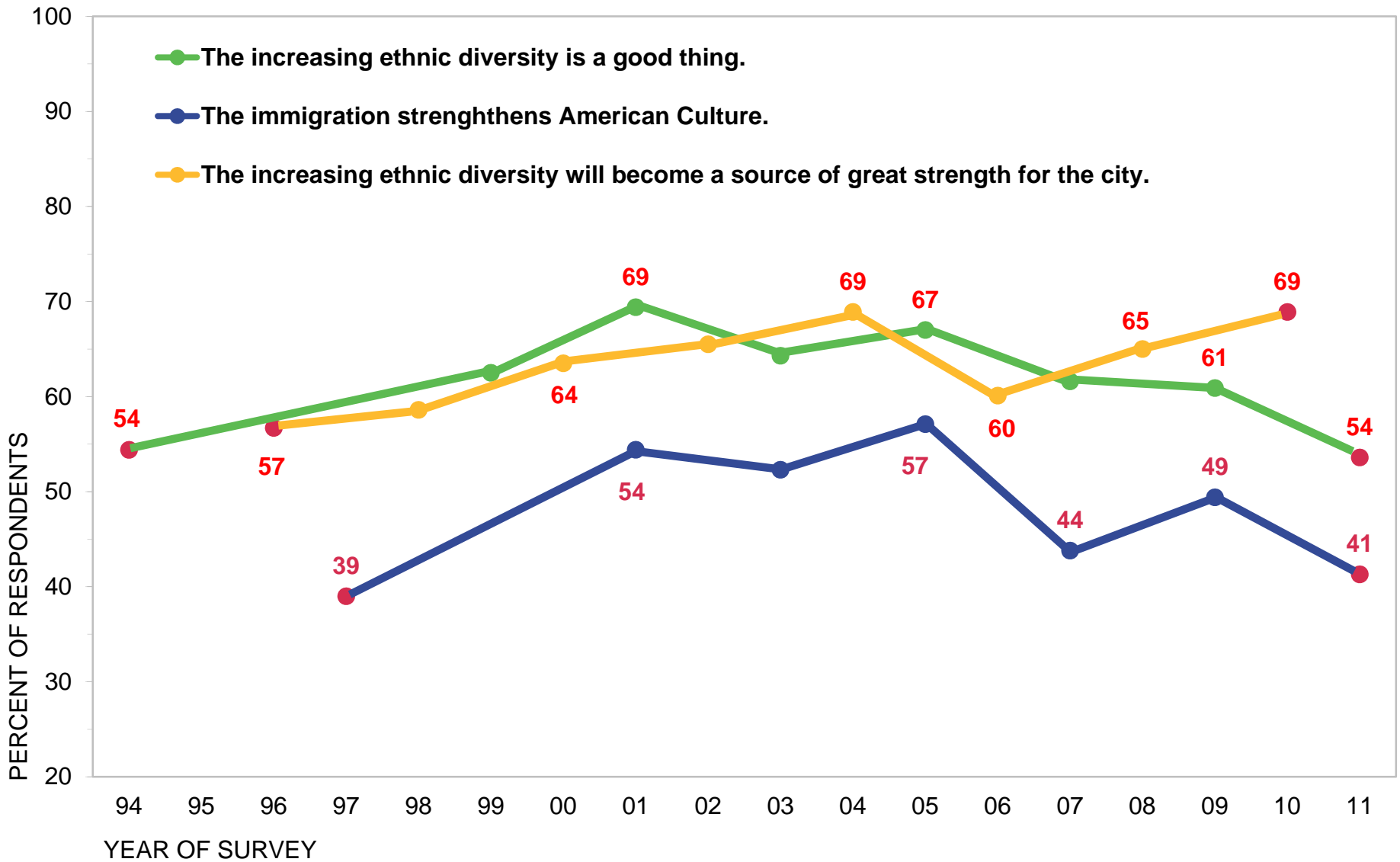
# SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AMONG LATINO IMMIGRANTS BY TIME IN U.S. AND GENERATION (94-11)



# ASSIMILATION AMONG LATINO IMMIGRANTS BY TIME IN THE U.S. AND BY GENERATION (1994-2011)

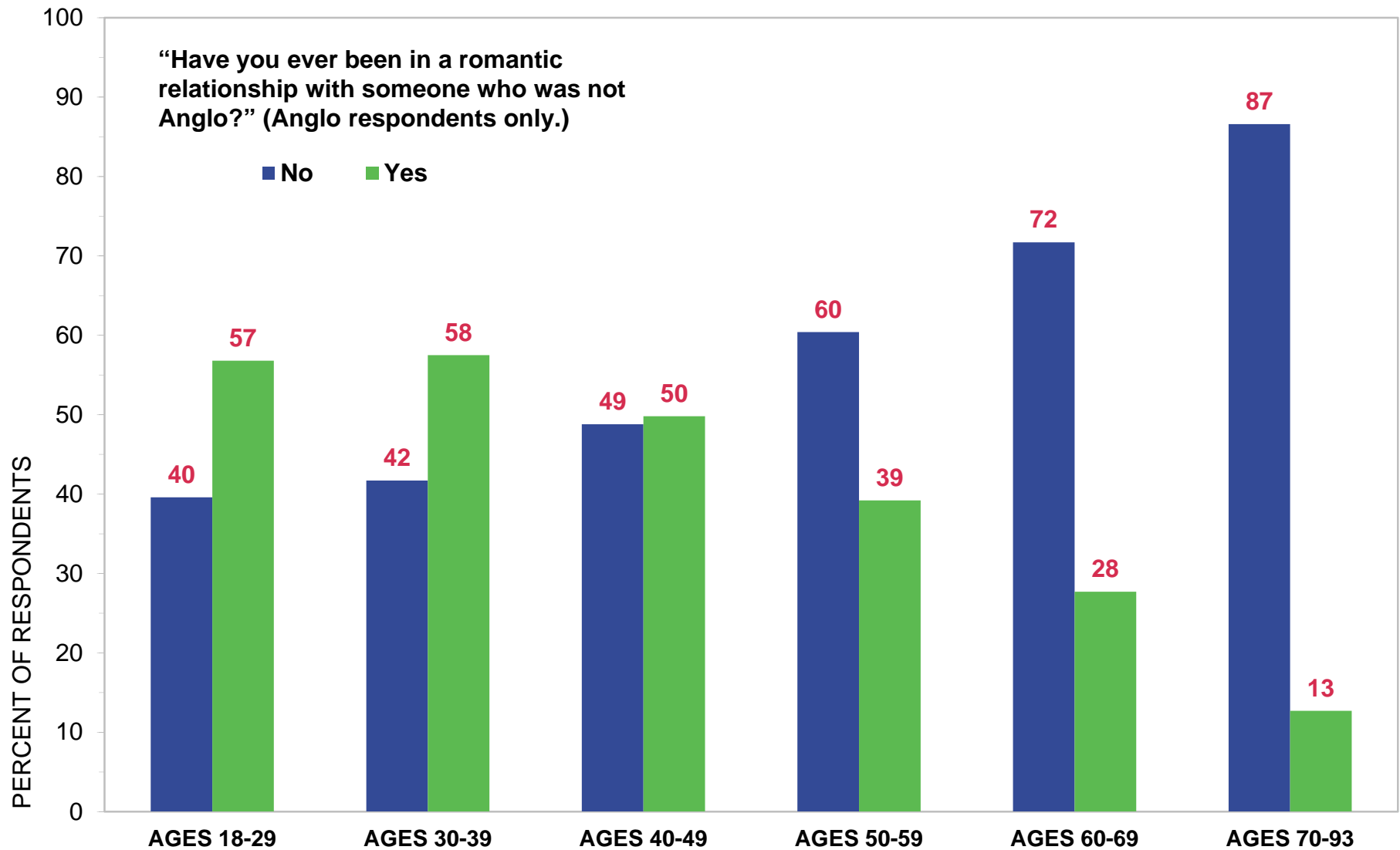


# ATTITUDES TOWARD ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN HOUSTON (1994-2011)

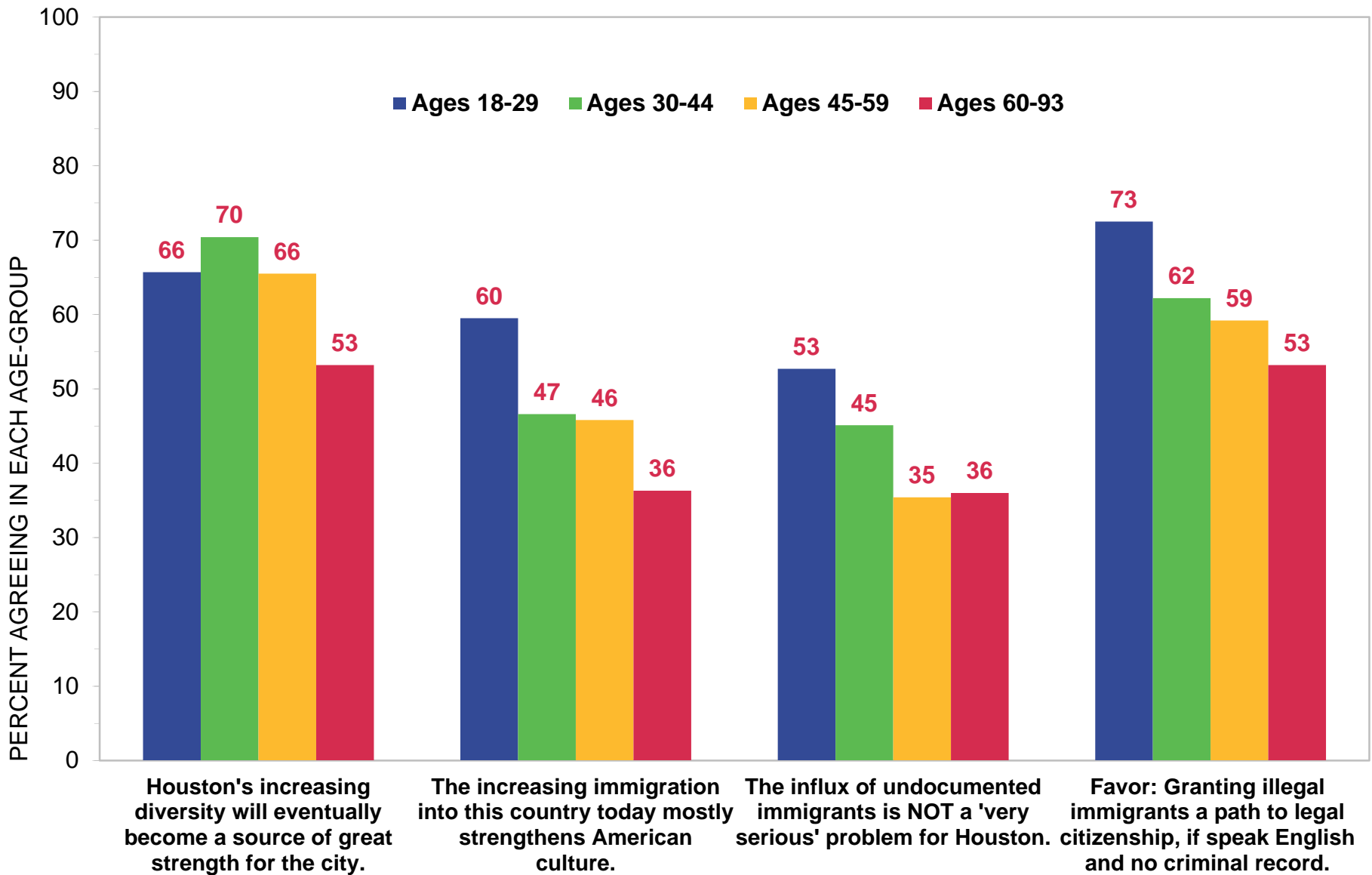




# INTERETHNIC ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS BY AGE, ANGLOS ONLY (2007 AND 2011, COMBINED)



# ETHNIC ATTITUDES BY AGE AMONG ANGLOS (2006-2011, COMBINED)



# **THE NEW PRO-GROWTH AGENDA**

- **To prosper in the high-technology, knowledge-based, worldwide economy, this city (and nation) will need to nurture a far more educated workforce and fashion policies to reduce the growing inequalities and prevent the rise of a new urban underclass.**
- **To attract the most innovative companies and talented individuals, Houston will need to grow into a more environmentally and aesthetically appealing urban destination, and develop the research centers that will fuel the engines of growth in the new economy.**
- **If this region is to flourish in the years ahead, it will need to develop into a much more unified and inclusive multiethnic society, in which equality of opportunity is truly made available to all citizens and all of its communities are empowered to participate as full partners in shaping the Houston future.**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**



## **THE KINDER INSTITUTE FOR URBAN RESEARCH AT RICE UNIVERSITY**

**PROFESSORS STEPHEN KLINEBERG AND MICHAEL EMERSON,  
CO-DIRECTORS**

For copies of the following publications:

- the report on the first 24 years of Houston surveys, 2005
- the report on six major sectors of the greater Houston region, 2007
- or to download additional reports and PowerPoint slides

Please visit the institute's website:

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