

**PERSONNEL AVAILABILITY IN THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:
*THE DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT***

STEPHEN L. KLINEBERG

Rice Global E&C Forum

3 February 2006



THE HOUSTON AREA SURVEY (1982–2005)



- Supported by a consortium of foundations, corporations, and individuals, the HAS has conducted random-digit-dialed interviews, in English and Spanish, with 24 successive representative samples of Harris-County residents.
- No other city in America has been the focus of a long-term study of this scope. None more clearly exemplifies the nation's ongoing economic and demographic transformations.
- In 13 of the past 15 years, the surveys were expanded to reach at least 450 Anglos, 450 Blacks, and 450 Hispanics.
- In 1995 and 2002, the research included multi-lingual interviews with large representative samples from Houston's Asian communities, the only such surveys in the country.

OVERVIEW



- In May 1982, two months after the first survey in this series, Houston's oil boom suddenly collapsed.
- The region recovered from deep recession in the mid 1980s to find itself in the midst of:
 - A restructured economy, and
 - A demographic revolution.
- Using identical questions across the years, the surveys have tracked area residents' experiences and attitudes regarding many aspects of these remarkable trends.
- How the city ultimately responds to the challenges these transformations represent will be significant not only for the Houston future, but for the American future as well.

THE RESTRUCTURED ECONOMY



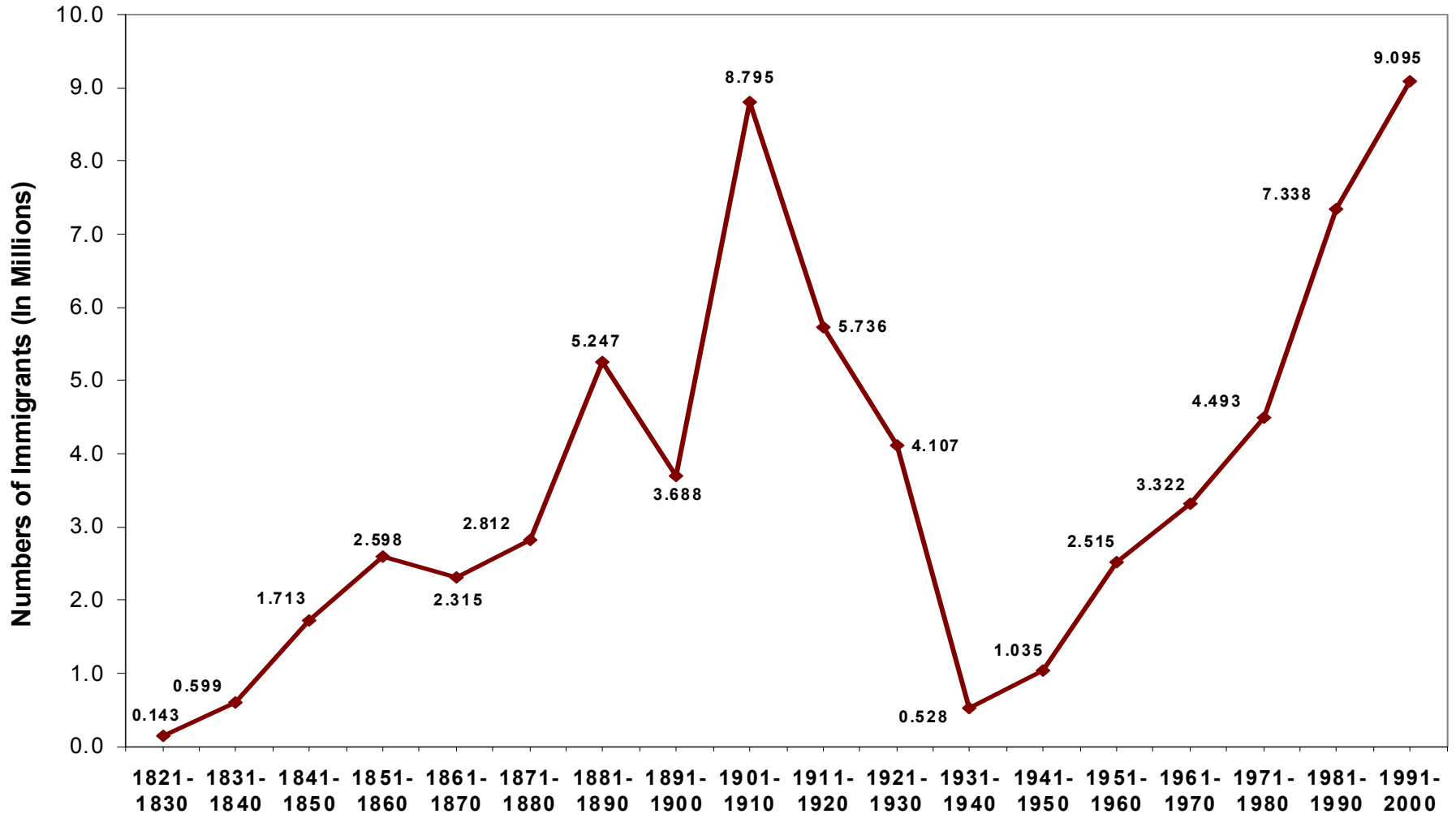
- The “resource economy” of the Industrial Age has now receded into history, taking with it the traditional “blue collar path” to financial security. In its place, a fully global and increasingly high-tech “knowledge economy” has been taking shape.
- In the new two-tiered “hourglass” economy, the good-paying jobs require high levels of technical skills. Income inequalities are growing ever wider and deeper, based primarily on educational credentials.
- Houston’s prosperity in the new economy will depend in part on its ability to nurture, attract, and retain the nation’s most skilled and creative “knowledge workers.” Hence the new importance of quality-of-life considerations.

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



- Between 1492 and 1965, 82 percent of all the human beings who came to these shores came from Europe.
- Under the notorious 1924 “National Origins Quota Act,” immigration was dramatically reduced, and the newcomers were restricted almost exclusively to Northern Europeans.
- In 1965, the “Hart-Celler Act” greatly increased the numbers of immigrants once again, and established new preferences based primarily on family reunification and professional skills.
- As a result, new immigrant streams — non-European and of striking socioeconomic diversity — are rapidly transforming the composition of the Houston, and American, populations.

FIGURE 1: THE NUMBERS OF DOCUMENTED U.S. IMMIGRANTS, BY DECADE (1820-2000)



Source: U.S. Census (www.census.gov).

THE DEMOGRAPHIC REVOLUTION

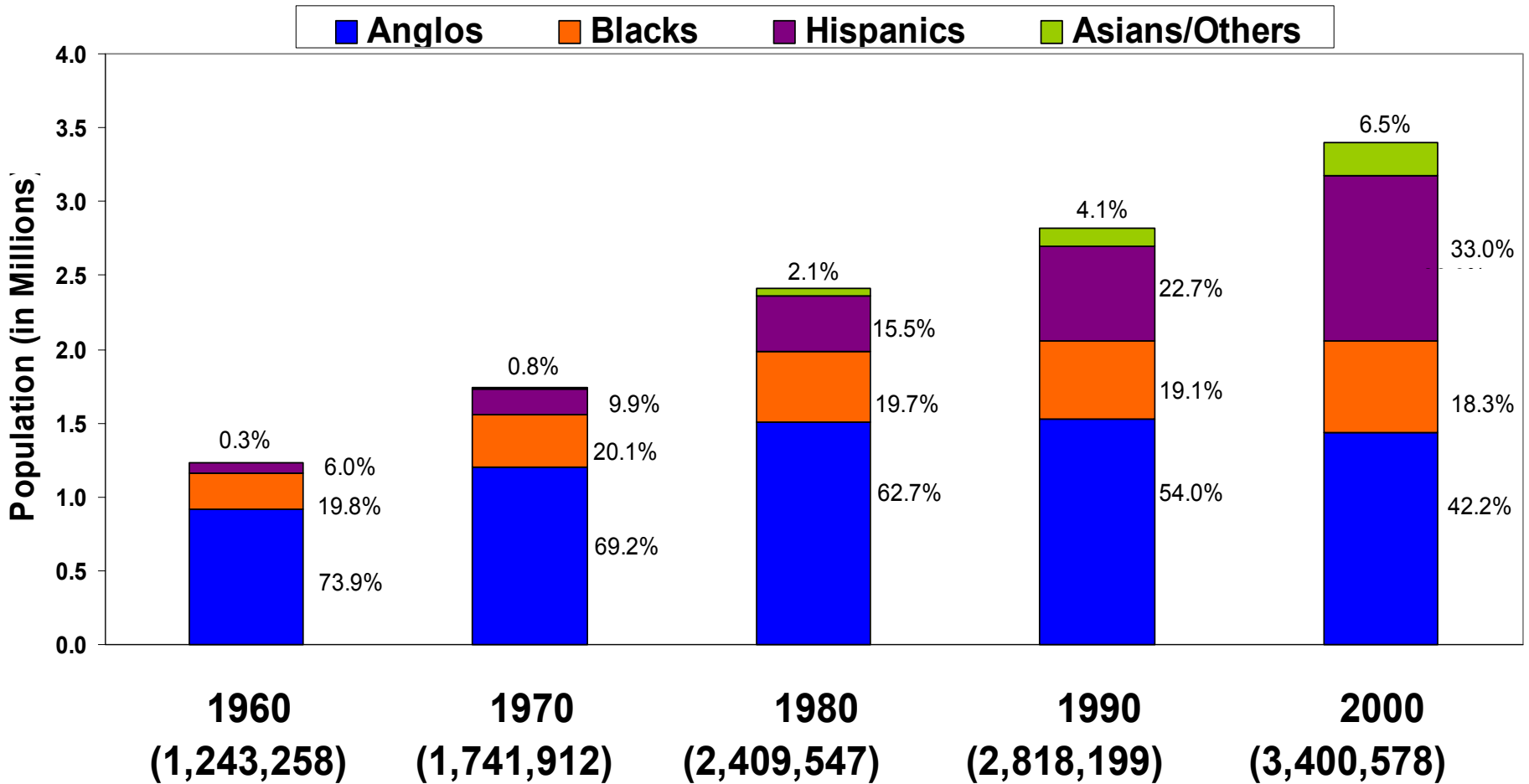


- Along with the major immigration capitals of L.A. and N.Y., closely following upon Miami, San Francisco, and Chicago, Houston is at the forefront of the new ethnicity that is re-fashioning the socio-political landscape of urban America.

- Throughout all of its history . . .
 - Houston was essentially a bi-racial Southern city,
 - Dominated and controlled, in a taken-for-granted way, by white men.

- Today . . .
 - This is one of the most culturally diverse metropolitan areas in the country.
 - All of Houston's ethnic communities are now "minorities."

FIGURE 2: THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATIONS OF HARRIS COUNTY (1960-2000)



Source: U.S. Census (www.census.gov); classifications based on Texas State Data Center conventions; total populations are given in parentheses.

INTERACTIONS OF ETHNICITY AND AGE



- Two ongoing revolutions: The “aging” and the “colorizing,” a.k.a. the “graying” and the “browning,” of America.
- Today’s seniors are primarily Anglos, and so are the 76 million babies born between 1946 and 1964, now 41 to 59. In the next 30 years, the numbers aged 65+ will double.
- The younger populations who will replace them are disproportionately non-Anglo and considerably less privileged.
- The “aging of America” is thus as much a division along ethnic lines as it is along generational lines.
- Nowhere is this transformation more clearly seen than in the Houston area.

FIGURE 3: THE PROPORTIONS IN FOUR AGE GROUPS WHO ARE ANGLO, BLACK, HISPANIC, AND ASIAN OR OTHER (2000-2005)

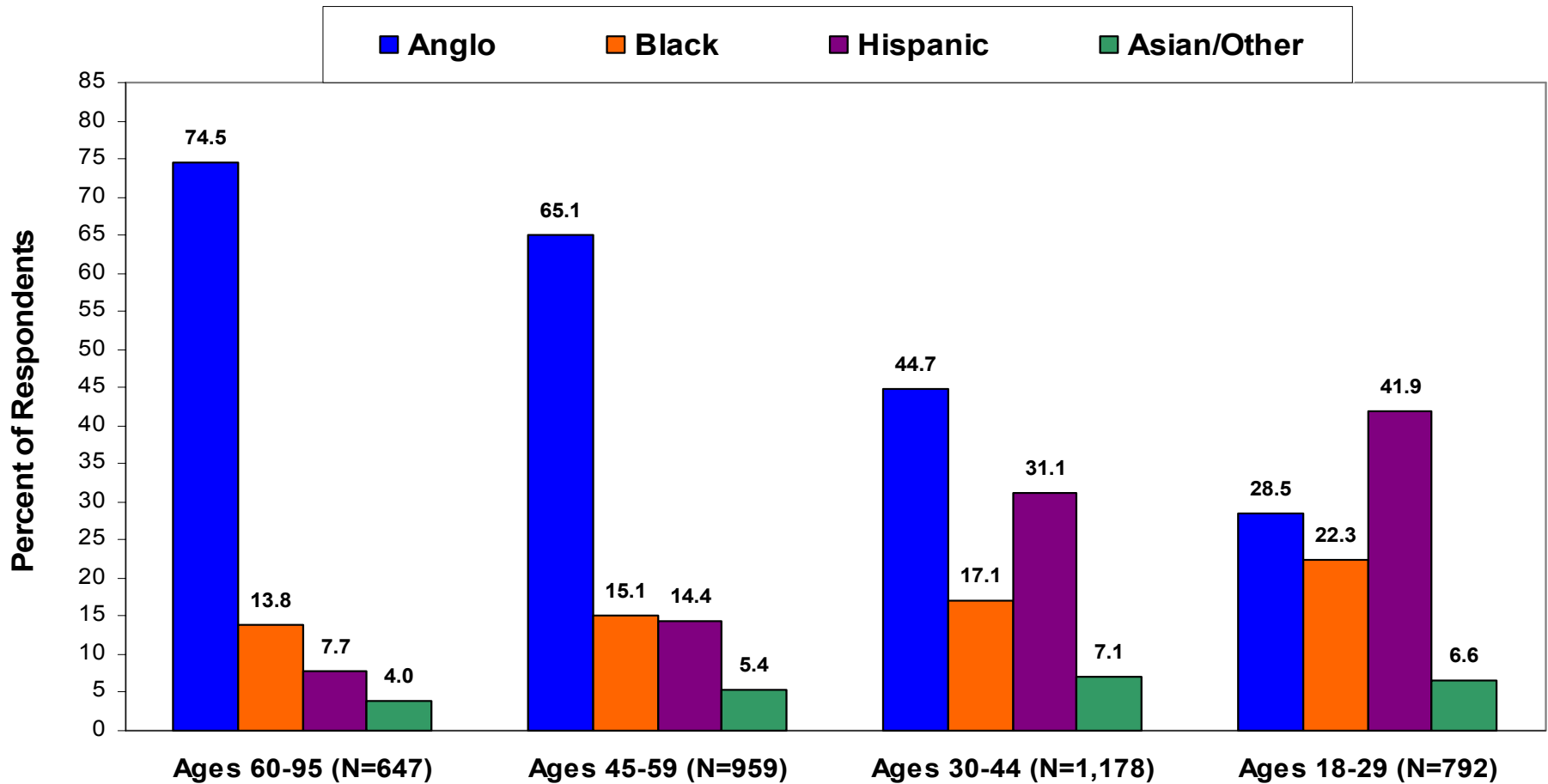
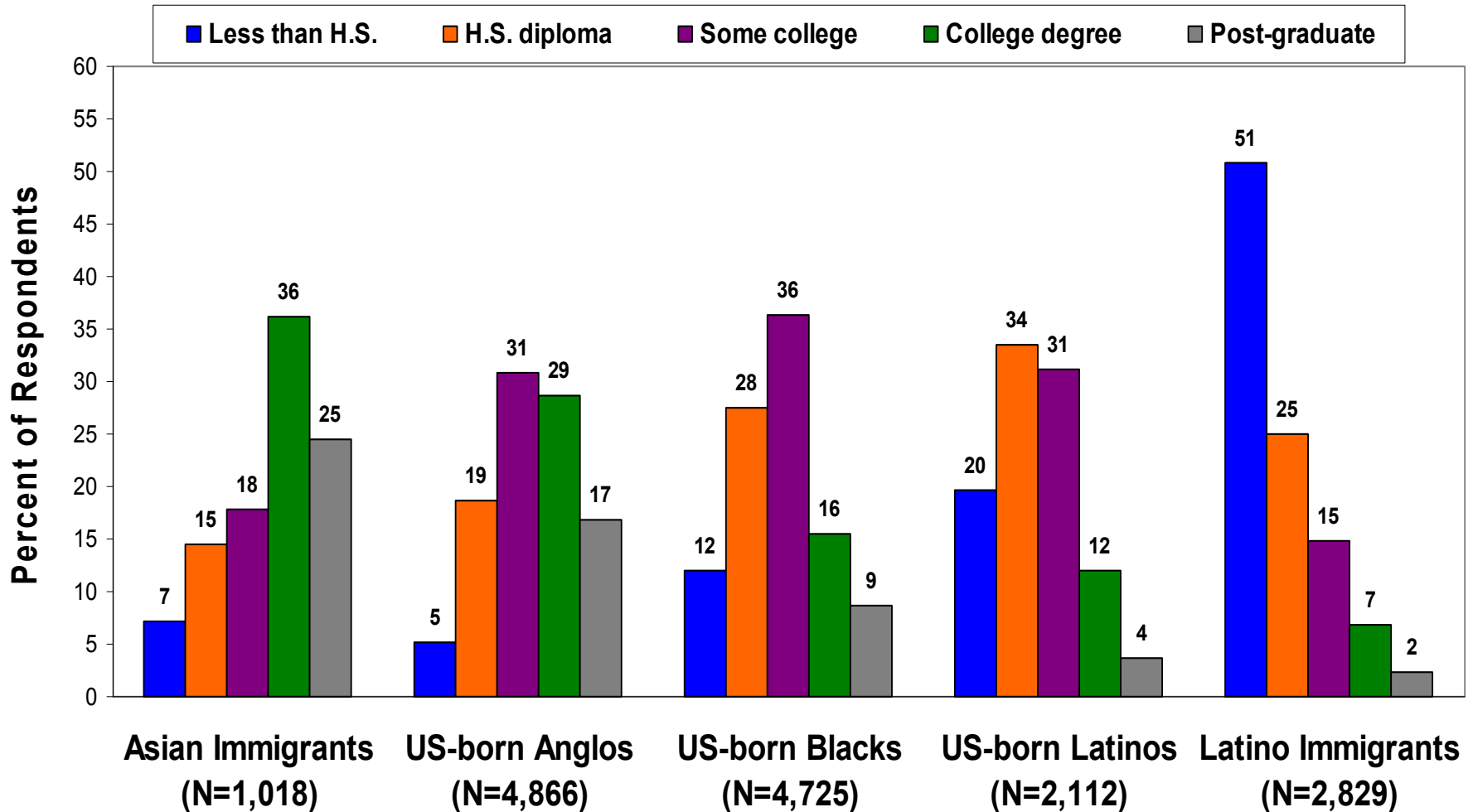


FIGURE 4: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN FIVE HOUSTON COMMUNITIES (1994-2005)



THREE IMPLICATIONS FOR HOUSTON AND AMERICA IN THE YEARS AHEAD



- This city and nation will need to nurture a far more educated workforce and develop effective policies to reduce the growing inequalities, which otherwise will result in a larger and more permanent urban underclass in the years ahead.
- Houston must continue to make progress in becoming a more environmentally and aesthetically appealing urban destination, in order to attract and retain the nation's most innovative companies and talented individuals.
- If the region is to flourish in the new century, it will need to develop into a much more inclusive and unified multiethnic society, one with true equality of opportunity, where all can participate as full partners in shaping the Houston future.

CONTACT INFORMATION



**Professor Stephen L. Klineberg
Department of Sociology, MS-28
Rice University, P. O. Box 1892
Houston, Texas 77251-1892**

Telephone: 713-348-3484 or 713-665-2010

email address: slk@rice.edu

Web: www.houstonareasurvey.org