

Global Migration and Demography

# ***Mexican Immigration to the U.S.:*** **New Estimates, Trends and** **Characteristics**

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***Forging a New Path in North American Trade & Immigration***

Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

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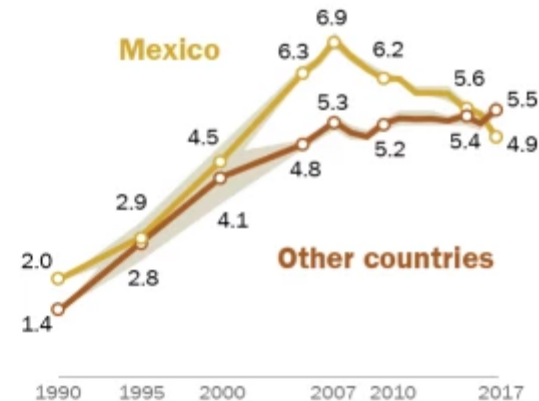
HISPANIC | JUN 12, 2019

### Mexicans Decline to Less Than Half the U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Population

For the first time, Mexican unauthorized immigrants no longer account for the majority of the 10.5 million living in the U.S. illegally.

- [Interactive: Unauthorized Immigrant population trends](#)
- [Video: How we estimate the U.S. unauthorized immigrant population](#)

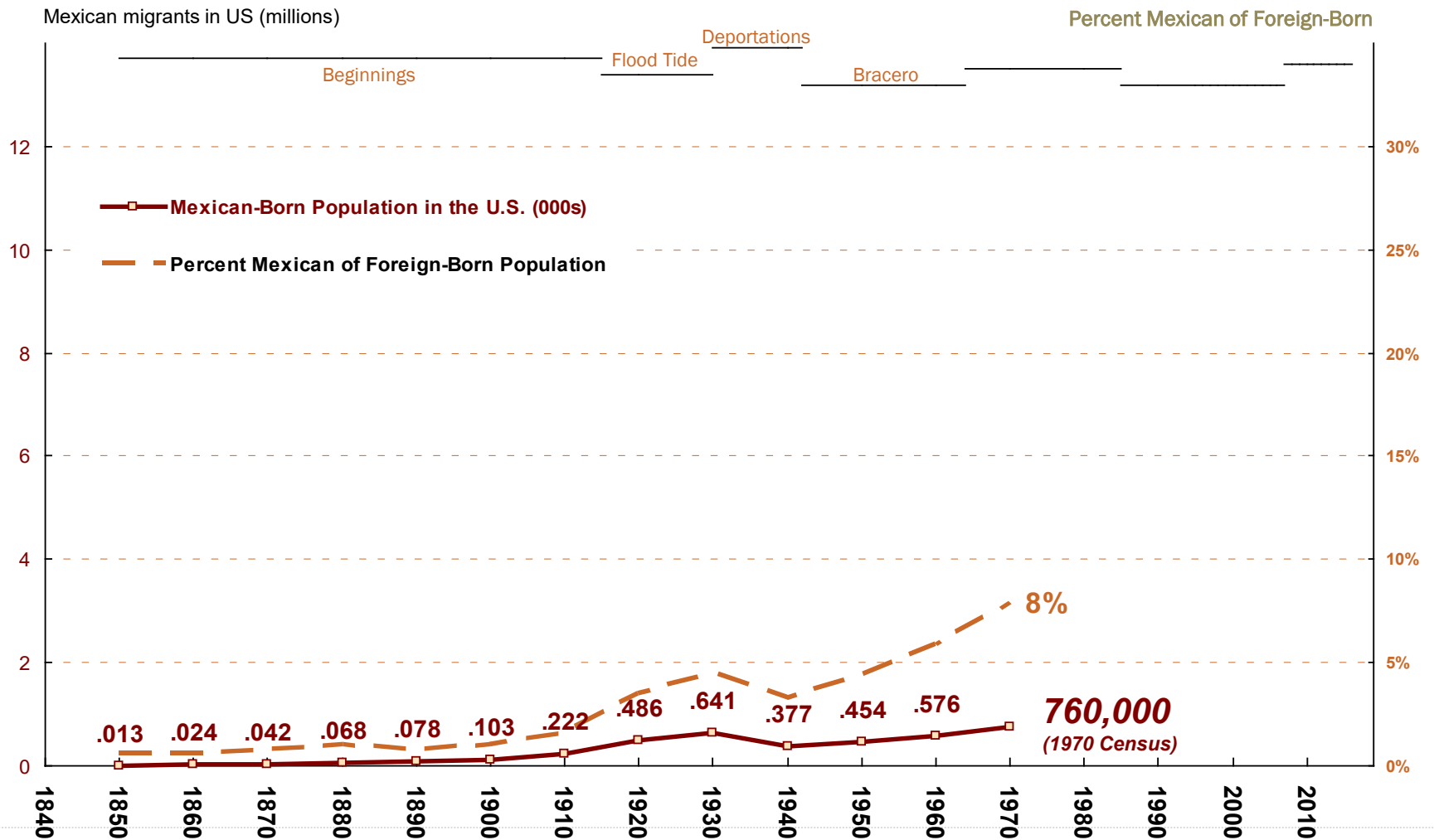
*U.S. unauthorized immigrants by origin, in millions*



# Immigration today

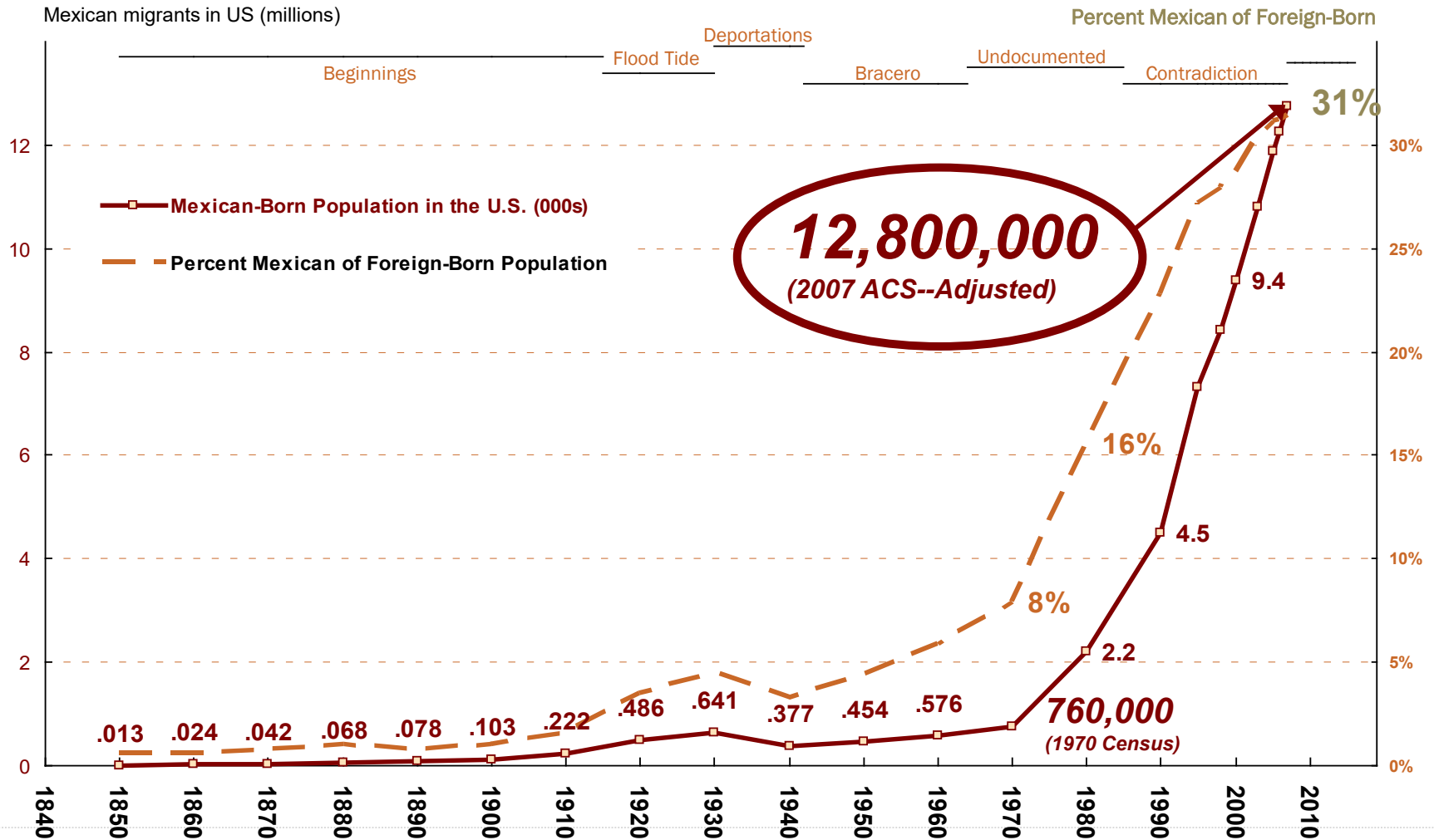
- **Mismatch between data and political rhetoric**
- **Unauthorized immigrant #s lowest since '04**
  - Unauthorized immigrant numbers grew rapidly, 1990 to 2007
  - Dramatic declines for 2 years then slow drop
- **Mexican mass migration has essentially stopped**
  - Drop in unauthorized since '07 due entirely to Mexican reversal
- **“New” unauthorized are mostly *visa overstayers***
  - Apprehensions of Mexicans are at a 50-year low
  - Deterrence seems to be working on Mexicans
- **Low flow and origin shifts have consequences**
  - Longer duration of residence & more families
  - Lawful immigration numbers remain unchanged
  - Key Labor force role for immigrants today & in the future

# Mexican population in US grew slowly before '80; By 1970, "only" about 3/4 million Mexicans in US



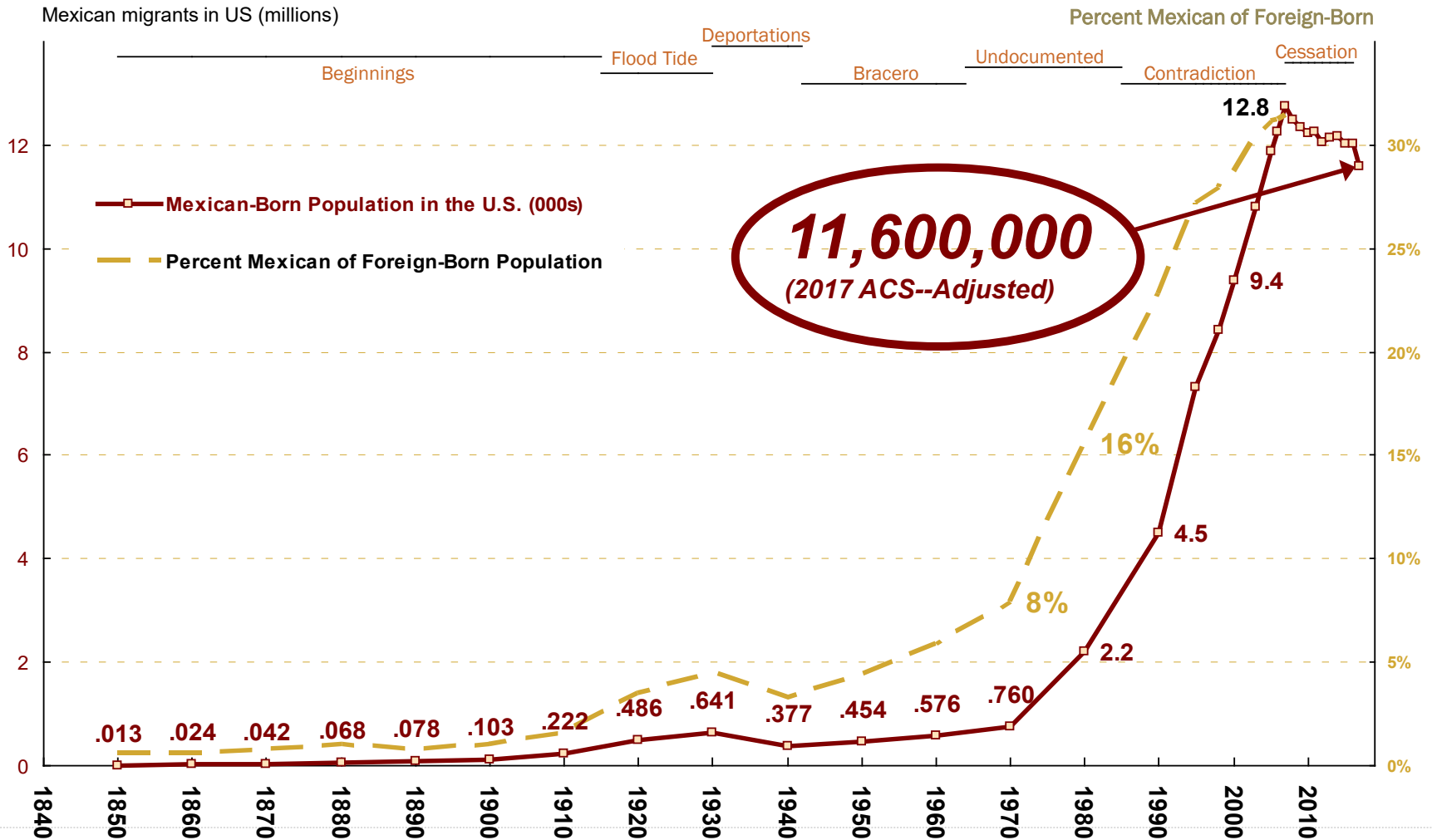
Source: Pew Research Center estimates based censuses and augmented CPS (1995-2004) and ACS (2005-2017)..

# Acceleration from unauthorized immigration; Almost 17-fold increase to 12.8 million by 2007



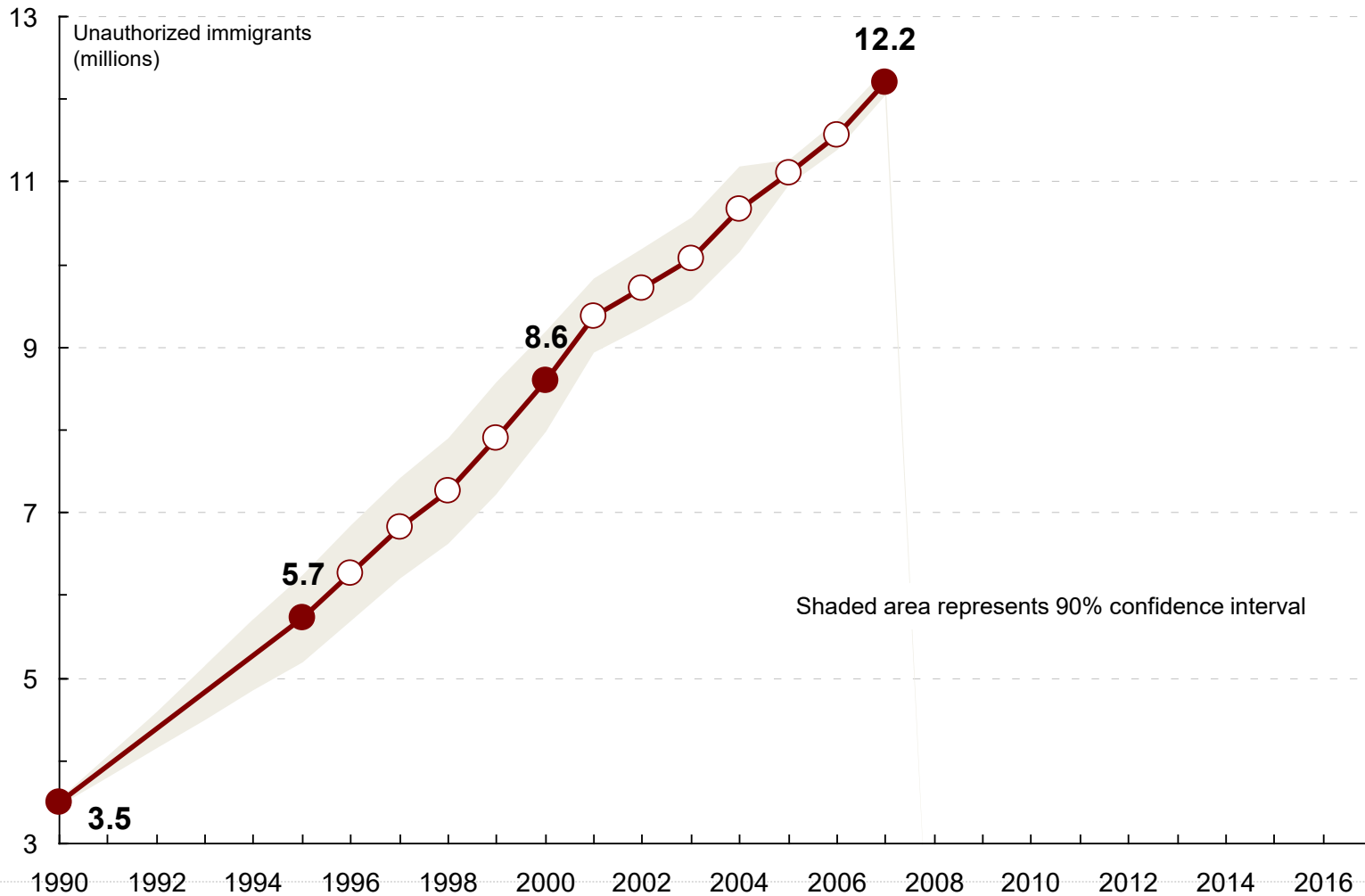
Source: Pew Research Center estimates based censuses and augmented CPS (1995-2004) and ACS (2005-2017)..

# Growth ceases & dramatically reverses, 2007-2010; Steady downward drift as returns to Mexico continue



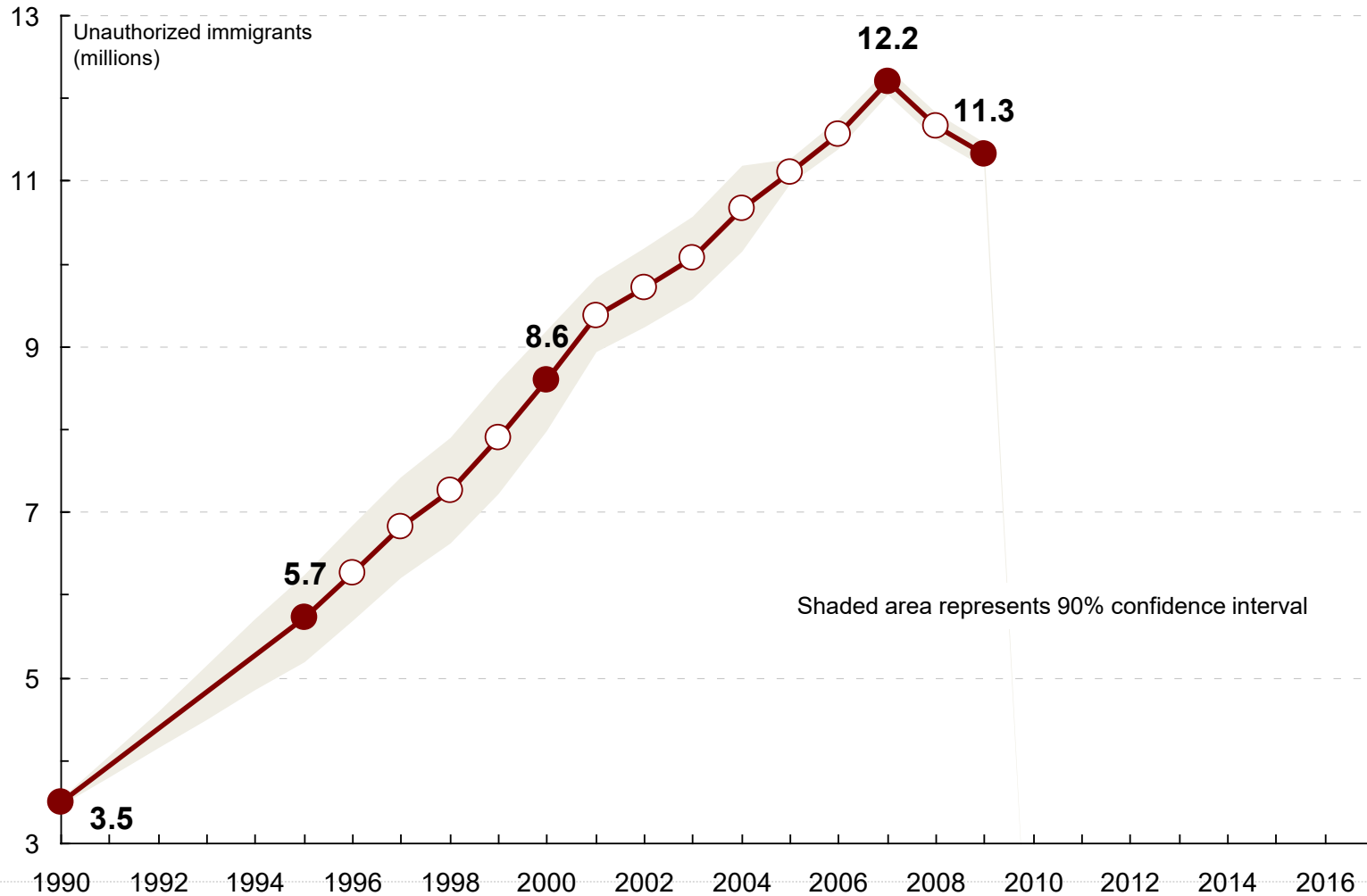
Source: Pew Research Center estimates based censuses and augmented CPS (1995-2004) and ACS (2005-2017)..

# Unauthorized immigrants reached 12+ million in '07 — NET growth of 500,000 per year for 17 years

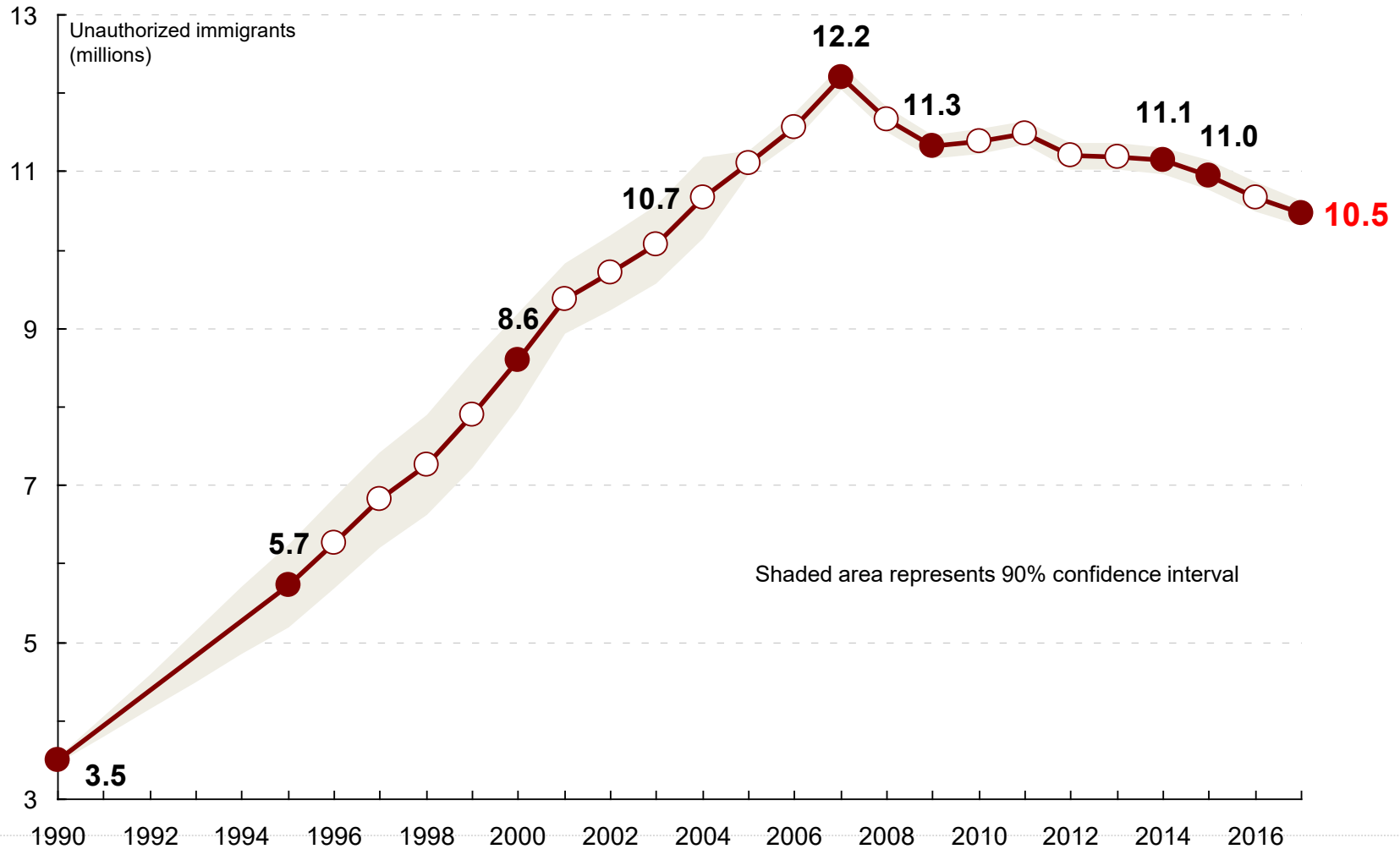




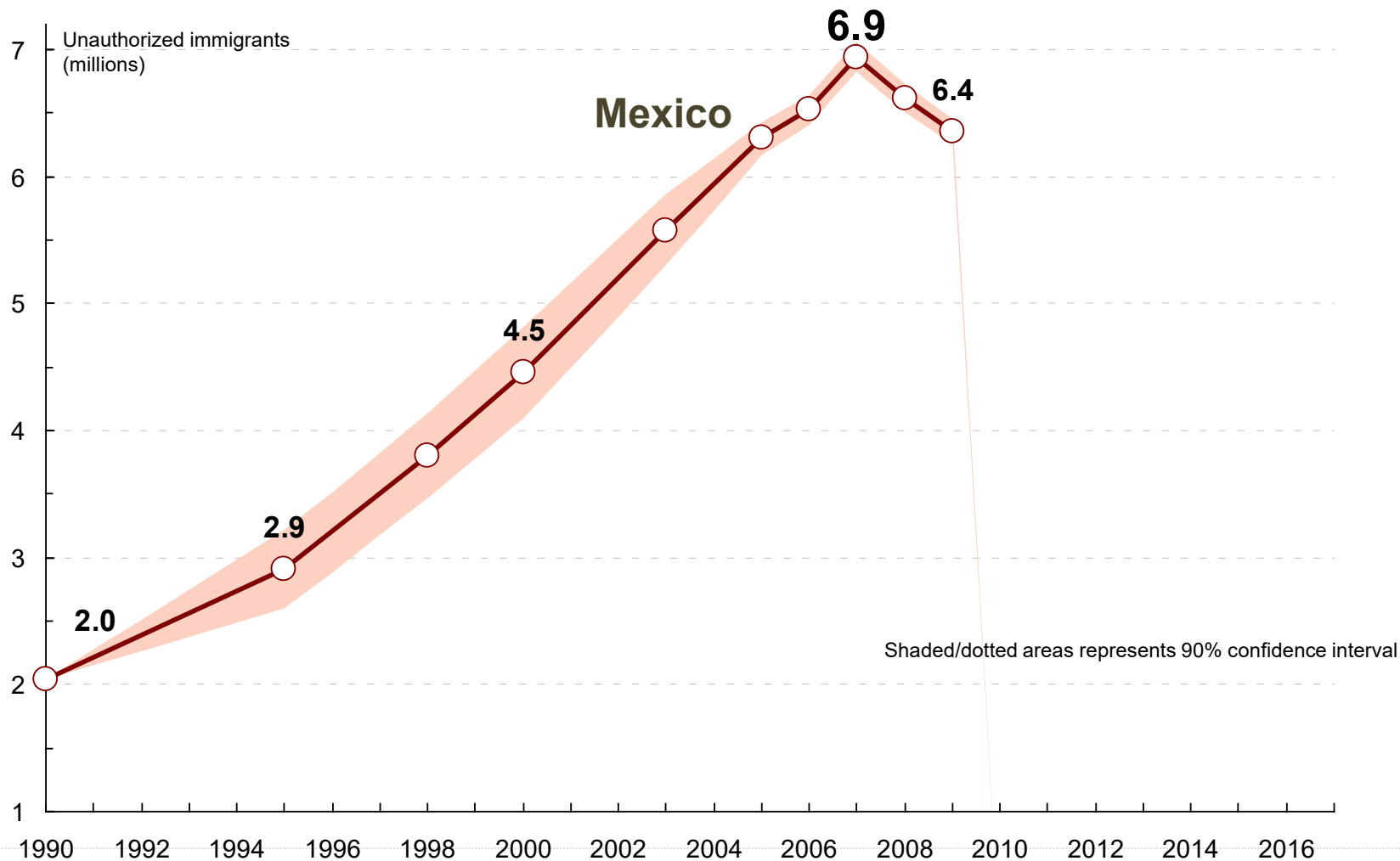
# Sudden reversal after '07 – DROP of 500,000 per year for two years



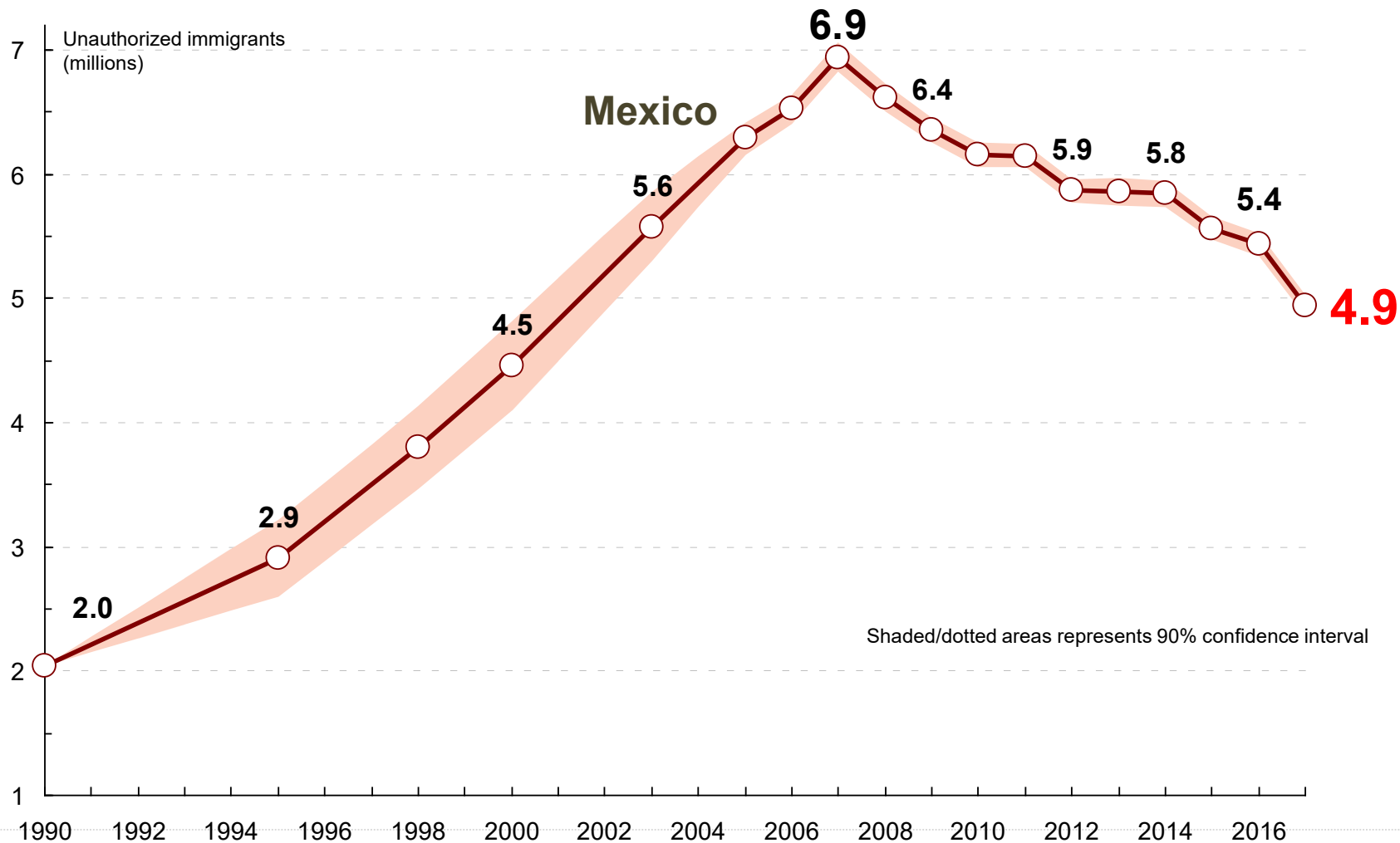
# Stable for '09-'14, then real declines in '15-'17; unauthorized immigrant #s drop to '04 (!) level



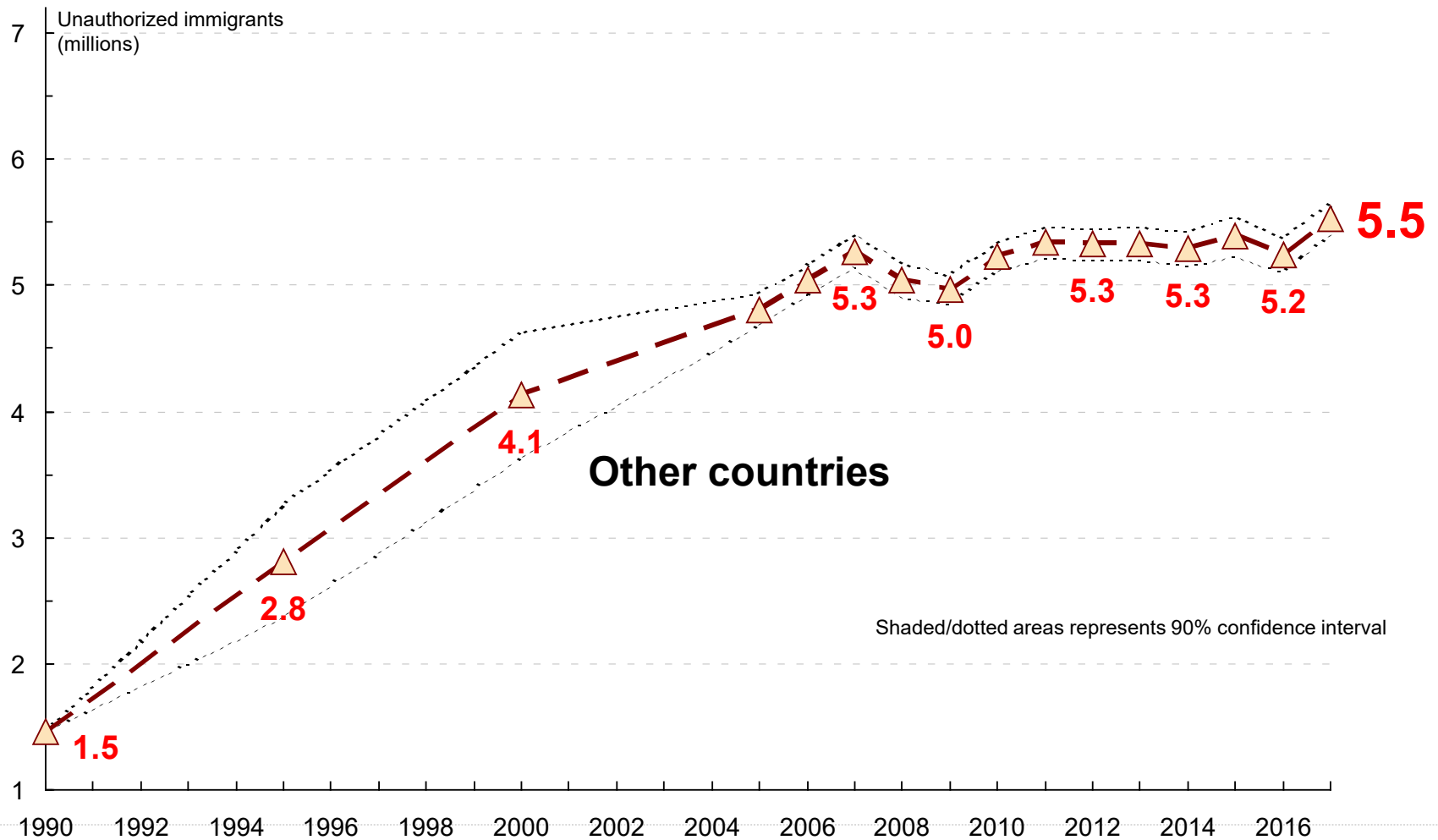
# Unauthorized *Mexicans* peaked '07, too; Dropped by 500,000 over next 2 years



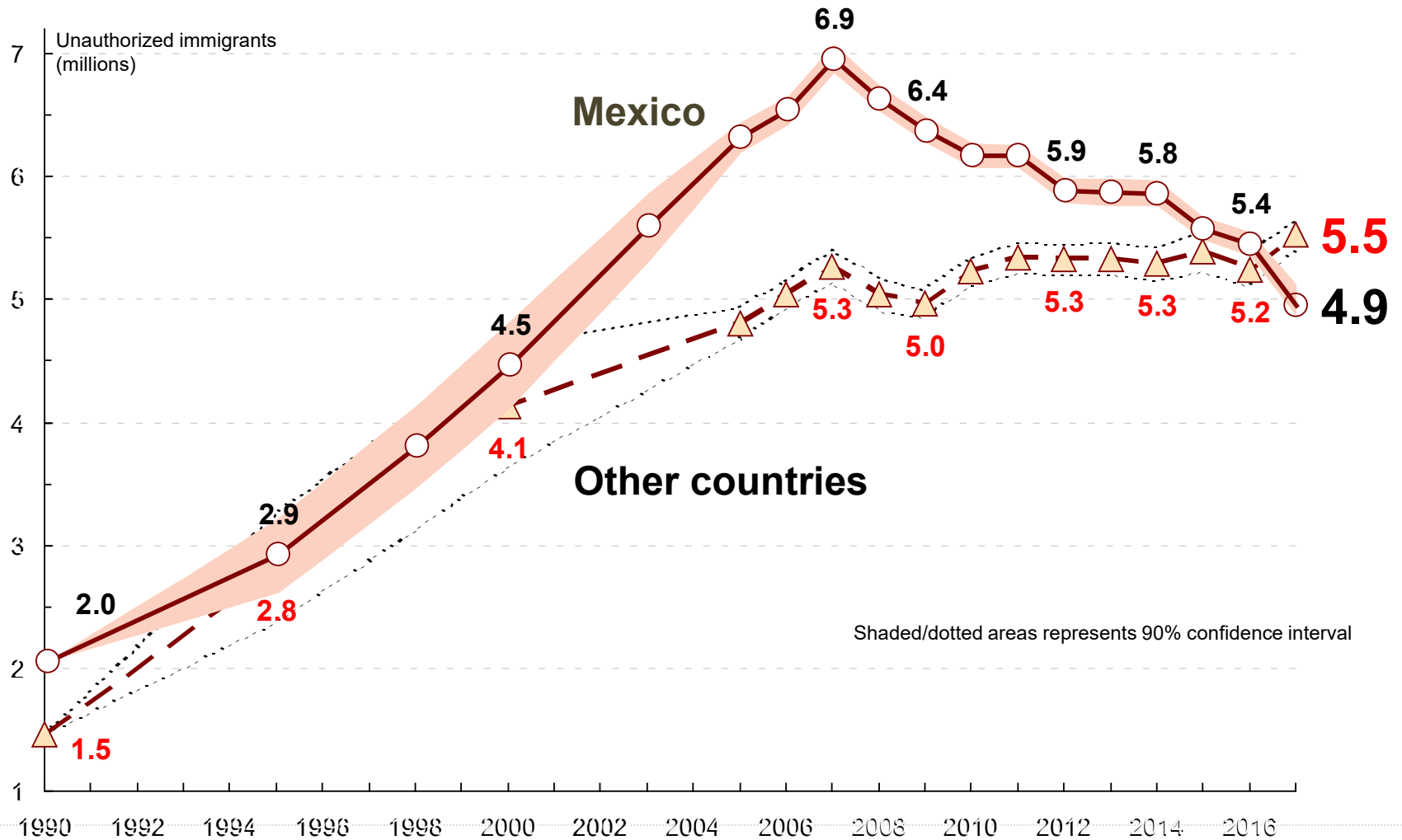
# Unlike total, Mexican declines continue — Down by ***2 million (!)*** from peak



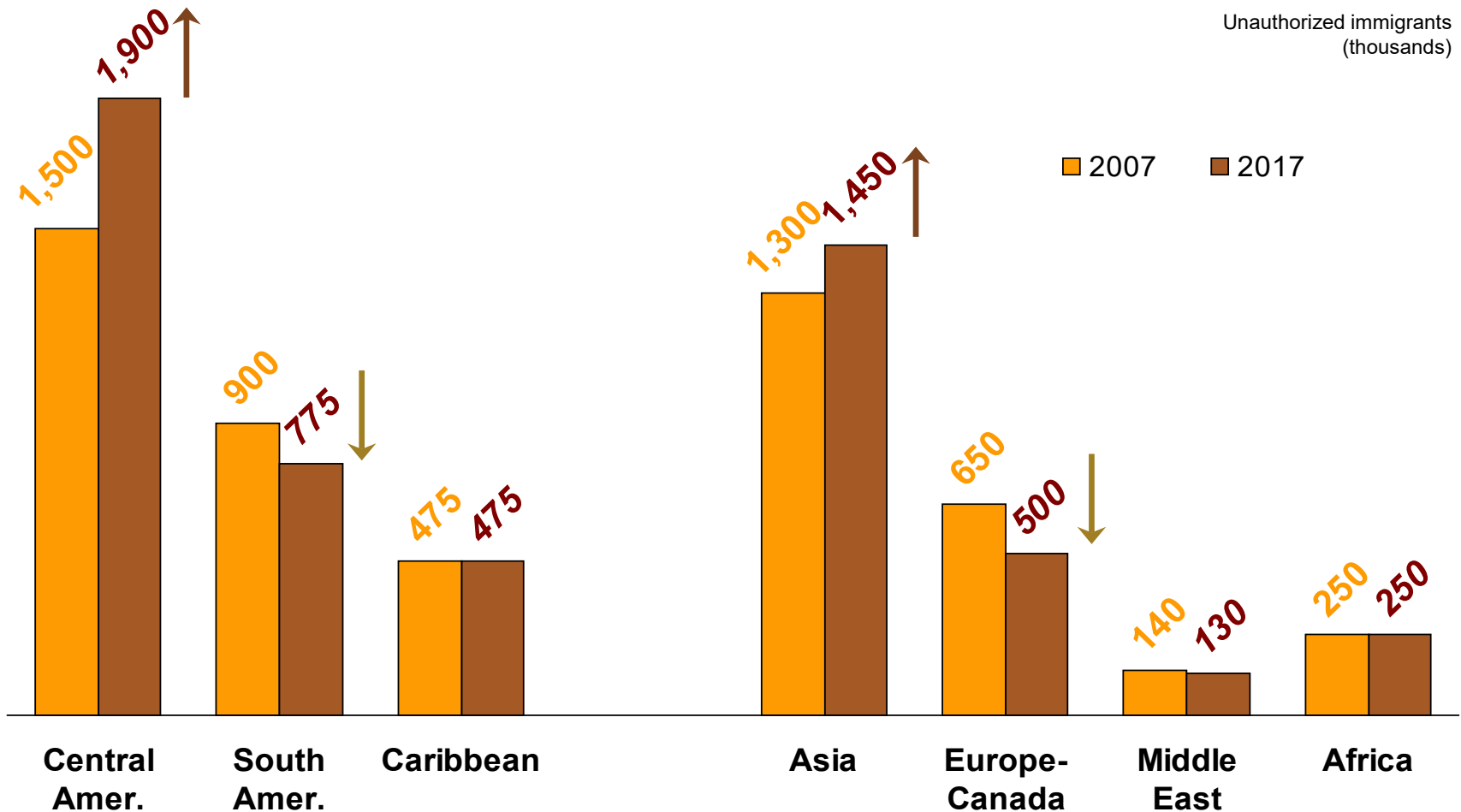
# Unauthorized from countries other than Mexico show rapid increase to '07; small increase since



# Mexicans decline to LESS THAN HALF of unauthorized immigrants for the 1<sup>st</sup> time ever

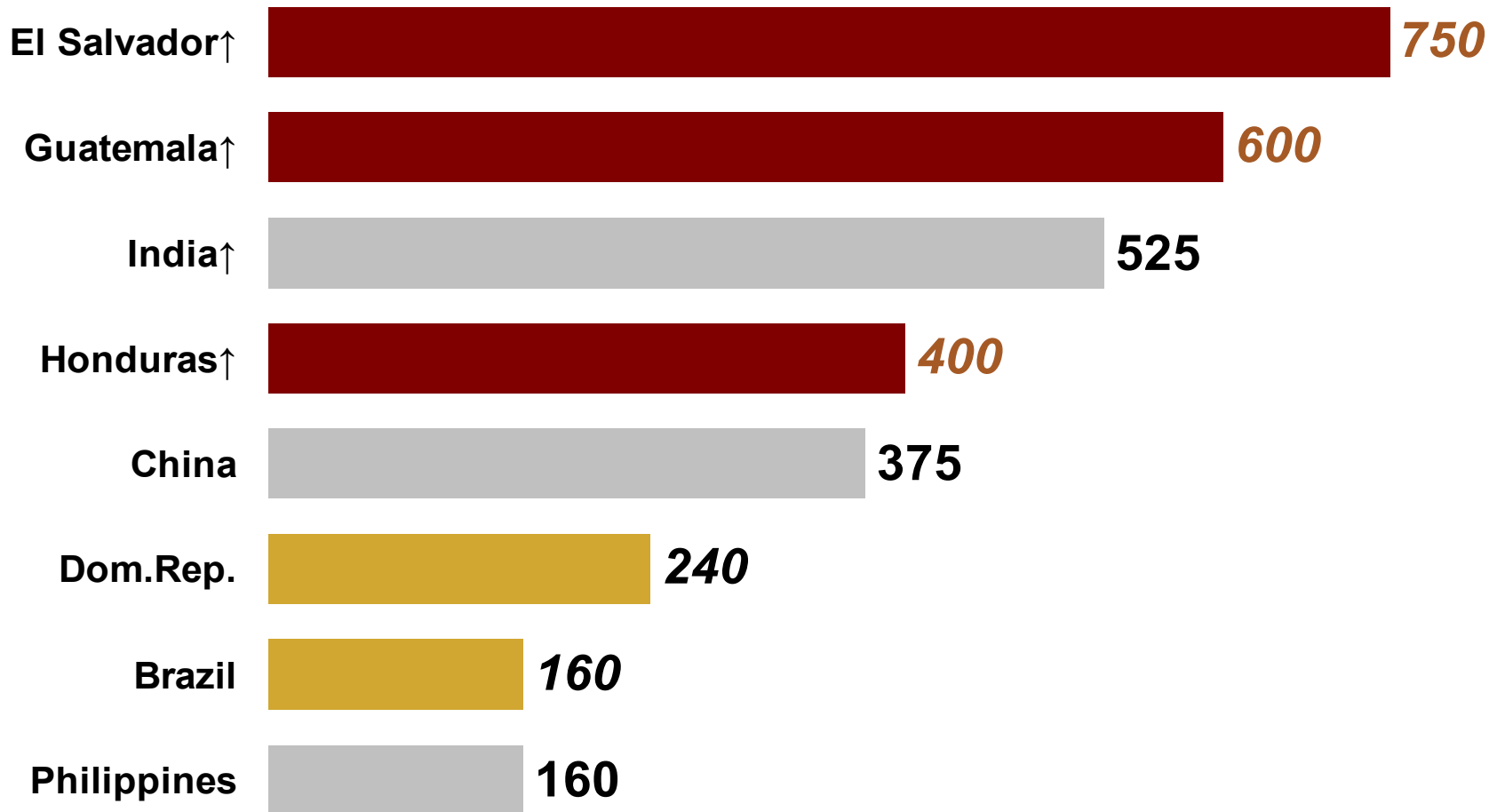


# Mexico down 2 million since '07; Central America, Asia – UP; South America, Europe-Canada - DOWN; Others stable



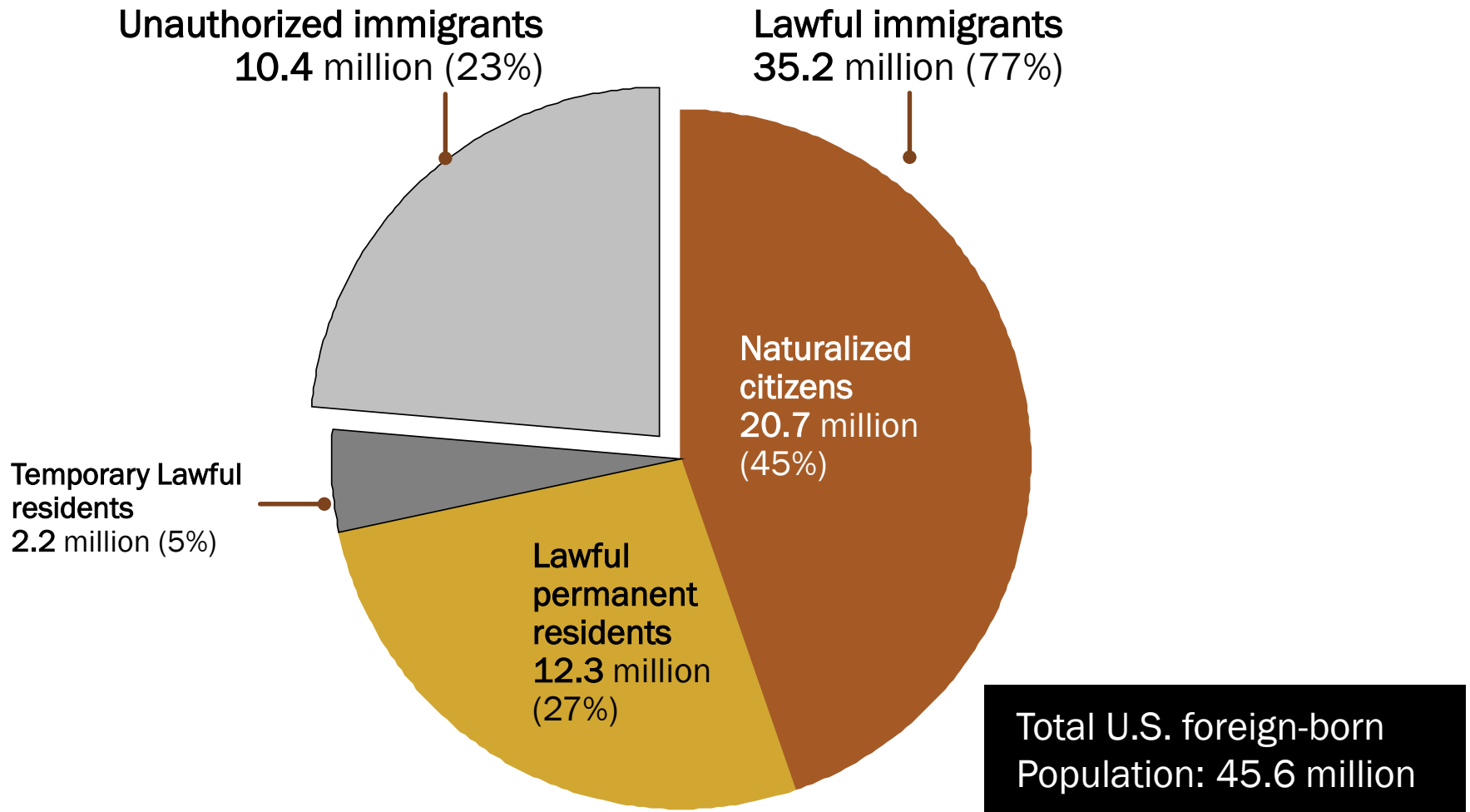
# Next 4 countries all up for 2007-2017; Then next 4 unchanged

Unauthorized immigrant population (thousands)

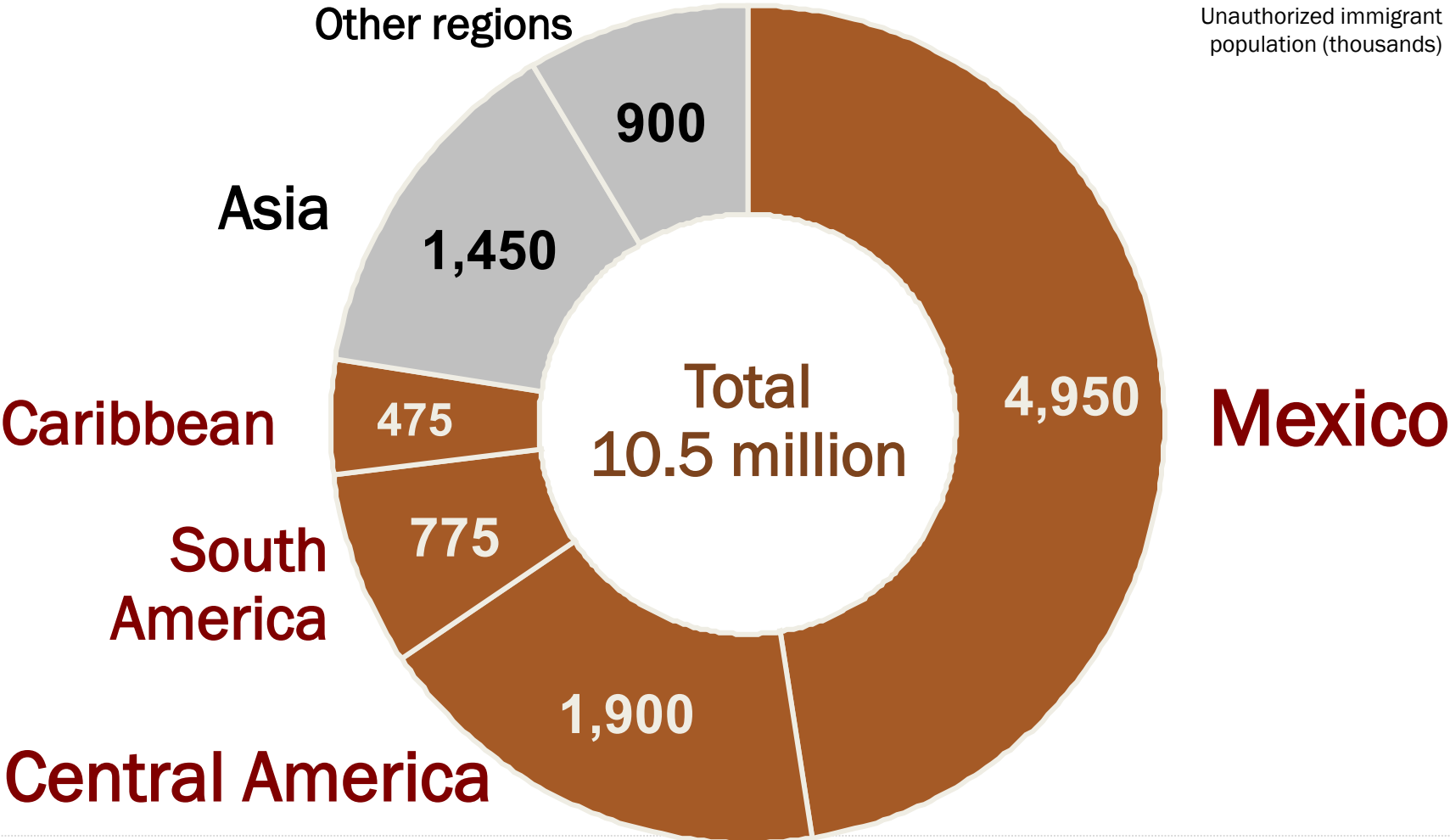




# About one-in-four U.S. immigrants are unauthorized



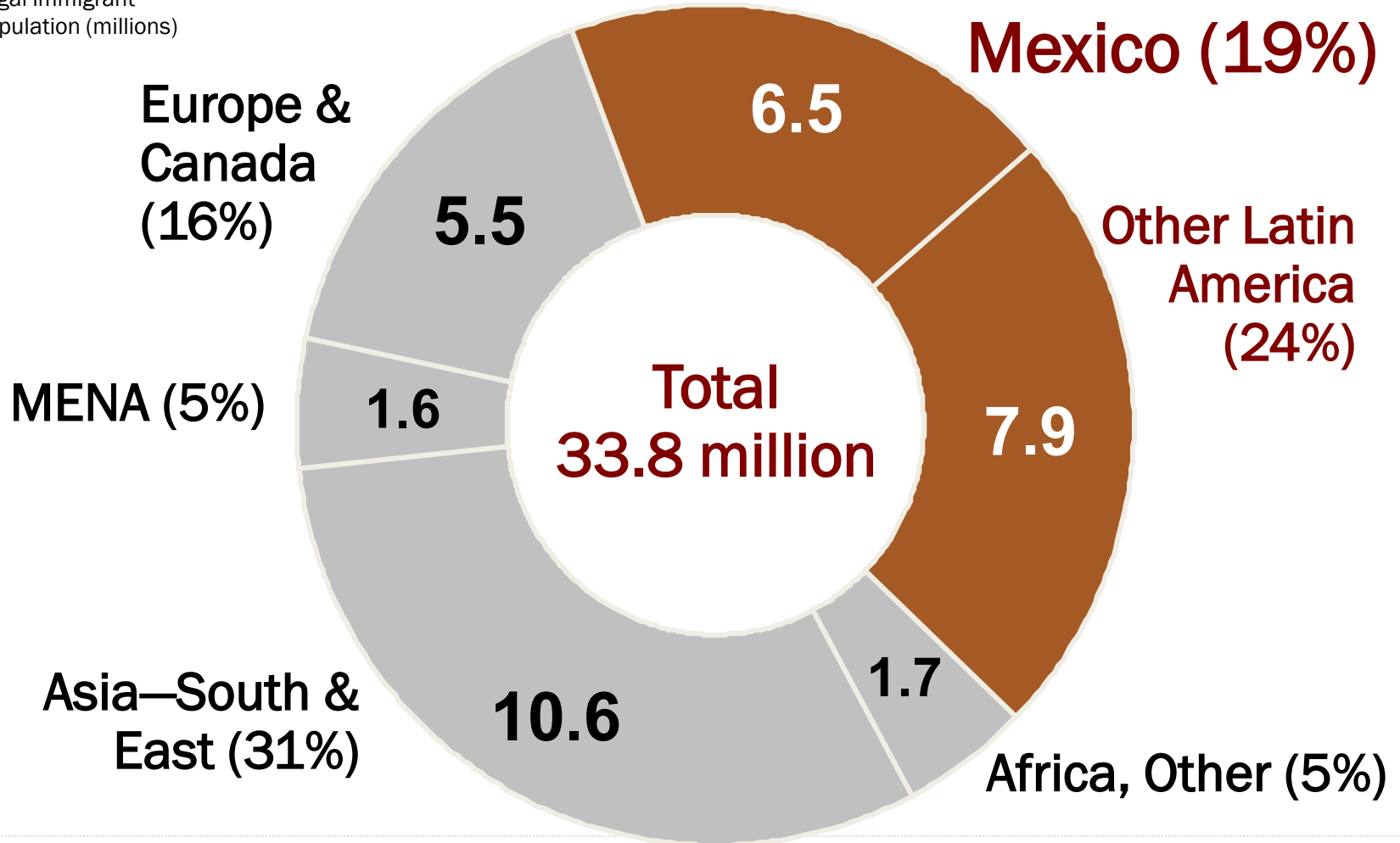
# Unauthorized immigrant population dominated by Mexico, Latin America



Source: Pew Research Center based on augmented 2017 ACS.

# Mexico is largest single source of *legal* immigrants, also

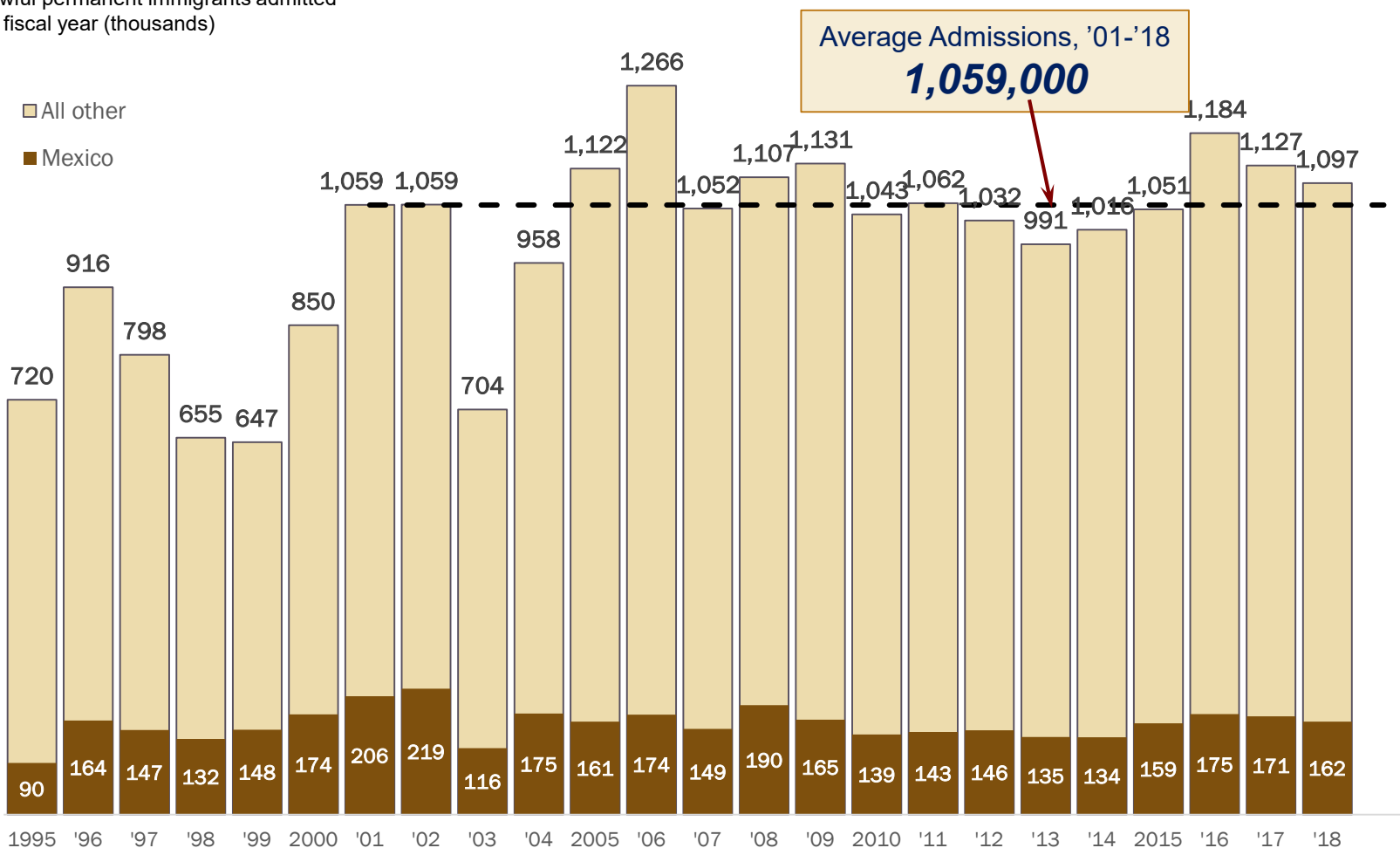
Legal immigrant population (millions)



# Legal admissions unchanged since '01 (exc. '03)

## “Green cards” exceed 1 million/yr routinely

Lawful permanent immigrants admitted by fiscal year (thousands)



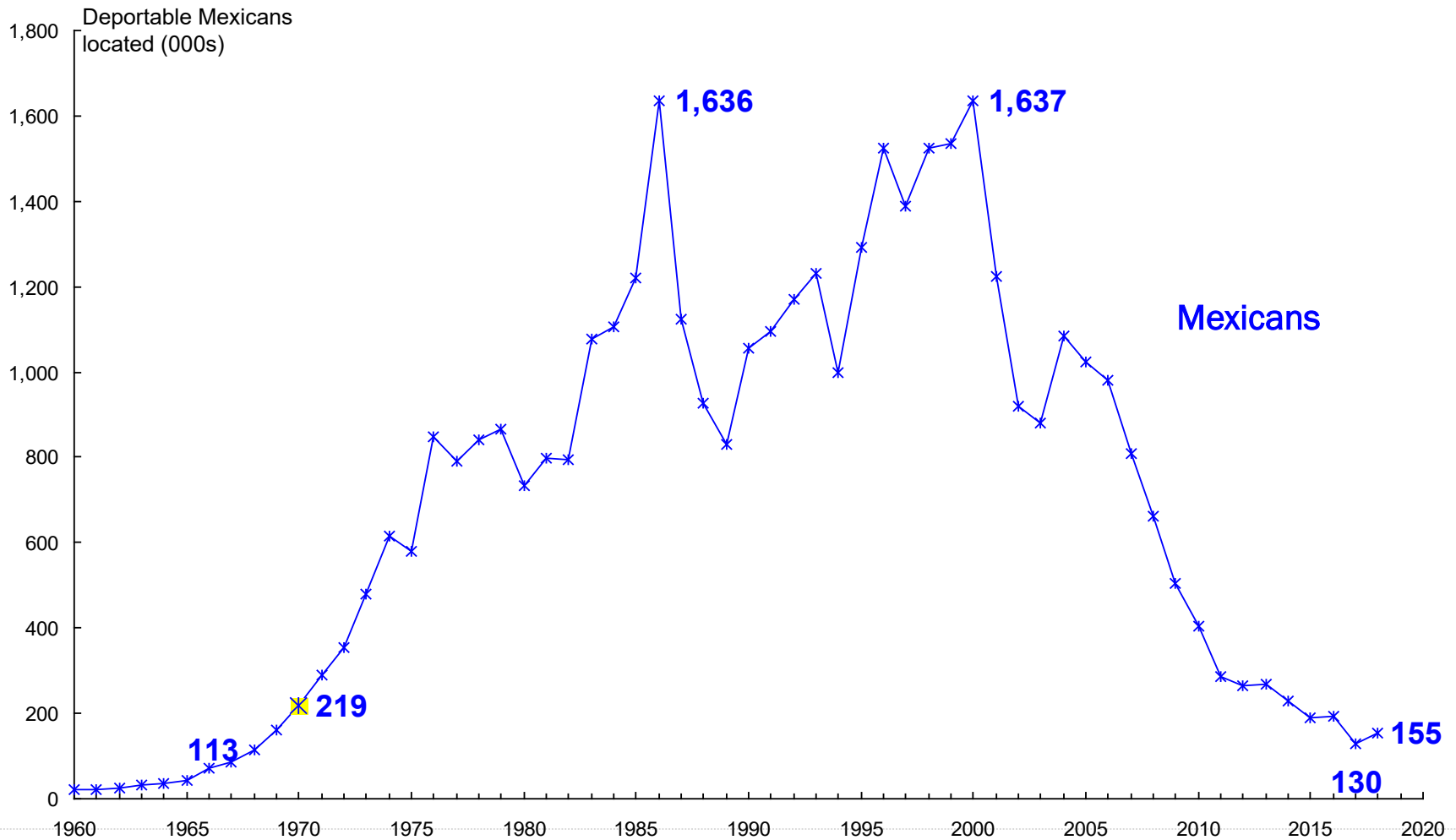
# ***Unauthorized immigrants and control of the Border***

# Implications of changing patterns

- *Growth through '07 and then decline* driven by *Mexican immigrants*
- Drop in “new arrivals” also driven by *Mexicans*
- Most unauthorized from places other than *Mexico & Central America* are **visa overstayers**
- **The southern border is generally “secure”**
  - Apprehensions of Mexicans are at a 50-year low
  - Central Americans (esp. families) are not trying to evade capture
  - Strong **deterrence** from (1) urban fencing; (2) Border Patrol build up; (3) technology; and (4) violence in northern Mexico
  - Evading capture is very difficult
  - Costly and risky to sneak into or re-enter the US
- **Unauthorized immigrants increasingly rooted in the US**
  - Time in the US has gone up markedly
  - Families with children
  - High labor force participation for men, low for women

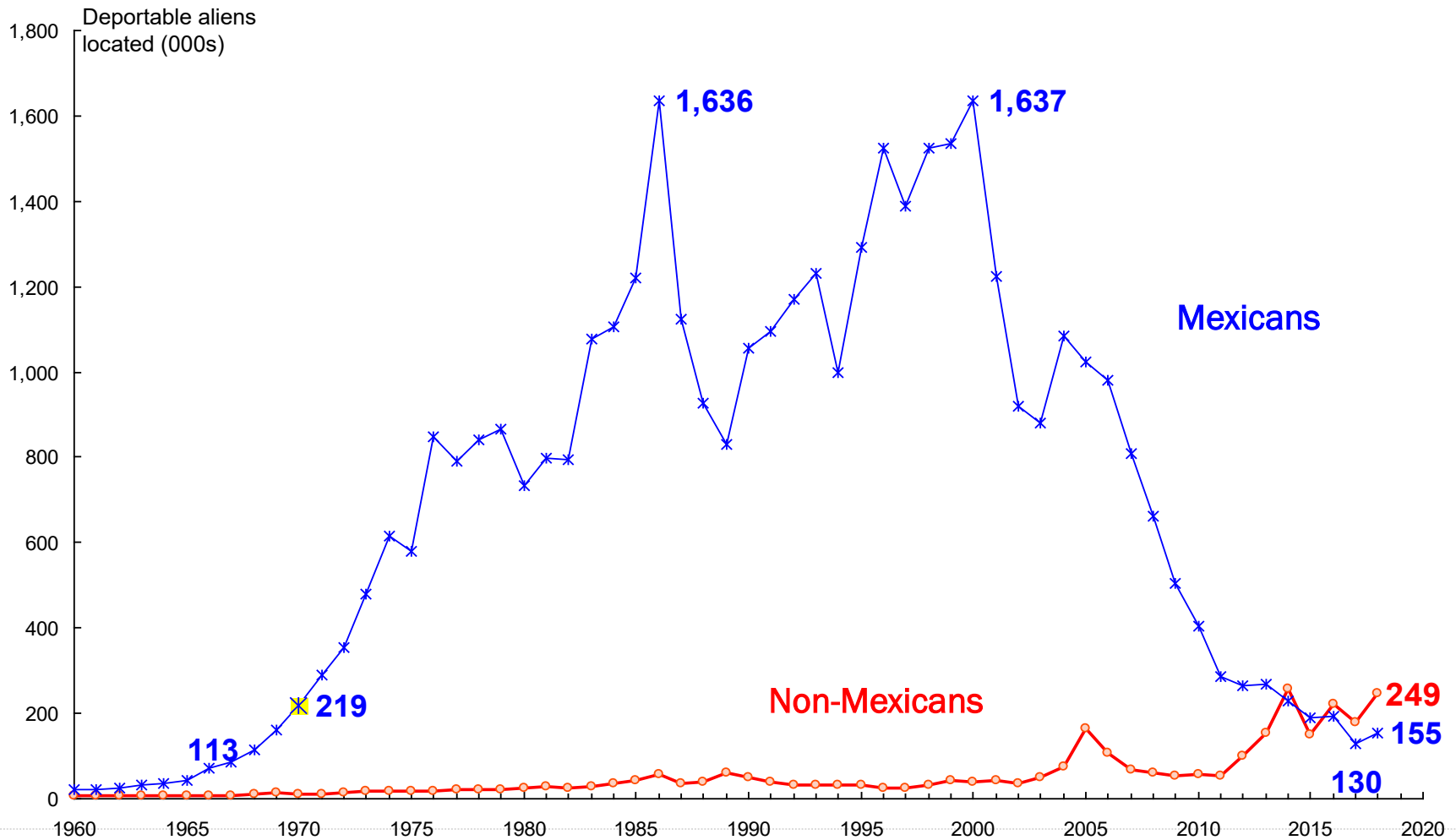
# Apprehensions of Mexicans in 2017-18

## Lower still → *lowest since 1968*



Source: Department of Homeland Security and INS, CBP apprehension statistics

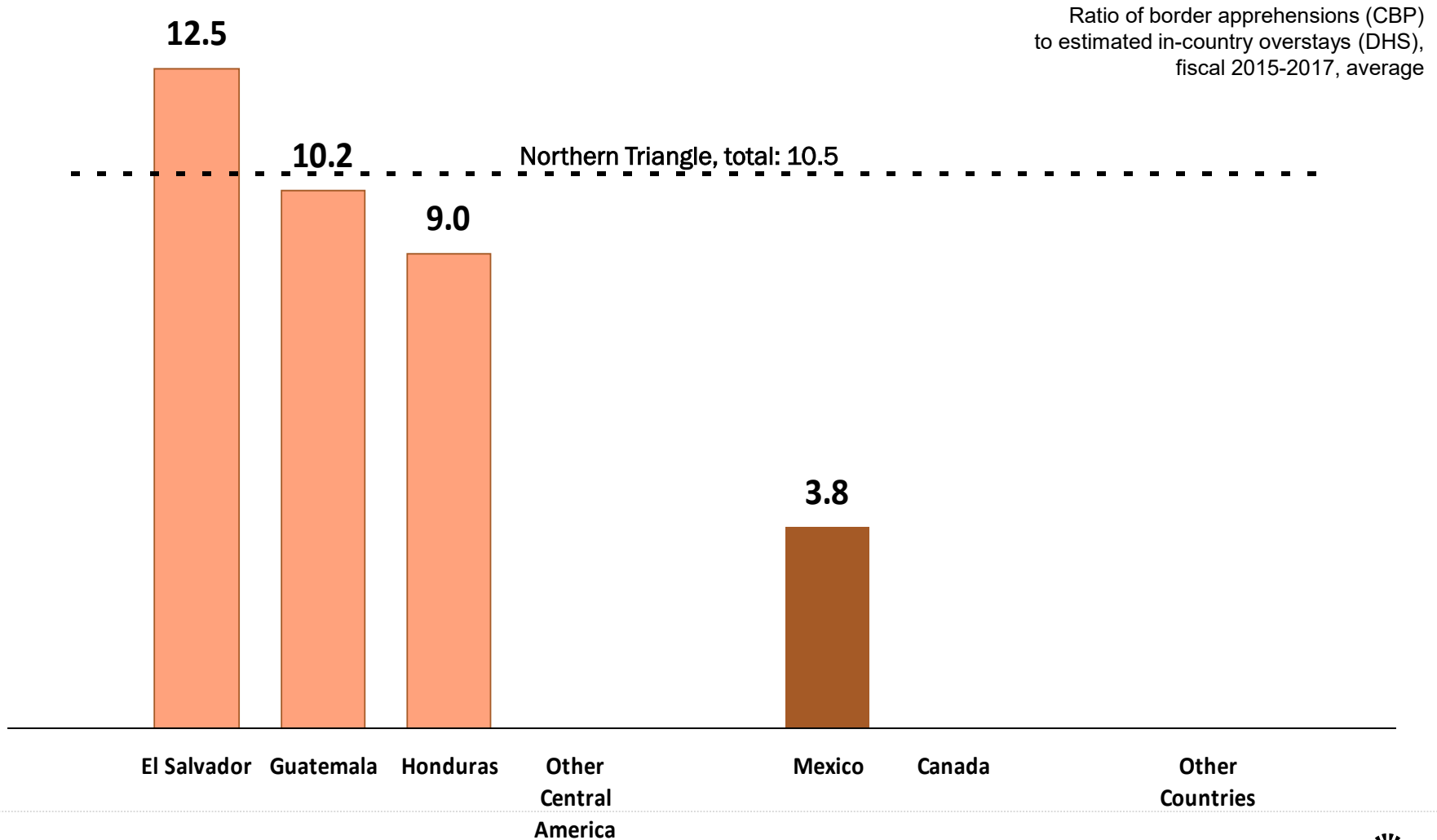
# Non-Mexican apprehensions exceed Mexicans, but total still low



Source: Department of Homeland Security and INS, CBP apprehension statistics

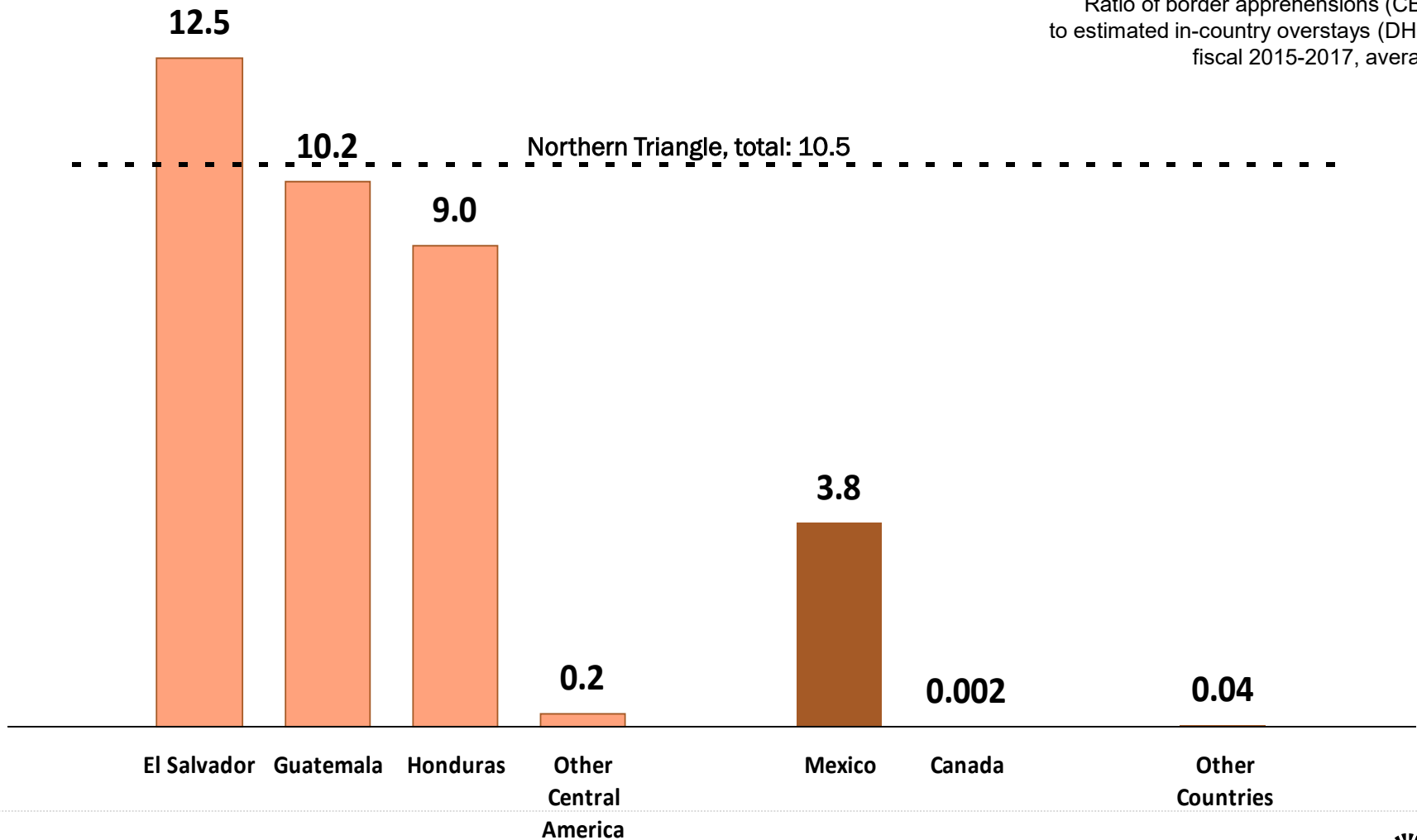


# Cross-border entries are the main source of unauthorized immigrants for Northern Triangle countries and Mexico; *Not overstays of legal visa arrivals*



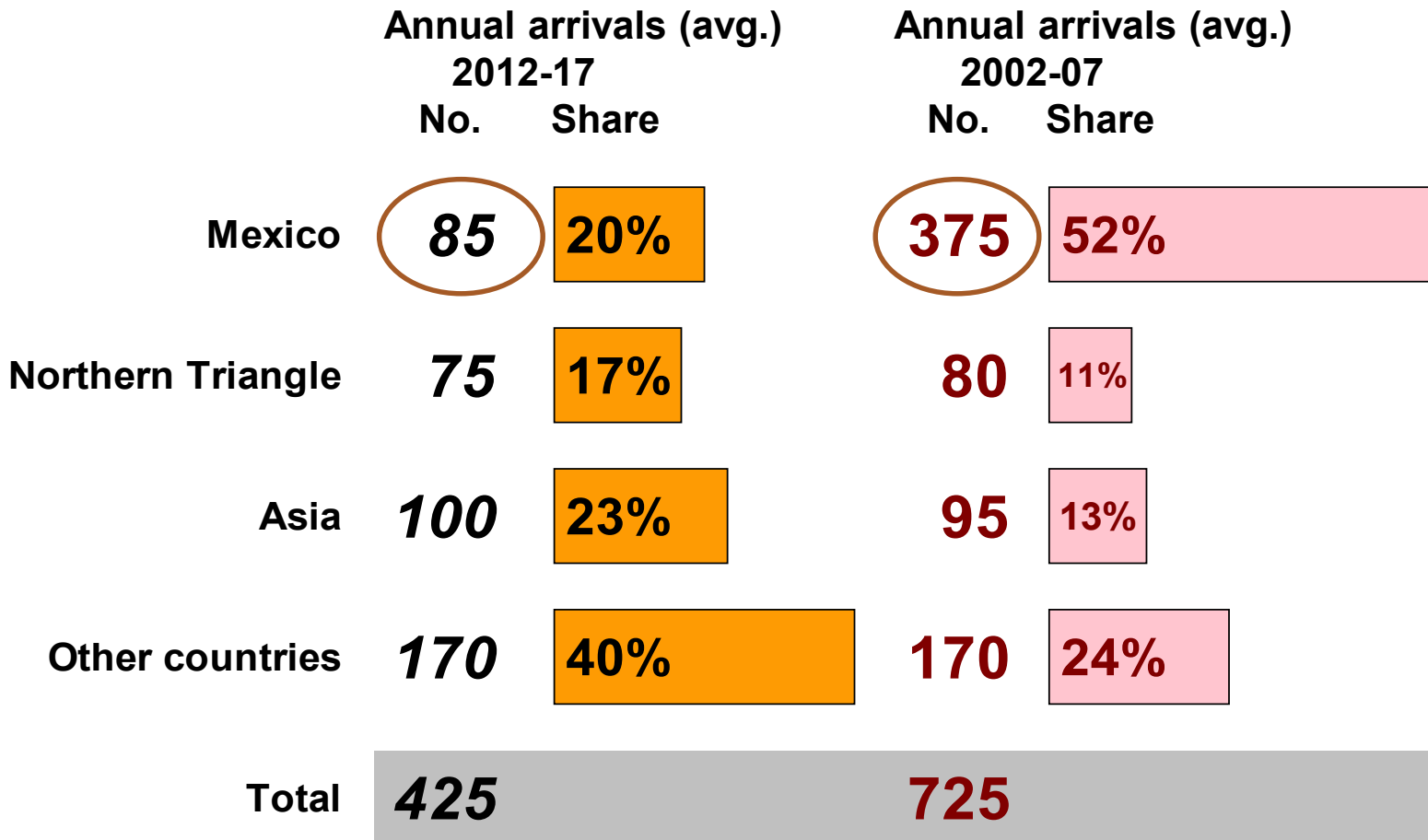
# Apprehensions for other countries (even others in Central America) pale in comparison to *visa overstays*

Ratio of border apprehensions (CBP)  
to estimated in-country overstays (DHS),  
fiscal 2015-2017, average

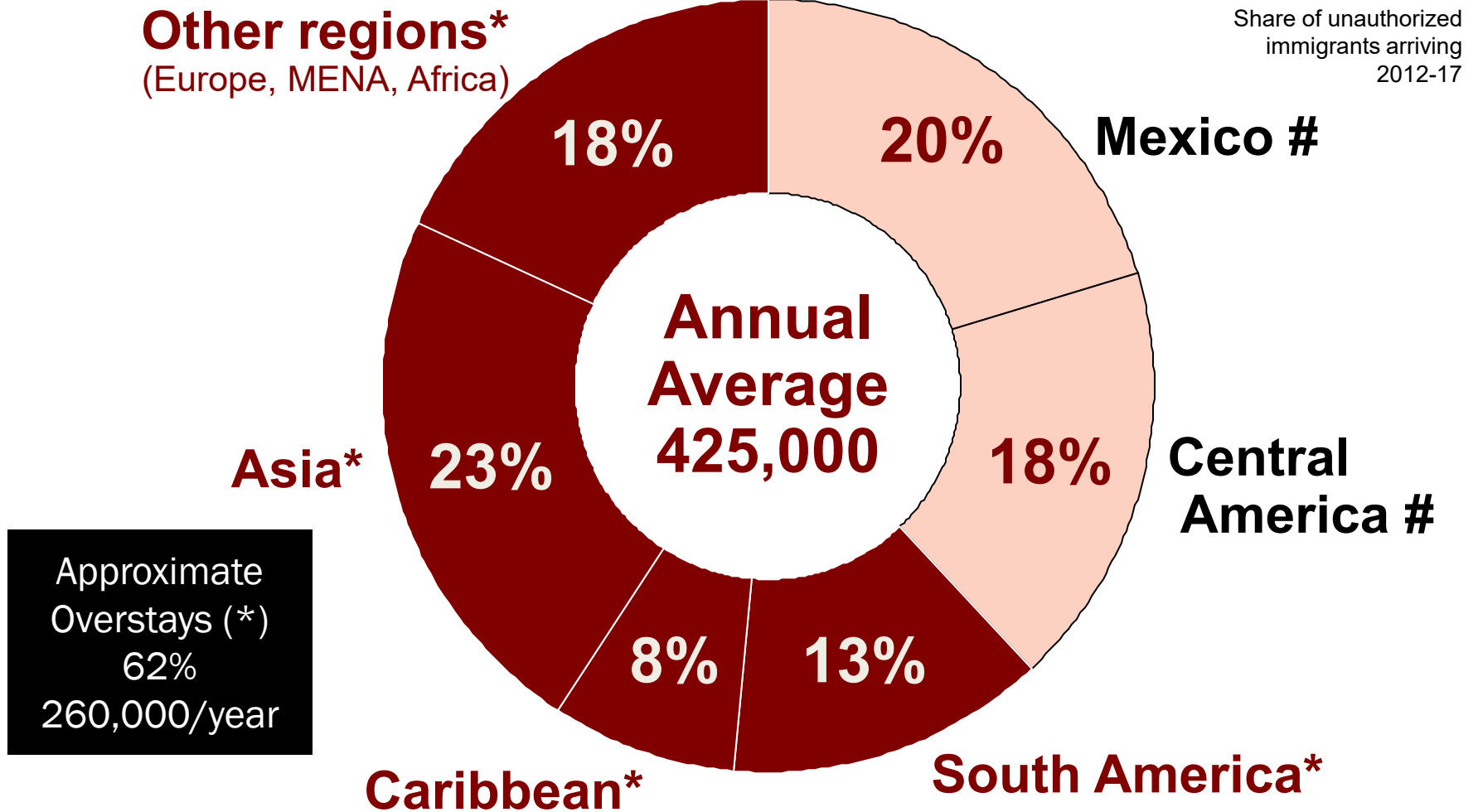


# Drop in “New Arrivals” especially large for Mexico (-75%) versus others (-1% overall)

Unauthorized immigrants (000s)



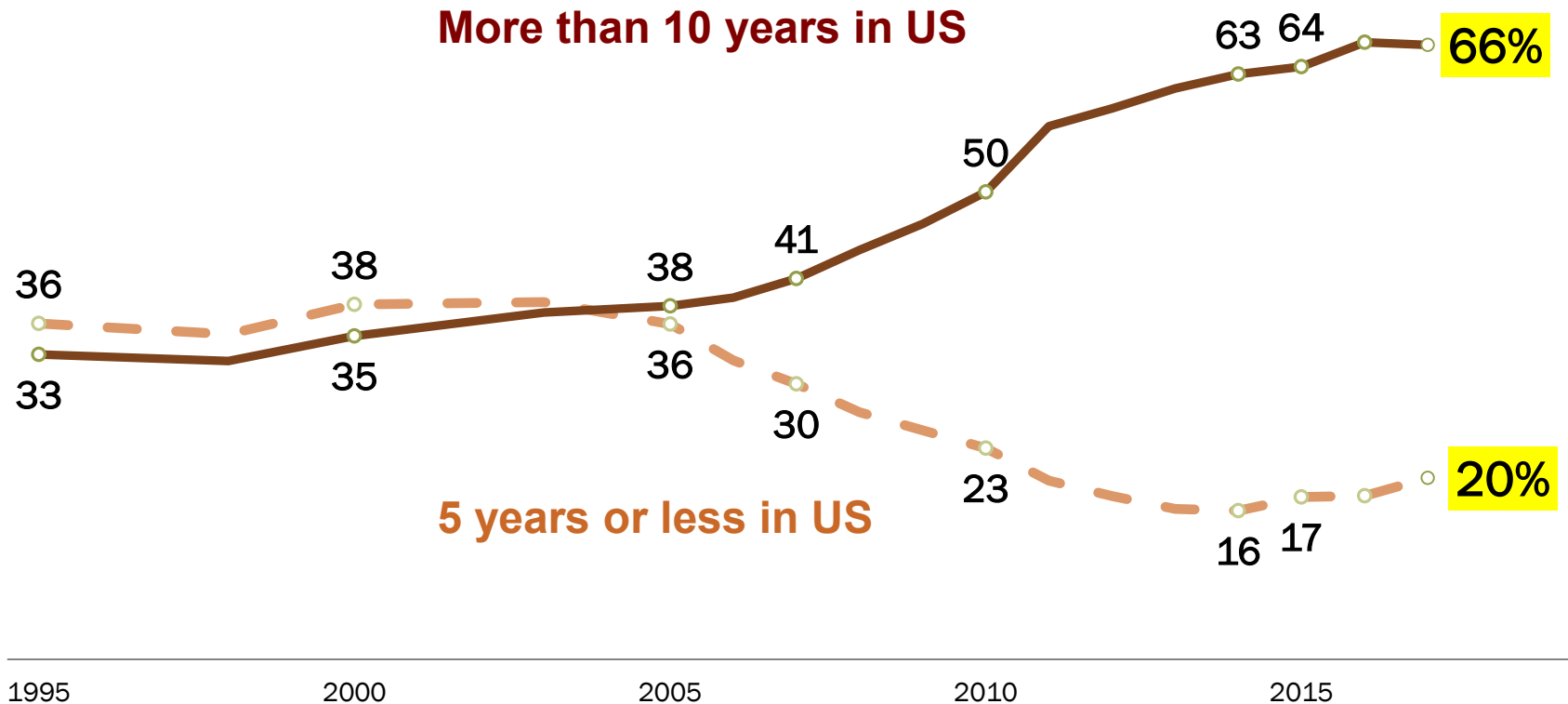
# New unauthorized immigrants in 2017 are NOT illegal entrants(#) but likely overstays(\*)



# ***Immigrant families & children***

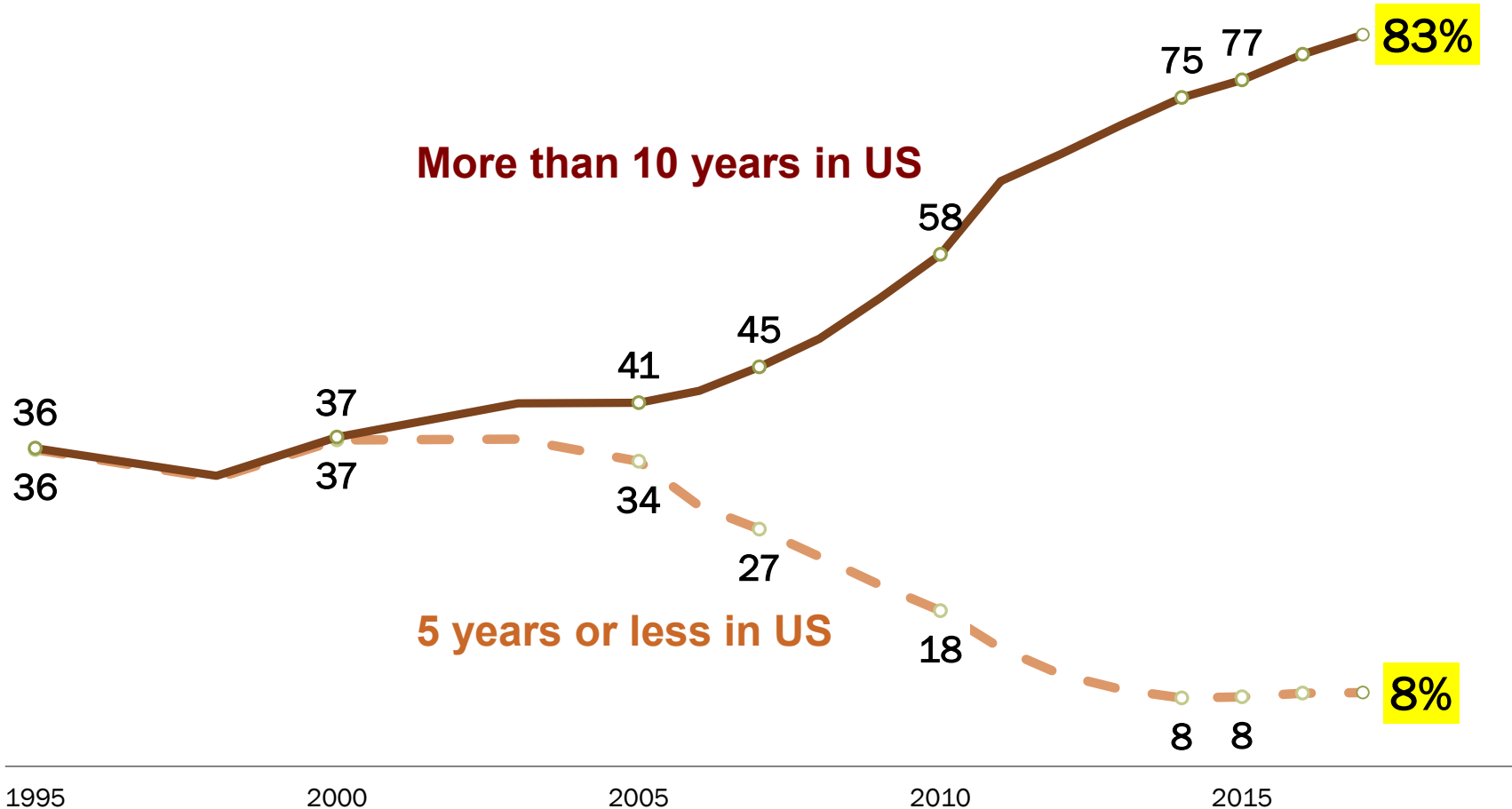
# Increasing % of unauthorized immigrant adults in the US for many years

Share of unauthorized  
Immigrant adults



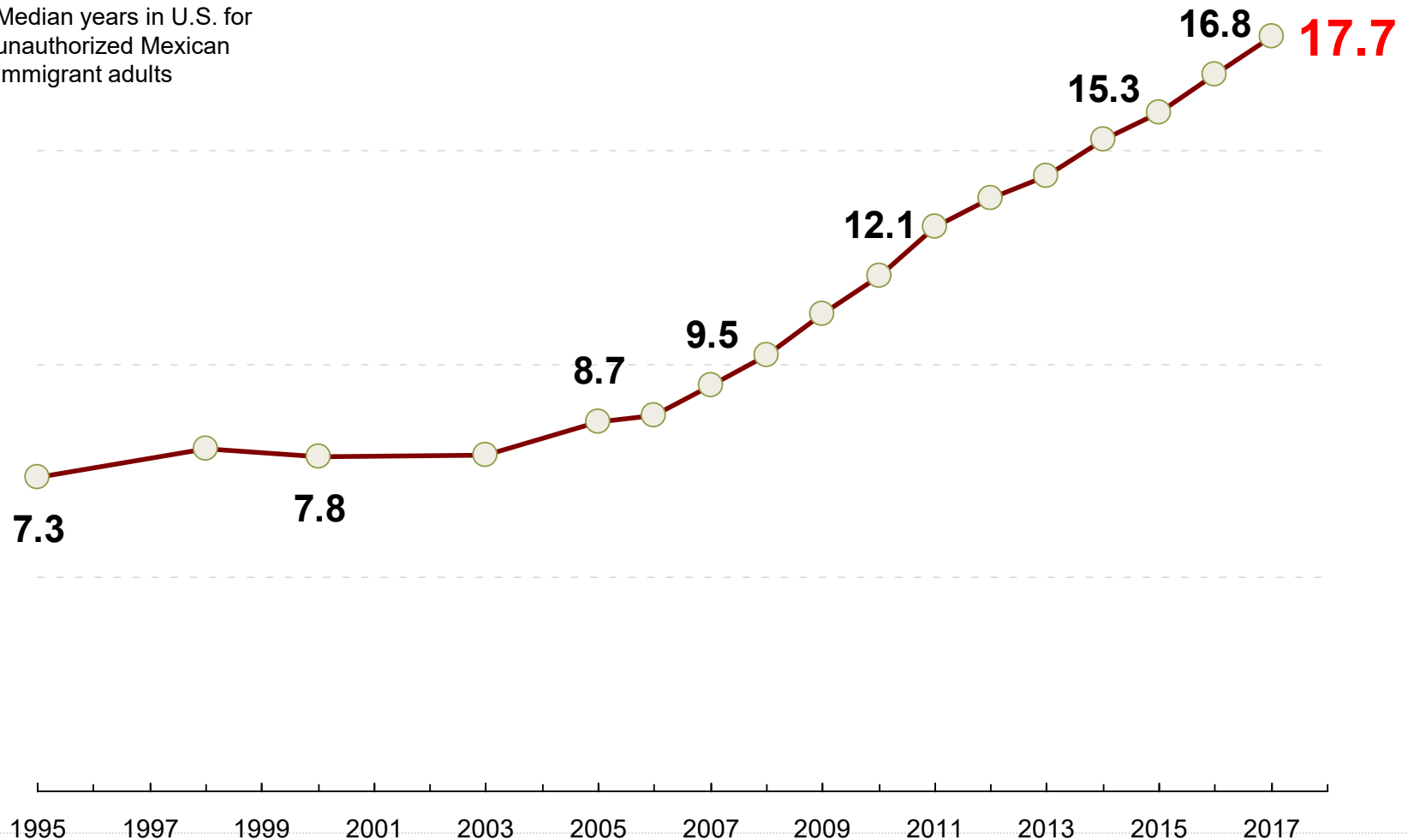
# Unauthorized Mexican immigrant adults have been here even longer

Share of unauthorized Immigrant adults



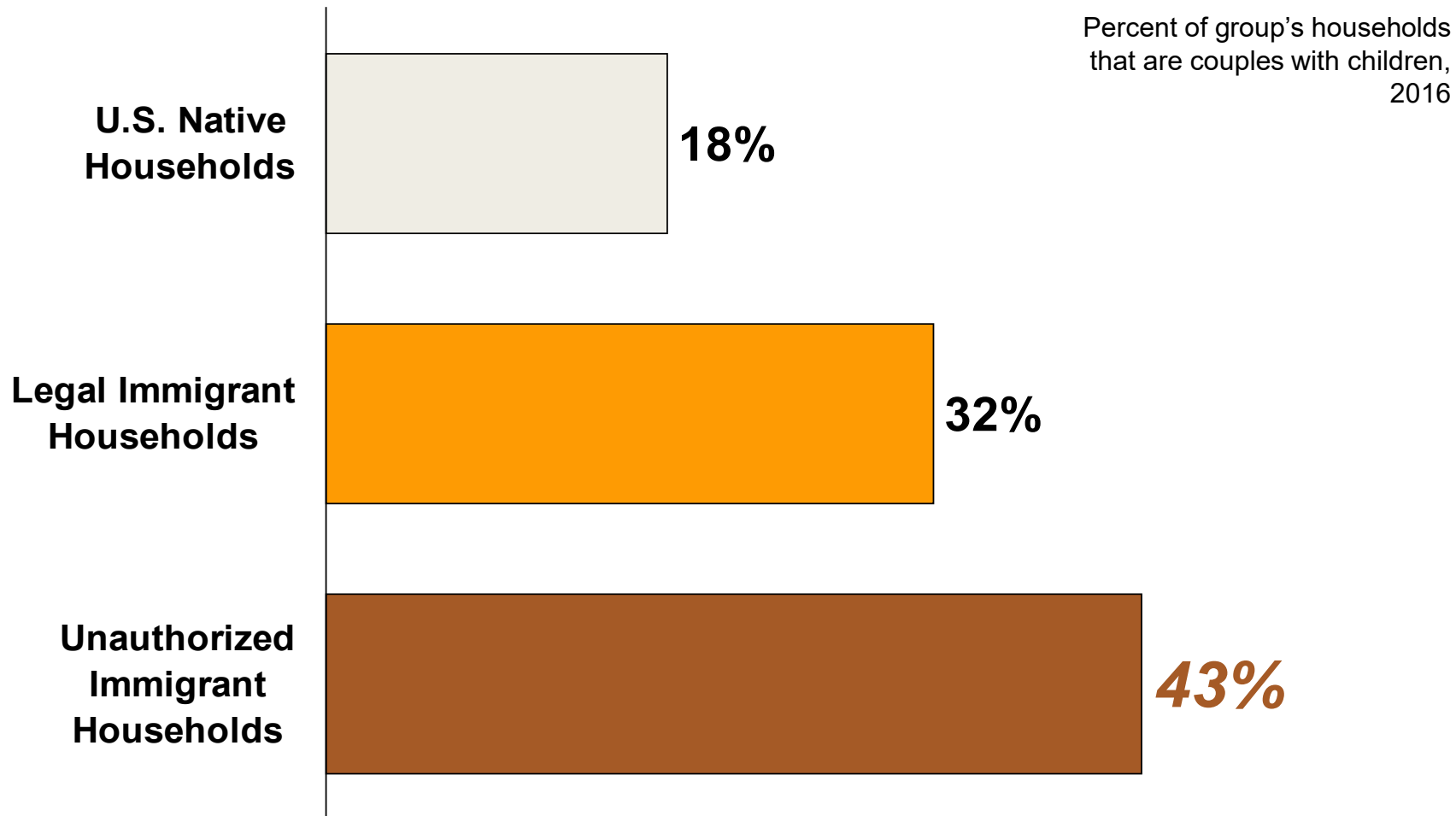
# “Typical” Mexican unauthorized immigrant came in the 20th century, not the 21st

Median years in U.S. for unauthorized Mexican Immigrant adults





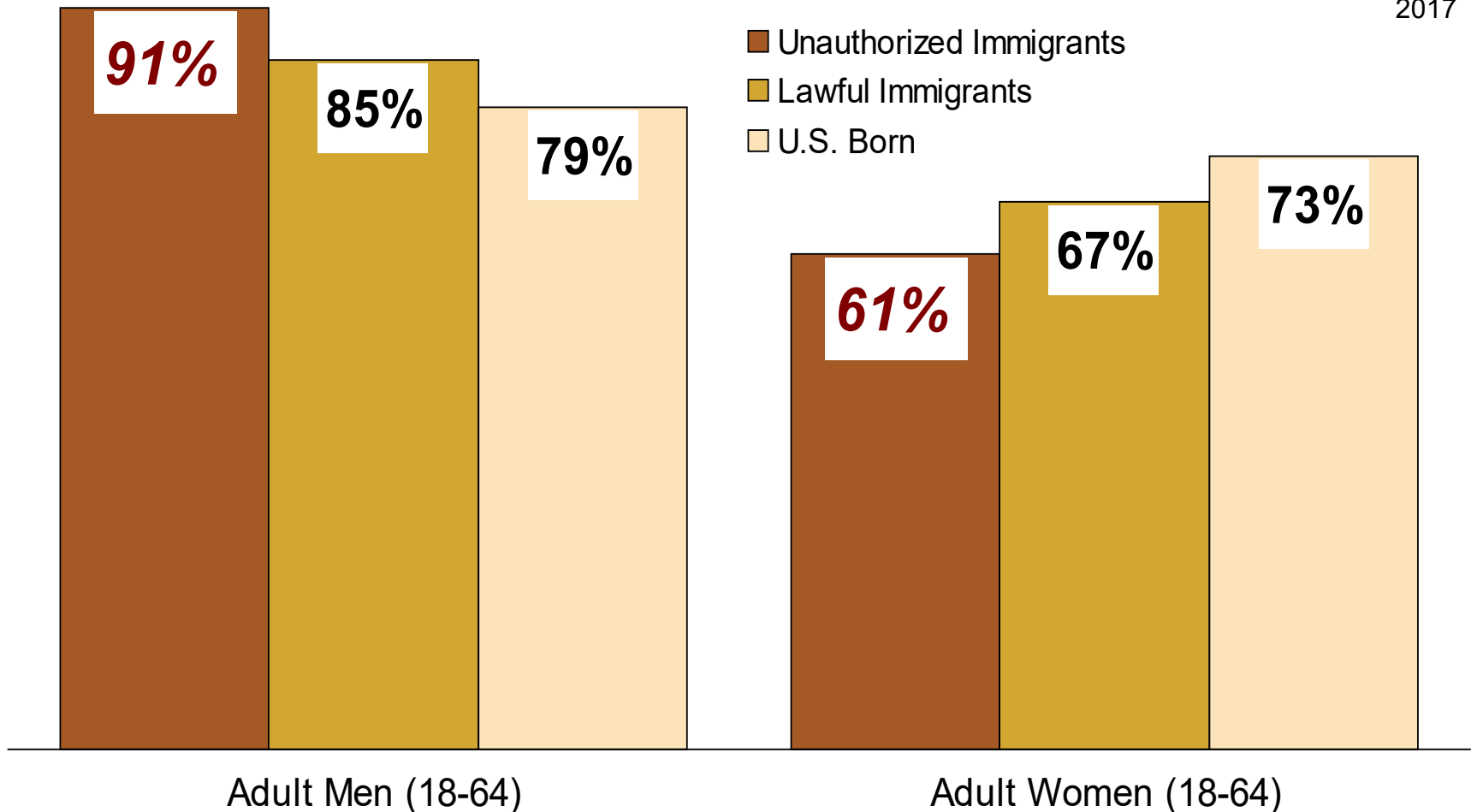
# Immigrants, especially unauthorized, more likely to be couples with children



# ***Immigrants & the workforce***

# Immigrant men work more than natives; Women work less

Percent in labor force,  
2017



# Unauthorized immigrant workforce trending down; Under 8 million – lowest since 2005

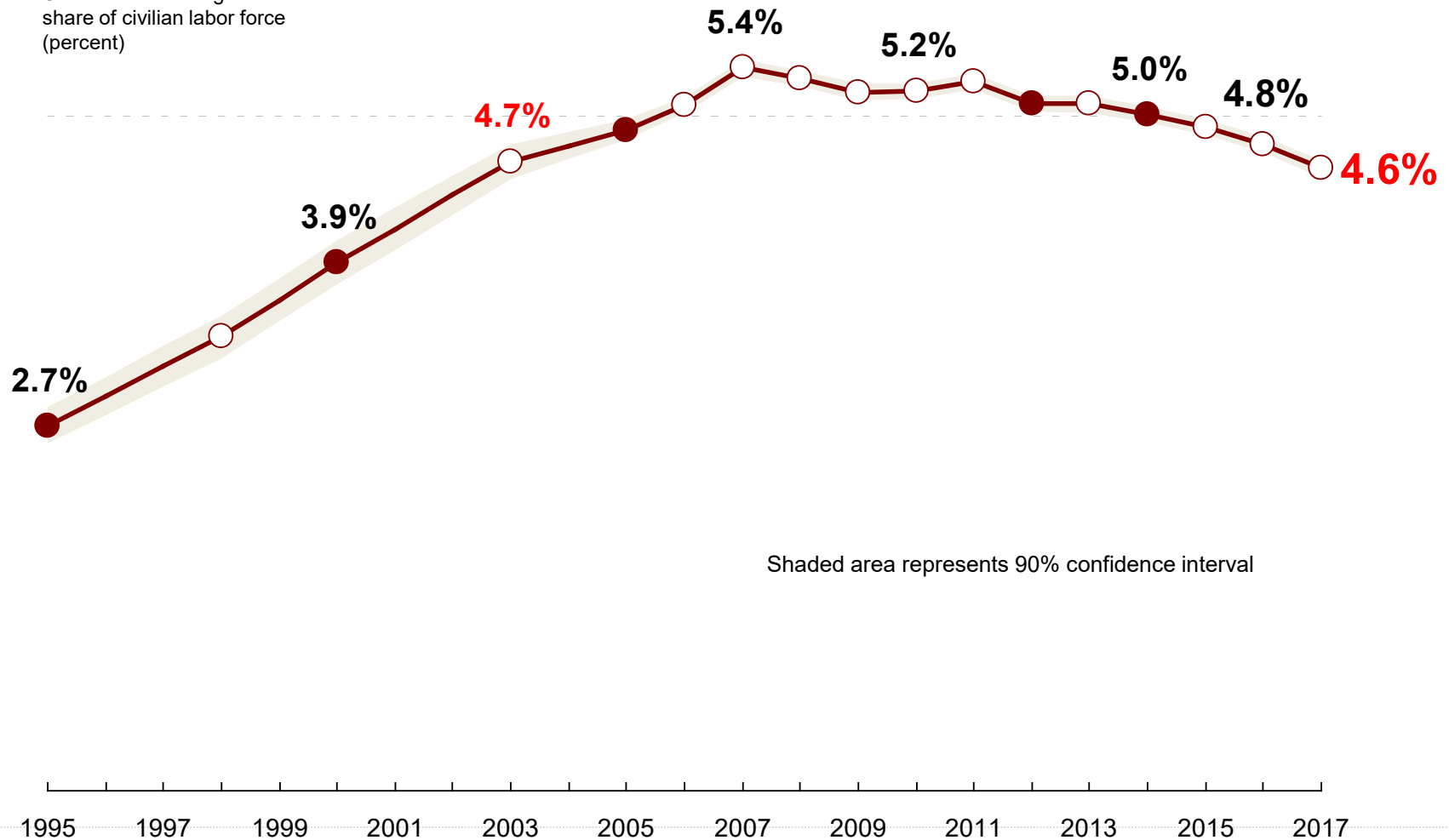
Unauthorized immigrant workers  
(millions)



Shaded area represents 90% confidence interval

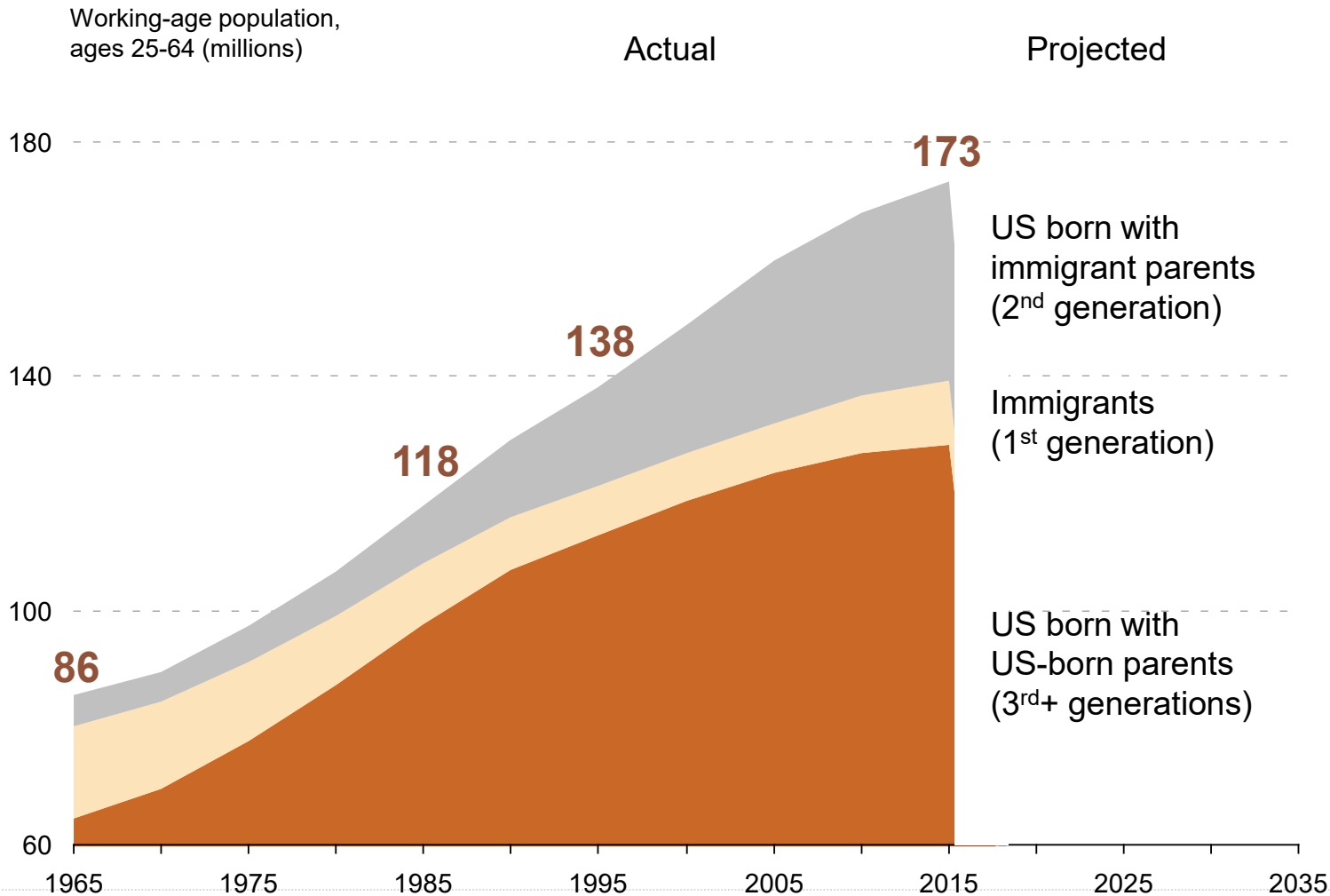
# Unauthorized immigrant share of workforce — Continues to down to lowest share since 2003

Unauthorized immigrant worker  
share of civilian labor force  
(percent)



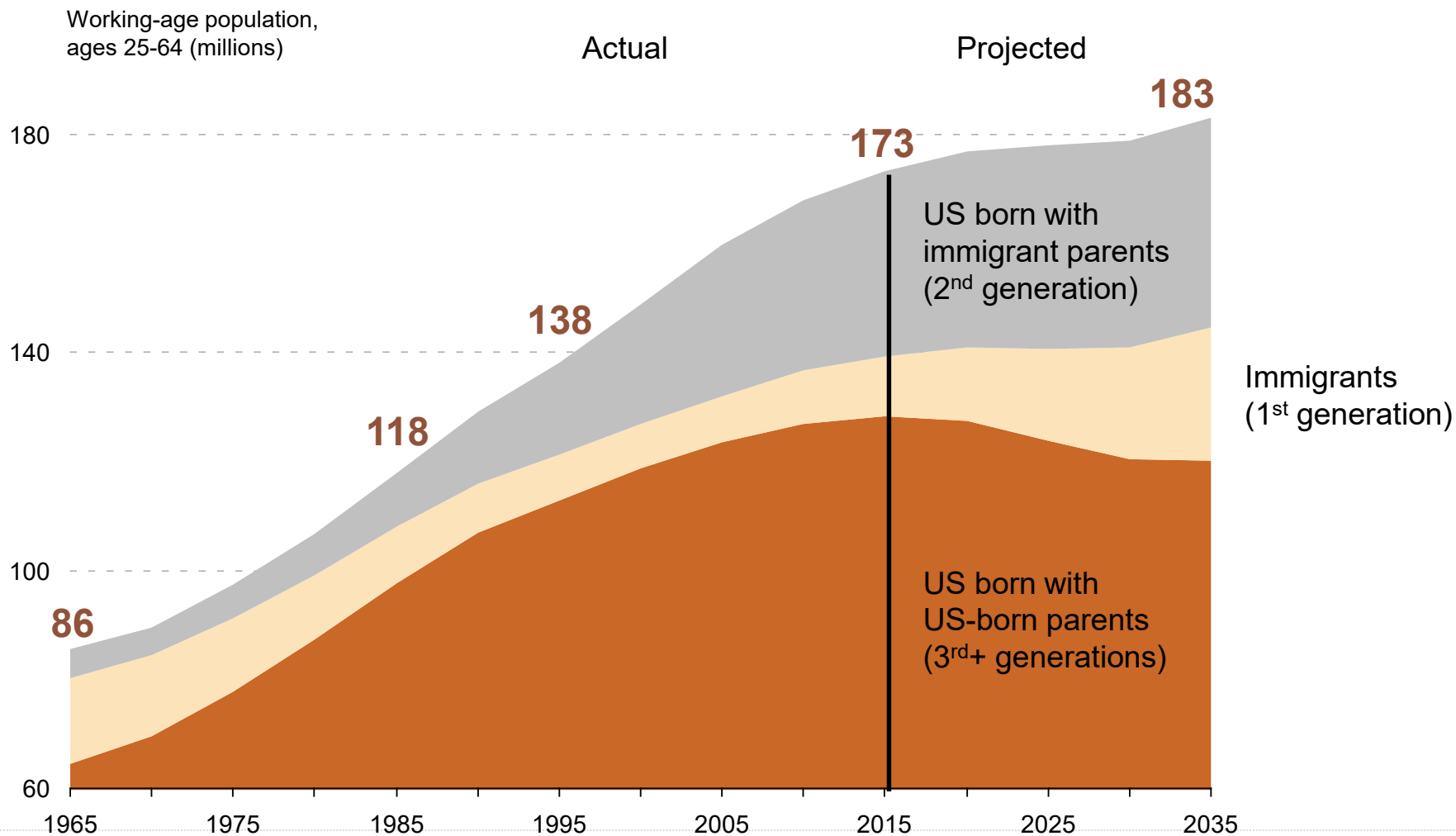
Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on residual methodology.

# Natives and US-born children of current immigrants have driven growth in working ages

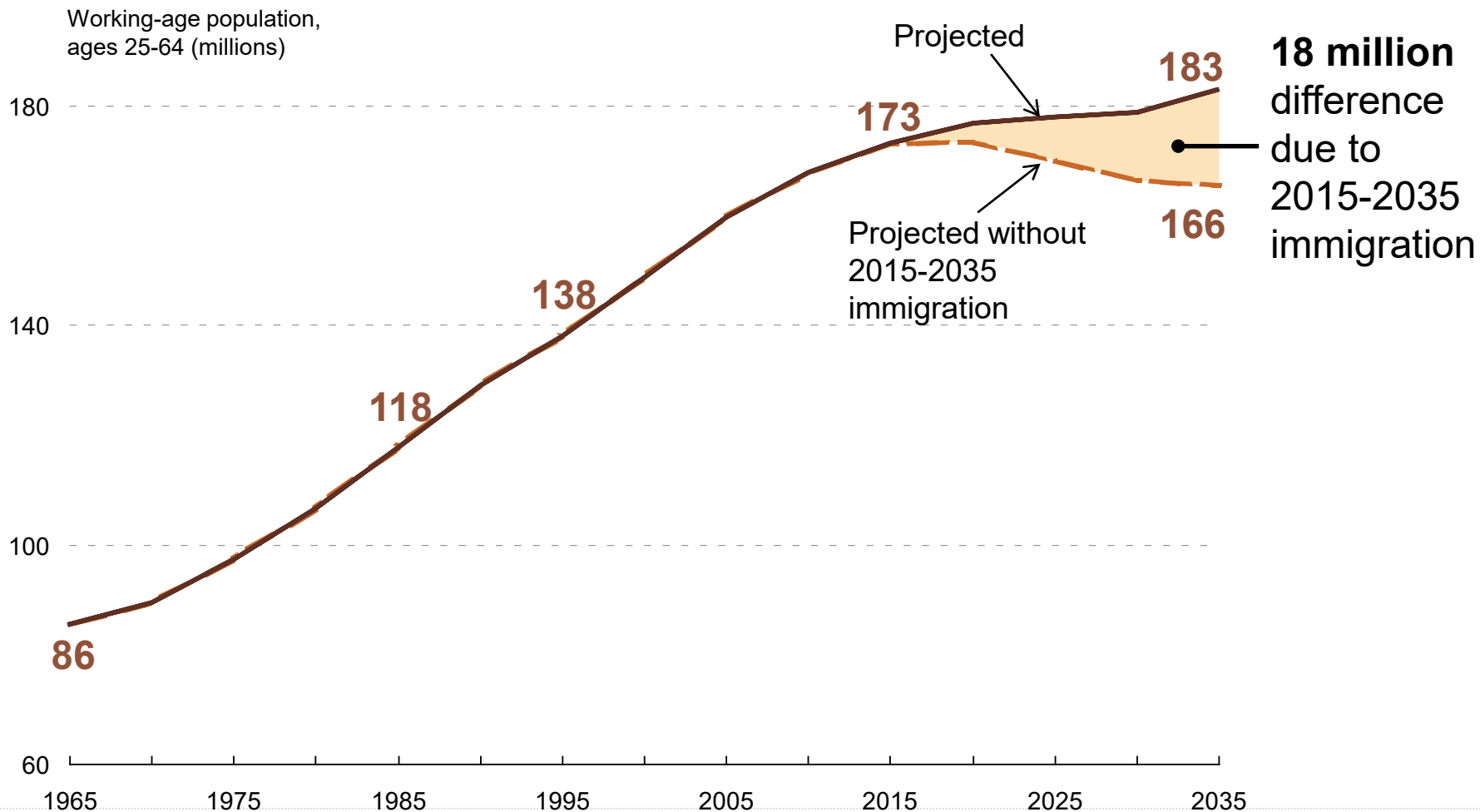


Source: Pew Research Center (2015) "historic" projections.

# Next 20 years, **ALL** growth comes from **NEW** immigrants and US-born children of current immigrants



# Without **FUTURE** immigrants, working-age population would decrease by 2035





***There's a lot more in the reports!  
Thank you! Questions?***

# Contact Information

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