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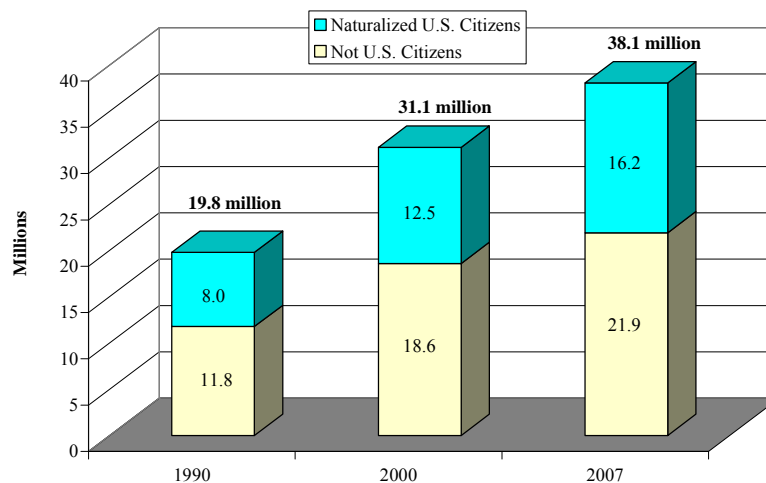
CITIZENSHIP BY THE NUMBERS: The Demographic and Political Rise of Naturalized U.S. Citizens and the Native-Born Children of Immigrants

Citizenship Day (September 17) is an appropriate time to take stock of the growing number of U.S. citizens who are immigrants to this country—or who are the children of immigrants. Roughly one-in-seventeen U.S. citizens are foreign-born, and tens of millions of native-born U.S. citizens have immigrant parents. This demographic reality has important political ramifications. A rising share of the U.S. electorate has a direct personal connection to the immigrant experience, and is unlikely to be favorably swayed by politicians who employ anti-immigrant rhetoric to mobilize supporters. This is particularly true among the two fastest-growing groups of voters in the nation: Latinos and Asians. The majority of Latinos and Asians are either immigrants or the children of immigrants, and they comprised [one out of every ten voters](#) in the 2008 election.¹

More than two-in-five immigrants are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- The foreign-born share of the U.S. population rose from 7.9% in [1990](#),² to 11.1% in [2000](#),³ to 12.6% in [2007](#), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.⁴
- There were 38.1 million immigrants living in the United States as of [2007](#), of whom 42.5% were naturalized U.S. citizens.⁵
- The number of naturalized U.S. citizens increased from 8 million in [1990](#),⁶ to 12.5 million in [2000](#),⁷ to 16.2 million in [2007](#) {Figure 1}.⁸

Figure 1: Foreign-Born Population of the United States by Citizenship Status
1990, 2000 & 2007



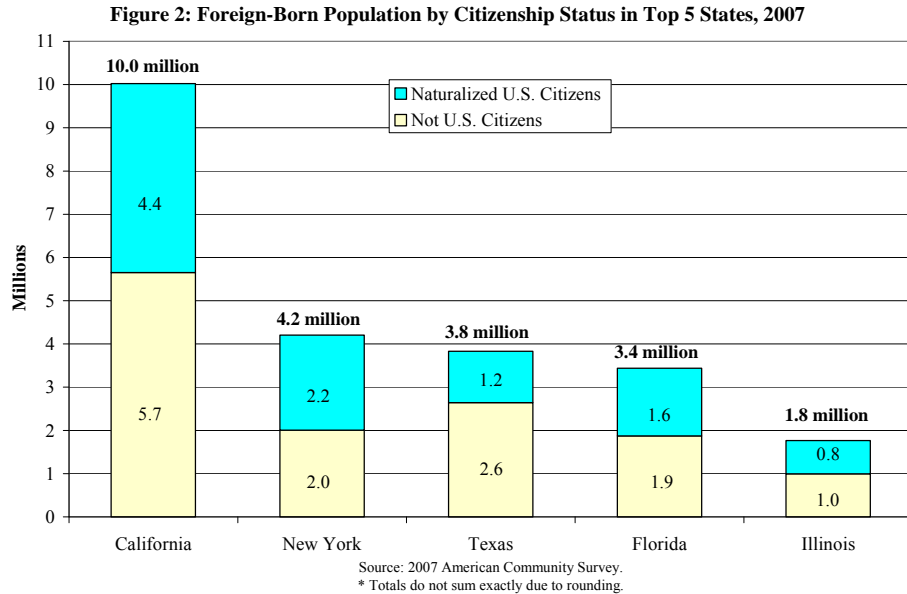
Source: 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census; 2007 American Community Survey.

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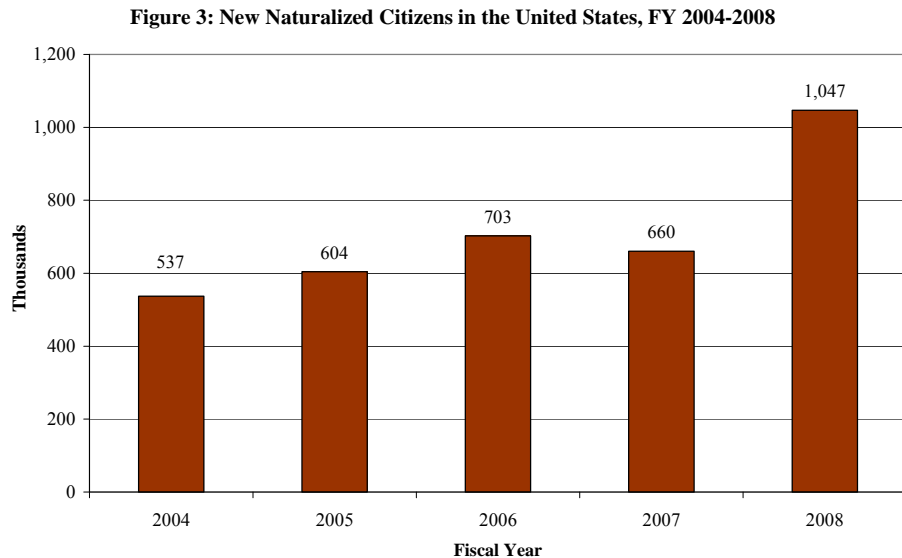
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- California was home to the largest number of naturalized U.S. citizens (4.4 million) in 2007, followed by New York (2.2 million), Texas (1.2 million), Florida (1.6 million), and Illinois (773,000) {Figure 2}.⁹



- Between the elections of 2004 and 2008, roughly 3.6 million immigrants became naturalized U.S. citizens, according to the [Office of Immigration Statistics](#). More than one million immigrants became naturalized U.S. citizens in FY 2008 alone {Figure 3}.¹⁰



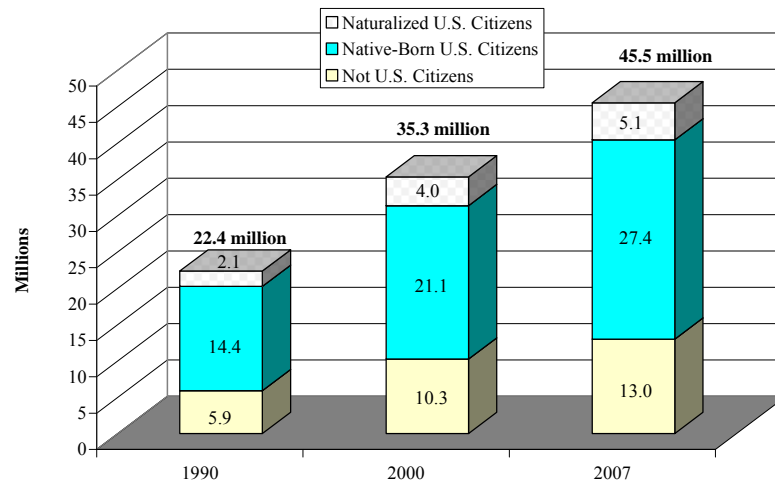
Source: Office of Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security, *2008 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, Table 21.

Three-in-five Latinos are native-born U.S. citizens, while one-in-nine are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- The Latino share of the U.S. population grew from 9% in 1990¹¹ to 12.5% in 2000,¹² to 15.1% in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹³

- There were 45.5 million Latinos in the United States in [2007](#), of whom 11.2% were naturalized U.S. citizens and 60.2% were native-born U.S. citizens.¹⁴
- The number of Latino naturalized citizens increased from 2.1 million in [1990](#),¹⁵ to 4.0 million in [2000](#),¹⁶ to 5.1 million in [2007](#) {Figure 4}.¹⁷
- The number of Latino native-born citizens increased from 14.4 million in [1990](#), to 21.1 million in [2000](#),¹⁸ to 27.4 million in [2007](#) {Figure 4}.¹⁹

**Figure 4: Latino Population of the United States by Citizenship Status
1990, 2000 & 2007**



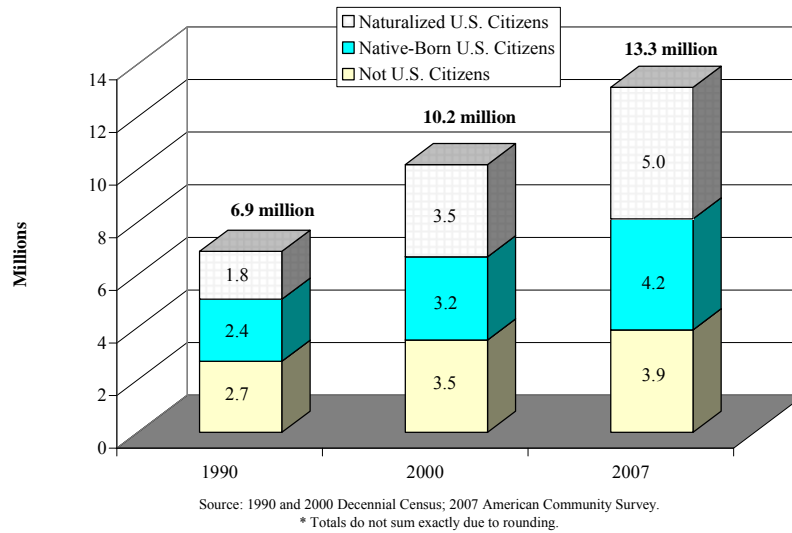
Source: 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census; 2007 American Community Survey.
* Totals do not sum exactly due to rounding.

- The Pew Hispanic Center estimates that roughly 52% (or 8.2 million) of the nation's 15.9 million Latino children were the native-born sons and daughters of at least one foreign-born parent as of [2008](#).²⁰

Three-in-eight Asians are naturalized U.S. citizens, while nearly one-third are native-born U.S. citizens.

- The Asian share of the population grew from 2.8% in [1990](#),²¹ to 3.6% in [2000](#),²² to 4.4% in [2007](#), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²³
- There were 13.3 million Asians living in the United States as of [2007](#), of whom 37.7 % were naturalized U.S. citizens and 31.8% were native-born U.S. citizens.²⁴
- The number of Asian naturalized citizens increased from 1.8 million in [1990](#),²⁵ to 3.5 million in [2000](#),²⁶ to 5.0 million in [2007](#) {Figure 5}.²⁷
- The number of Asian native-born citizens increased from 2.4 million in [1990](#),²⁸ to 3.2 million in [2000](#),²⁹ to 4.2 million in [2007](#) {Figure 5}.³⁰

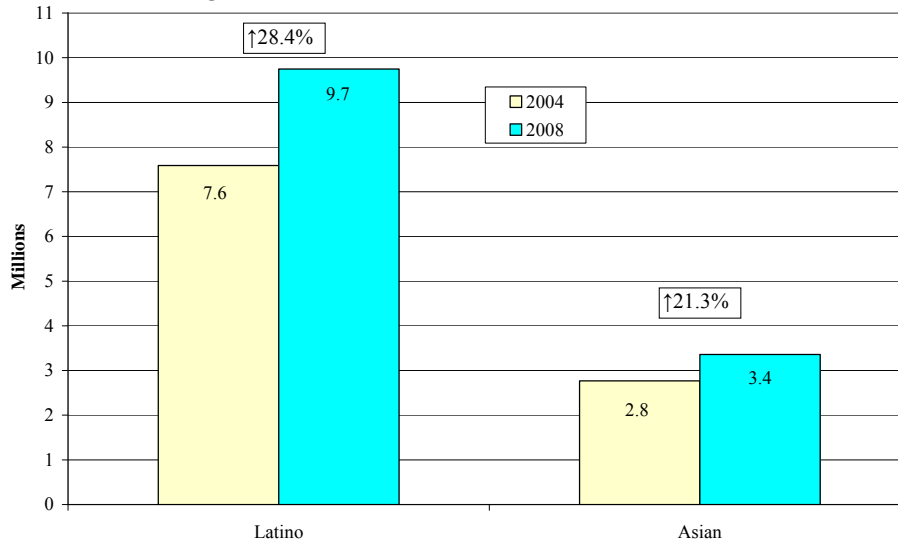
**Figure 5: Asian Population of the United States by Citizenship Status
1990, 2000 & 2007**



One-in-ten voters in 2008 were Latino or Asian.

- The number of Latino voters increased from 7.6 million in 2004³¹ to 9.7 million in 2008³²—an increase of 28.4%, or 2.2 million {Figure 6}.
- The number of Asian voters³³ increased from 2.8 million in 2004³⁴ to 3.4 million in 2008³⁵—an increase of 21.3%, or 589,000 {Figure 6}.

Figure 6: Latino & Asian Voters in 2004 & 2008 Elections



Source: 2004 & 2008 Current Population Surveys.

- In 2008,³⁶ Latinos accounted for more than one-in-three voters in New Mexico; one-in-five voters in California and Texas; and one-in-seven voters in Florida.
- Asians accounted for one-in-ten voters in California in 2008.³⁷

- In six of the [nine states](#) that went from “red” to “blue” in the 2008 election (Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Nevada, New Mexico, and North Carolina),³⁸ the number of Latino and Asian voters significantly exceeded Barack Obama’s [margin of victory](#)³⁹ over John McCain.
- 8.6% of all registered voters in 2006 were “New Americans”—naturalized U.S. citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of immigration from Latin America and Asia which began in 1965—according to an analysis of Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).⁴⁰

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Endnotes

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- ¹ See Immigration Policy Center, [Latino and Asian Clout in the Voting Booth: Census Data Underscores Growing Power of Minority Voters](#) (Washington, DC: American Immigration Law Foundation, August 13, 2009).
- ² U.S. Census Bureau, [The Foreign-Born Population: 2000](#), December 2003.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Foreign-Born Population: 2000](#), December 2003.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Office of Immigration Statistics, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, [2008 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics](#), Table 21.
- ¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Hispanic Population: 2000](#), May 2001.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, [We, the American Hispanics](#) (Washington, DC: September 1993), p. 6.
- ¹⁶ Roberto R. Ramirez, [We the People: Hispanics in the United States](#), CENSR-18 (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, December 2004), p. 8.
- ¹⁷ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹⁸ Roberto R. Ramirez, [We the People: Hispanics in the United States](#), CENSR-18 (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, December 2004), p. 8.
- ¹⁹ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ²⁰ Richard Fry and Jeffrey S. Passel, [Latino Children: A Majority Are U.S.-Born Offspring of Immigrants](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, May 28, 2009), p. 1.
- ²¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Asian Population: 2000](#), February 2002.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, [1990 Census of Population: Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States](#) (1990 CP-3-5), 1993, p. 5.
- ²⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, [We the People: Asians in the United States](#) (CENSR-17), December 2004, p. 9.
- ²⁷ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ²⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, [1990 Census of Population: Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States](#) (1990 CP-3-5), 1993, p. 5.
- ²⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, [We the People: Asians in the United States](#) (CENSR-17), December 2004, p. 9.
- ³⁰ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ³¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2004, “[Table 4a. Reported Voting and Registration of the Total Voting-Age Population, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2004.](#)”
- ³² U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008, “[Table 4b. Reported Voting and Registration of the Voting-Age Population, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2008.](#)”
- ³³ “Hispanic” (or “Latino,” in this report) is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as an ethnic category, whereas “white,” “black,” and “Asian” are defined as racial categories. Individuals who identify themselves as Hispanic may also identify themselves as white, black, or Asian. The Census Bureau data released in July provides separate figures for all “whites” and for “non-Hispanic

whites” in particular, but does not do the same for blacks and Asians. As a result, there is some overlap between the figures for Hispanics (Latinos) and for blacks and Asians. However, this overlap is relatively small.

³⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2004, “[Table 4a. Reported Voting and Registration of the Total Voting-Age Population, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2004.](#)”

³⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008, “[Table 4b. Reported Voting and Registration of the Voting-Age Population, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2008.](#)”

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ *New York Times* website, [Election Results 2008](#), December 9, 2008.

³⁹ U.S. Electoral College, [2008 Presidential Election: Popular Vote Totals](#).

⁴⁰ Rob Paral & Associates, [The New American Electorate: The Growing Political Power of Immigrants and Their Children](#) (Washington, DC: Immigration Policy Center, American Immigration Law Foundation, October 2008).