



RICE UNIVERSITY  
**KINDER**  
INSTITUTE  
FOR URBAN RESEARCH

# **THE NEW PRO-GROWTH AGENDA: Perspectives from 30 Years of Houston Surveys**

***STEPHEN L. KLINEBERG***

Meeting of the Houston Chapter of the  
Texas Economic & Demographic Association

21 April 2011



# **THE 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.**

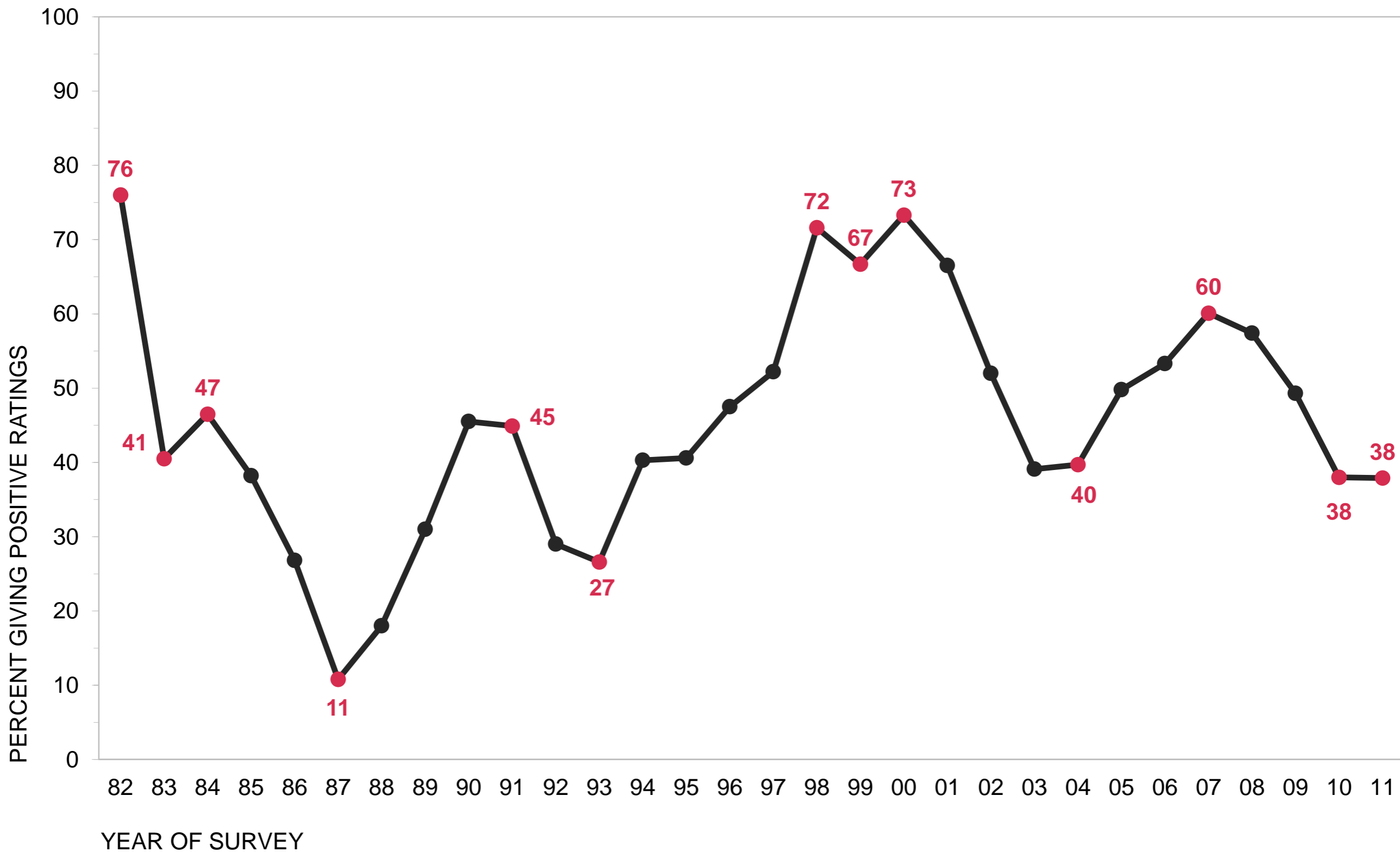
**In May 1982, just two months after the first Houston Area Survey was completed, the 80-year oil boom suddenly collapsed.**

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

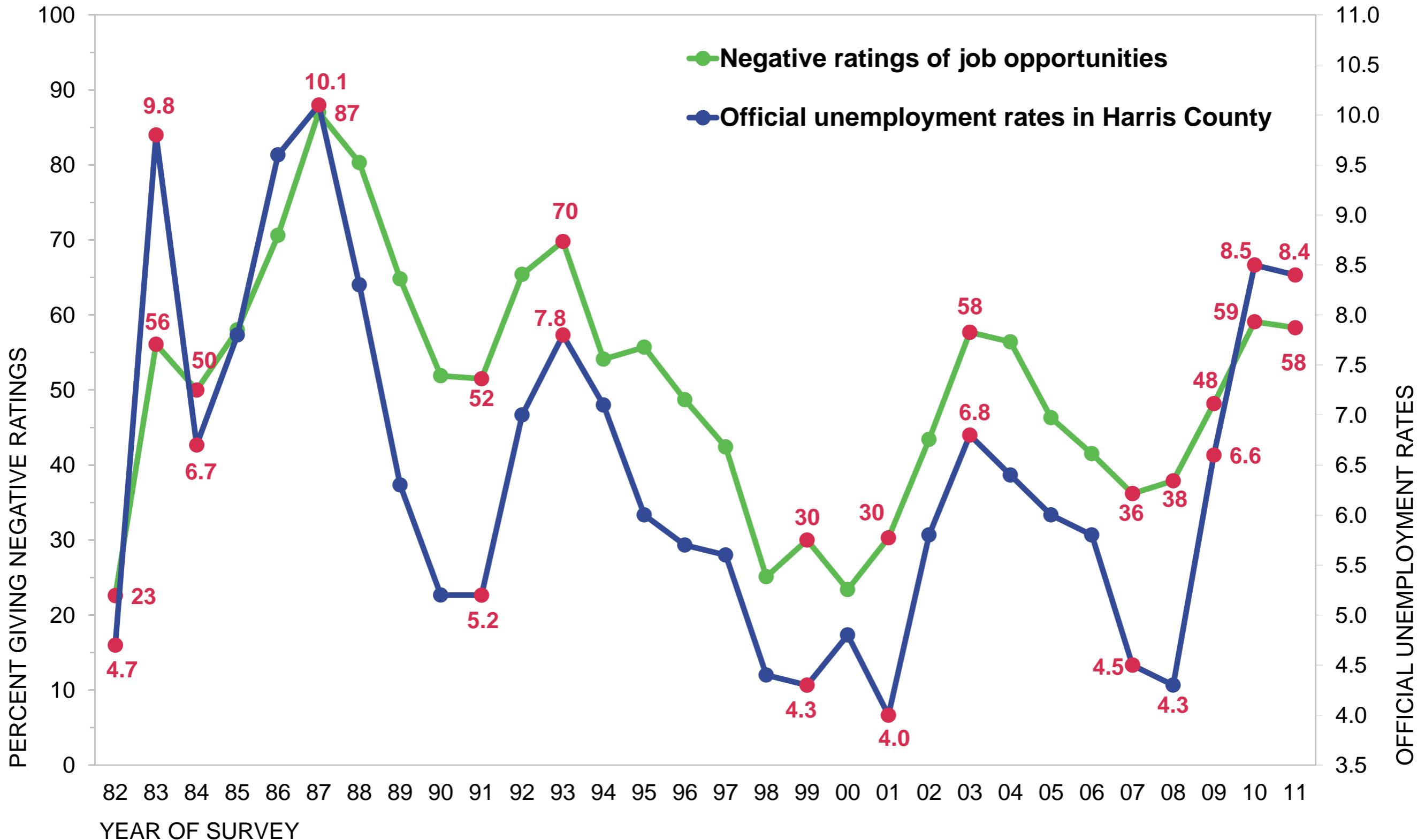
- a restructured economy and**
- a demographic revolution.**

**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

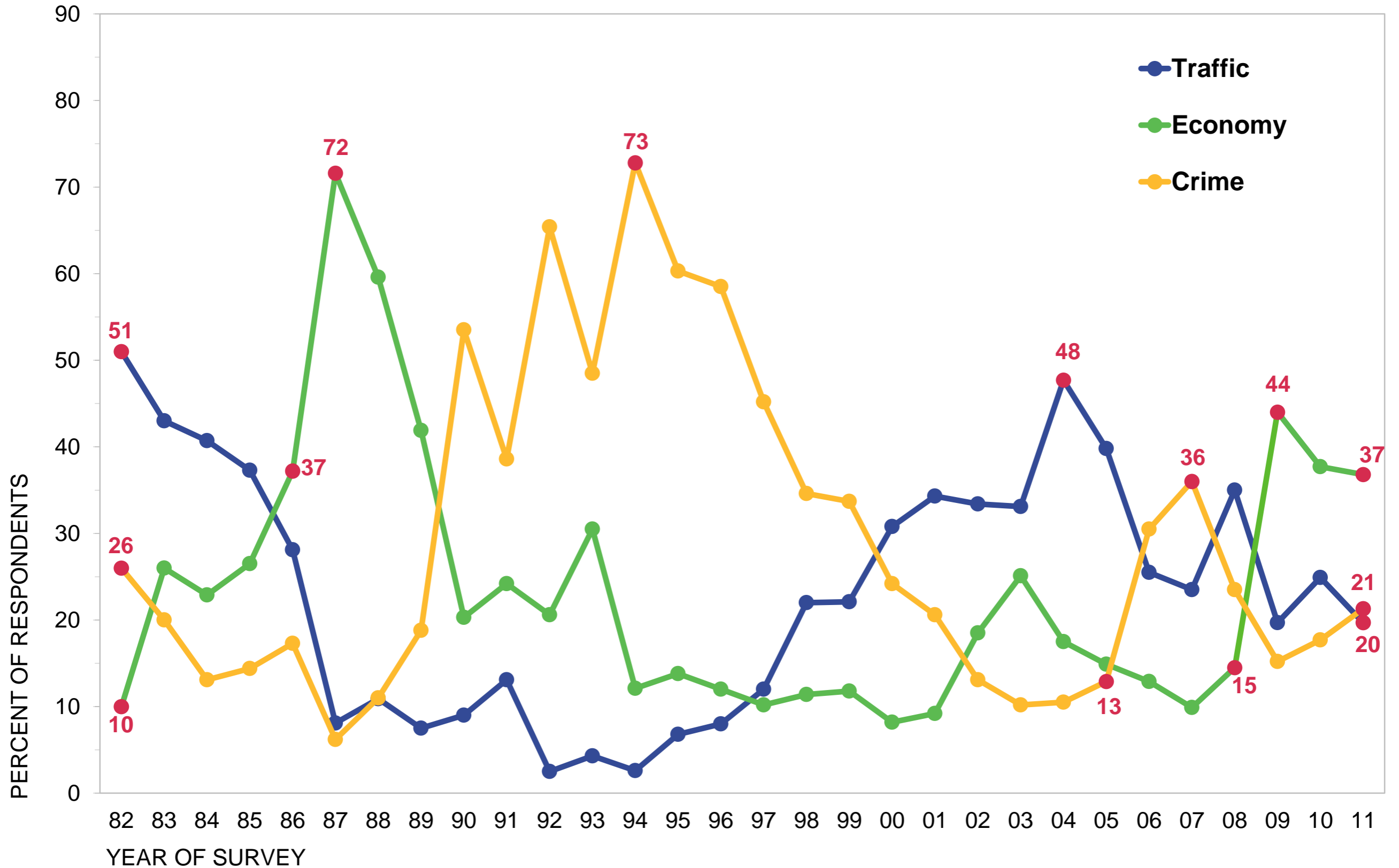


# NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND THE REALITIES IN HOUSTON

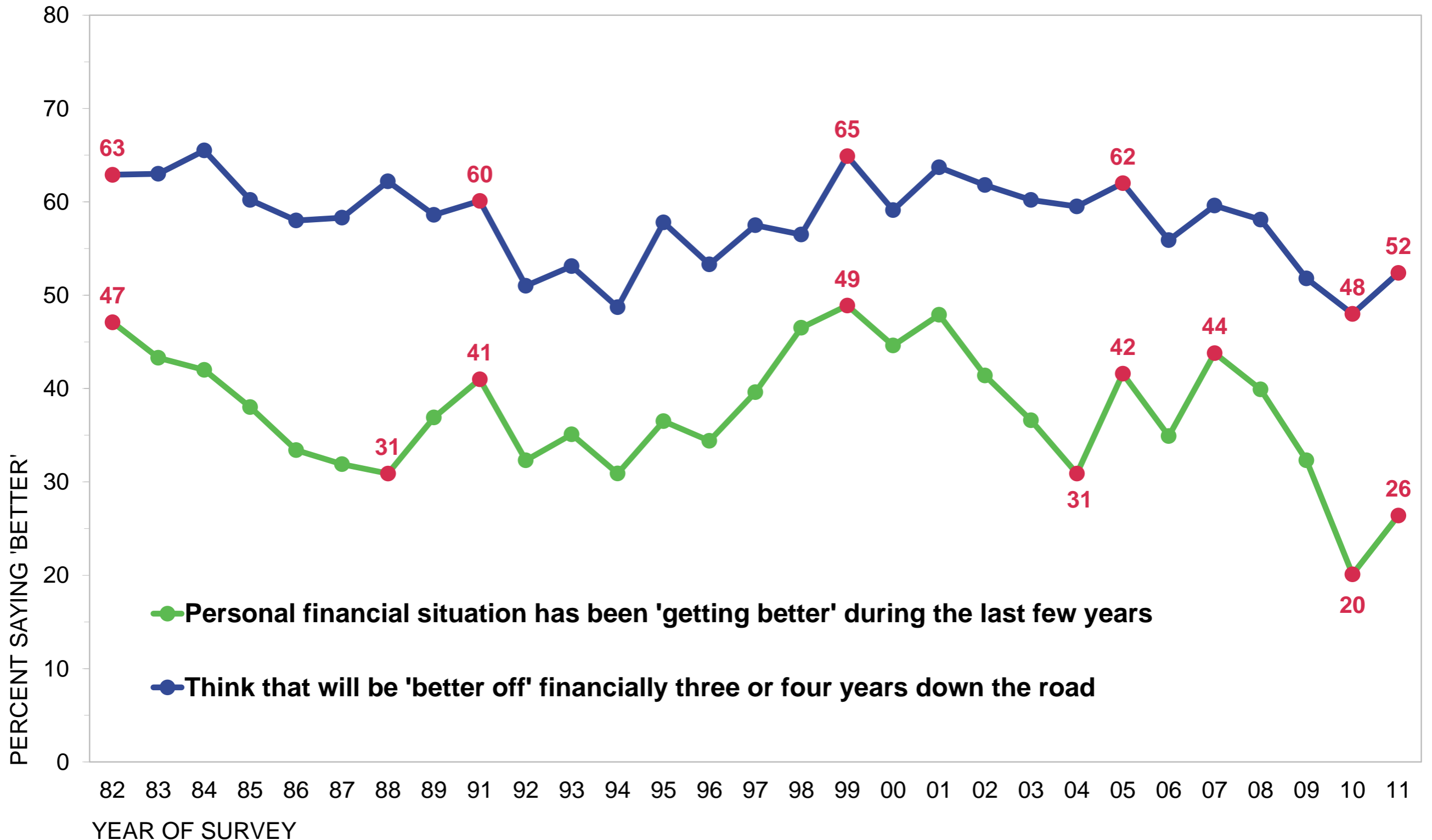


SOURCE: US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES ARE NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED.

# WHAT IS THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN THE HOUSTON AREA TODAY? (1982-2011)



# PERCENT DOING BETTER FINANCIALLY IN THE LAST FEW YEARS AND EXPECTING TO DO BETTER IN THE 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**The “resource economy” of the industrial era, for which this city was so favorably positioned, has been replaced by a new high-tech, knowledge-based, fully worldwide marketplace.**

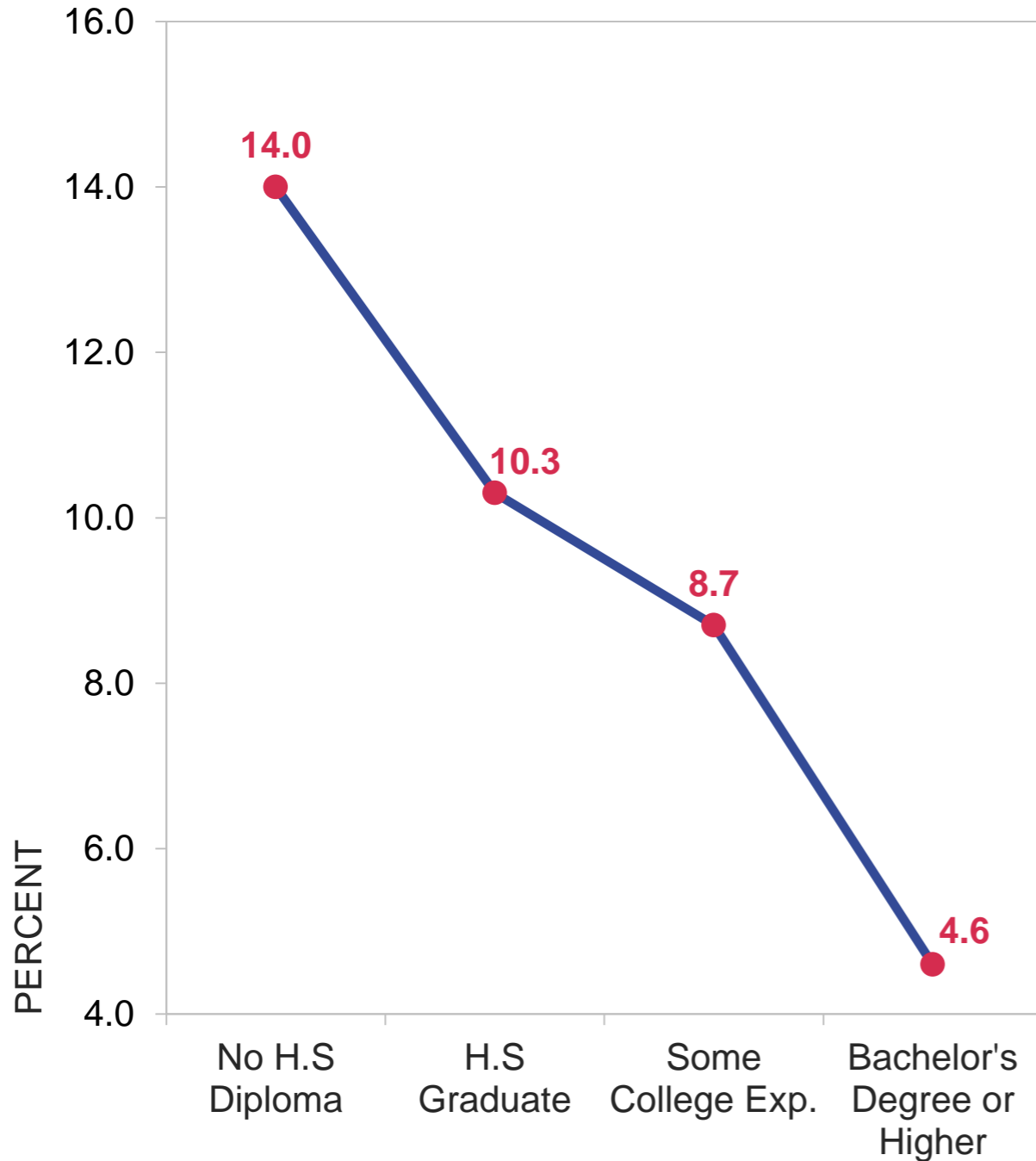
**The traditional “blue collar path” to financial security has now largely disappeared. Almost all the good-paying jobs today require high levels of technical skills and educational credentials.**

**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.”**

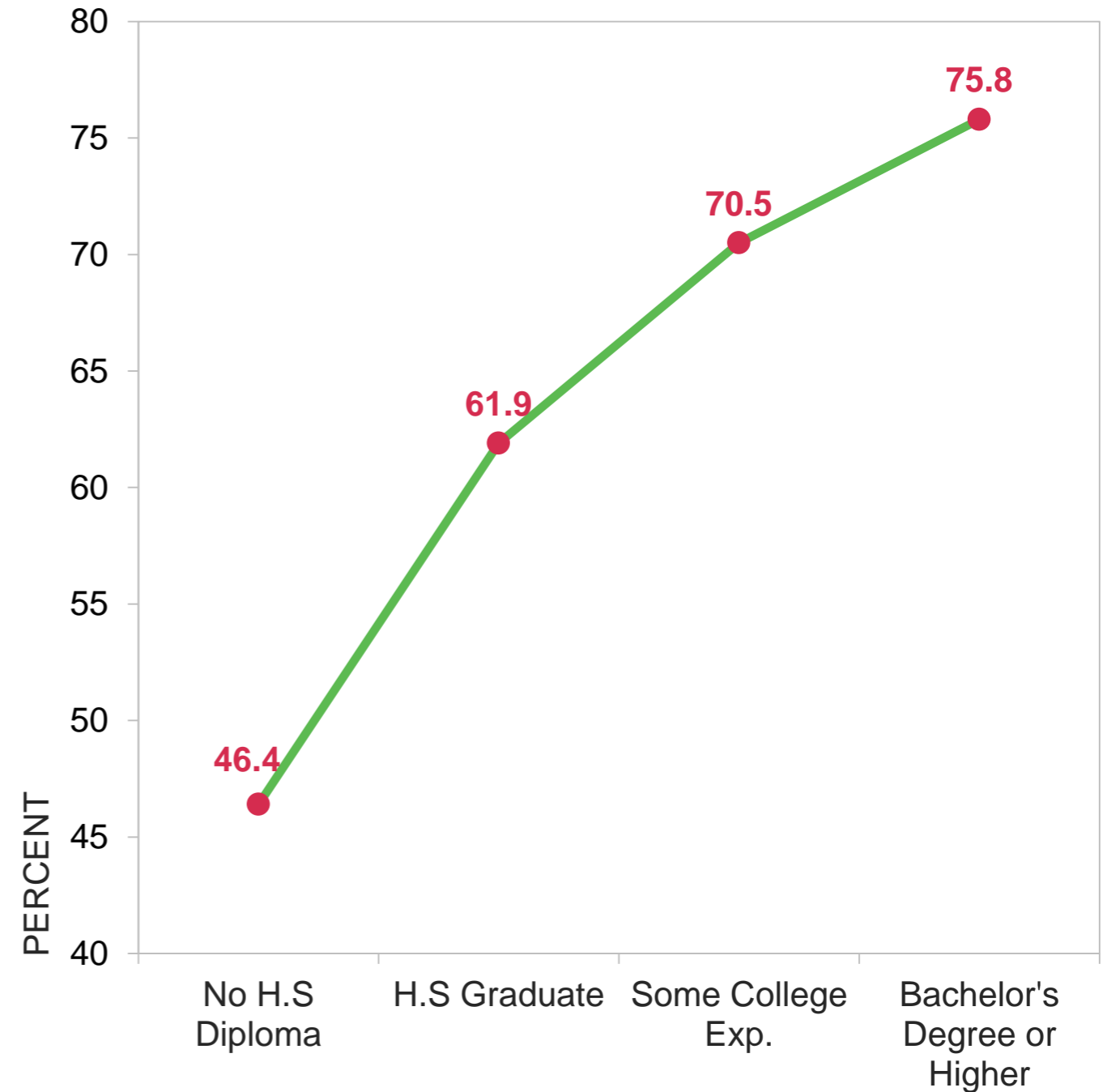
**In this increasingly unequal, hourglass economy, “What you earn,” as the saying goes, “depends on what you’ve learned.”**

# THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON EMPLOYMENT (US POPULATION OVER 25)

## Unemployment Rate

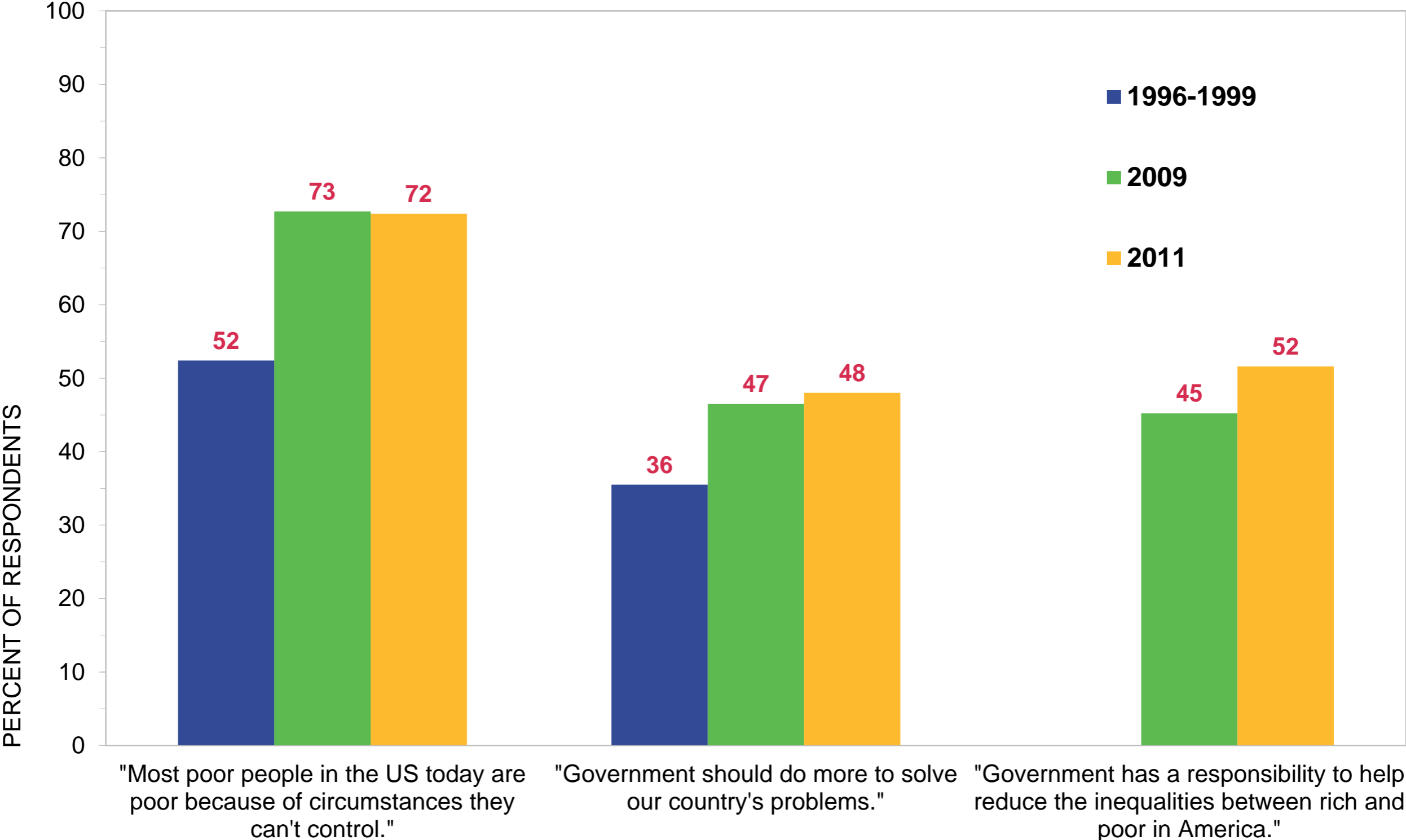


## Participation Rate

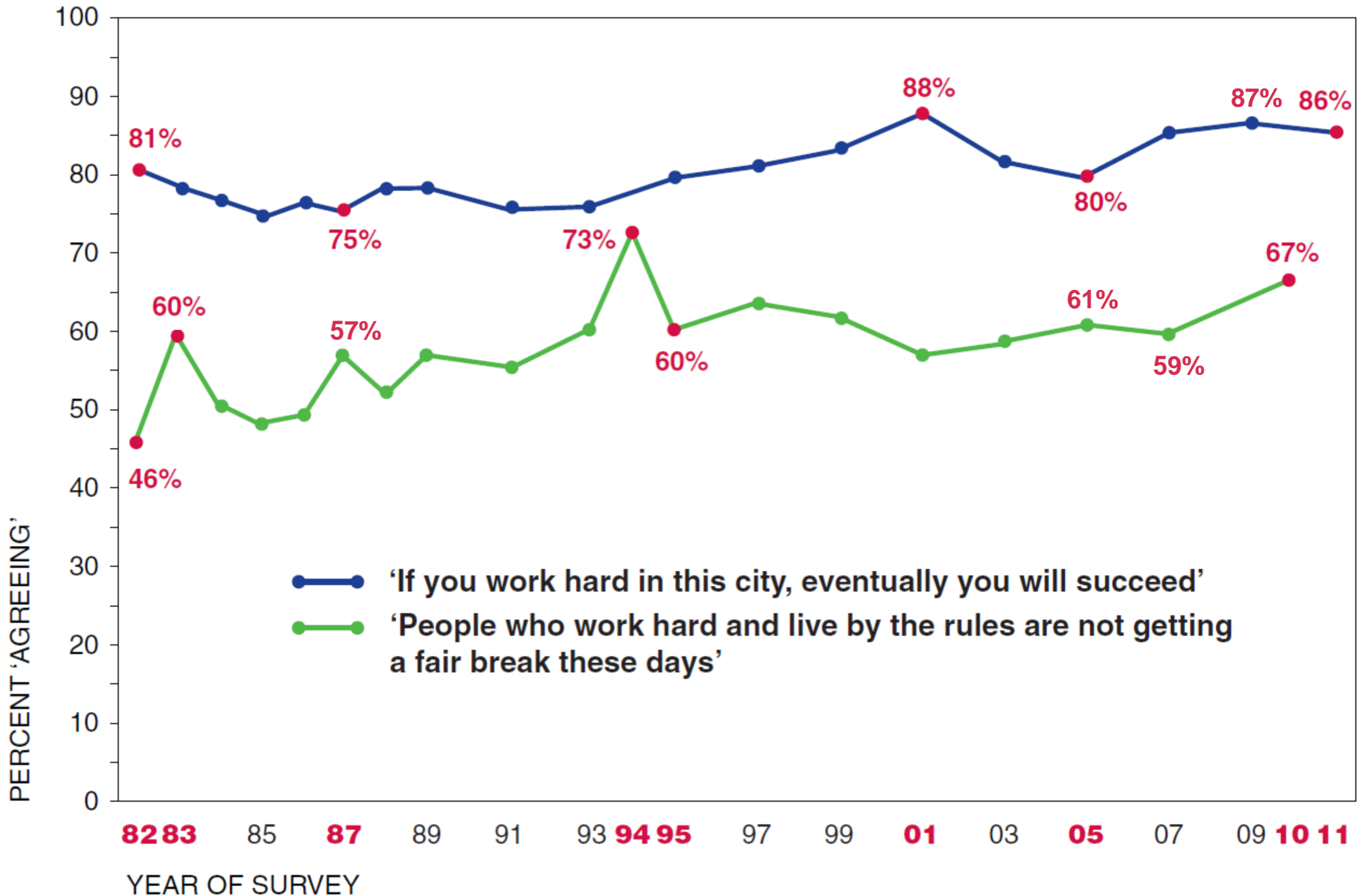


SOURCE: US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS. AUGUST 2010 REPORT, RATES ARE SEASONALLY ADJUSTED.

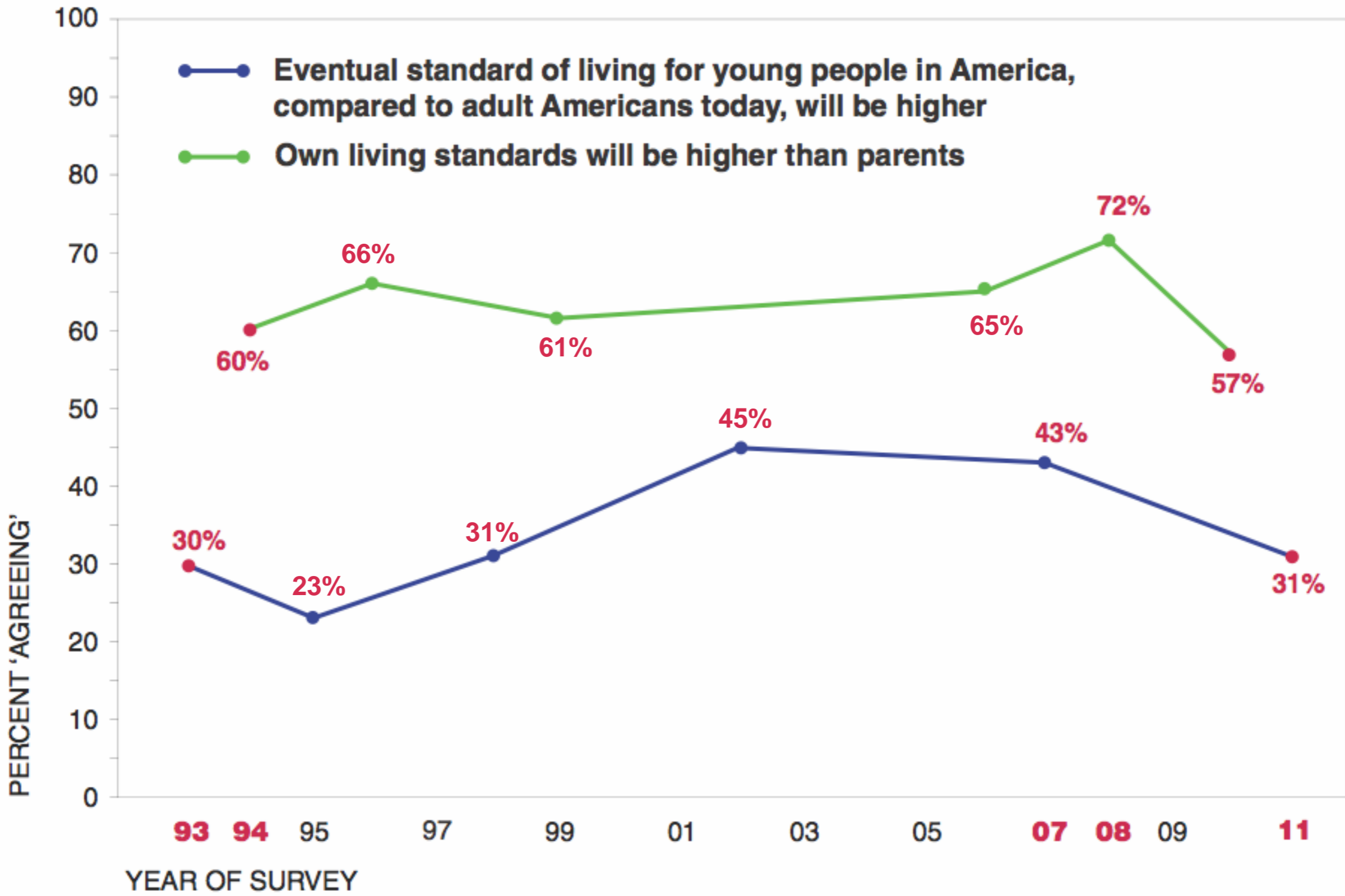
# SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE INEQUALITIES



# TWO MEASURES OF BELIEF IN THE 'AMERICAN WORK ETHIC' (1982-2011)



# BELIEFS ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR GENERATIONAL ADVANCE



# **QUALITY OF PLACE CONSIDERATIONS**

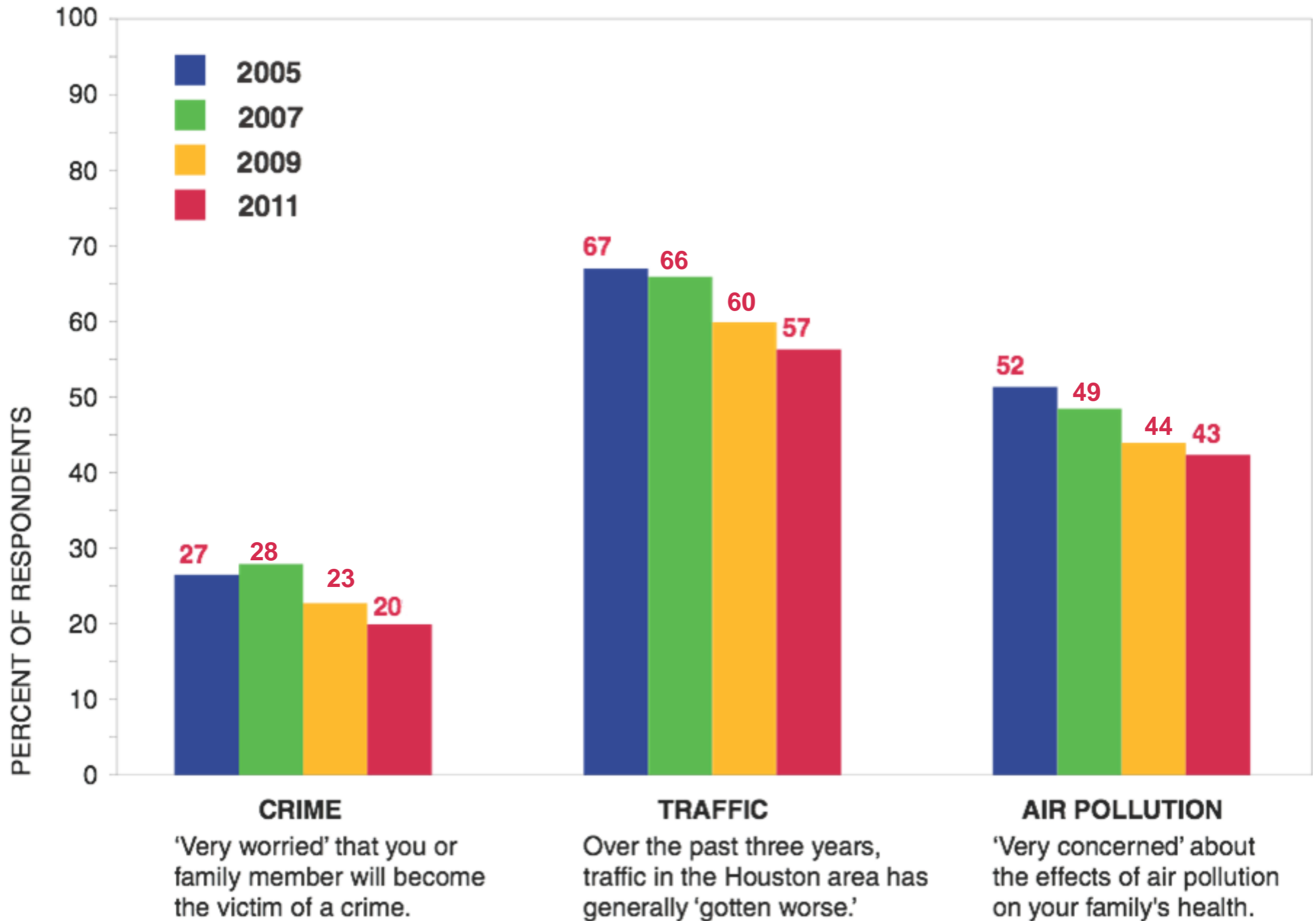
**Houston's prospects will now increasingly depend on the city's ability to attract and retain the nation's most skilled and creative "knowledge workers" and high tech companies.**

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

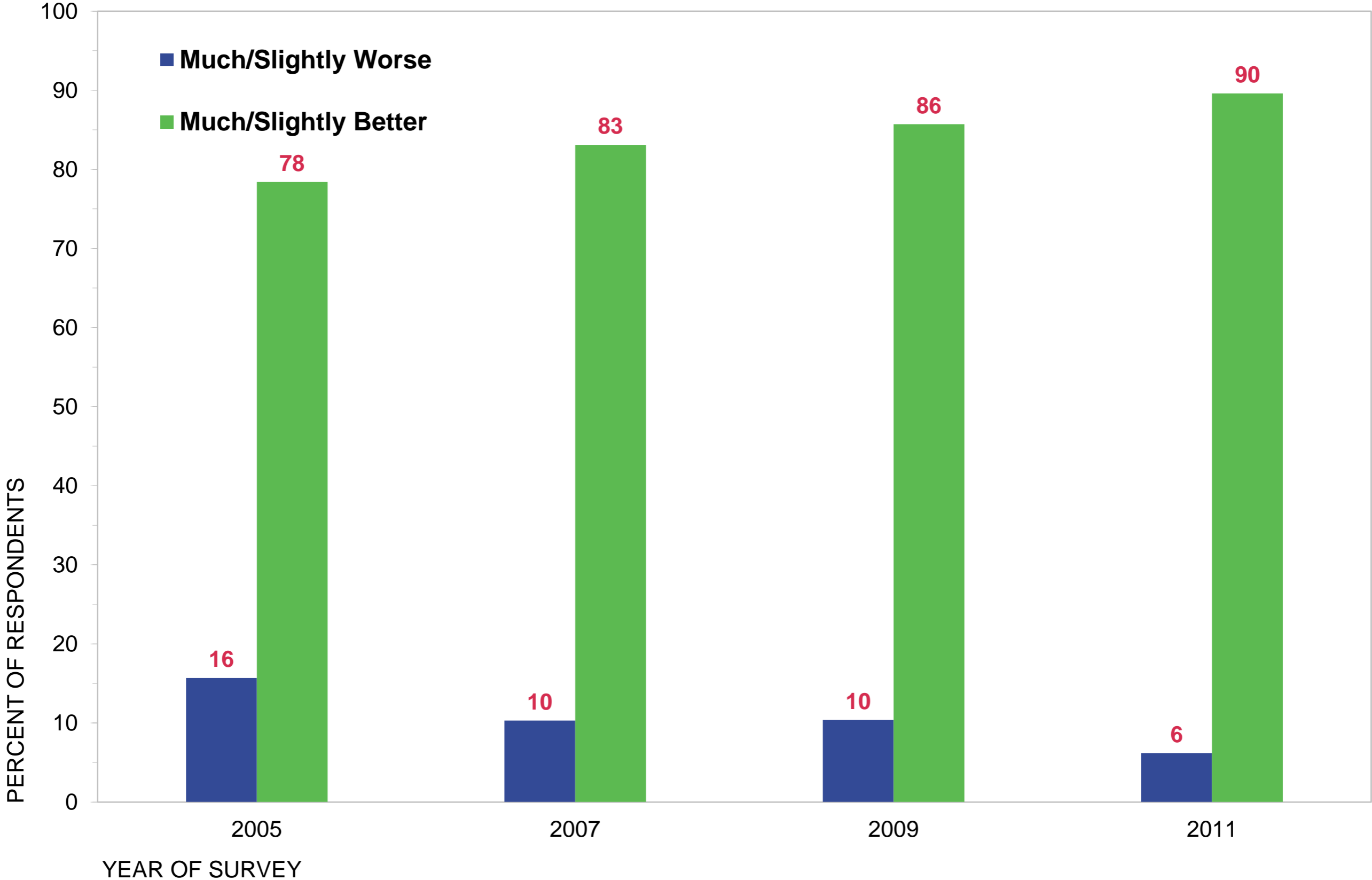
- **the healthfulness of the region's air and water quality**
- **the excellence of its venues for sports, arts, and culture**
- **its overall physical attractiveness and aesthetic appeal**
- **the enhancement of its green spaces, trees, and bayous**
- **the revitalization and preservation of its urban 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.**

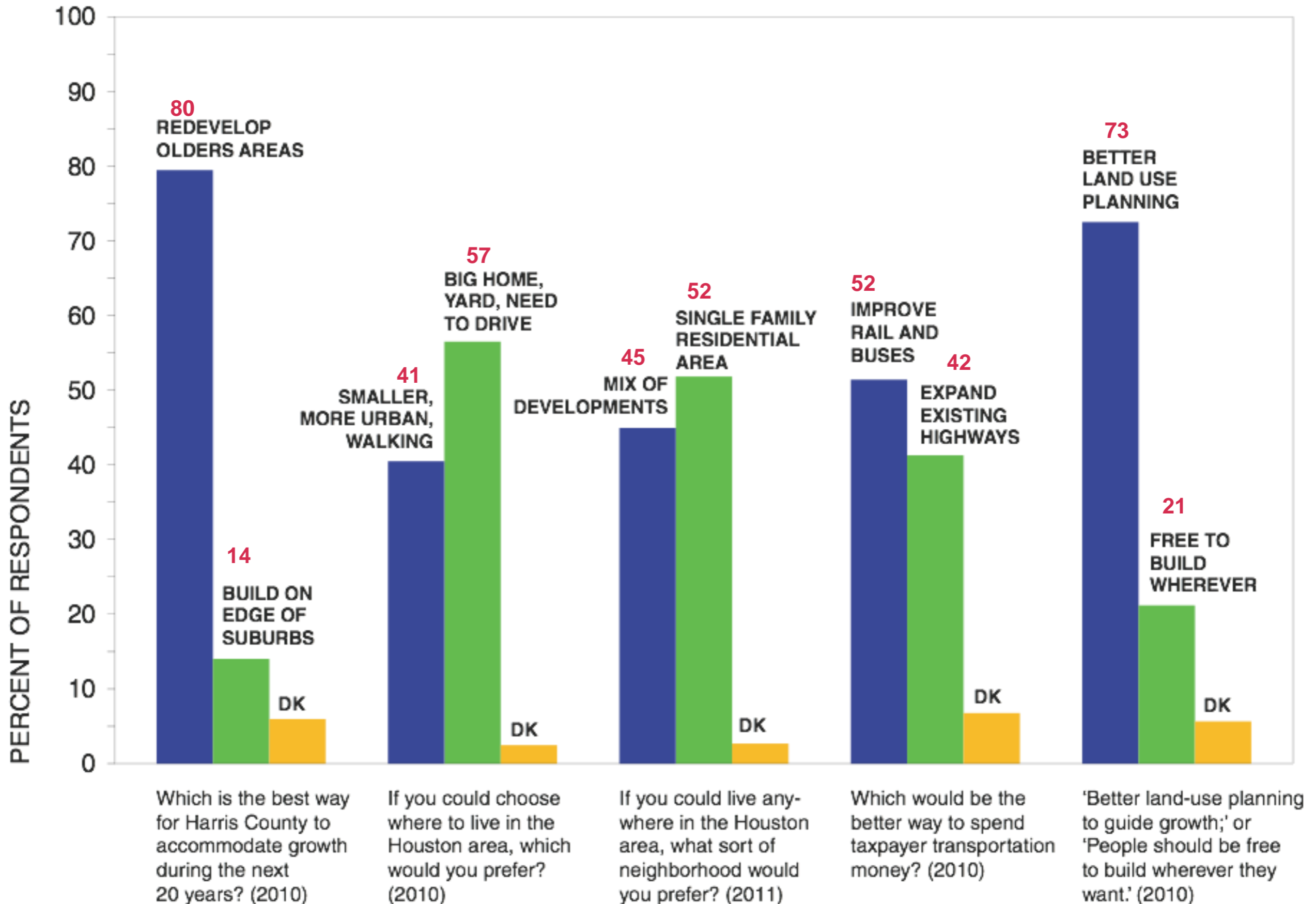
# LESSENING CONCERNS ABOUT CRIME, TRAFFIC AND AIR POLLUTION



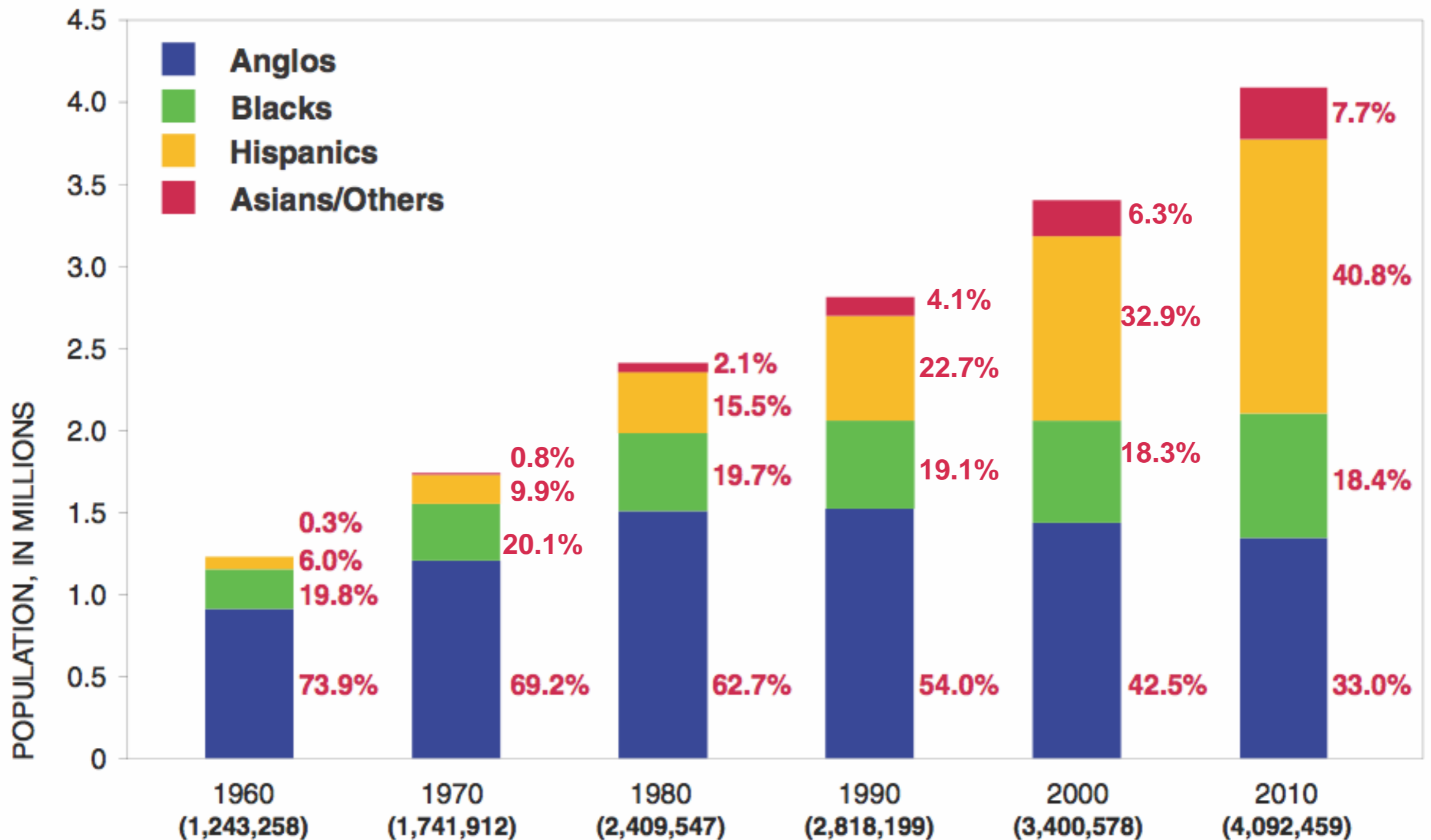
# LIFE IN HOUSTON COMPARED TO OTHER US CITIES



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

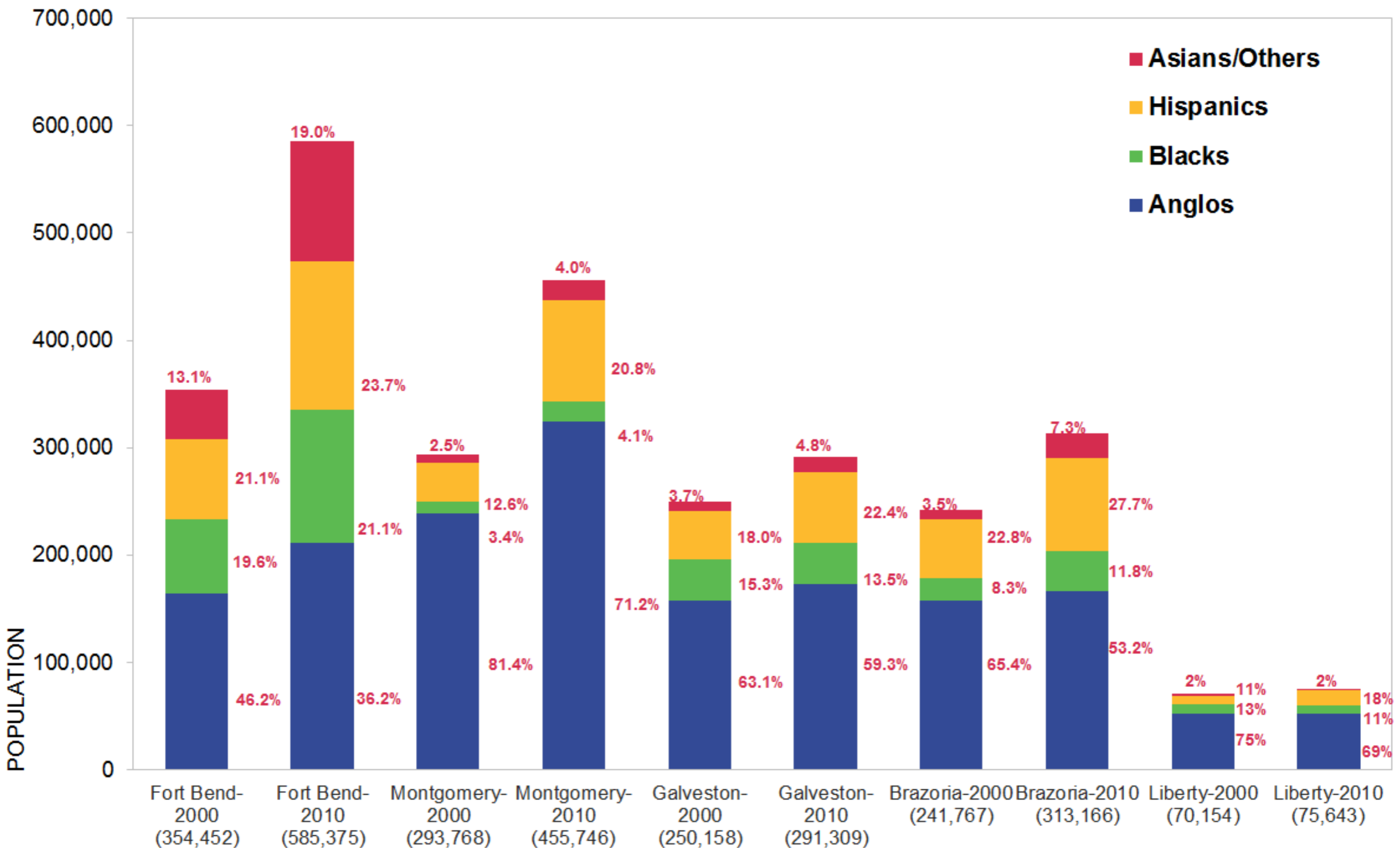


# THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION OF HARRIS COUNTY (1960-2010)



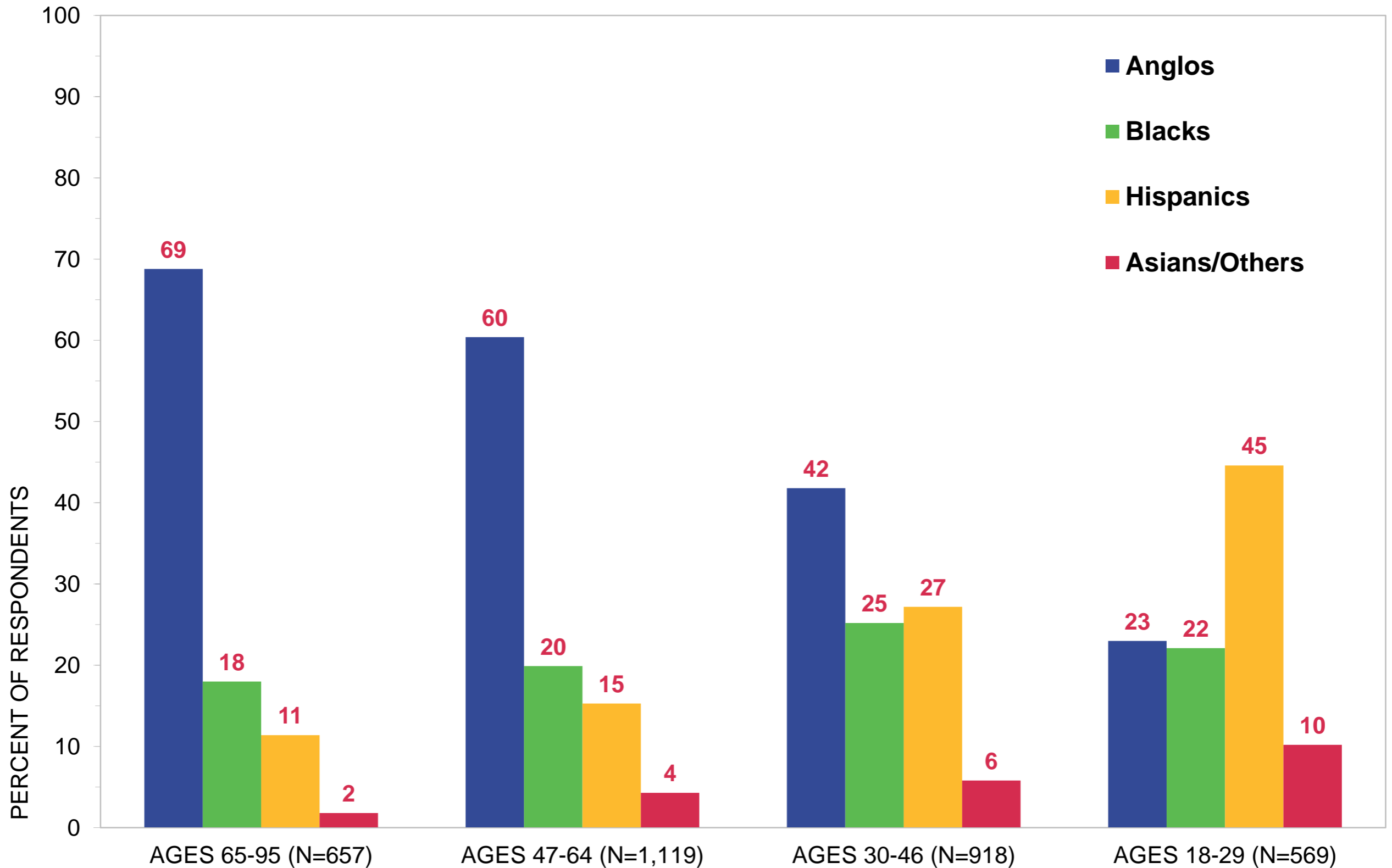
SOURCE: US CENSUS. CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON TEXAS STATE DATA CENTER CONVENTIONS.

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

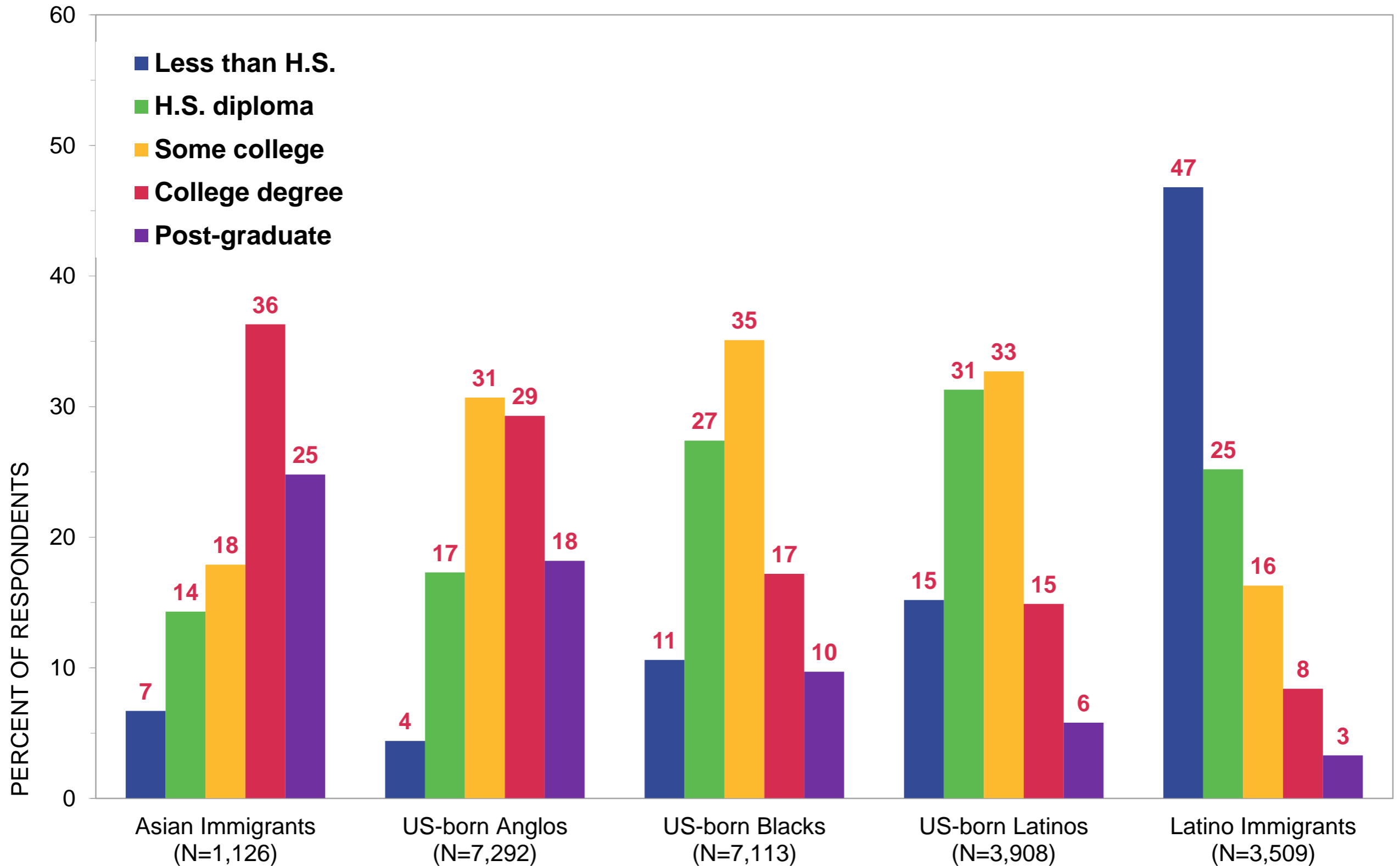


SOURCE: US CENSUS. CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON TEXAS STATE DATA CENTER CONVENTIONS

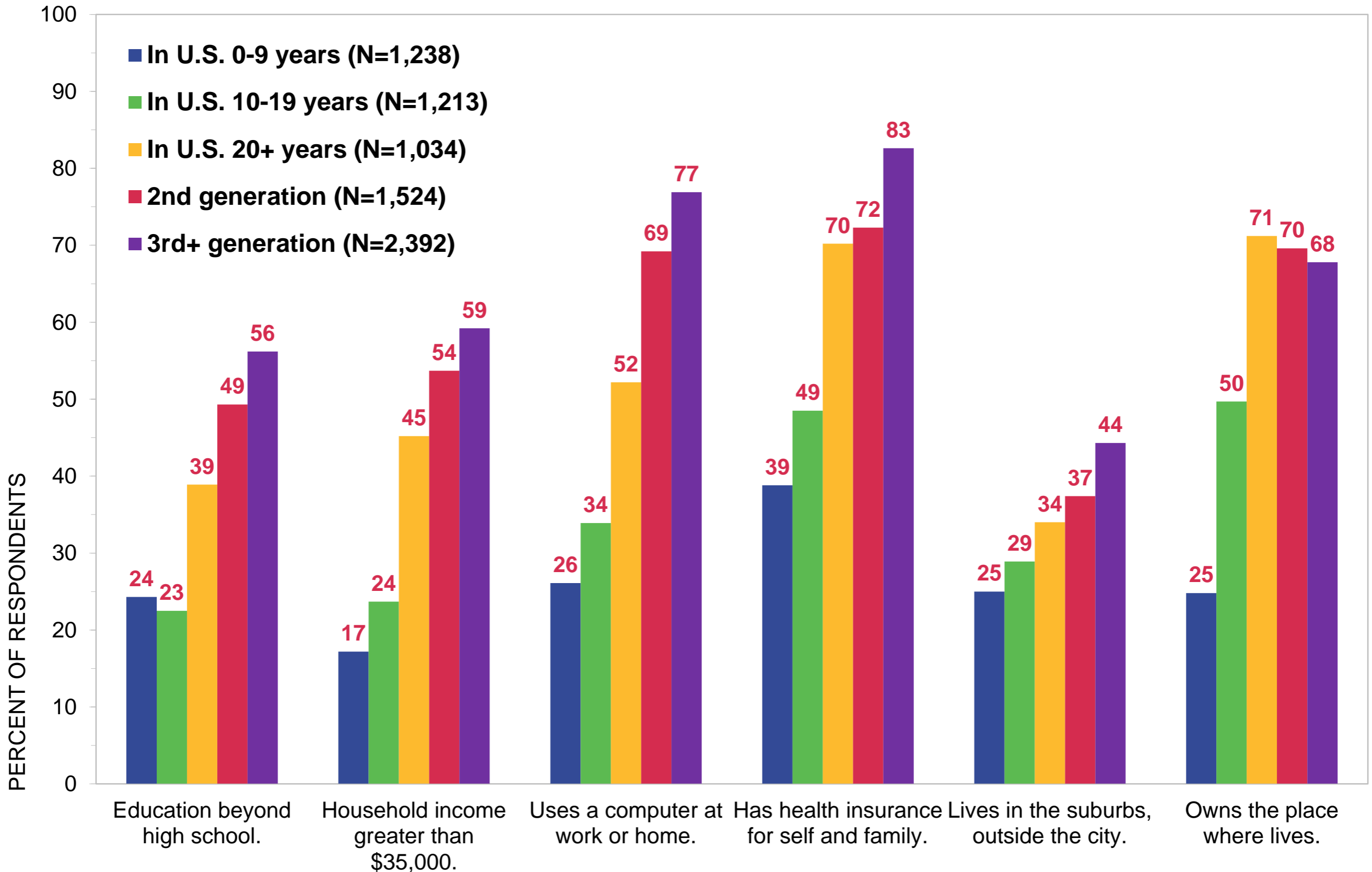
# ETHNICITY BY AGE IN HARRIS COUNTY (2007-2011 COMBINED)



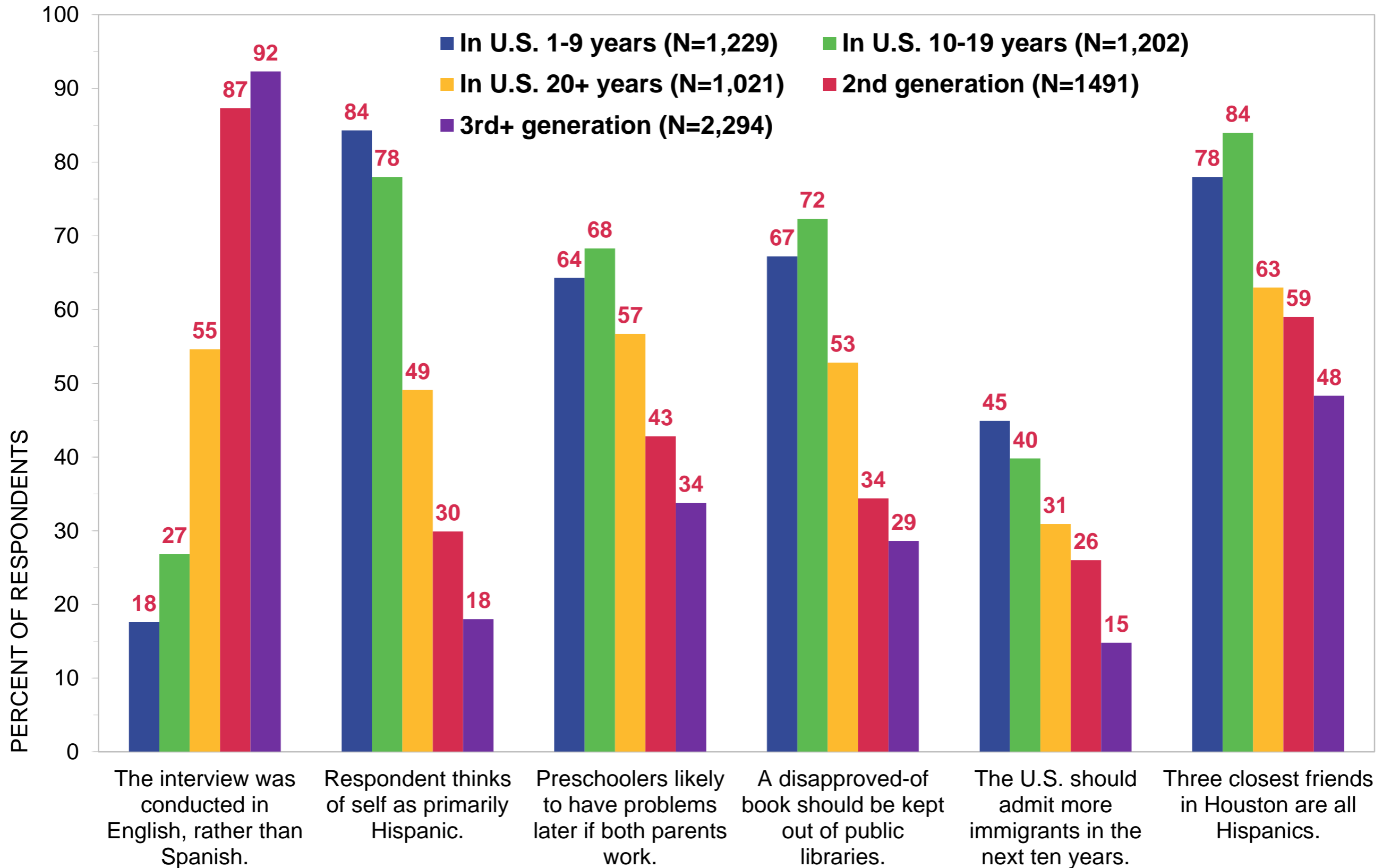
# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN FIVE HOUSTON COMMUNITIES (1994-2010)



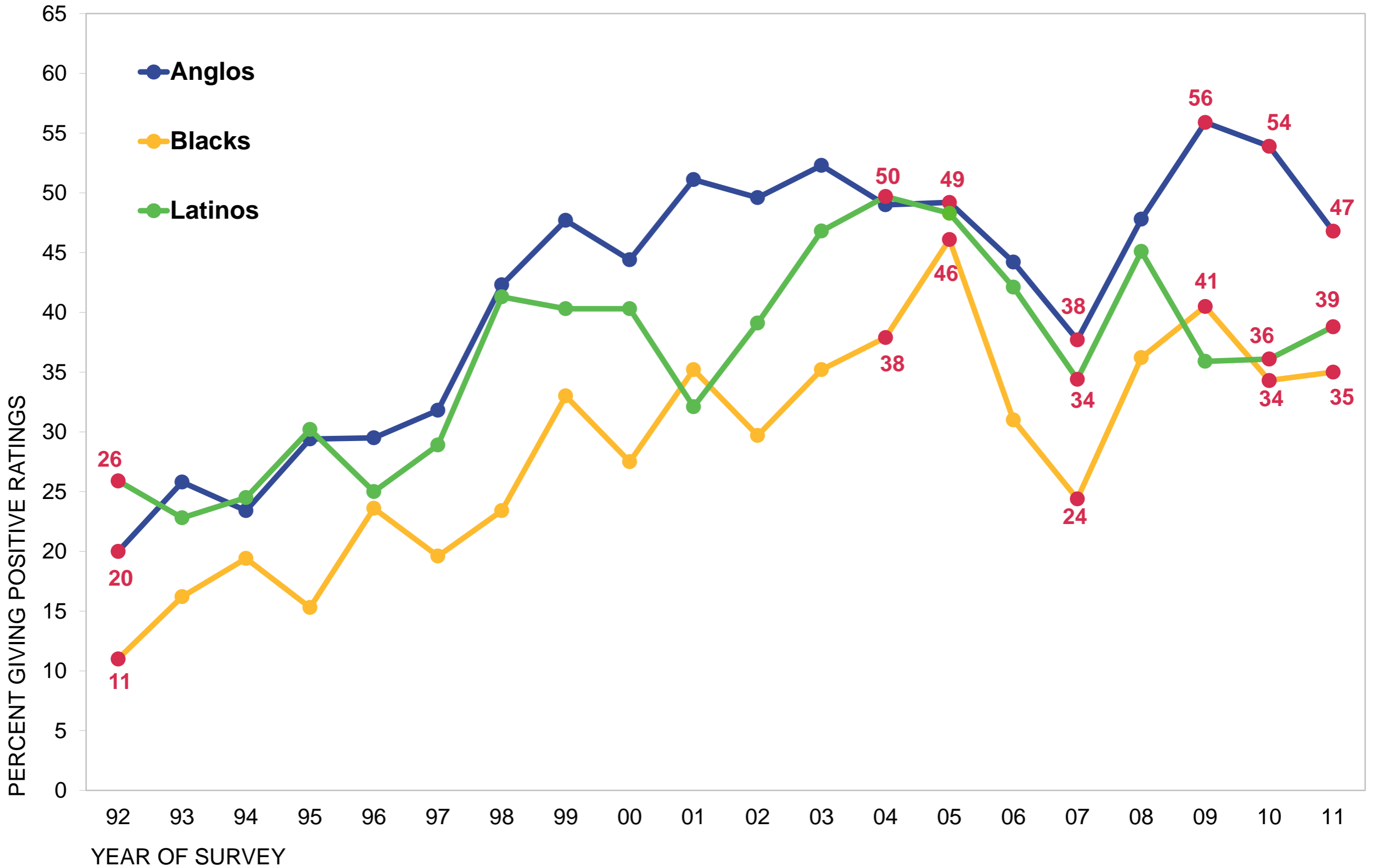
# SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AMONG LATINO IMMIGRANTS BY TIME IN U.S. AND BY GENERATION (1994-2010)



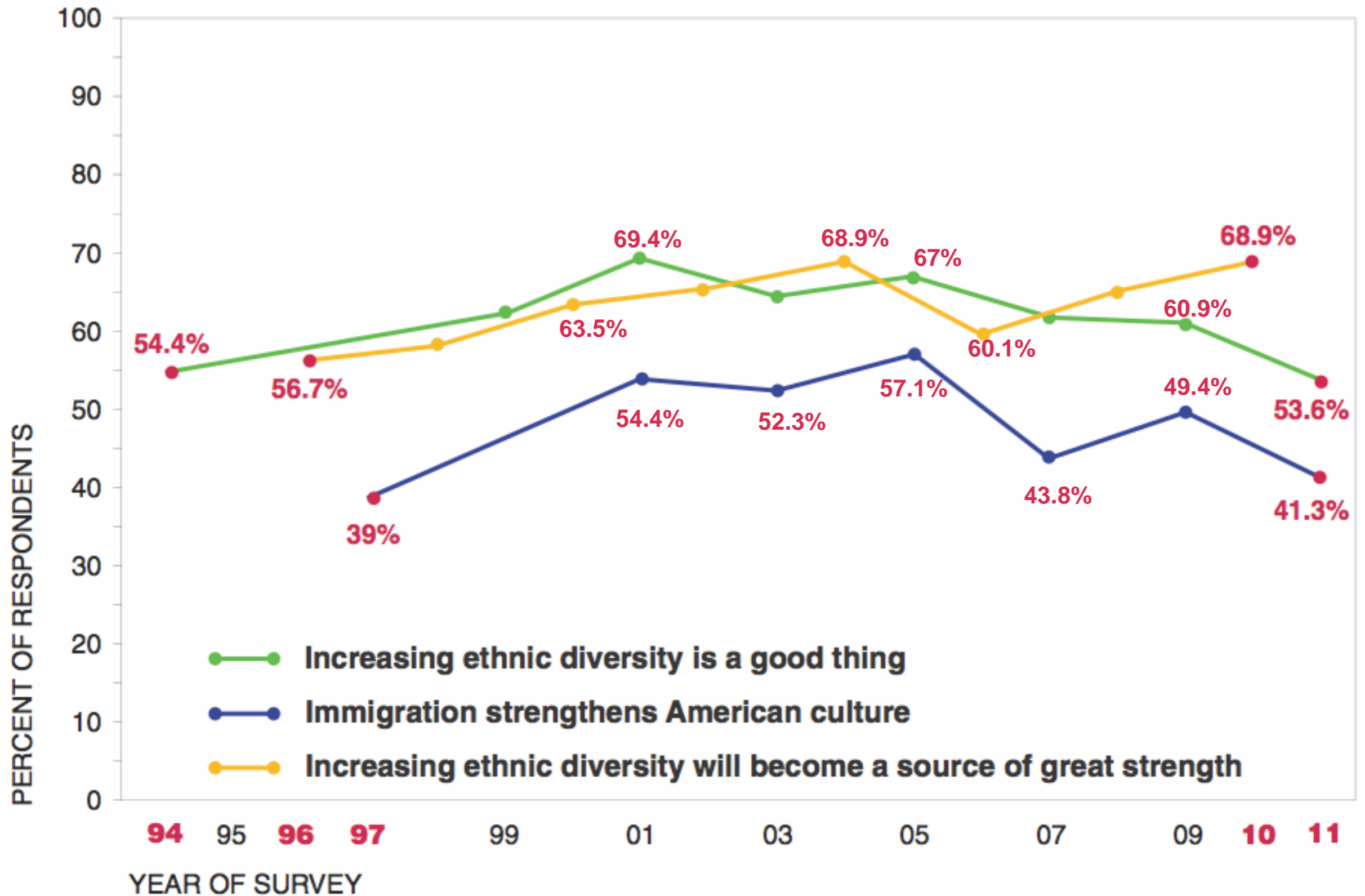
# ASSIMILATION AMONG LATINO IMMIGRANTS BY TIME IN THE U.S. AND BY GENERATION (1994-2010)



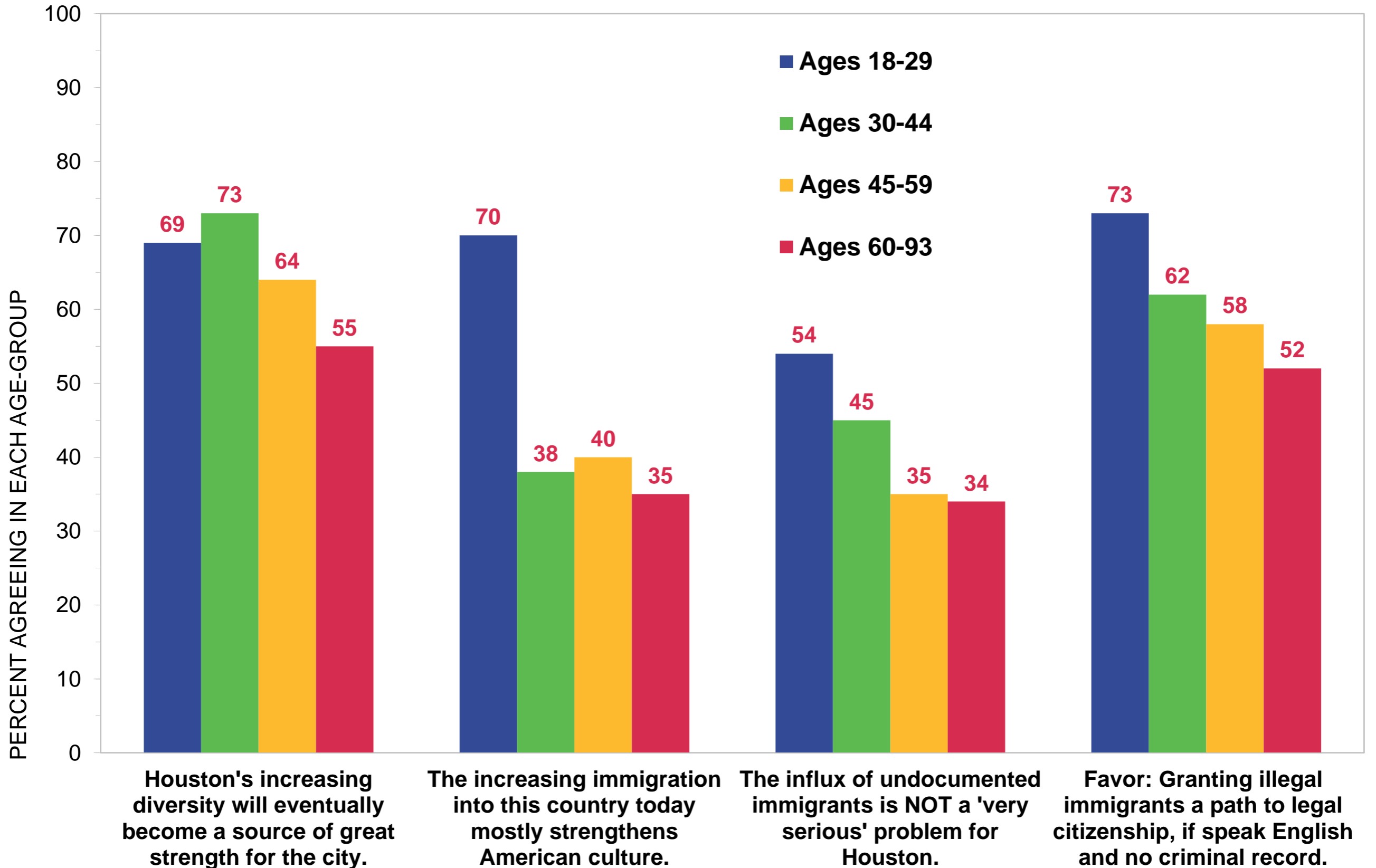
# ETHNIC RELATIONS IN HOUSTON BY ETHNICITY



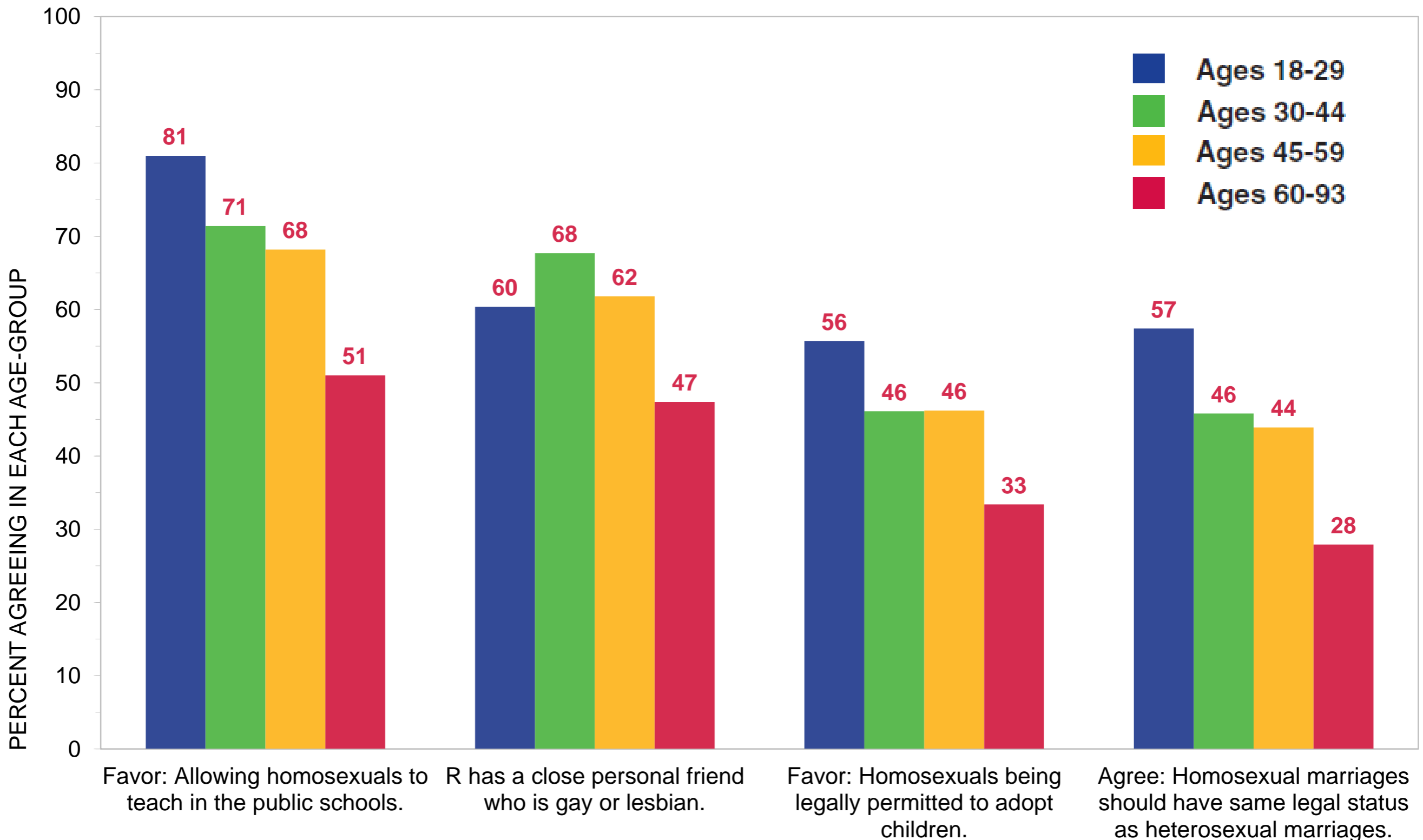
# ATTITUDES TOWARD ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN HOUSTON



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



# SUPPORT FOR GAY RIGHTS BY AGE AMONG ANGLOS (2000-2011, COMBINED)



# **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2011 SURVEY**

**The economic outlooks among Harris County residents have improved somewhat compared to last year, but there is little confidence that we have entered into a sustained recovery.**

**Area residents are more worried about the American future, but they are feeling better about Houston — about local crime, traffic, and air pollution — and they are even more enthusiastic than in past years about the Houston area as a place to live.**

**Houston's burgeoning diversity, poised to grow even faster in the years ahead, is creating deep ambivalence and mixed reactions. Younger Anglos are considerably more comfortable with the demographic transformations than are older Anglos.**

# 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 from six major sectors of the greater Houston area, 2007
- or to download additional reports and PowerPoint slides

Please visit the institute's website:

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