

Understanding the Immigrant Experience

Lessons and themes for economic opportunity

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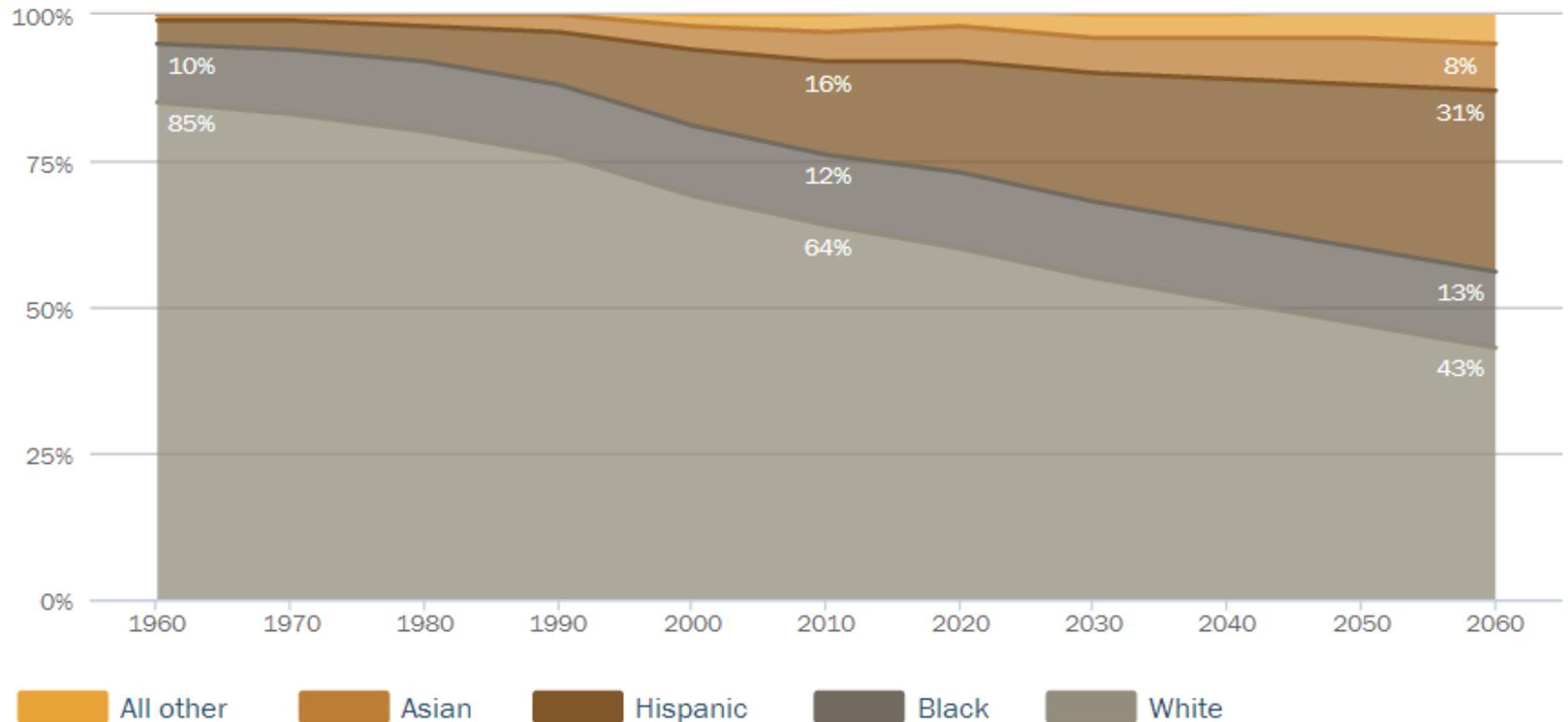
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force
March 10, 2016



America is becoming more diverse

Changing Face of America

Percent of total U.S. population by race and ethnicity, 1960-2060

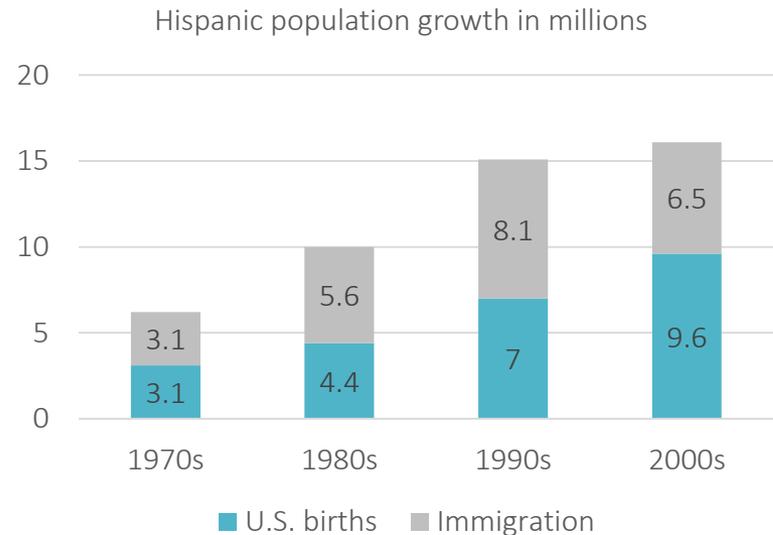


Immigration is a major driver of population growth and change

U.S. population is projected to grow 48% from 2005 to 2050.

More than 80% of that growth will be immigrants and their descendants.

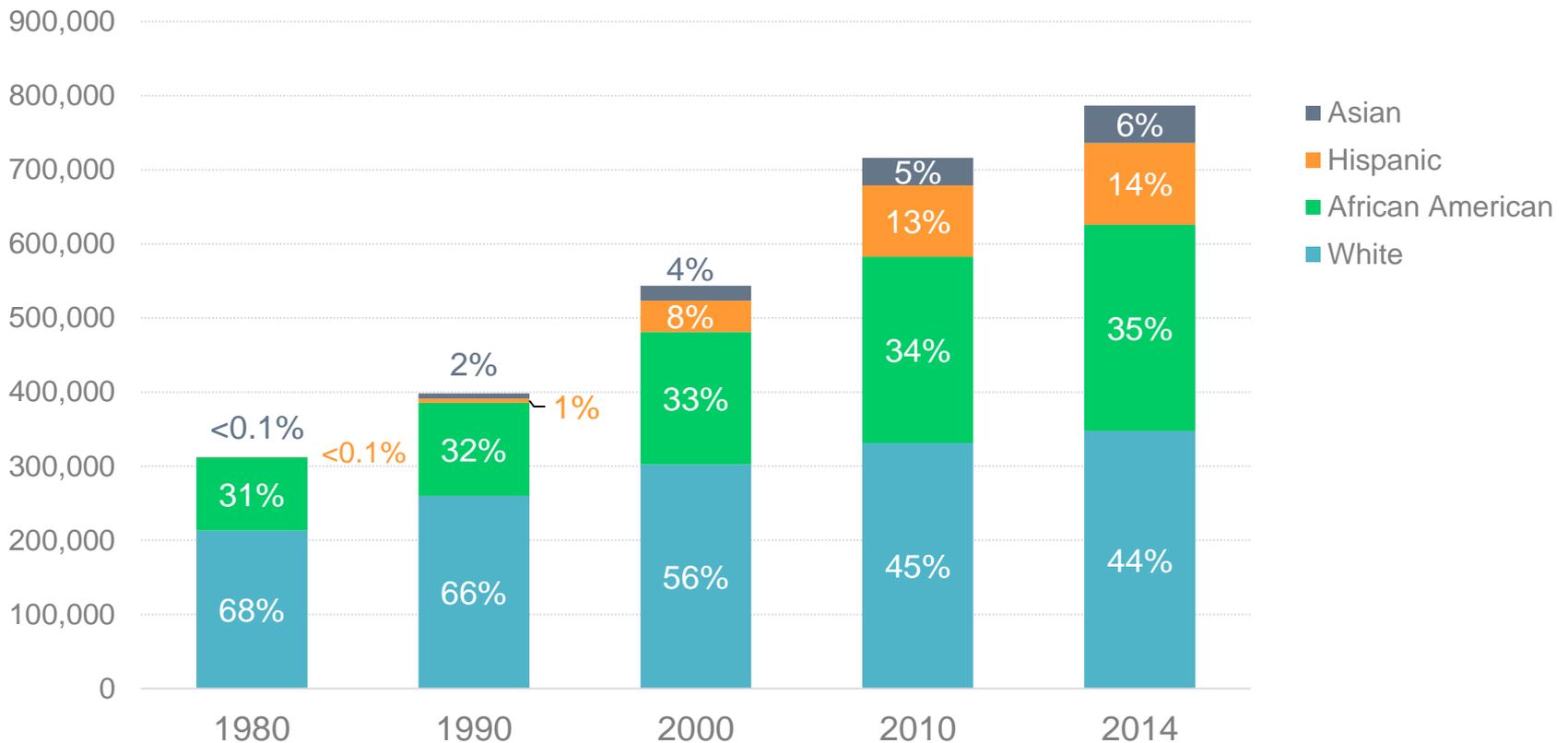
Hispanic population is now growing more from **U.S. births** than immigration.



Source: Pew Research Center's tabulations of Census PUMS data

Charlotte has transformed

from a black/white Old South city to a multi-ethnic New South city



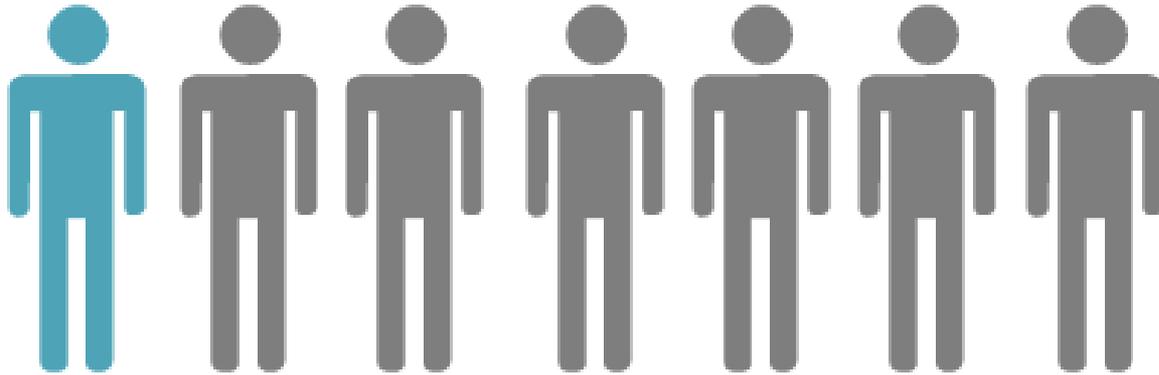
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and American Community Survey 1-year estimates for Charlotte

What brought immigrants to Charlotte?



What does Charlotte's
immigrant population
look like today?

135,000 immigrants live in Mecklenburg County.

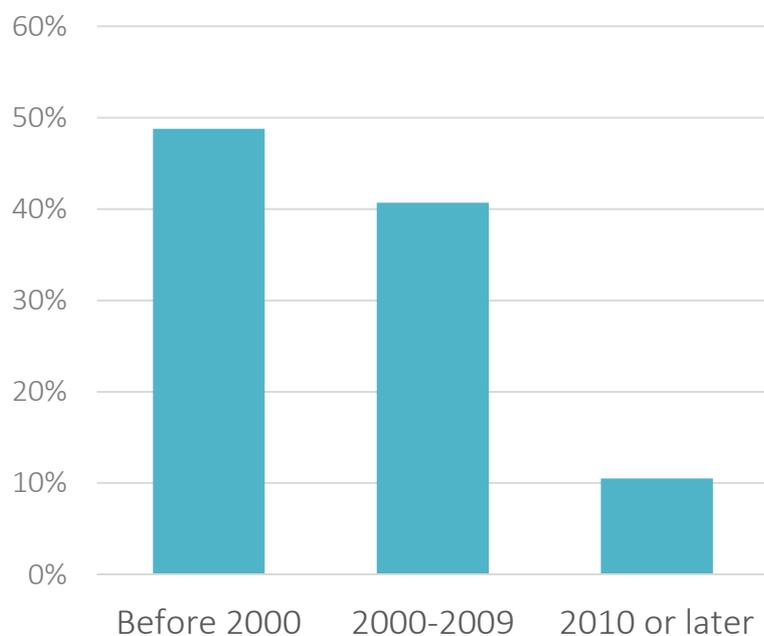


One in seven (14%) Mecklenburg residents are immigrants.

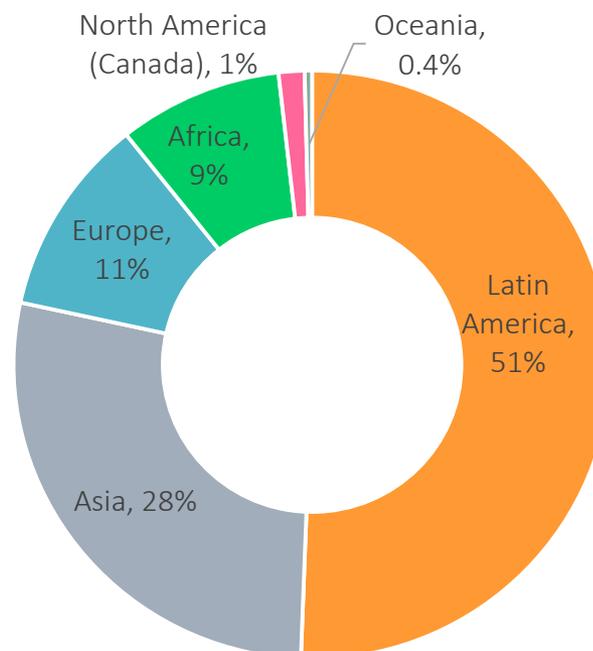
Charlotte's
immigrants are
diverse

They arrived at different times, from different parts of the world

One-half immigrated before 2000.

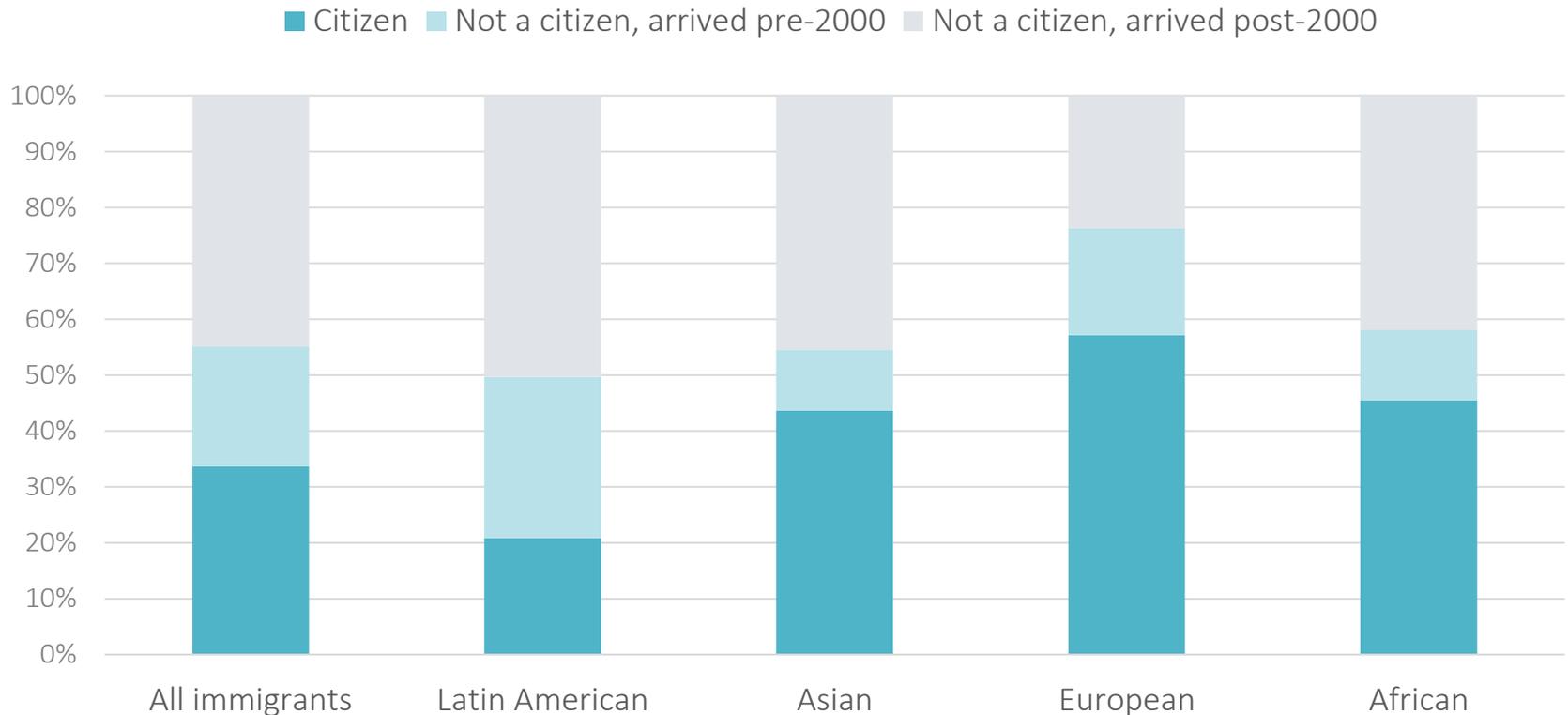


One-half came from Latin America.



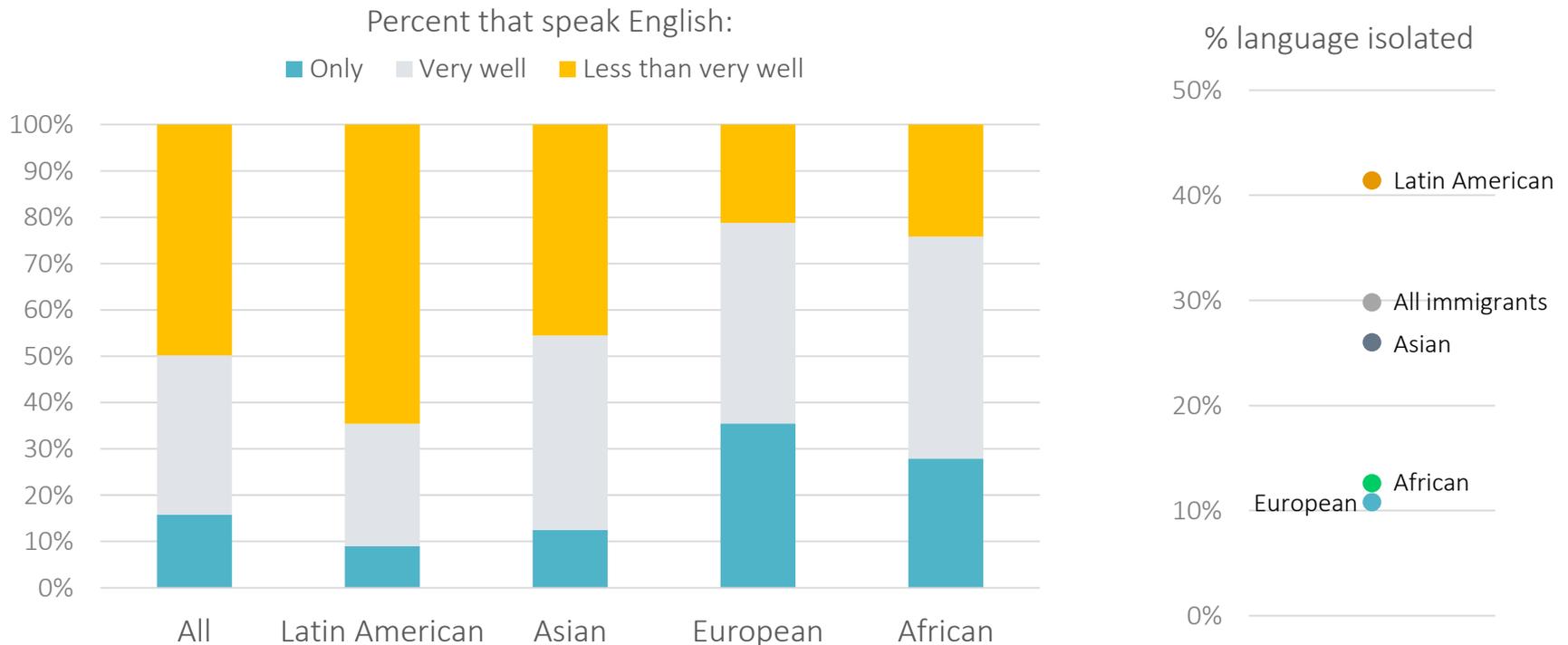
One-third are U.S. citizens

Among European immigrants, over half are citizens; for Latin Americans, only one-fifth have citizenship.



One-half speak English very well, but 30% are language isolated

English ability is highest among European immigrants and lowest for Latin Americans.

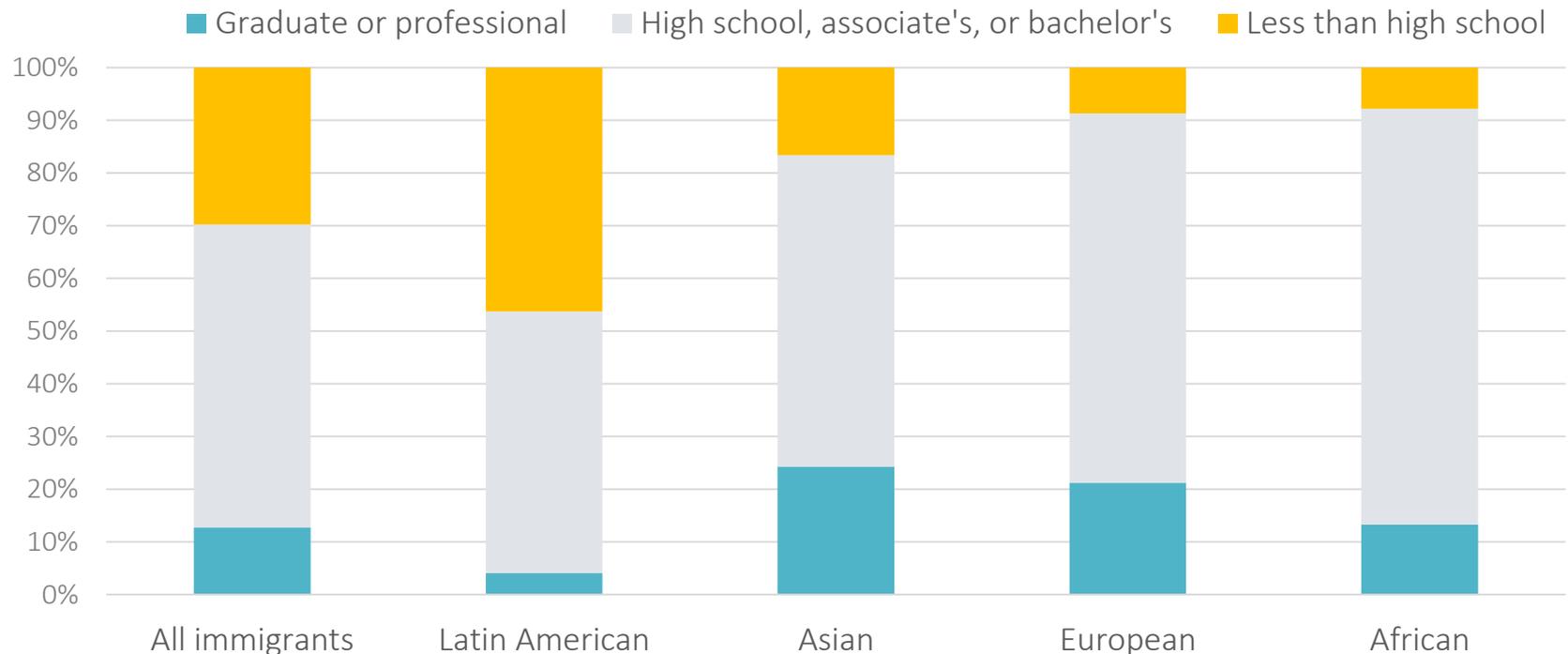


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates for Mecklenburg County

How are Charlotte's
immigrants faring
socio-economically?

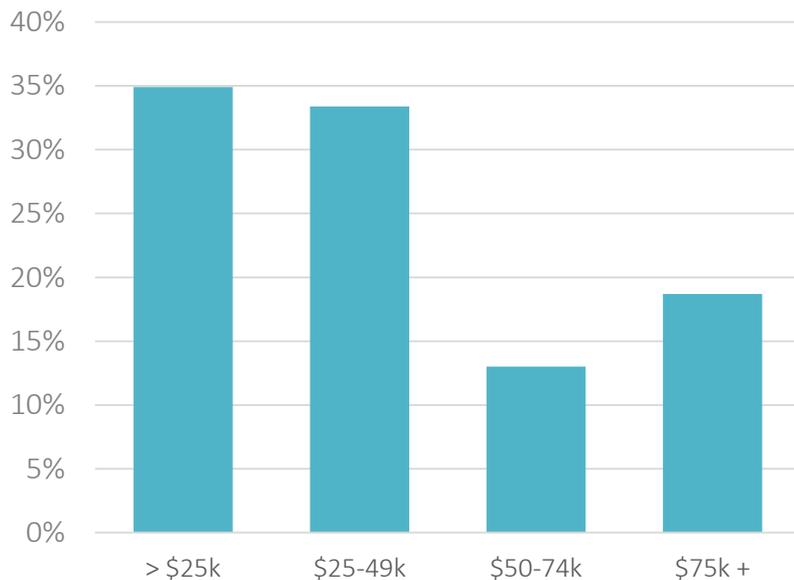
30% lack a high school degree; one-eighth have graduate/professional degree

Nearly half of Latin American immigrants lack a high school degree.
Almost one-quarter of Asians have a graduate/professional degree.

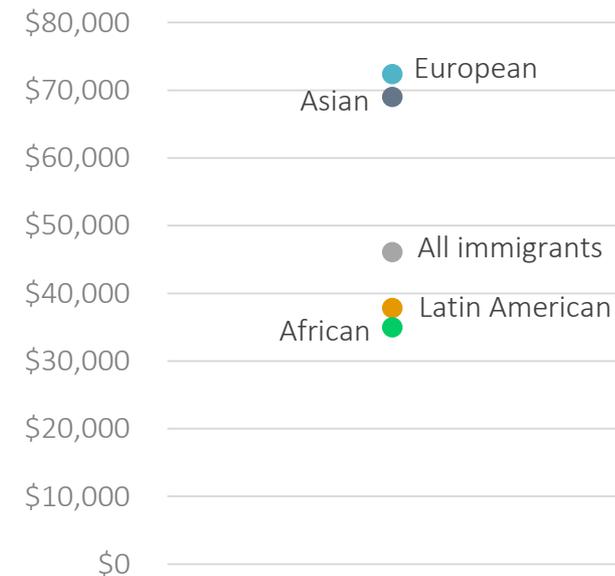


35% earn less than \$25,000; nearly 20% earn more than \$75,000

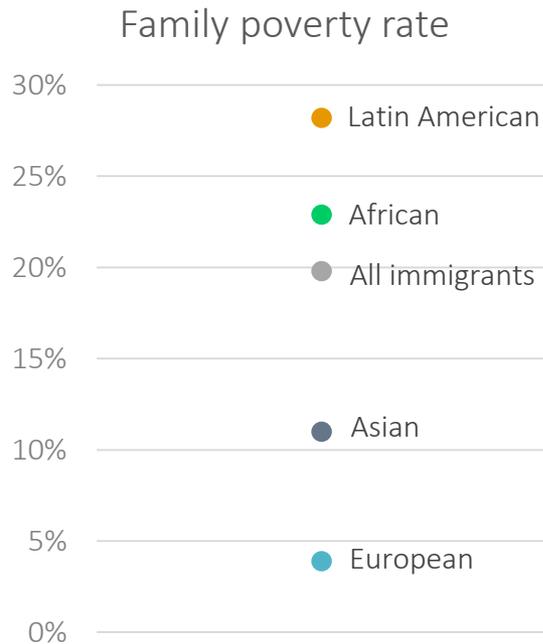
Immigrants by annual earnings



Median household income for Latin American and African immigrants is > \$40,000.



One-fifth of immigrant families live in poverty (27,500 immigrants)

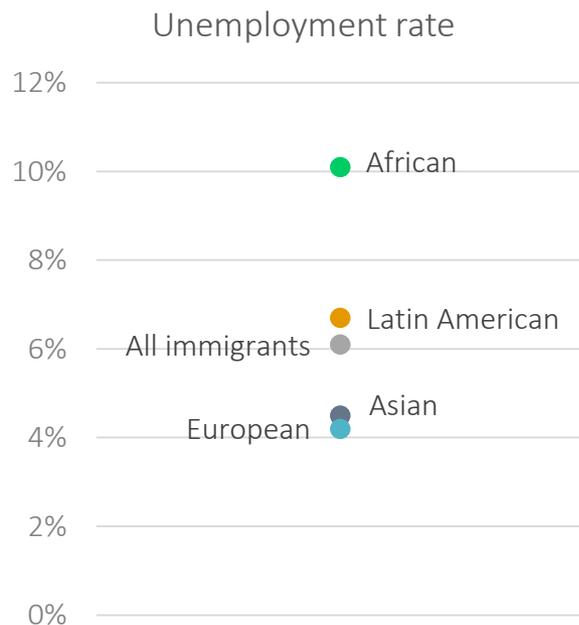


18,000 Latin American immigrants live in poverty.

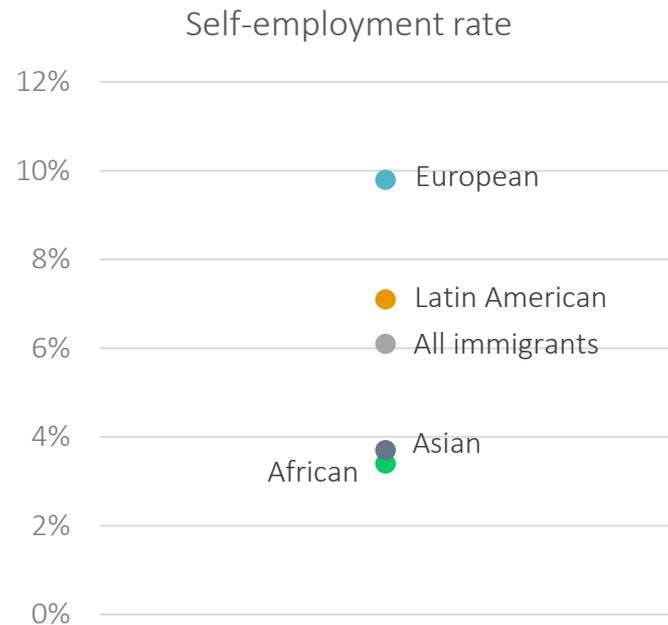
28% of Latin American and 23% of African immigrant families live in poverty.

6% are unemployed and looking for work

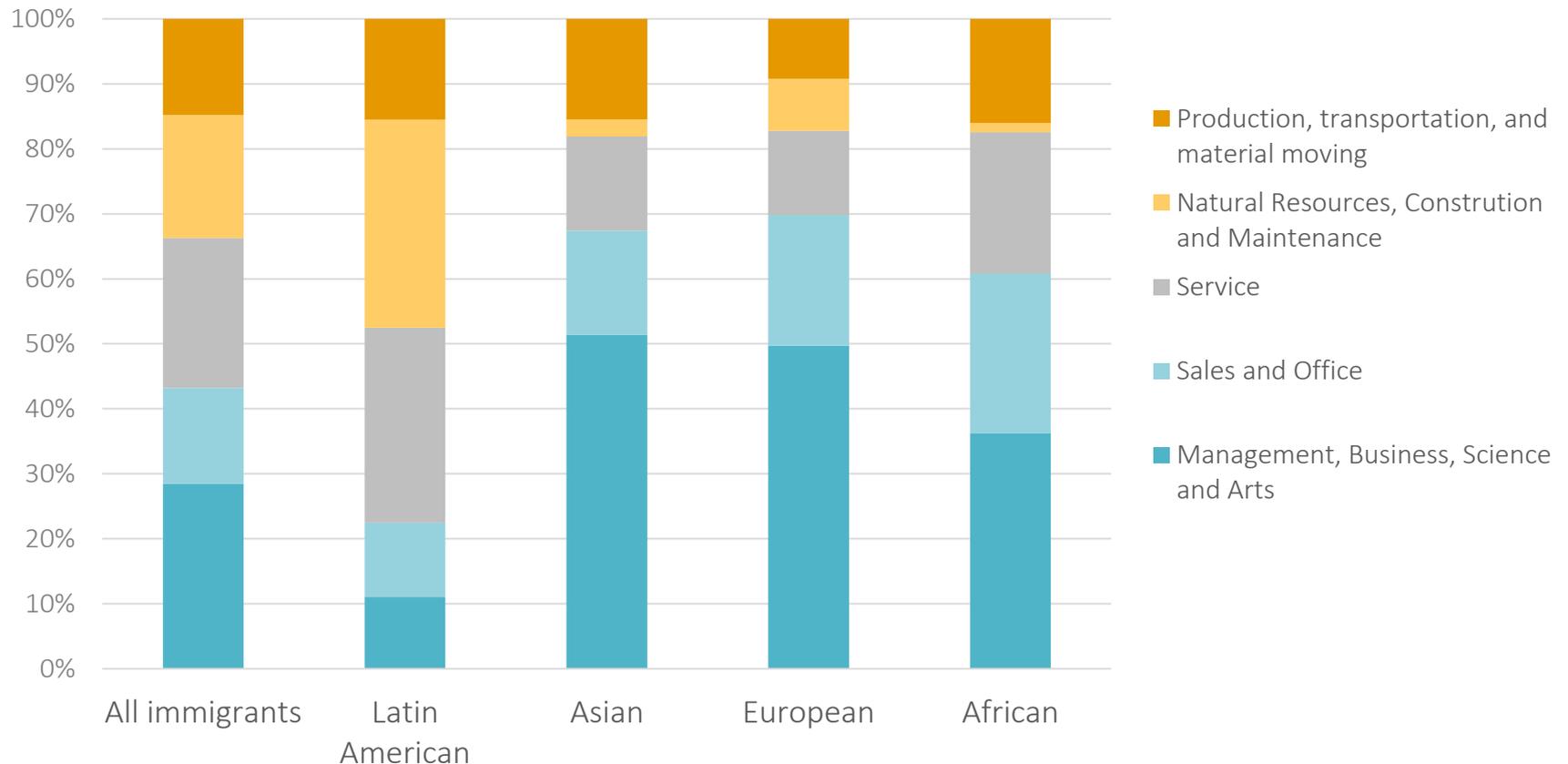
10% of African immigrants are unemployed.



10% of European immigrants are self-employed.



Many have low-status occupations, but a sizeable group have high-status jobs

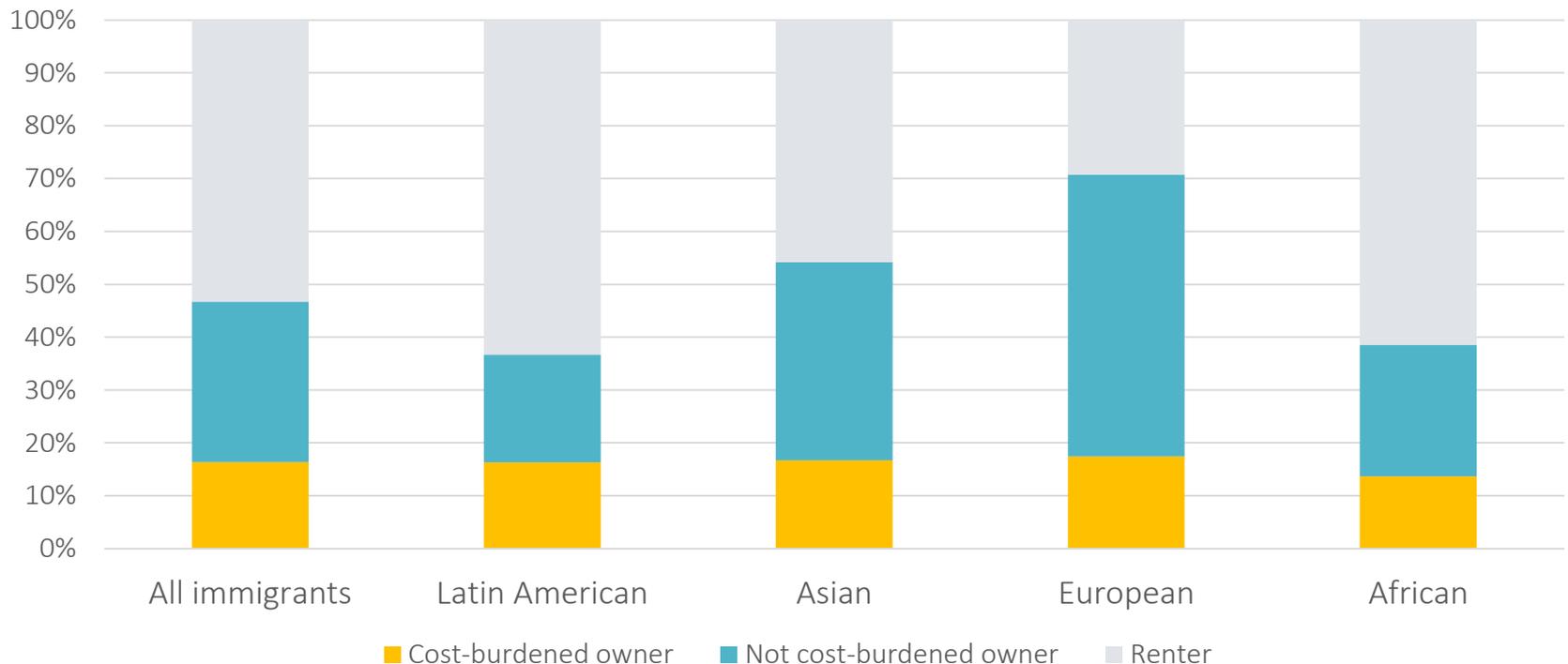


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 5-year estimates for Mecklenburg County

Nearly one-half are home owners, but one-sixth of owners are cost-burdened

70% of European immigrants own their home.

44% of Latin American immigrant home-owners are cost-burdened.

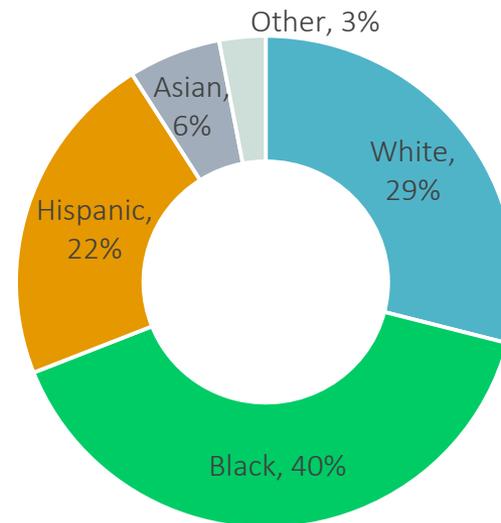


Many immigrant children attend CMS schools

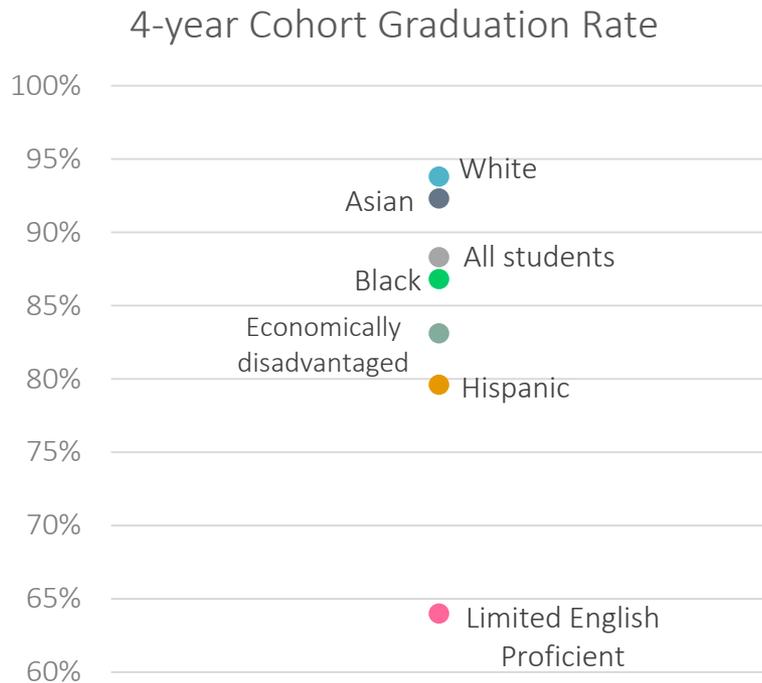
Impacts of immigration can be seen in the racial/ethnic make-up of CMS students.

Students from over 150 different countries attend CMS schools.

30,000 language minority students attend CMS schools.



Many of those with limited English ability struggle to graduate high school



Only 64% of Limited English Proficient students graduate within 4 years- the lowest graduation rate of all sub-groups in CMS.

Hispanic students have the lowest graduation rate of the racial/ethnic sub-groups.

How well are
immigrants faring in
terms of economic
mobility?



The Integration of Immigrants into **AMERICAN SOCIETY**

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

Examines change over time for immigrants themselves and intergenerational change across first, second, and later generations

Multiple markers of socio-economic mobility

Data from Current Population Survey 2003-2013

Immigrants arrive in the U.S. with varying levels of education

Indian immigrants bring an average of 16.3 years of education.



For Mexican immigrants, the average is 9.4 years.



Despite these large differences, there is strong intergenerational progress

Second generation immigrants met or exceeded schooling level of native-born Americans.



Employment success differed by gender

Immigrant men had higher rates of employment than native-born men and higher rates than later generations, especially for the less-educated.



Immigrant women had substantially lower employment rates than native-born, but later generations approached parity with native-born women.



Employment success differed by race/ethnicity

Second and later generations of:

Hispanic men had higher employment than first generation immigrants, when lower educational attainment is accounted for.

Asian men attained similar employment levels as white non-Hispanic men.

Black immigrant men moved toward employment levels of native-born Blacks.

Immigrants often concentrate in certain occupations and industries

Subsequent generations display intergenerational improvement in occupational distributions, similar to education and earnings.

Immigrant groups concentrated in **low-status occupations** experience substantial improvement in occupational position by the second generation but **do not reach parity with native-borns in later generations**.

Like employment status, occupational progress differs by gender

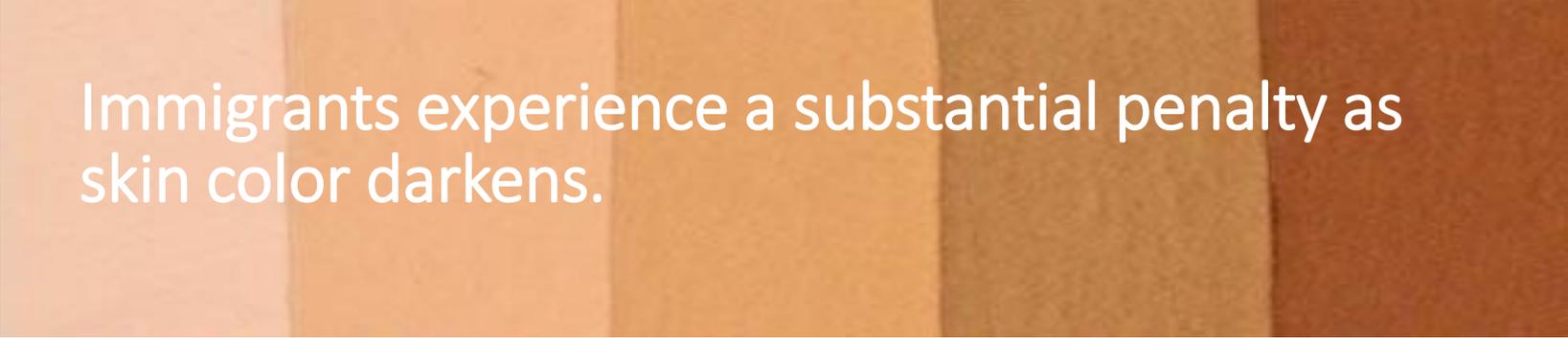
Immigrant women experience greater gains than immigrant men, and the gap between native-borns narrows greatly in later generations.



Second generation men are more likely to have jobs with healthcare and retirement benefits than their immigrant parents.



Immigrants earned less than native-born workers with comparable skills, initially, but improved with time in U.S.



Immigrants experience a substantial penalty as skin color darkens.

Asian immigrants do as well as native-born whites.

Hispanic/Mexican immigrants experience slower earnings assimilation.

Black and Hispanic immigrants see less intergenerational mobility

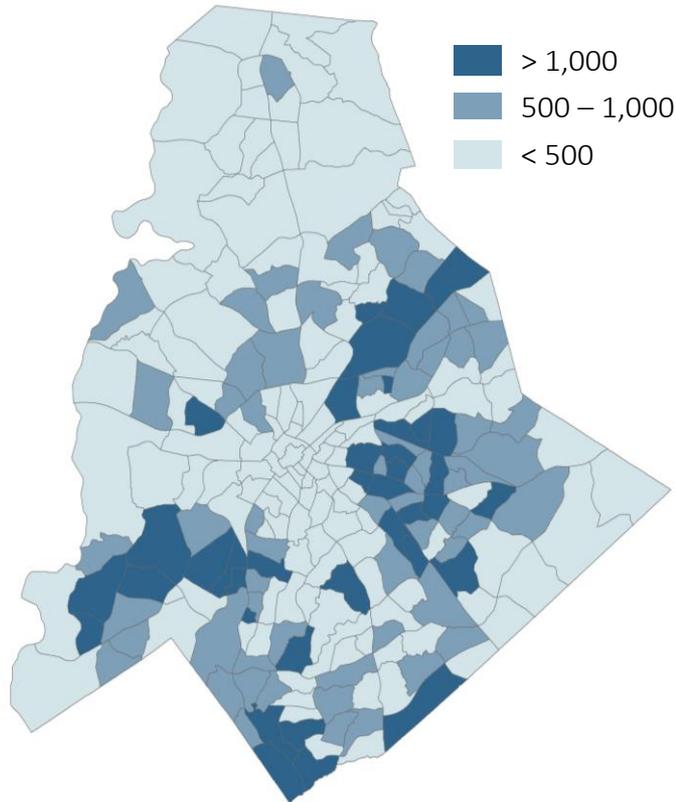
Black immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean bring high levels of schooling and subsequent generations meet or surpass native-born blacks in educational attainment.

But they still experience a skin color penalty when it comes to earnings.

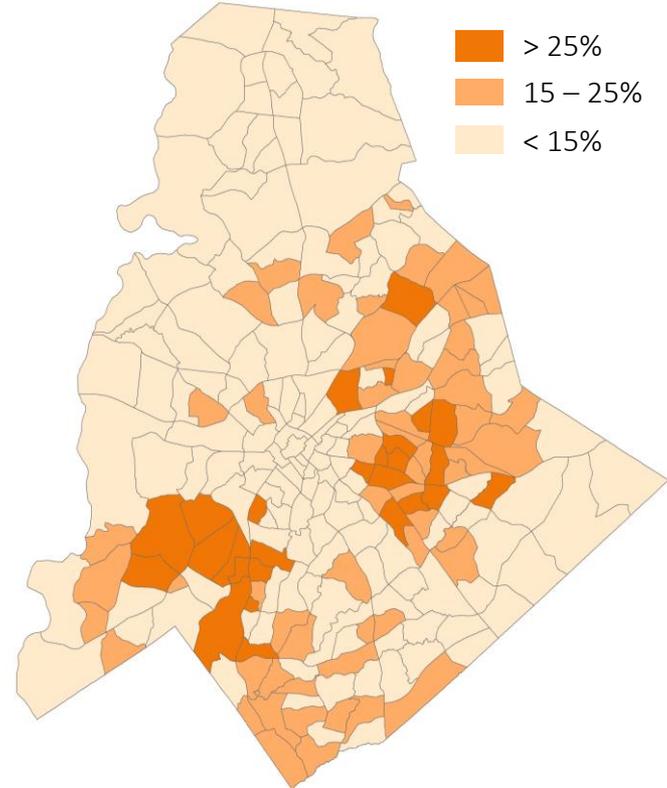
Other studies find some evidence suggesting that third and later generations of Hispanic immigrants will not experience upward mobility.

Where do Charlotte's immigrants live?

NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS



PERCENT IMMIGRANTS



**Majority of immigrants
are from:**

% foreign-born
Low High

Latin America



Asia



Europe



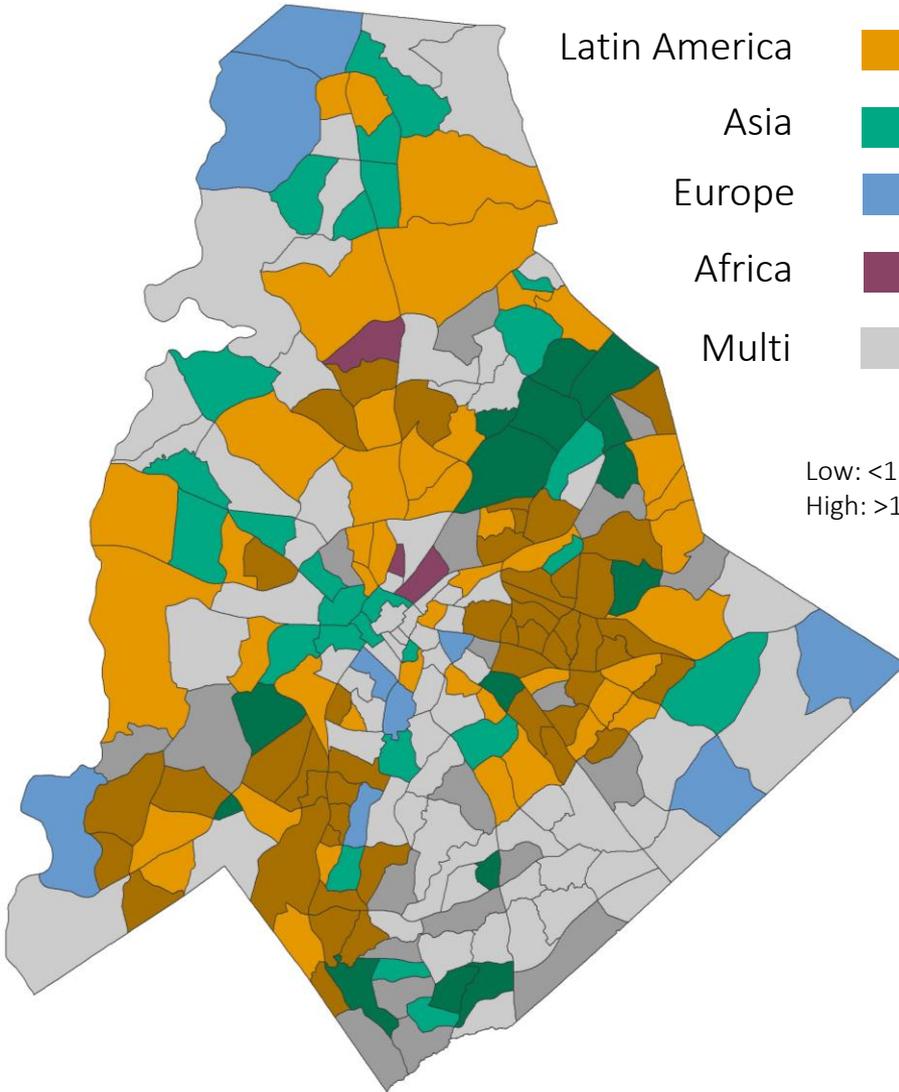
Africa



Multi

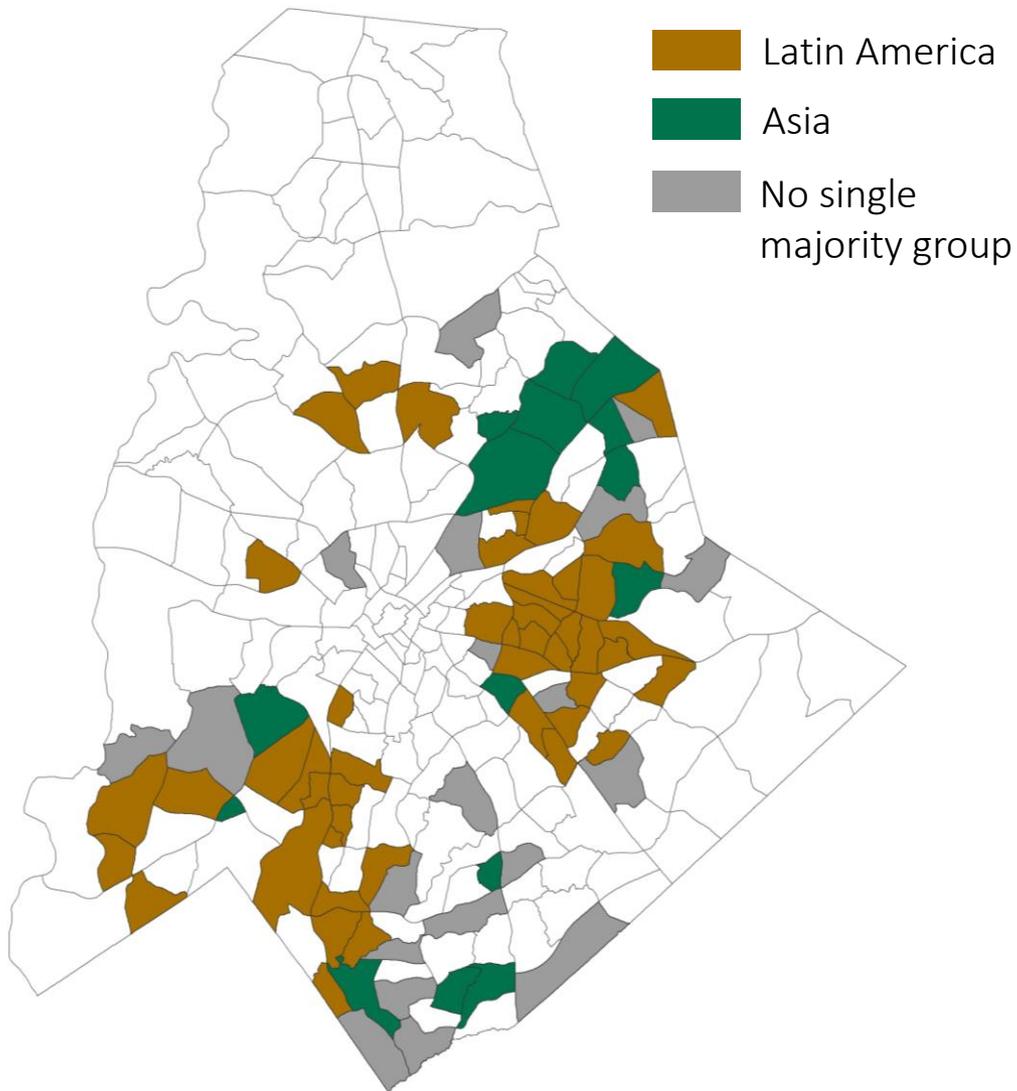


Low: <15% foreign-born
High: >15% foreign-born



Regional
immigrant
groups are
spread out
across the
county.

Of neighborhoods where immigrants make up 15% or more of the population, the majority of immigrants are from:



Latin Americans prevail in East and Southwest Charlotte.

Asians are more prominent in University City and pockets of South and East Charlotte.