

PewResearchCenter

# Unauthorized Immigrants: Trends and Perspectives

**Jeffrey S. Passel**

*Senior Demographer*

***Migrant Labor and Global Health***

University of California Davis

Davis, California — 2–3 March

# The Larger Picture (1)

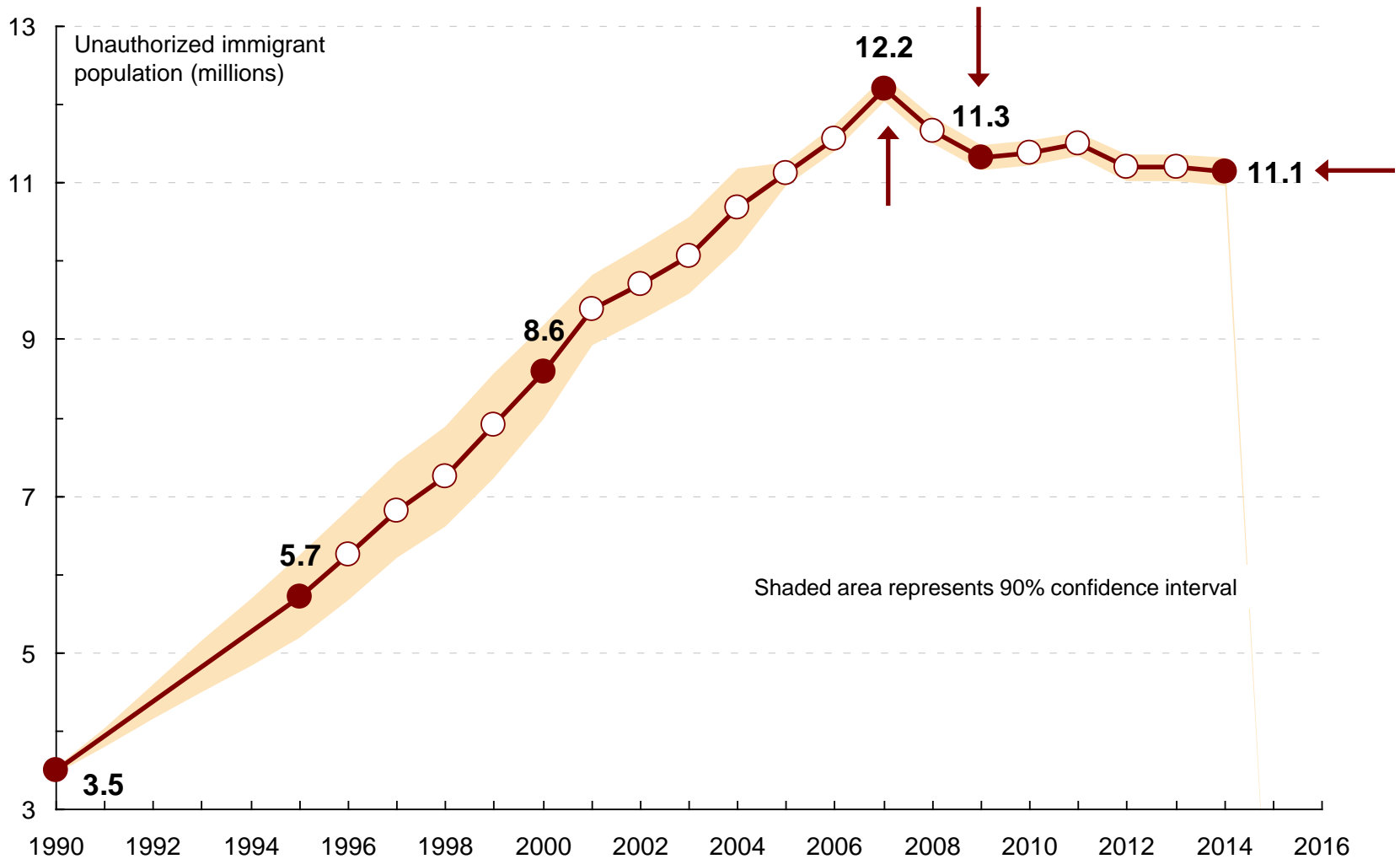
- **Unauthorized Immigrant Growth Stopped as of '09**
  - Unauthorized Population Growth Reversed in '07
  - Unauthorized Population Unchanged since '09
  - Many Fewer New Arrivals; Departures up in '07-'08
- **Decreasing Mexican Population in U.S. '07-'10**
  - Driven by a Large Drop in Unauthorized '07-'12
  - No Real Change in Numbers after '12
  - Traditional Pattern of Large NET Movement to US
    - Stopped with Net ZERO for '05-'10
    - Reversed with Net to Mexico for '09-'14
- **Some Unauthorized Populations ARE Increasing**
  - Central Americans are growing (Total and Unauthorized)
  - In-flows have increased since 2011
  - Large Share of Central American Populations are Unauthorized
  - Asian and Sub-Saharan African Numbers are Growing

# The Larger Picture (2)

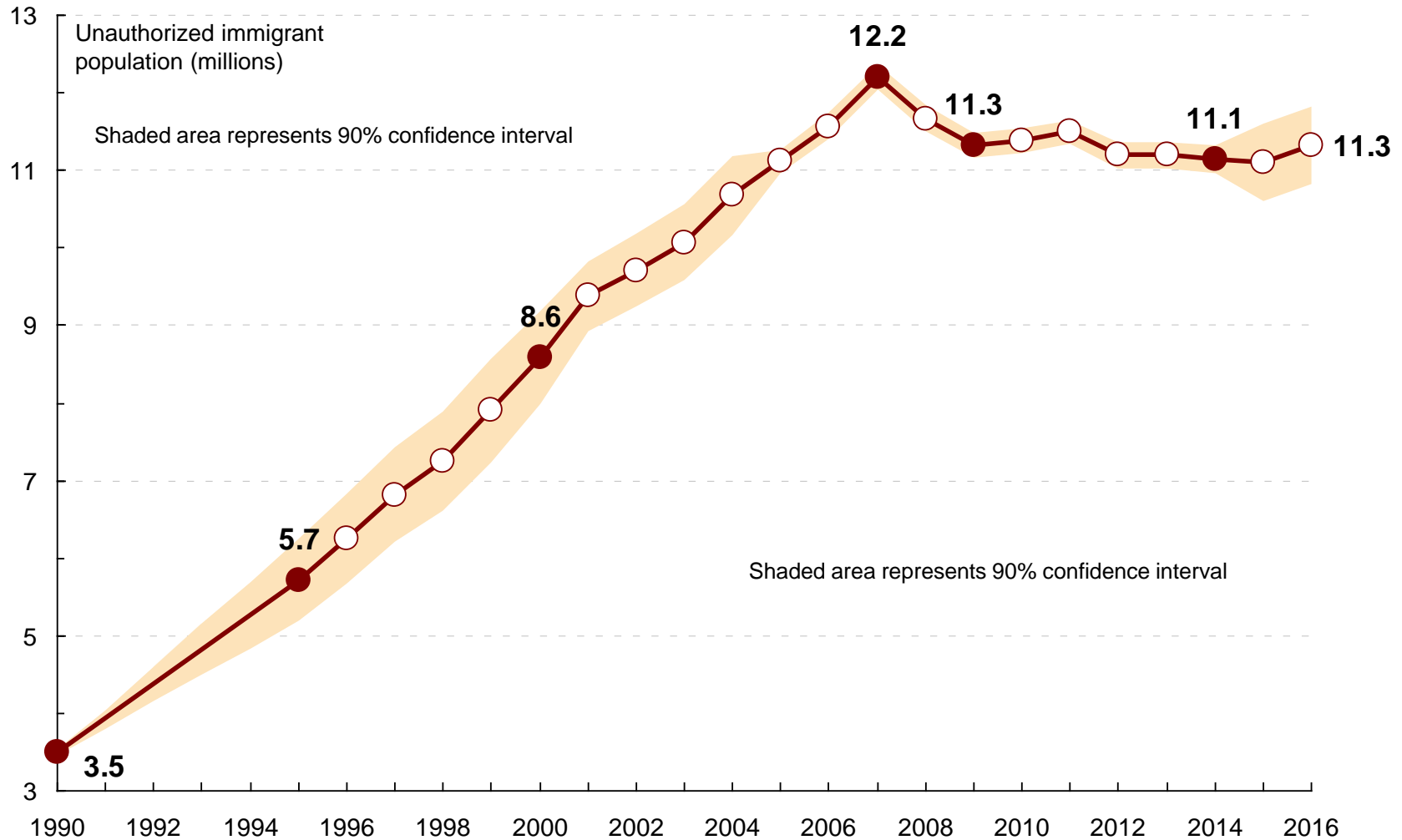
- **Changes in Unauthorized Mexican Population**
  - New Dynamic
    - Lower Numbers of New Arrivals;
    - Balanced by Departures, mainly of Relatively Recent Arrivals
  - Result is a Very Different Unauthorized Immigrant Population
- **Unauthorized Immigrants are Young, Working FAMILIES**
  - Longer Residence in US → Increased Family Formation
  - More are Parents of US-born Children
  - More US-born Children; Fewer Unauthorized Immigrant Kids
  - Growing Population of Adult US-born Children
- **Labor Force Impacts are Varied**
  - Relatively small share of workers (5%) and not increasing
  - Concentrations in same industries/occupations is high
  - Some are actually authorized to work (~10%)

# Unauthorized Immigrant Population

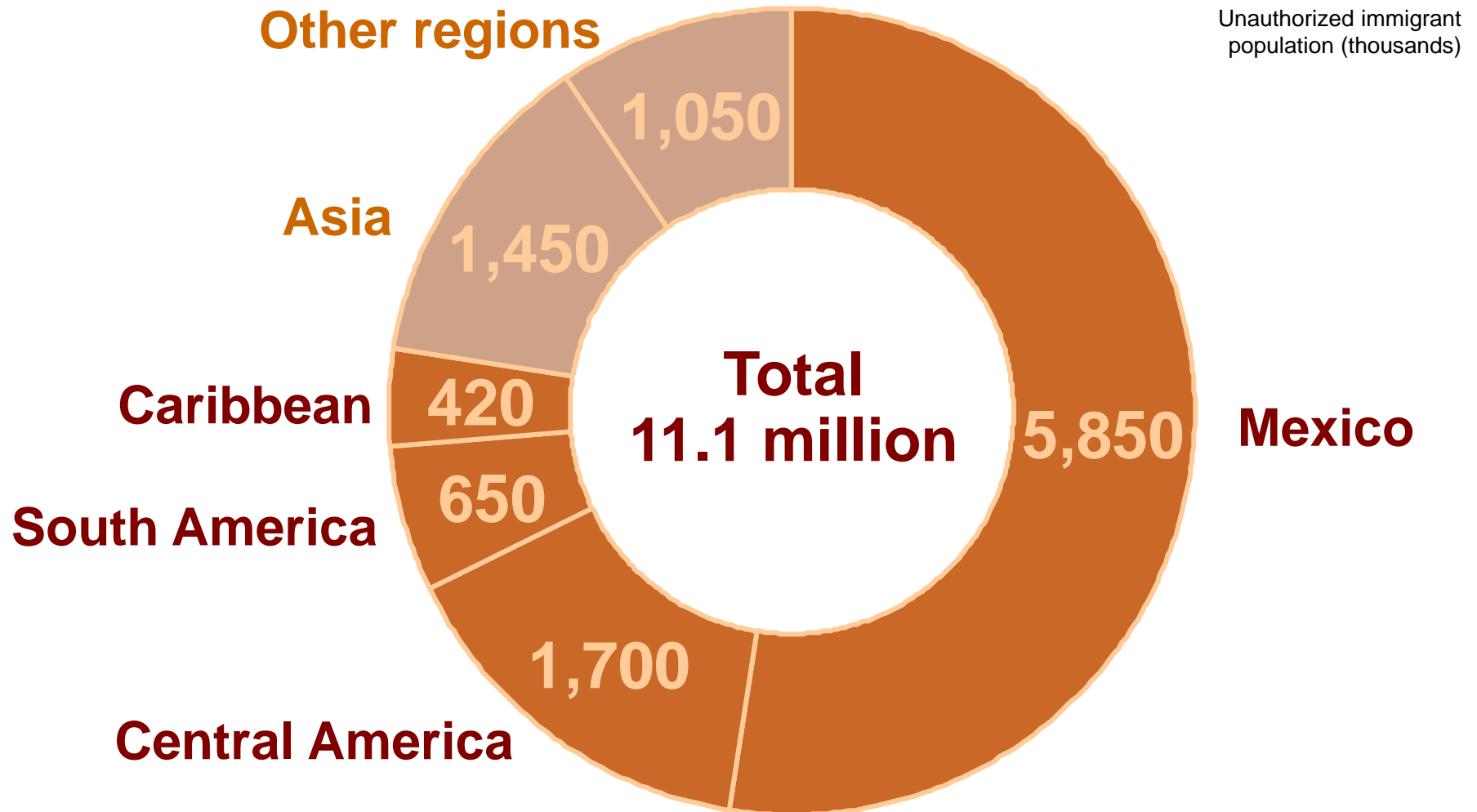
# Unauthorized Population Grows by NET of 500,000/yr for 17 Years; Sudden Reversal after '07 → DROP of 500,000/yr for 2 Years; No Real Change for since '09 as Numbers Stay Level



# Preliminary Estimates for '14-'15 Show No Real Changes in Level

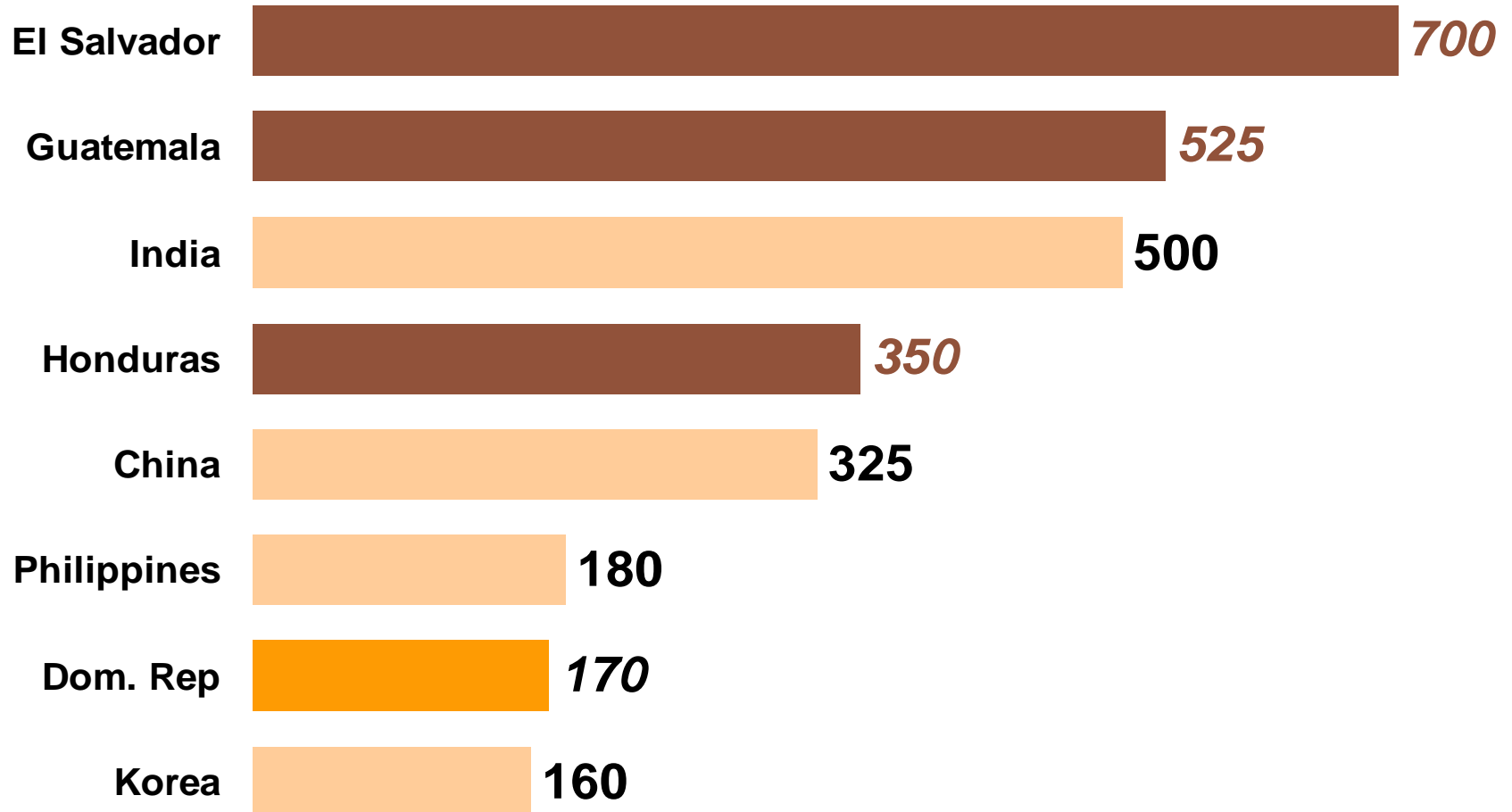


# Unauthorized Immigrants Dominated by Mexico, Latin America



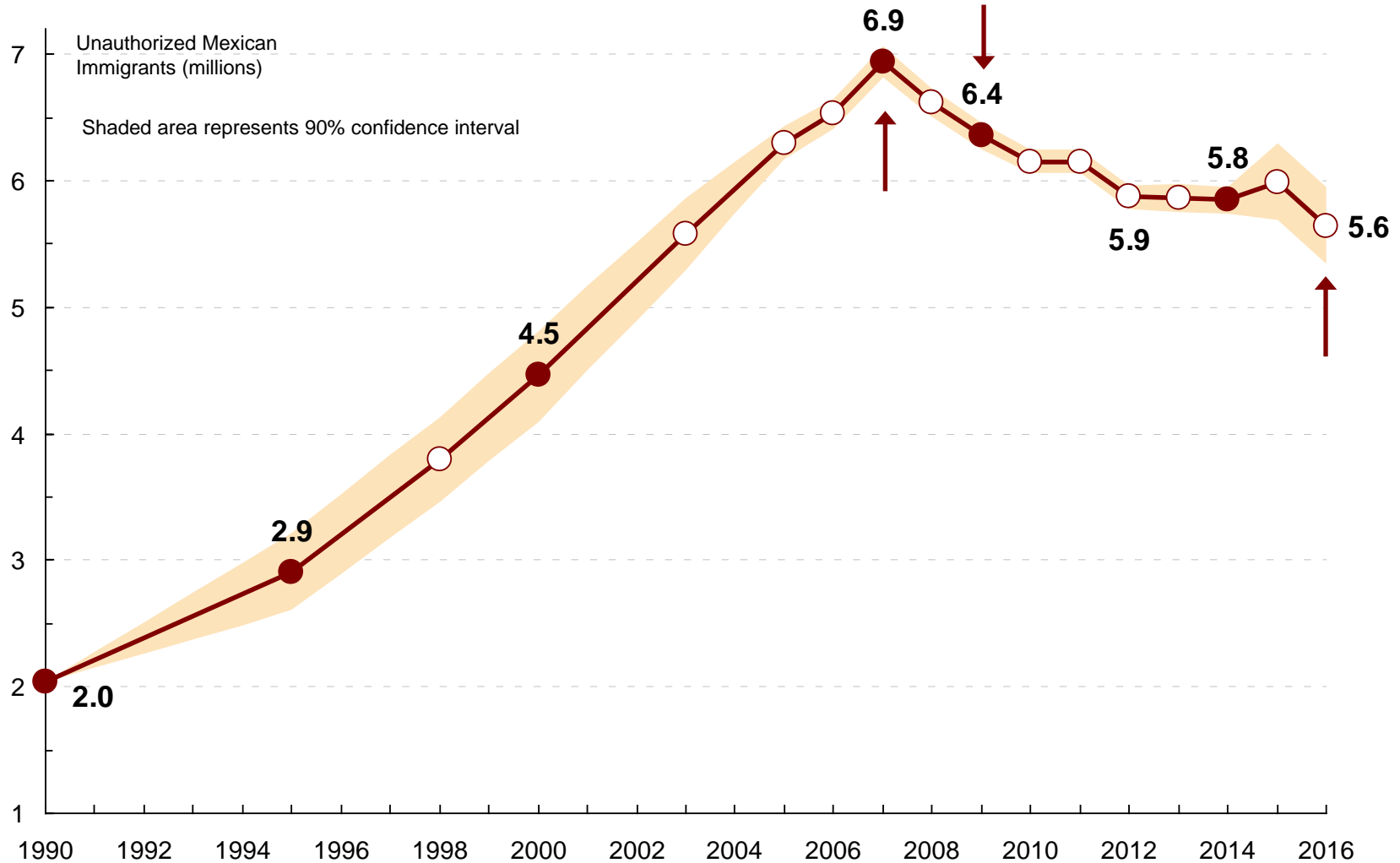
# Leading Countries of Birth for Unauthorized Immigrants (except Mexico)

Unauthorized immigrant population (thousands)

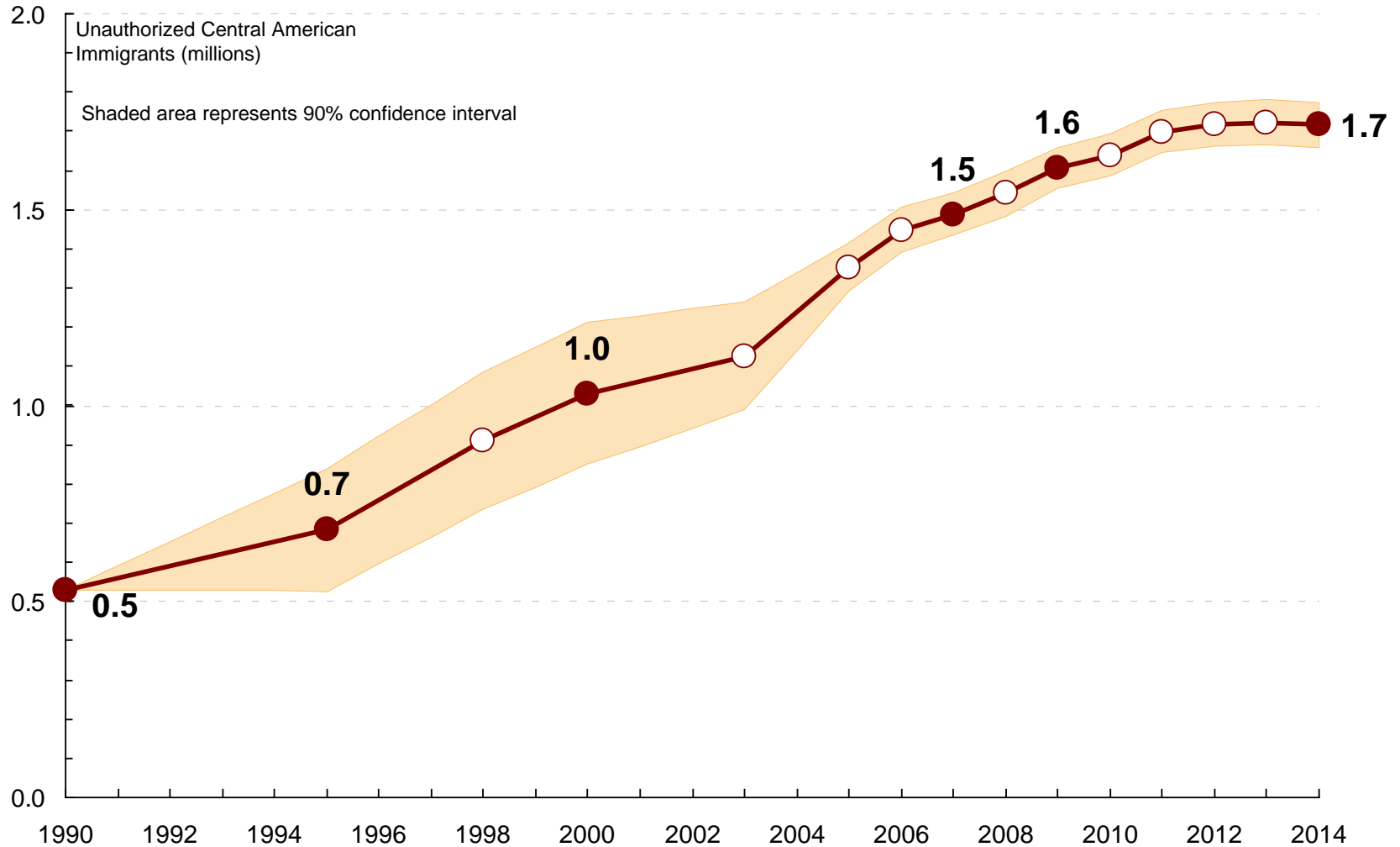




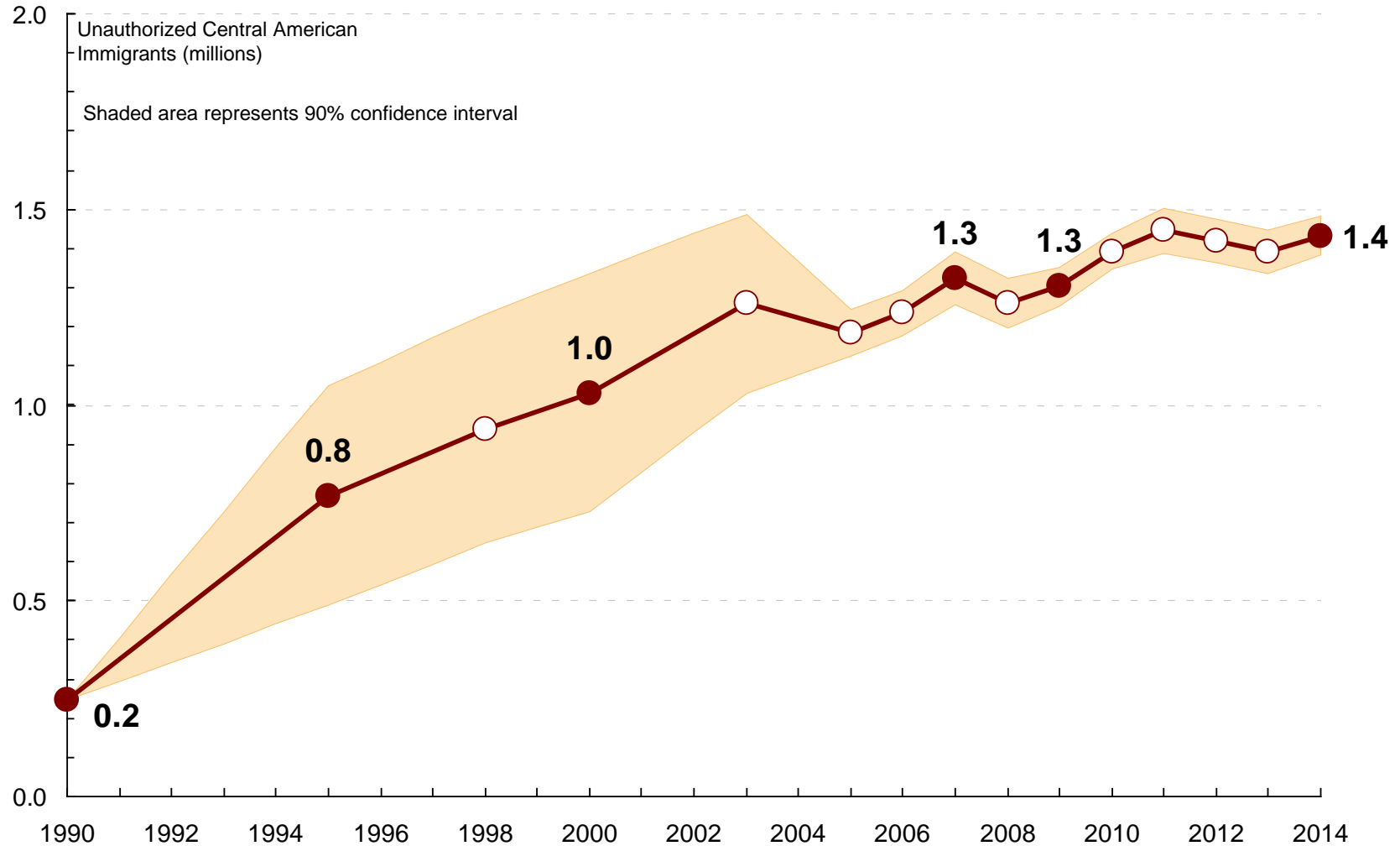
**Unauthorized Mexican Population Up by NET of 300K/yr for 17 yrs;  
Sudden Reversal '07-'12 → DROP of 1,000,000 in 5 Years;  
Preliminary Data for '15-'16 are Level, but Hint at Possible Declines**



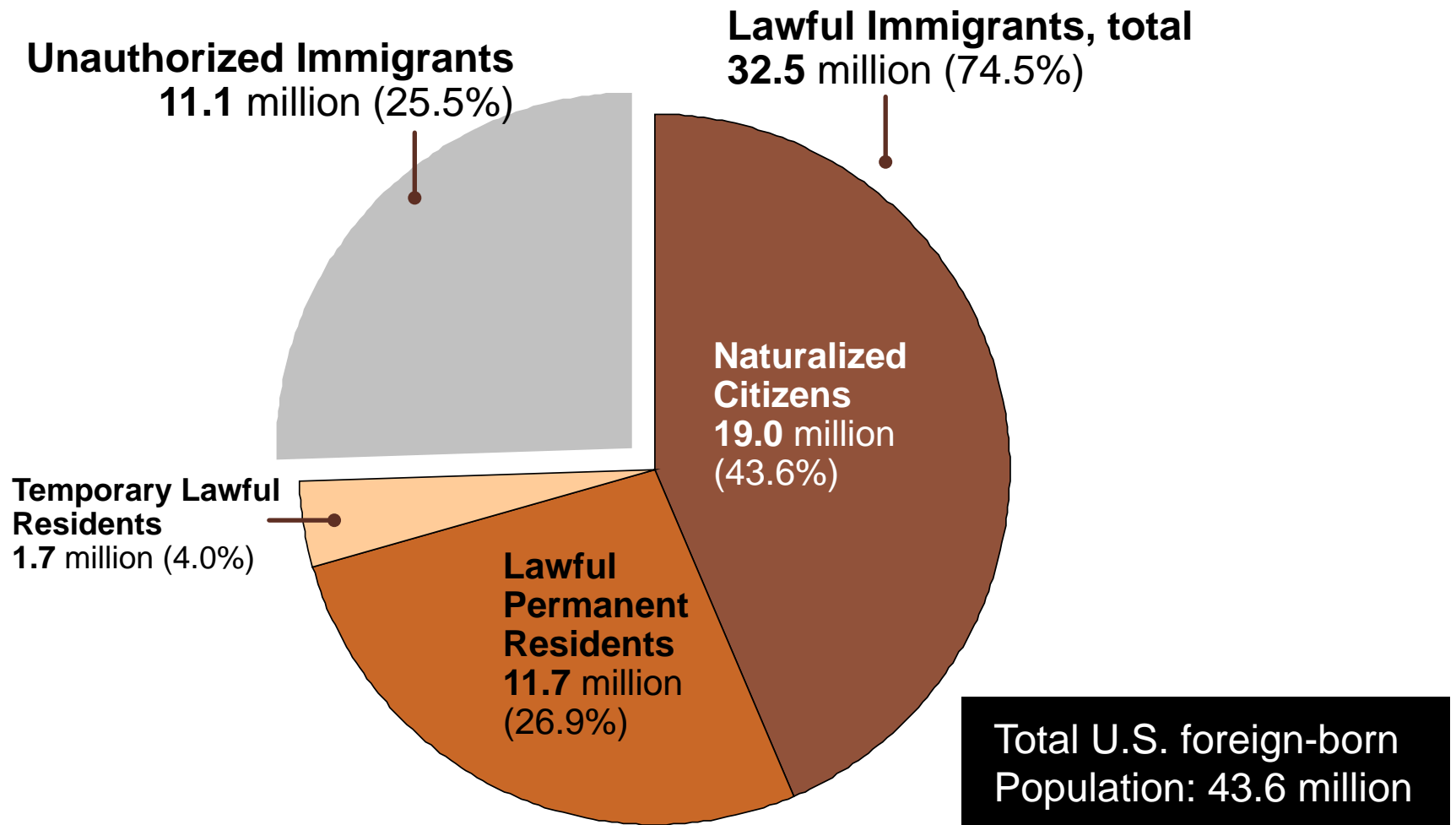
# Unauthorized Central American Immigrants Show Continuing Small Increases After '07 & '09



# Unauthorized Asian Immigrants Increase, but More Slowly in Recent Years



# About one-in-four U.S. Immigrants are Unauthorized



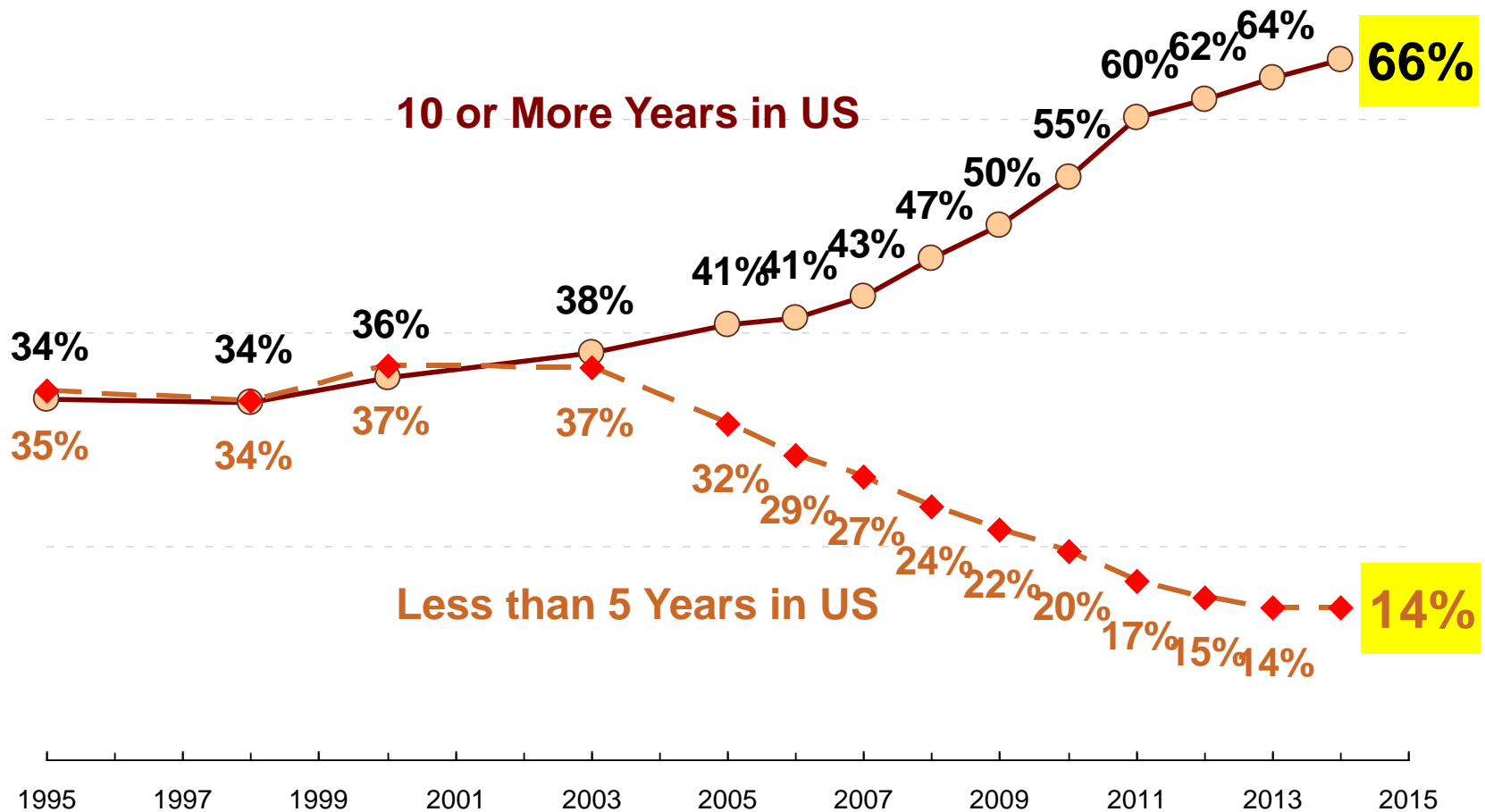
# Unauthorized Immigrant Families

# *Changing Structure of Unauthorized Immigrant Population*

- **Growing Number & Share 10+ Years in US**
  - Few New Unauthorized Added
  - Return Flows High in '07-'09 but Back to “Normal”
- **Family Formation High among Unauthorized**
  - Much Larger Number Affected than 11.1 million
  - A majority of Men are in Families
  - Almost  $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  of Adults have US-born Children
- **Workforce Impacts**
  - Participation varies by gender
  - Representation high in many industries/occupations
  - Unauthorized are not a majority

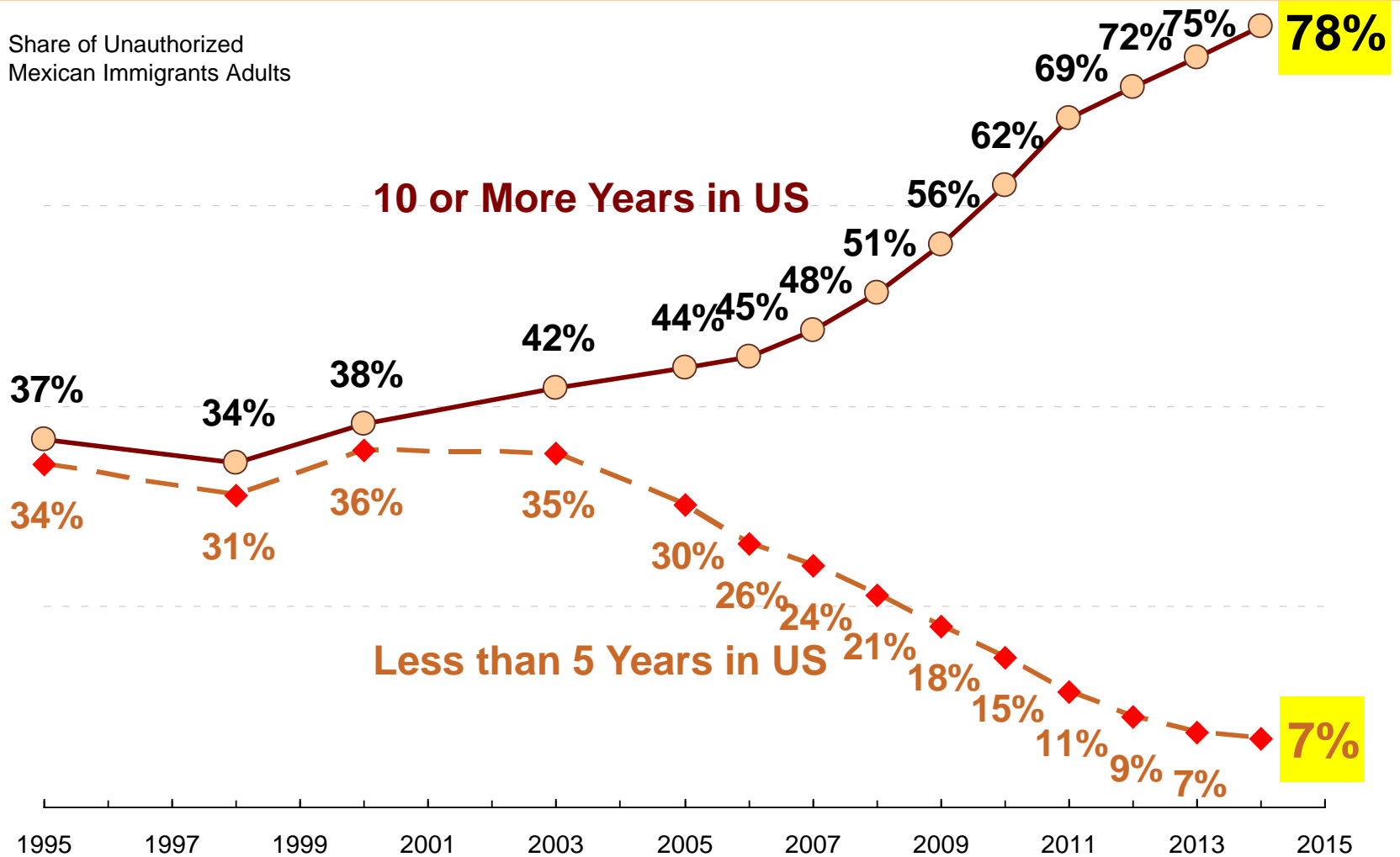
# Increasing % of Unauthorized Immigrant Adults in the US for Many Years

Share of Unauthorized Immigrant Adults



# Unauthorized Mexican Immigrants Have Been in the US Even Longer

Share of Unauthorized Mexican Immigrants Adults

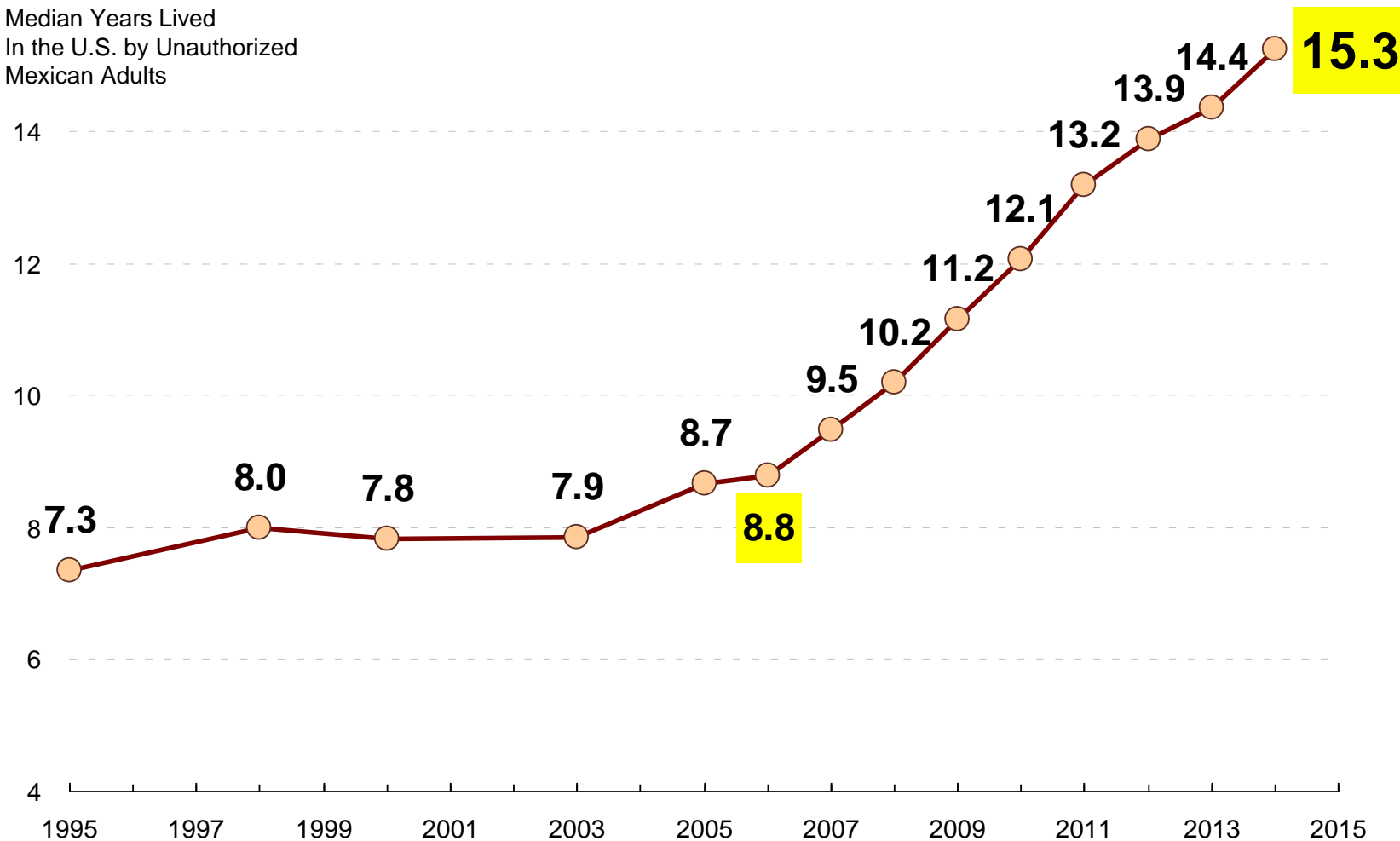


Source: Pew Research Center based on augmented 1995-2003 March CPS and 2005-2014 ACS.



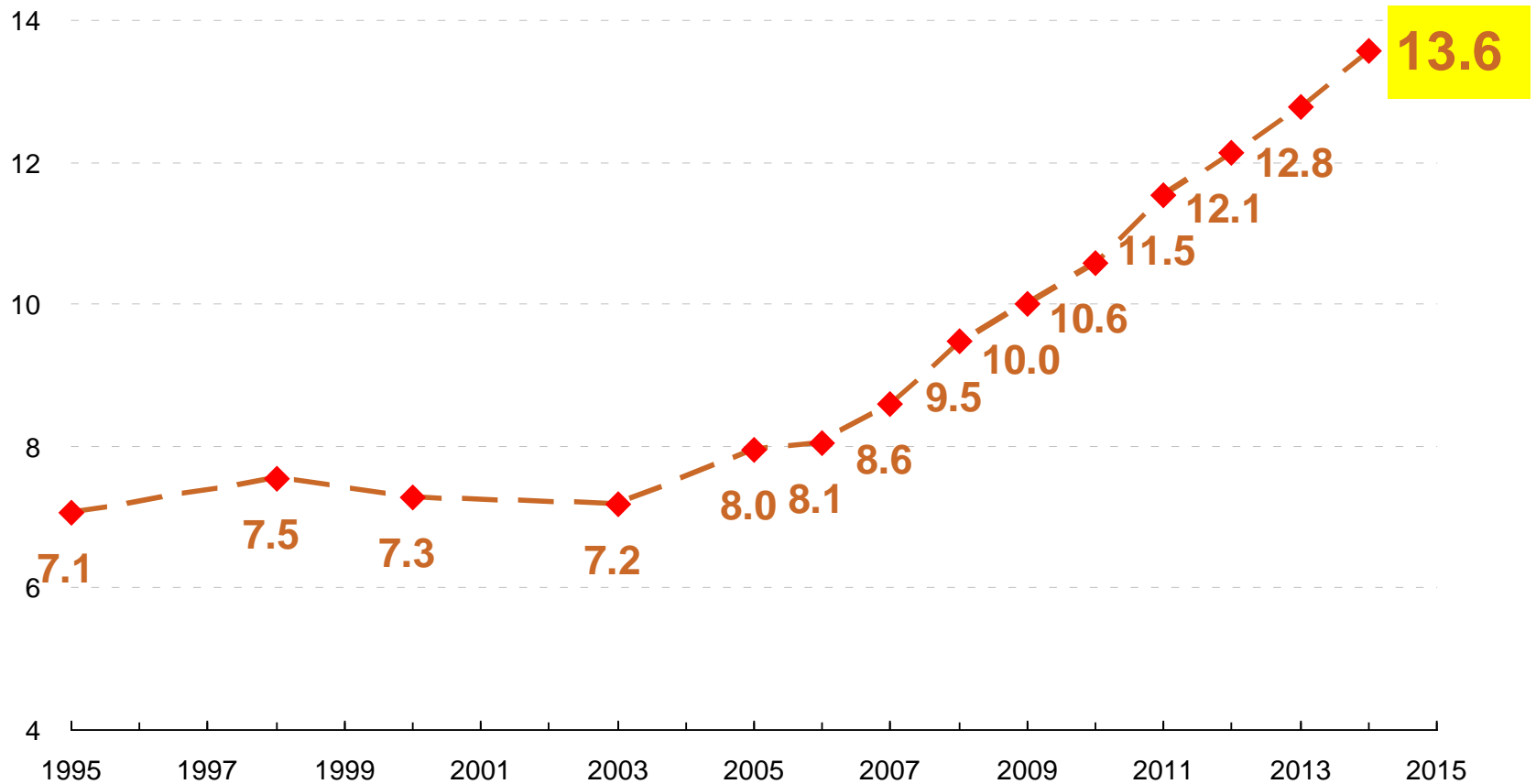
# The Average Mexican Unauthorized Immigrant Arrived in the US in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (!)

Median Years Lived  
In the U.S. by Unauthorized  
Mexican Adults



# Median Duration in US Went Up for All Unauthorized Immigrant Adults

Median Years Lived  
In the U.S. by Unauthorized  
Immigrant Adults



# Unauthorized Immigrant Families Include 6 million Legal Residents

## Unauthorized Men

5.6 million  
54% of Adults

## Unauthorized Women

4.7 million  
46% of Adults

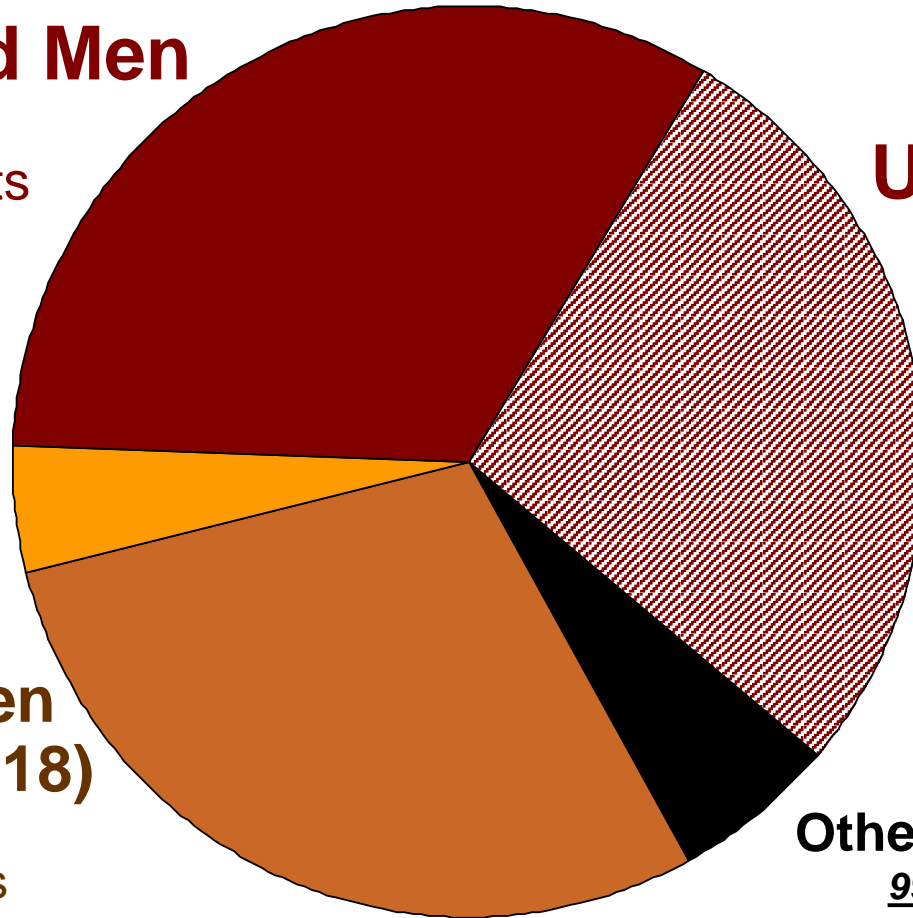
## Unauthorized Children (<18)

750,000  
Only 7% of All  
Unauthorized

## U.S. Citizen Children (<18)

5.0 million  
87% of Kids

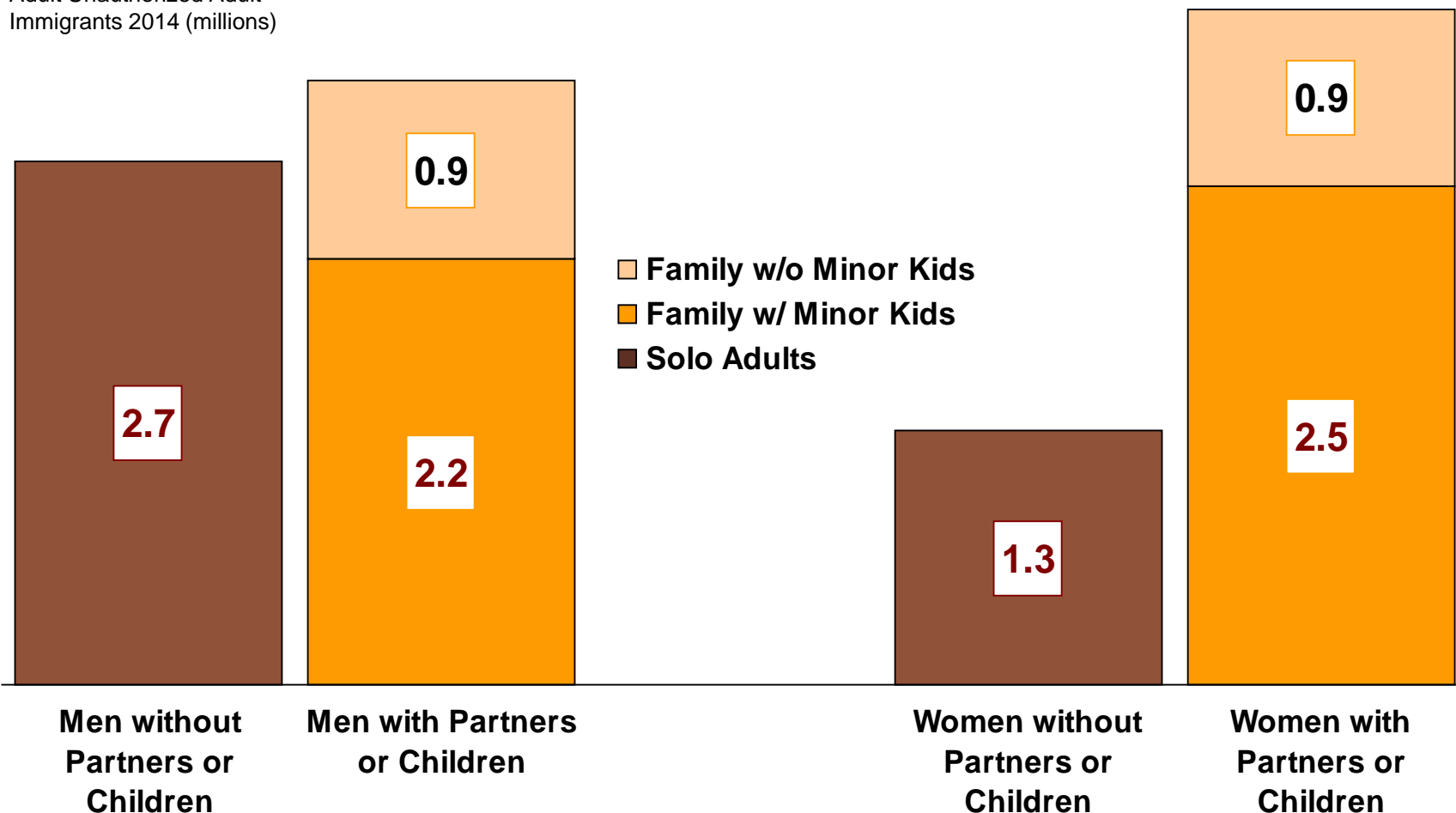
Other Adults  
990,000



# 17 Million in Unauthorized Immigrant Families, 2014

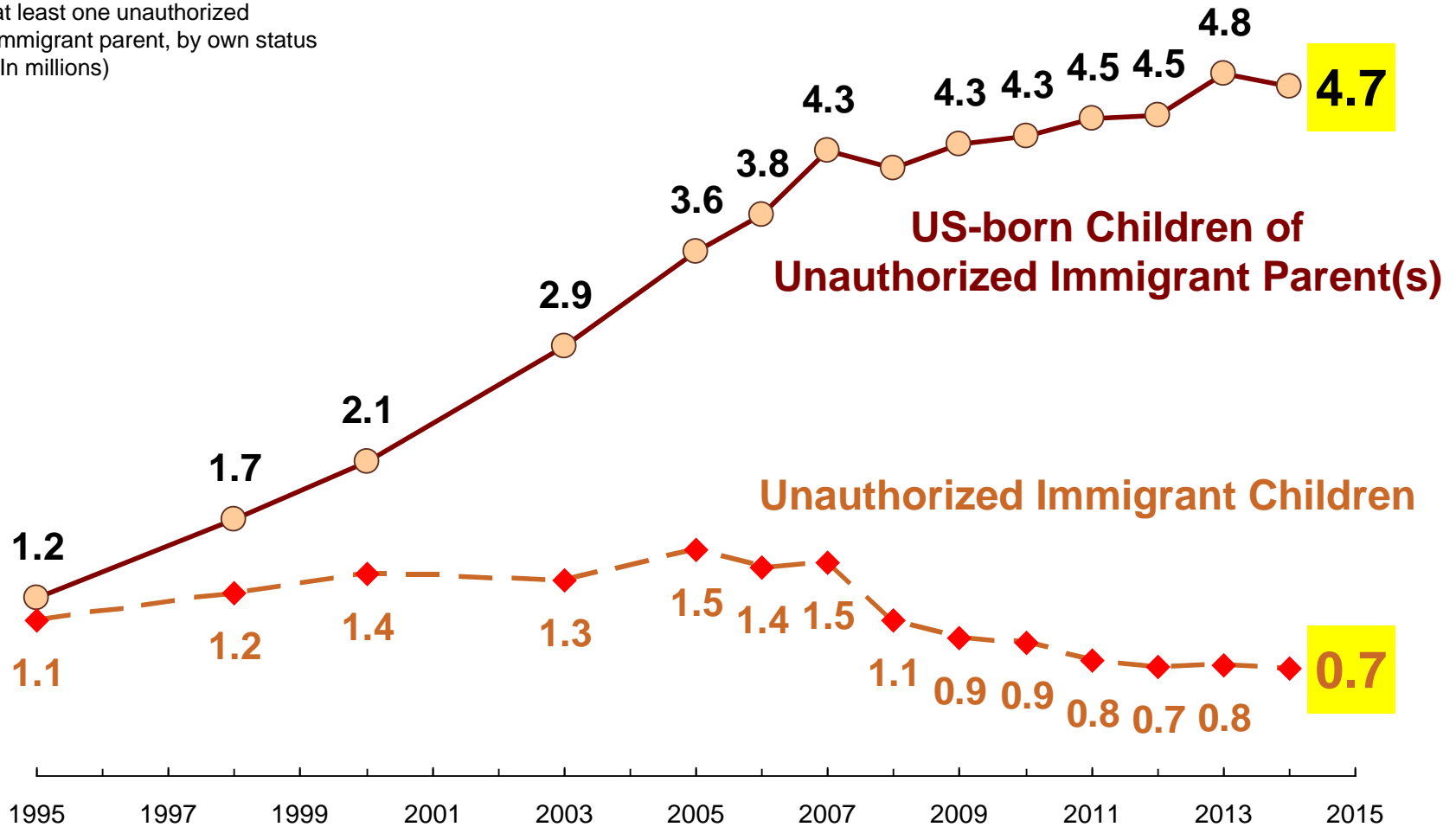
# Most Unauthorized Immigrants, Men & Women, Are Married or Have Children, too

Adult Unauthorized Adult Immigrants 2014 (millions)



# US-Born Children of Unauthorized Immigrants Up, but Unauthorized Immigrant Children Decrease

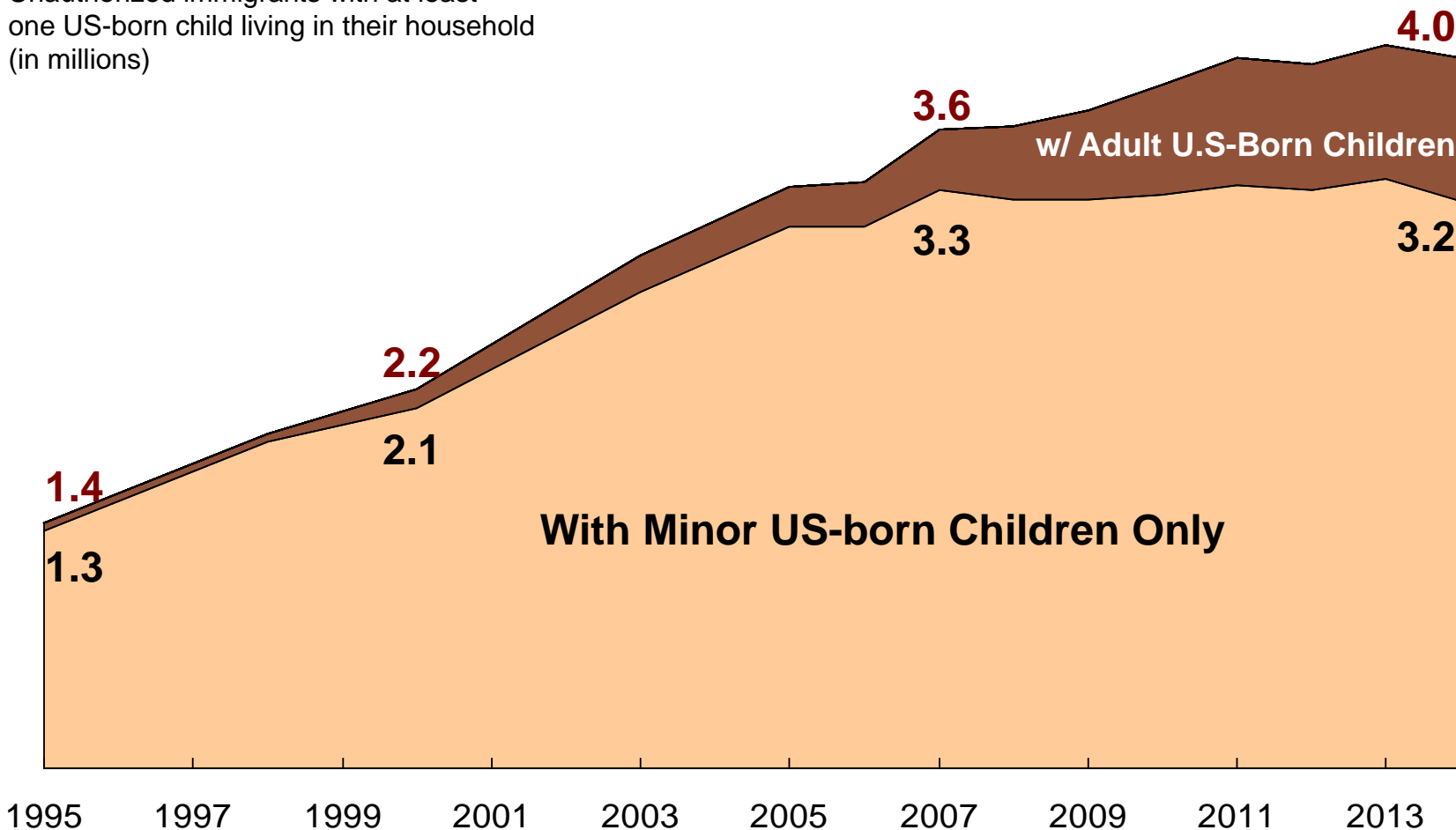
Children (under 18) with at least one unauthorized immigrant parent, by own status (In millions)



Source: Pew Research Center based on augmented 1995-2003 March CPS and 2005-2014 ACS.

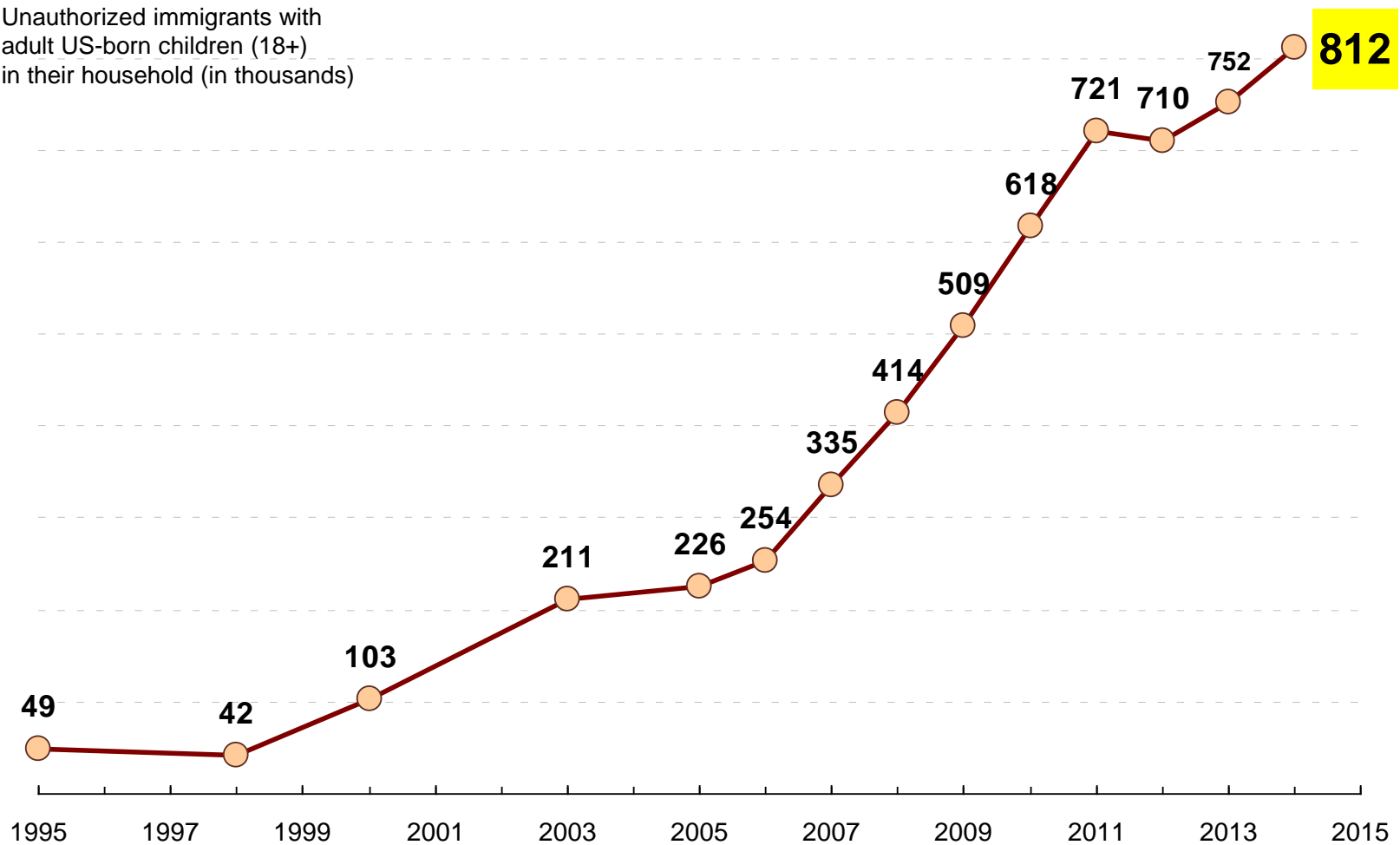
# At least 39% of Unauthorized Immigrant Adults have US-Born Children (47% of Mexicans)

Unauthorized immigrants with at least one US-born child living in their household (in millions)



# Unauthorized Immigrants with Adult US-born Kids exceed 3/4 Million

Unauthorized immigrants with adult US-born children (18+) in their household (in thousands)

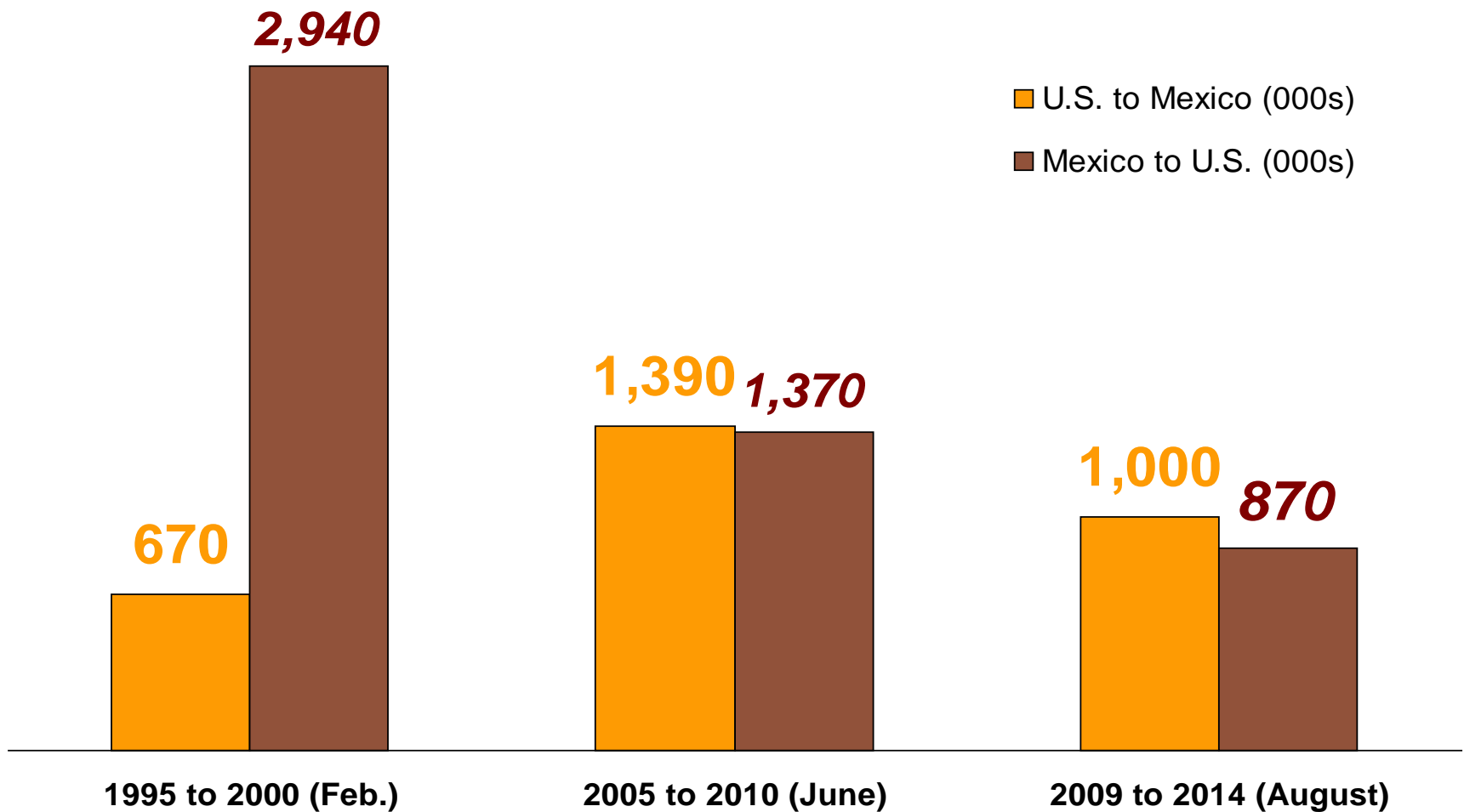


# What About New Flows?

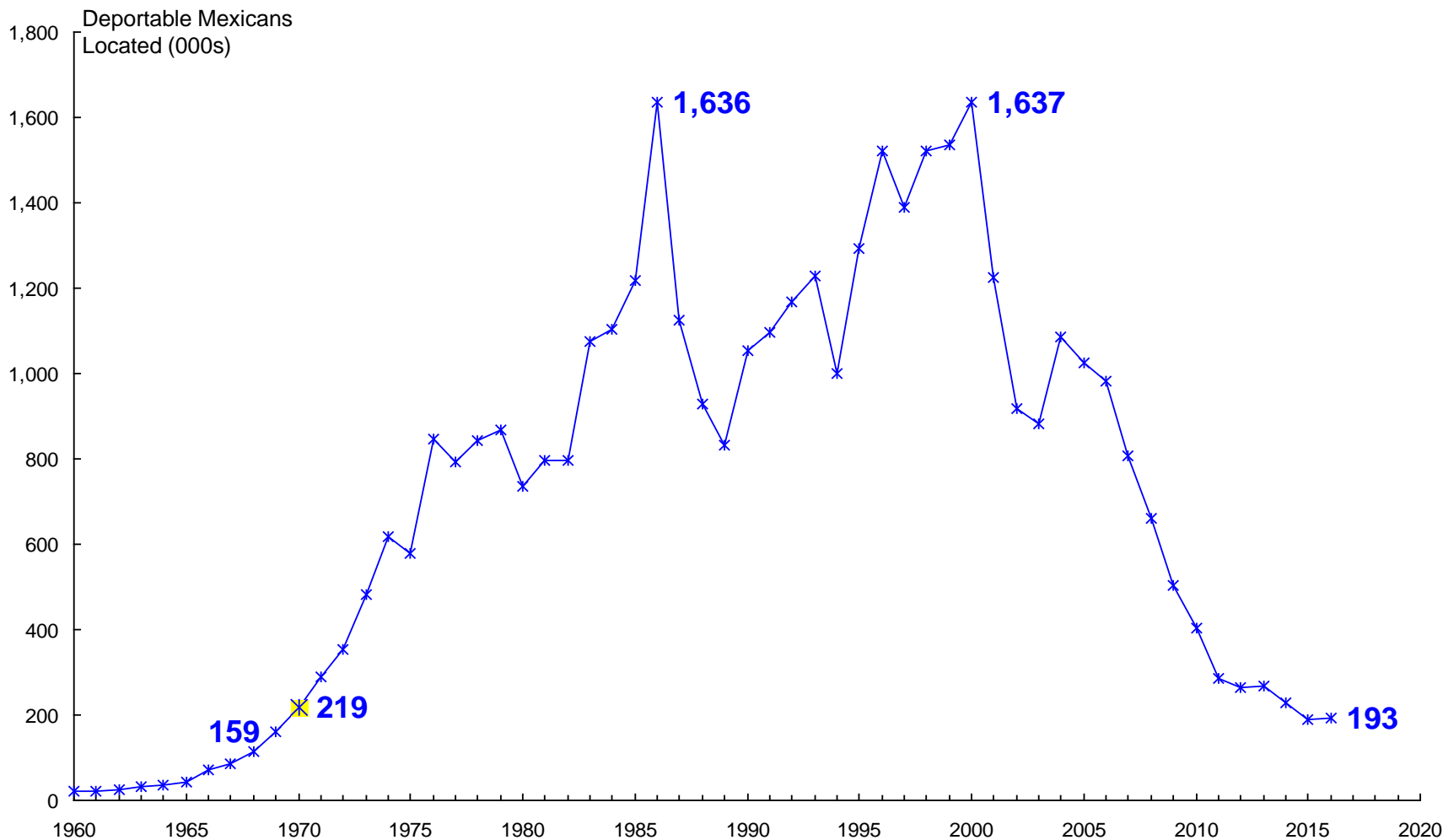


# Mexican Entries Down—Returns Up →

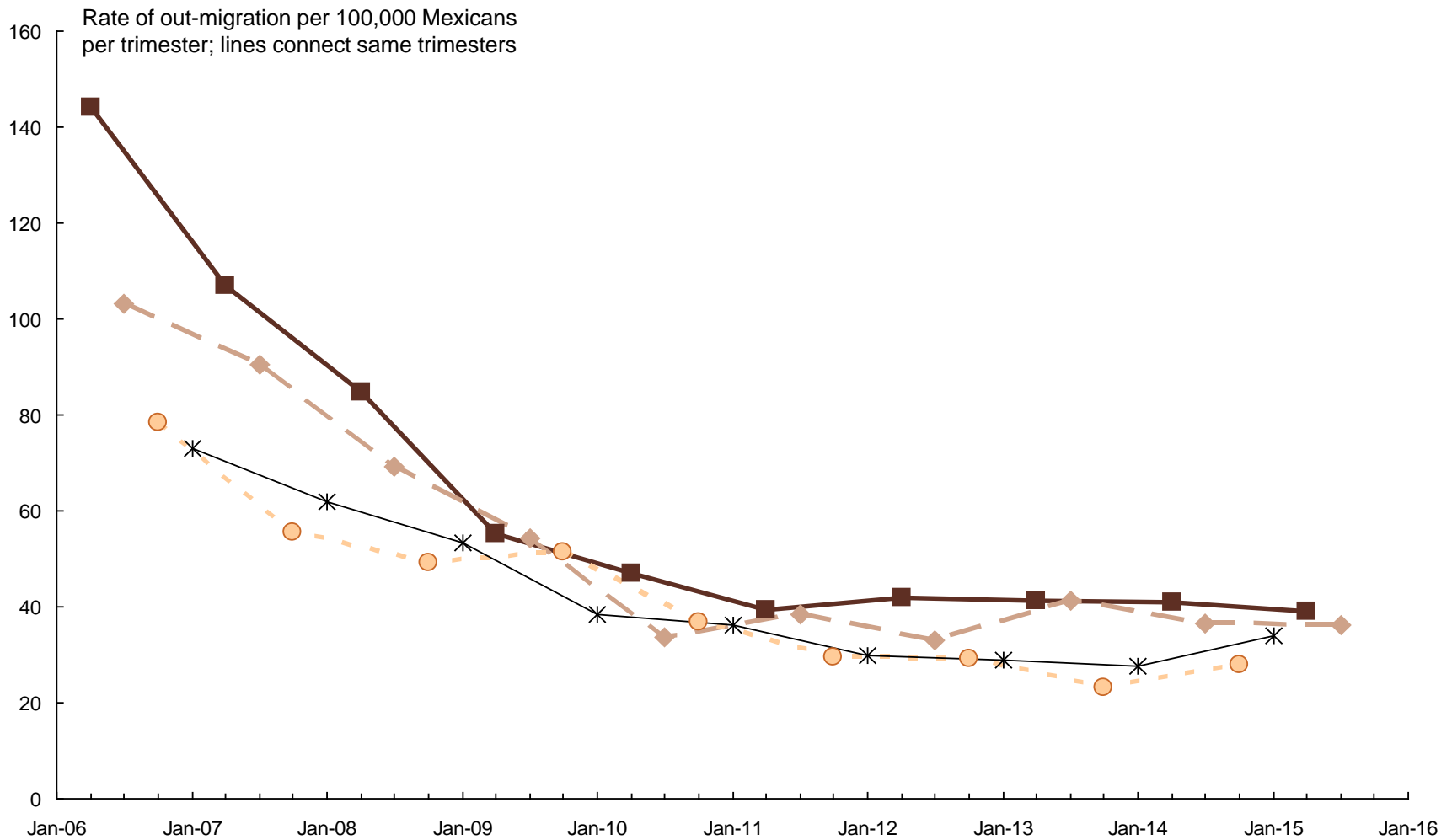
Net ZERO '05-'10; Net to Mexico for '09-'14



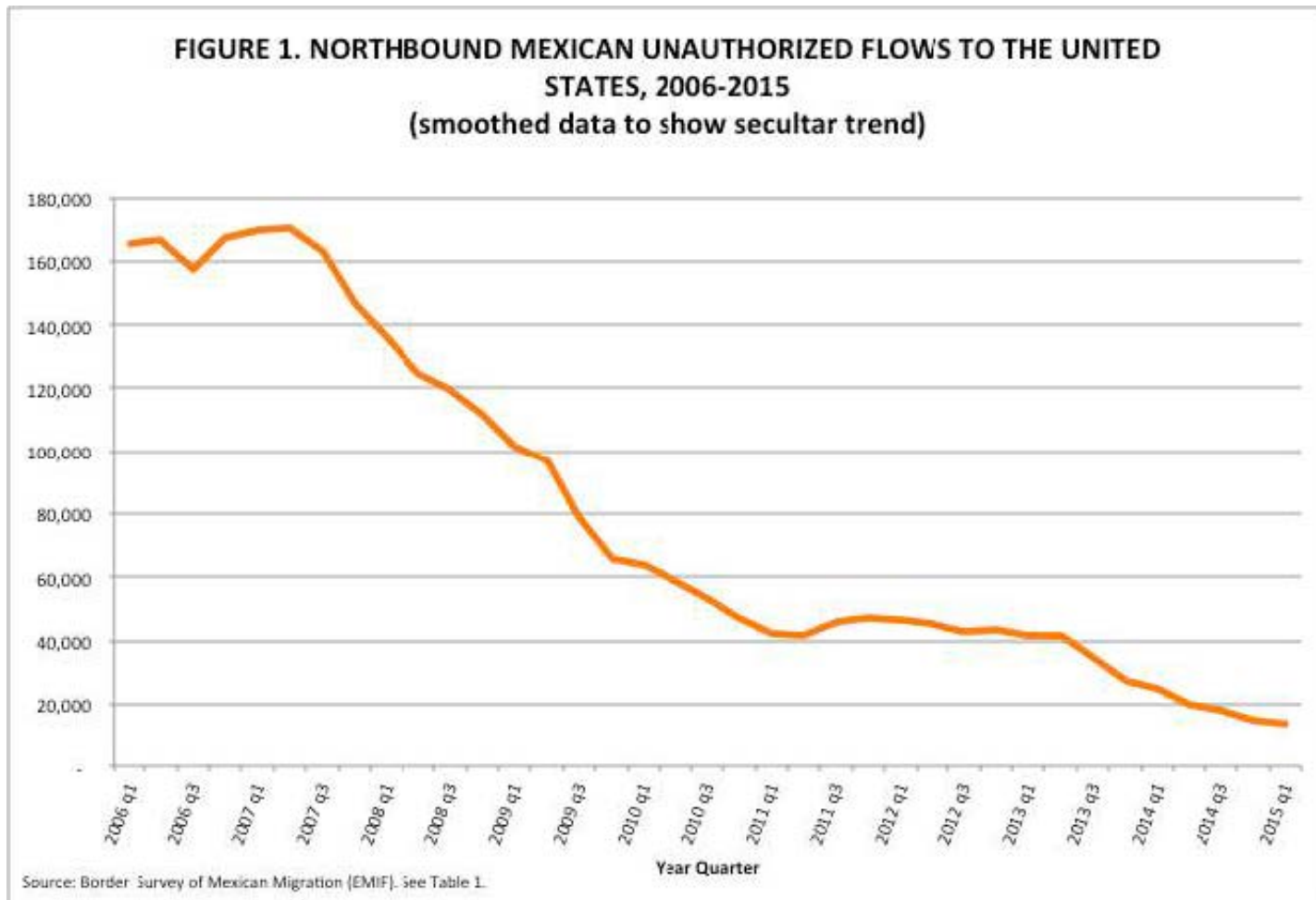
# Apprehensions of Mexicans in '15-'16 drop from already low levels – lowest since '69



# Out-migration rates from Mexico dropped through 2012; constant since

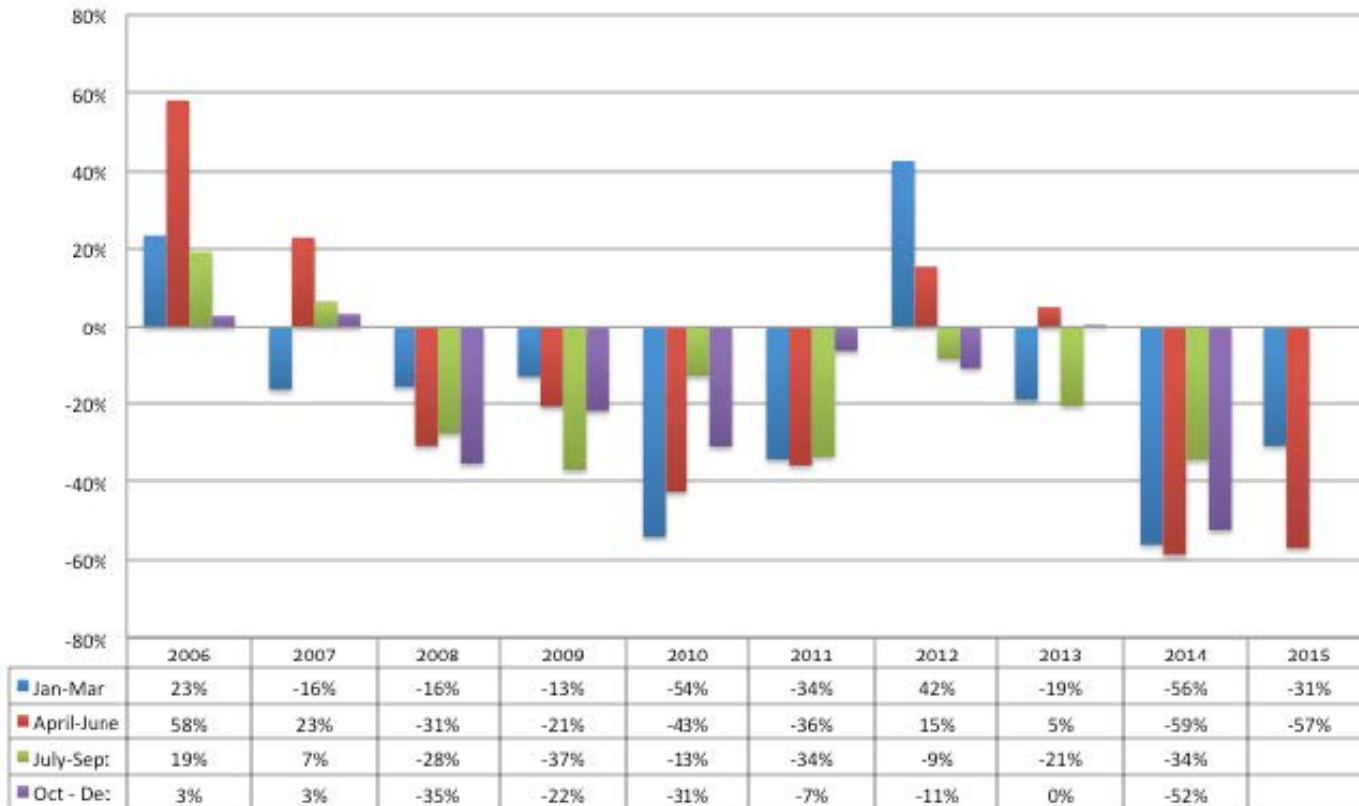


# Northbound flows of unauthorized continue to drop 2013-2015



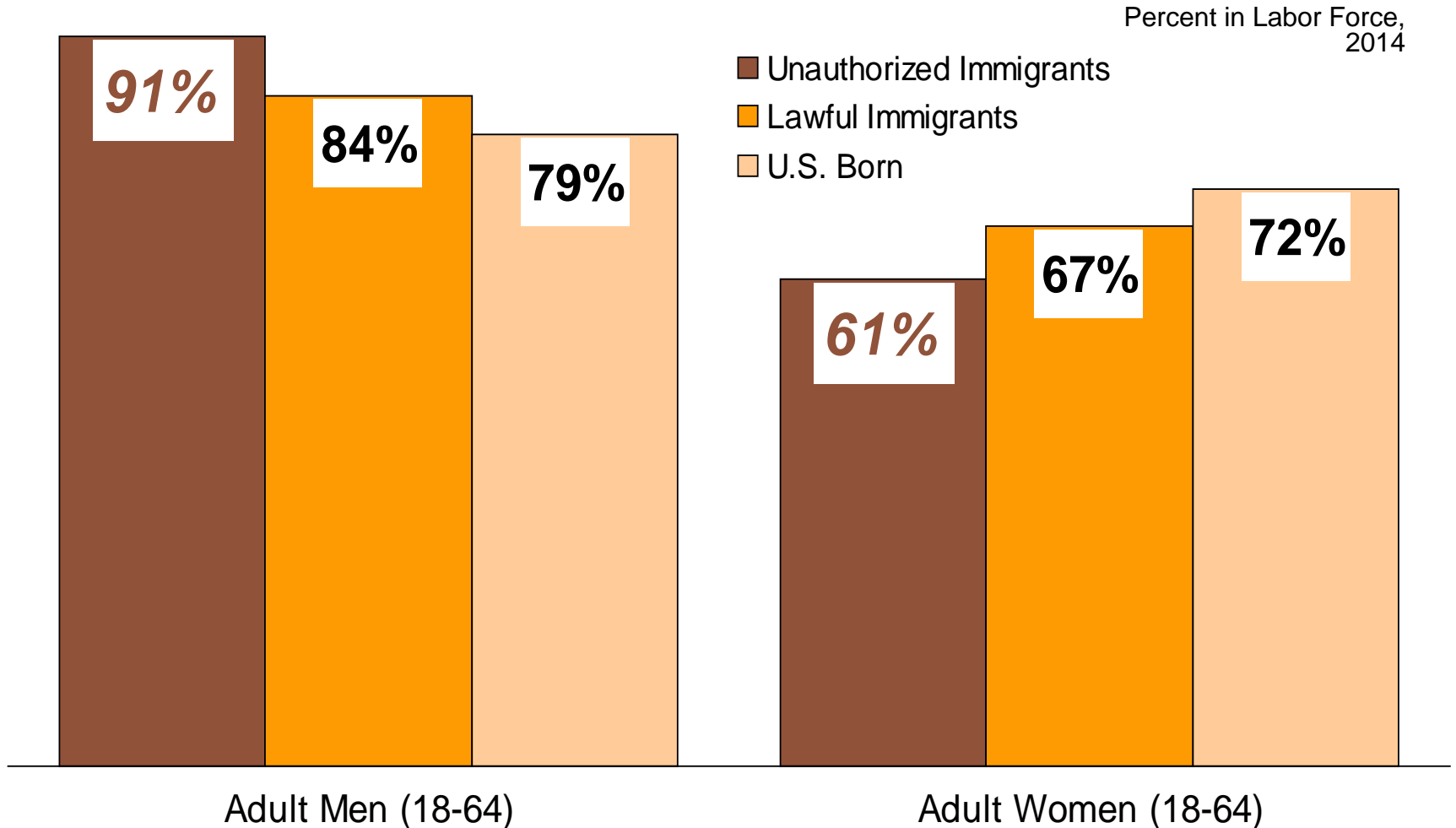
# Northbound flows of unauthorized continue to drop 2013-2015

**FIGURE 2: ANNUAL PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN THE FLOW OF UNAUTHORIZED MIGRANTS**  
 Mesasured on a Quarterly Basis, 2006 to 2015

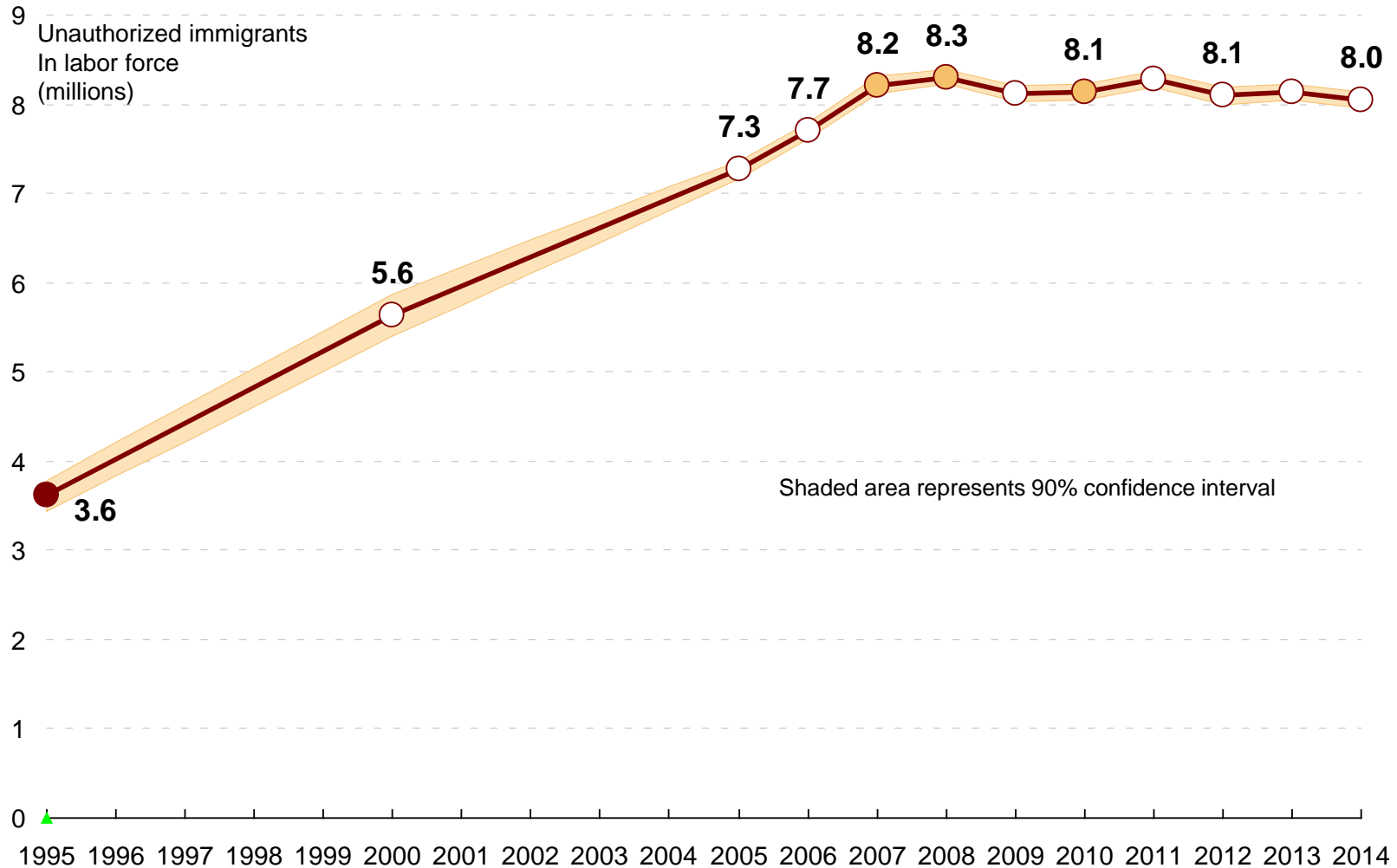


# Unauthorized Immigrant Workers

# Unauthorized Immigrant Men Work More; Women Work Less Than Others

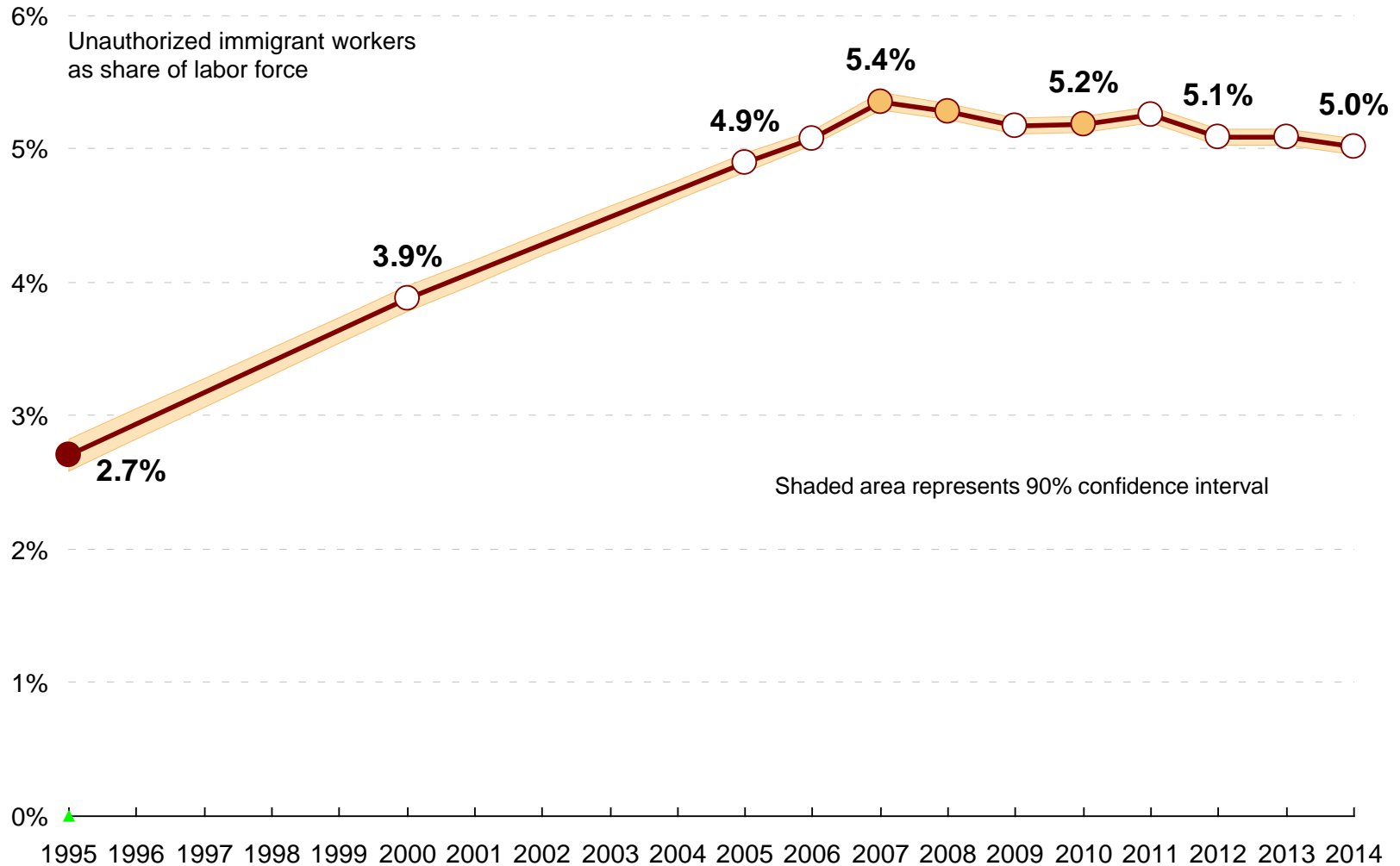


# Unauthorized Immigrants in Labor Force Up Rapidly to '07-'08, Then Little Change



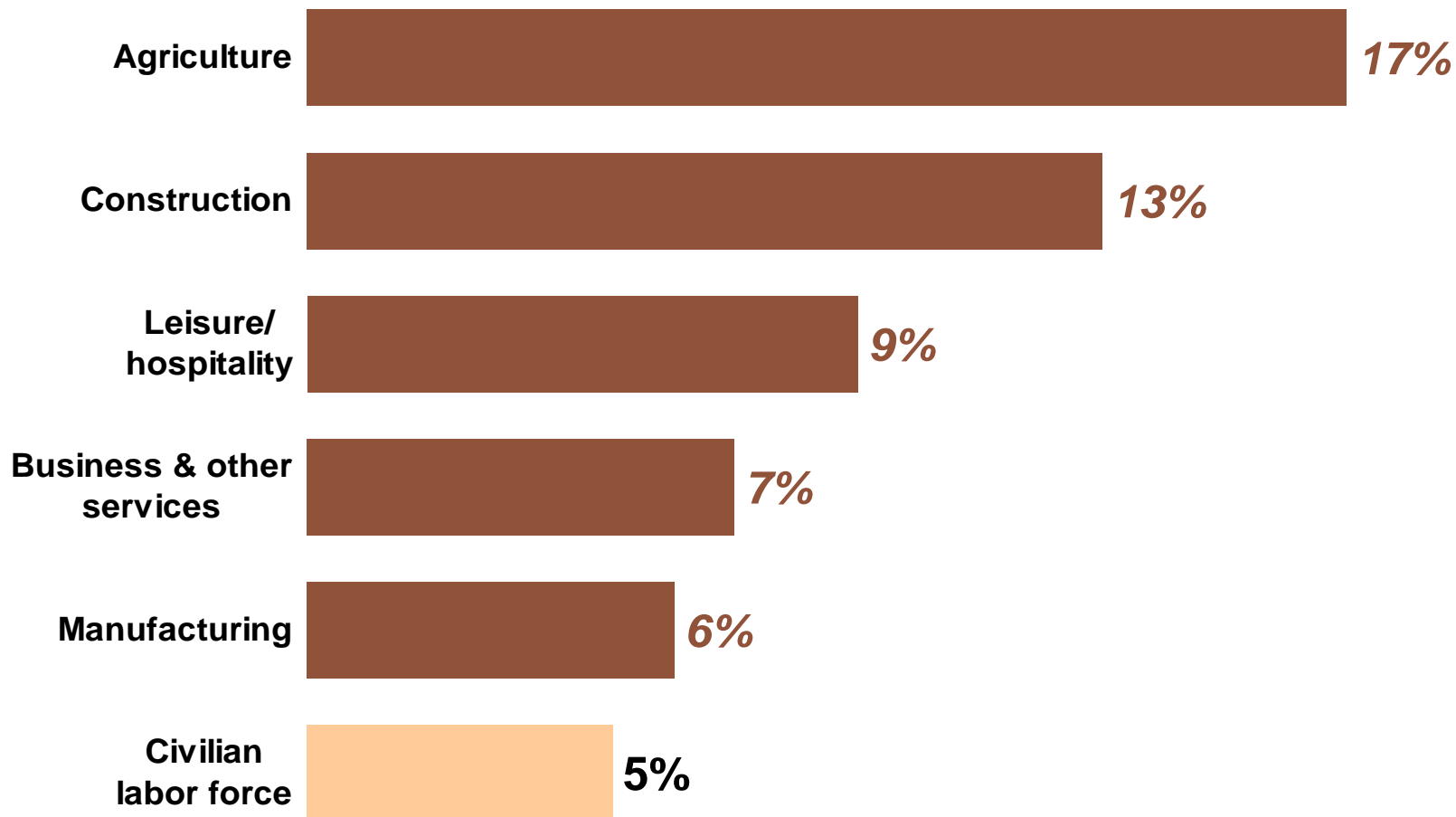


# Unauthorized Immigrants as Share of Workers Doubled Since '95 but Unchanged Since '05



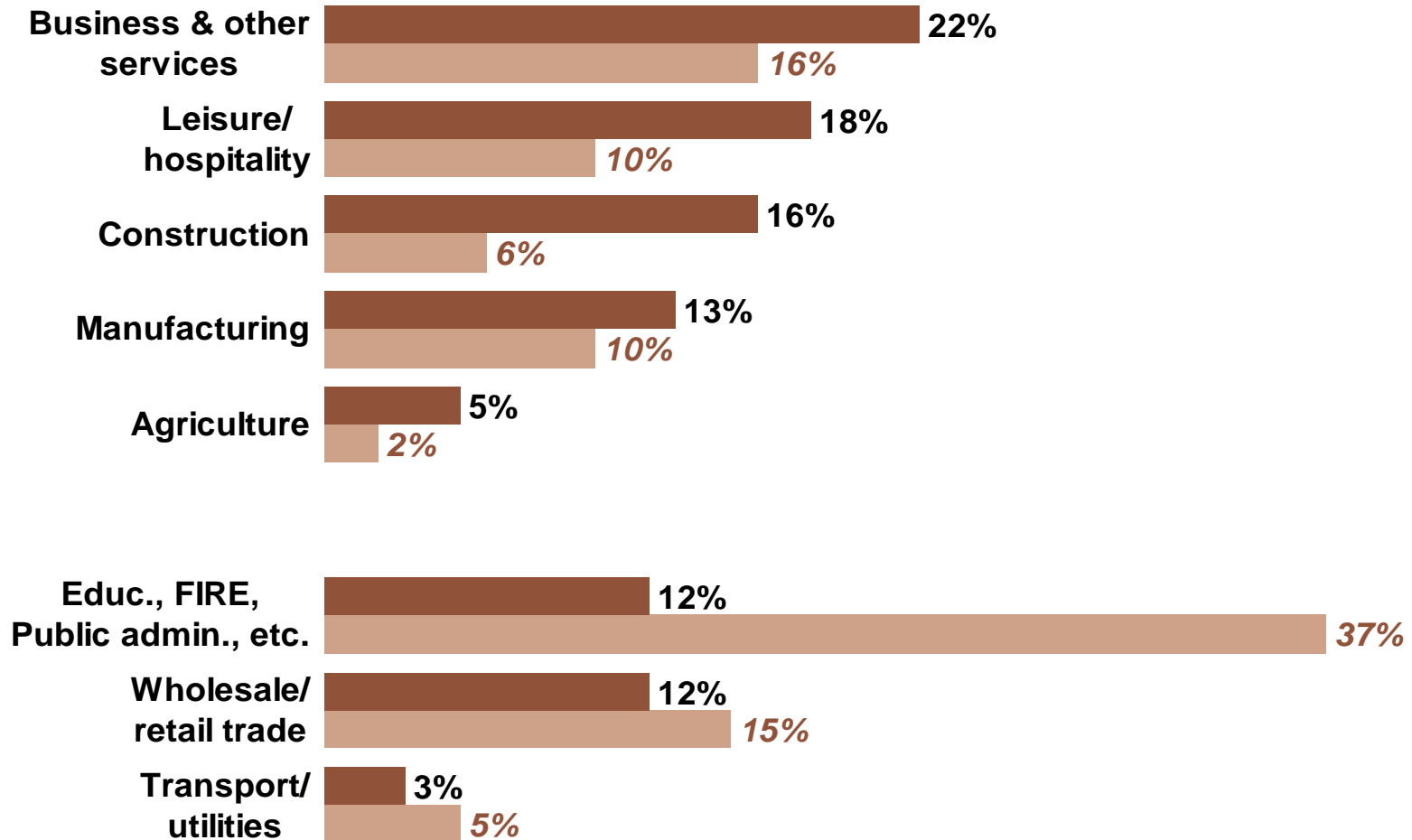
# Some industries have high shares of unauthorized immigrant workers

% of workers in \_\_\_ industry who are unauthorized immigrants, 2014



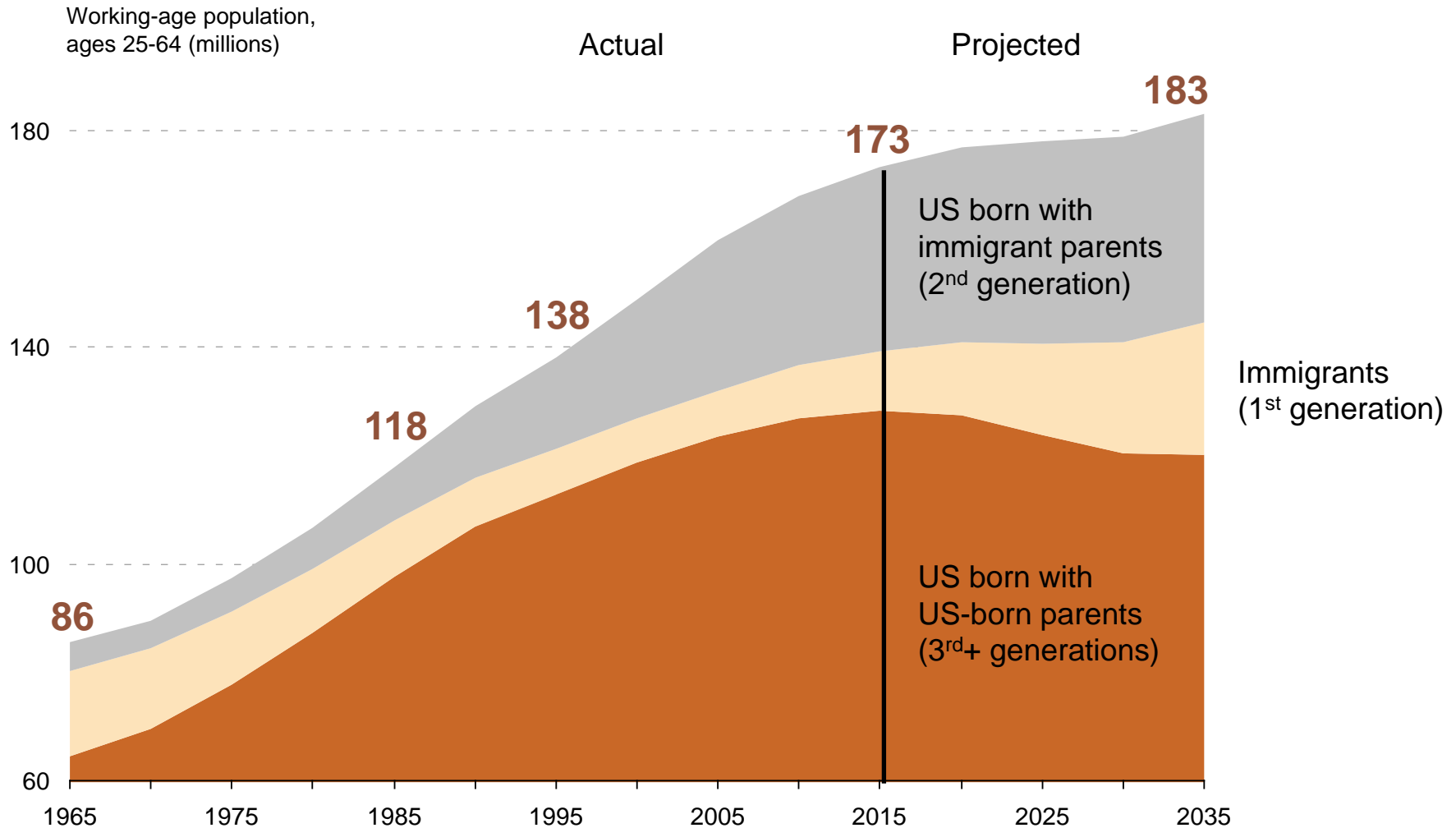
# Unauthorized immigrants & US-born workers have different industry profiles

% of each status group's workers who are in each major industry, 2014

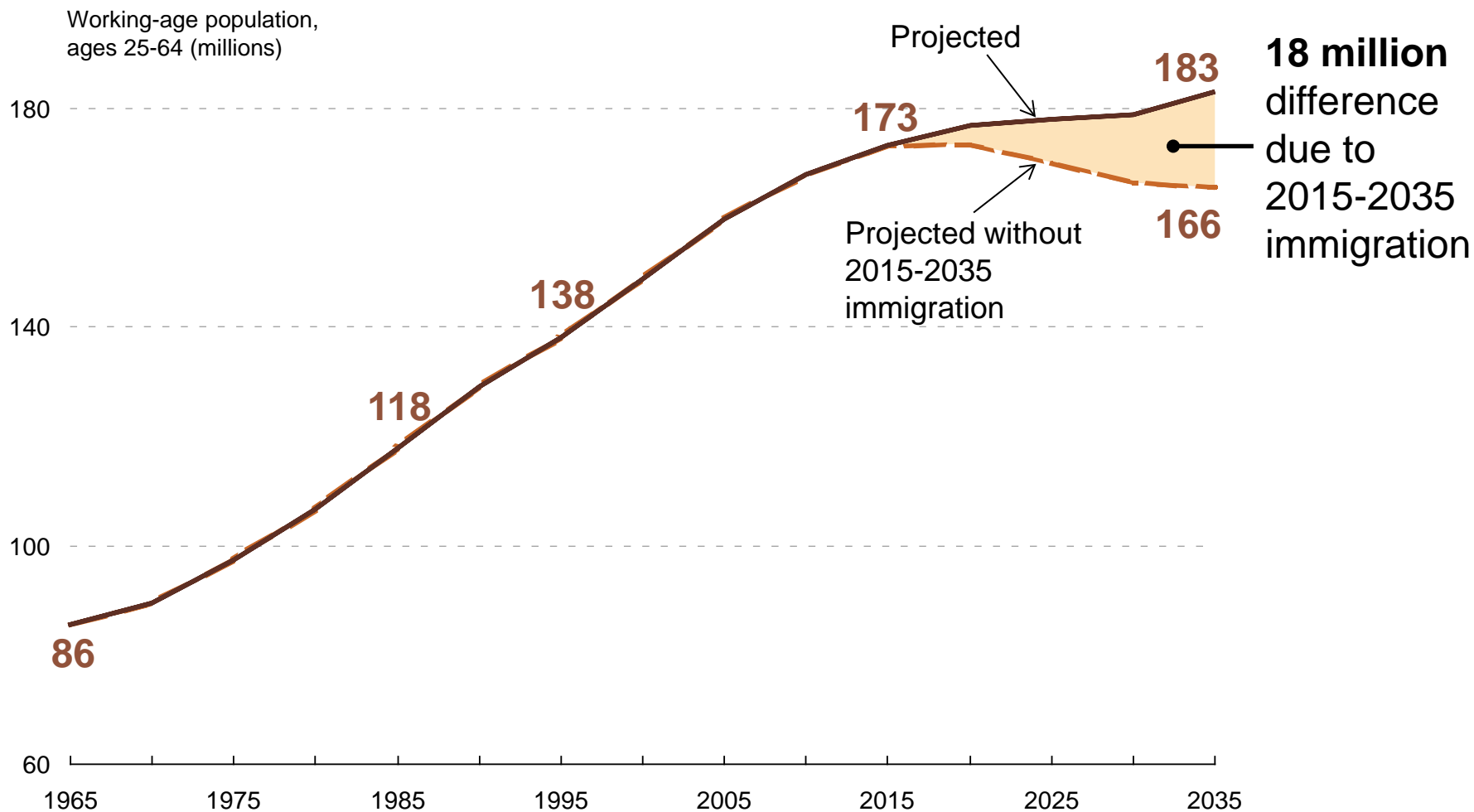


# Immigration and Change in the Working-Age Population

# Immigrants and US-born Children of Current Immigrants Drive Growth of Working-Age Population

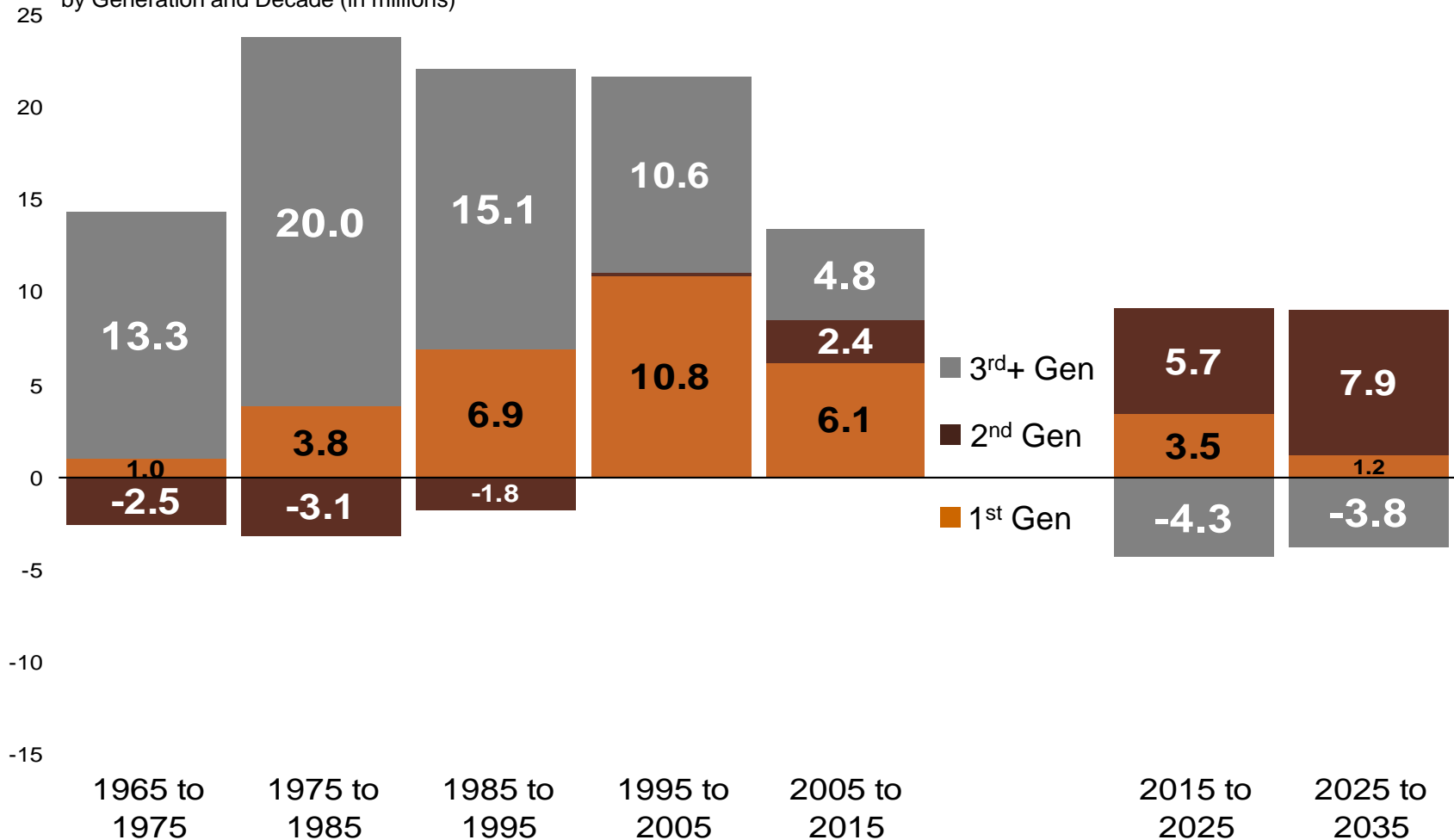


# Without Future Immigrants, Working-Age Population Would Decrease by 2035



# As Baby Boomers Leave the Workforce, ALL Growth in Next Two Decades will be from Immigrants and Their Children

Net Change in Working-Age Population (25-64)  
by Generation and Decade (in millions)



Source: Pew Research Center population estimates and baseline projections (2015).

PewResearchCenter

## Contact Information

**Jeffrey S. Passel**

*Senior Demographer*

[jpassel@pewresearch.org](mailto:jpassel@pewresearch.org)

202-419-3625 (direct)

202-527-2146 (mobile)