

**Citizenship and Language Use in California:
Profiles from the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey**

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The *CCSRE Race and Ethnicity in California: Demographics Report Series* documents the current socioeconomic, educational, and demographic status of ethnic and racial minority populations in California. Census 2000 data are being used as they become available to examine racial/ethnic diversity, residential segregation, household and family composition, language use, educational attainment, occupation and work status, income, and poverty. The series is made possible by a grant from the Irvine Foundation, and is accessible on-line at the CCSRE website: www.stanford.edu/dept/csre.

According to Census 2000 data, an estimated one out of every four people in California is foreign-born. The proportion of foreign-born in the state is probably larger because the number of undocumented immigrants is difficult to determine. Given the large percentage of immigrants residing in California and the benefits afforded to those who become naturalized citizens (in particular, the right to vote and participate in the democratic process of the U.S.), it is important to consider rates of citizenship¹. A key requirement to attaining naturalized citizenship is the ability to read, write, and speak basic English (though there are a few exceptions to this rule based on age and disability). To examine both citizenship and language use in California, this brief report summarizes data from the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey. Most of the information is presented at the state-level, though in the section on language use, city-level differences are noted for places with at least 250,000 people.

Census 2000 Supplementary Survey Data

There are two surveys implemented as part of the U.S. decennial census: the short form (including population questions related to age, sex, race and Hispanic/Latino origin, household relationship, and housing questions related to tenure, occupancy, and vacancy status) and the long form (including, in addition to the short form questions, more detailed items related to the social, economic, and housing characteristics of each individual and household). In an effort to gather information from the population more often than every ten years, plans are underway to replace the census long form with the American Community Survey (ACS). A panel of the ACS will be conducted each month, with data released annually, in order to provide more timely information to governmental agencies, policymakers, researchers, and others. Beginning in 2004, the ACS will produce estimates for geographic areas with at least 65,000 people; estimates for smaller areas will be available by 2008 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

In preparation for these changes in how the Census Bureau gathers demographic data, the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey (C2SS) was administered. The C2SS was designed to be used in combination with data from ACS site tests, to produce estimates for states, counties, and cities with 250,000 people or more. Overall, 0.6 percent of the housing units in the U.S. were sampled for the C2SS; about 58,000 addresses were surveyed each month across 1,203 counties. Though this sample size is smaller than that used for the census long form—about 19 million, or one in six households—and is a smaller sample than will eventually be used for the ACS when it is fully launched, the C2SS information offers a glimpse of the data to be released from the Census 2000 long form in mid-2002.

The Census Bureau suggests that estimates from the C2SS—about cities and counties with at least 250,000 people—be used to make comparisons *within* the C2SS data set itself, either between cities/counties or with state estimates, rather than to make comparisons with data from earlier censuses. At the sub-state level (e.g., city, county, etc.), the impact of methodological and sampling differences in the surveys is magnified (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2001).

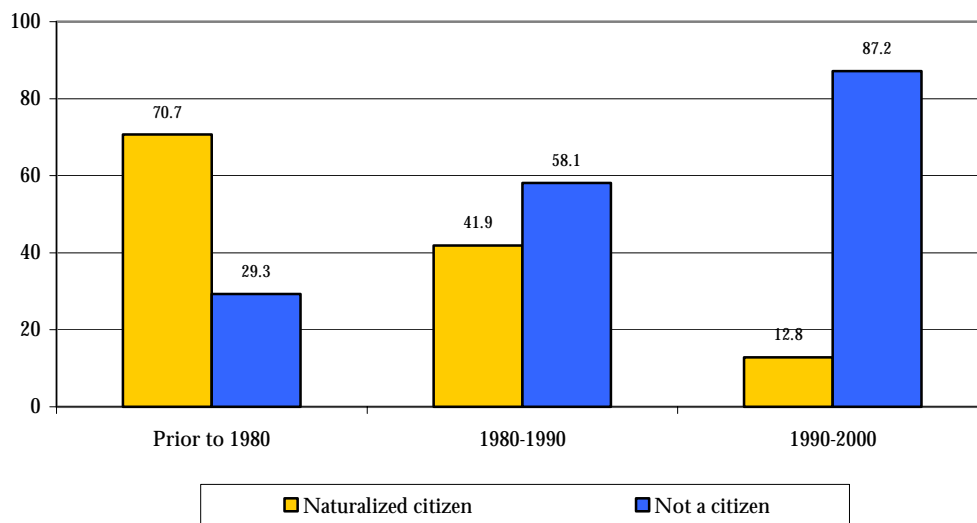
¹ By definition of the federal government, citizenship is held by people who were born in the U.S., Puerto Rico, a U.S. Island Area, or abroad of U.S. citizen parent(s) and those who have become naturalized. To become a naturalized citizen, individuals must—among meeting other requirements—swear allegiance to the U.S. giving up prior allegiances to other countries, and promise to support and defend the U.S. constitution and other laws and to serve the country when required (Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000). Benefits of citizenship include the right to vote and the ability to attain a U.S. passport (allowing travel freedom, plus protection and assistance from the U.S. government when abroad). Citizens are expected to participate in the political process by registering and voting in elections, to serve on a jury when called upon, and to tolerate and respect different opinions, cultures, ethnic groups, and religions.

Note: This report includes profiles of citizenship and language use in California based on C2SS data. Hence, the statistics presented throughout this brief are state-level estimates based on a sample of the population in California (unlike Census 2000 data on which information is gathered from the total population).

Citizenship

In California, 74.1 percent of residents are native-born U.S. citizens (and 50.6 percent are native-born Californians). The remaining population, one out of every four people in the state (25.9 percent), is foreign-born. Of the foreign-born population in California, 39.5 percent are naturalized citizens. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of the foreign-born population in the state with U.S. citizenship, divided into three categories based on their year of entry: prior to 1980, 1980-1990, and 1990-2000. These data show that people who came to the U.S. between 1990 and 2000 have a lower rate of citizenship (12.8 percent) as compared to those who have been in the country longer, immigrants who arrived between 1980 and 1990 (41.9 percent) or prior to 1980 (70.7 percent). To contextualize these numbers, 38.3 percent of the foreign-born population in California entered the U.S. between 1990 and 2000, 21.5 percent entered between 1980 and 1990, and 30.3 percent moved here prior to 1980. Of course, the significant number of undocumented immigrants living in California makes it impossible to determine with precision the size of the foreign-born population and rates of naturalized citizenship in the state.

Figure 1: Citizenship Status of the Foreign-Born Population in California, By Year of Entry



There are variations within the foreign-born population in California when we examine citizenship by place of birth using available categories in the C2SS data set, including Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Northern America (besides the U.S. and Mexico), Oceania, and “Born at Sea.” For example, Figure 2 shows that just over half of the people from Asia (55.9 percent), Europe (55.5 percent), and North America (54.5 percent) are naturalized U.S. citizens, compared to about 41 percent of people from Africa (40.8) and Oceania (40.5). The lowest rate of citizenship in California is for people born in Latin America, at 26.6 percent. Within this group, there are further variations in rates of citizenship: Mexico (23.6), Central America (32.7), South America (47.9), and the Caribbean (69.9).

Figure 2: Citizenship Status of the Foreign-Born Population in California, By Place of Birth

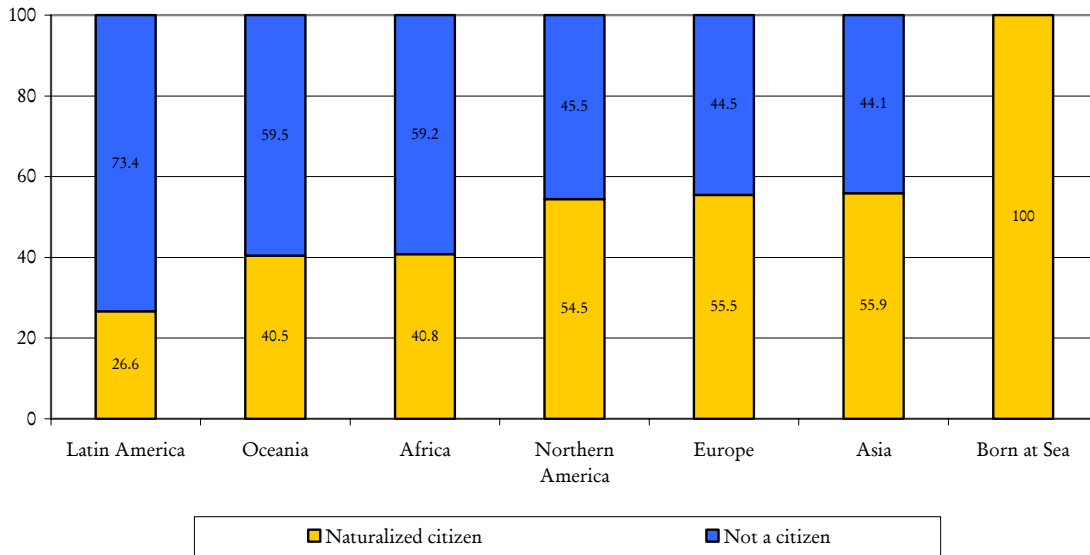
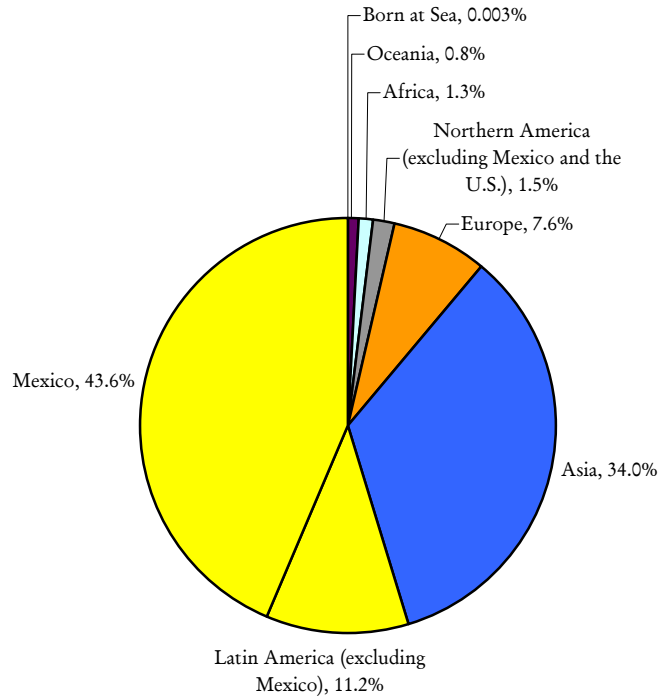


Figure 3: Place of Birth of Foreign-Born Population in California



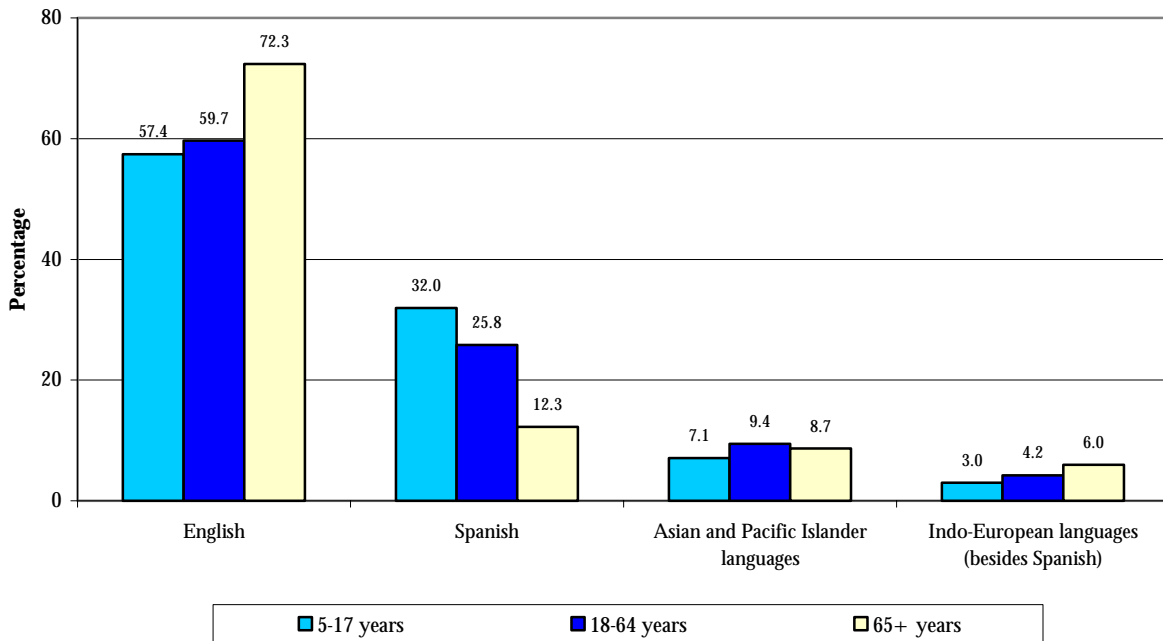
Also useful to consider as we examine rates of U.S. citizenship in California are the percentages of the foreign-born population from each of region of the world, as summarized in Figure 3. Latin America accounts for the majority of foreign-born people (54.8 percent) in California, followed by Asia (34.0

percent). Within the broad category, “Latin America,” 79.7 percent of this foreign-born group is from Mexico. And, 43.6 percent of the total foreign-born population in California is from Mexico.

Language Use

The C2SS data on language use at home is summarized by language type (English, Spanish, Indo-European besides Spanish, and Asian or Pacific Islander) and age group (5-17, 18-64, and 65 years old and up)—as shown in Figure 4. Evident in these data, a larger percentage of people age 65 and older (72.3 percent) use English at home than the other age groups, 18-64 years (59.7 percent) or 5-17 years (57.4 percent). After English, Spanish is the second most common language spoken, and a larger percentage (32.0) of children ages 5-17 use Spanish, compared to adults ages 18-64 (25.8) or 65 and older (12.3).

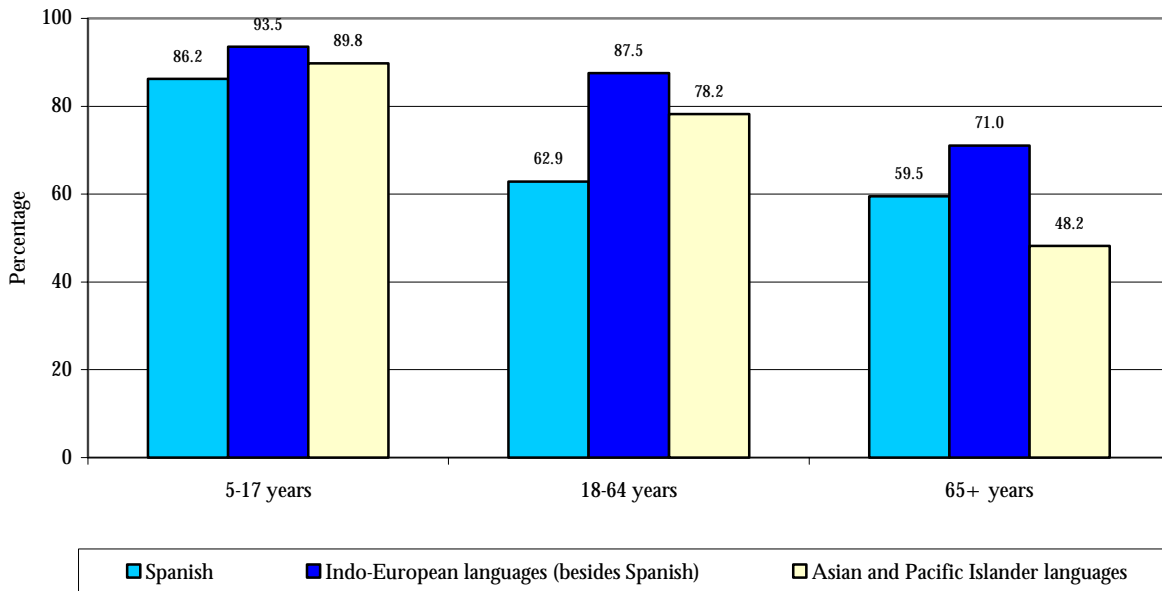
Figure 4: Language Used at Home By Californians



The C2SS also inquired about English speaking ability (rated as “very well”, “well”, “not well”, or “not at all”). Figure 5 provides the percentages of people who speak English “well” or “very well,” by age and non-English language used at home. Overall, among people who primarily use non-English languages at home, children ages 5-17 speak English better than adults, particularly those who are 65 years or older.

Examining English ability by the non-English language type used at home, people who speak Indo-European languages (besides Spanish) at home are the most likely to speak English well or very well, for all three age groups. For children ages 5-17 and adults 18-64 years old, people who speak Asian or Pacific Islander languages at home are the next most likely to speak English well or very well, and those who speak Spanish at home are the least likely. For adults 65 years and up, there is a difference to this pattern—a little over half of the older adults who speak Asian or Pacific Islander languages at home speak English “not well” or “not at all.”

**Figure 5: Speaks English "Well" or "Very Well",
By Age and Language Used at Home**



To illustrate some of the variation in language use in different geographical areas of California, Figures 6 through 8 detail the percentage of people in each of the three age groups using non-English languages at home for cities with 250,000 or more people (including Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Monterey, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Ventura).

Summary Findings

- Of California residents, 74.1 percent are native-born U.S. citizens (and 50.6 percent of the state population is native-born Californian). The remaining 25.9 percent of Californians are foreign-born, 39.5 percent of which are naturalized citizens. Foreign-born people who moved to California prior to 1980 are the most likely to be naturalized citizens (70.7 percent), in contrast to those who entered the U.S. between 1980 and 1990 (41.9 percent) or between 1990 and 2000 (12.8 percent).
- Just over half of the people living in California who were born in Asia (55.9 percent), Europe (55.5 percent), or North America (54.5 percent) besides Mexico and the U.S. are naturalized citizens, compared to about 41 percent of people from Africa and Oceania, and 26.6 percent of people from Latin America.
- Latin America accounts for the majority of the foreign-born population in California, 54.8 percent, followed by Asia with 34.0 percent. Within this broad category, "Latin America," 79.7 percent of this foreign-born group is from Mexico; and, overall, 43.6 percent of the total foreign-born population in the state is from Mexico.

Figure 6: Non-English Language Use at Home--Children Age 5-17

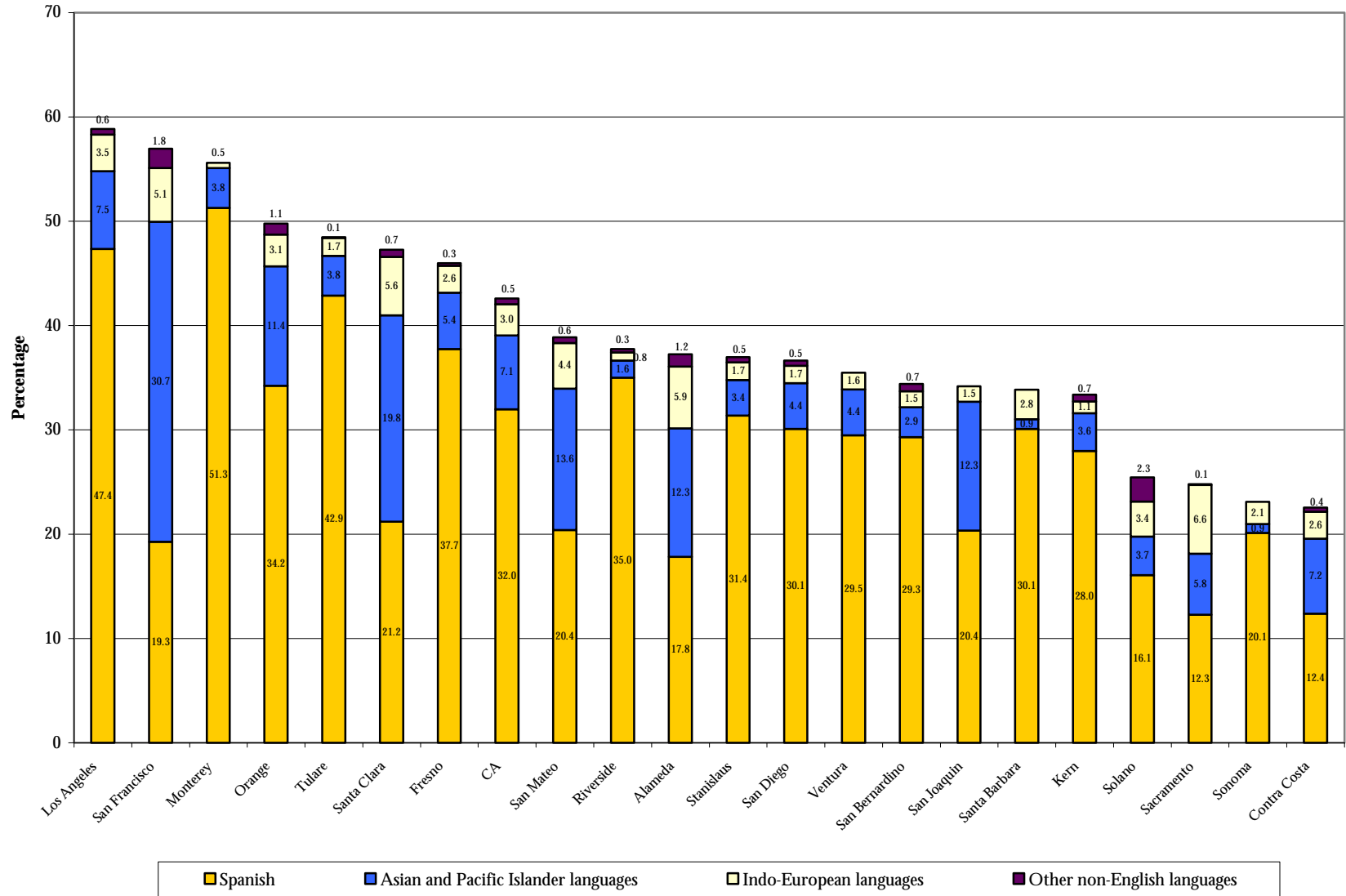


Figure 7: Non-English Language Use at Home--Adults Age 18-64

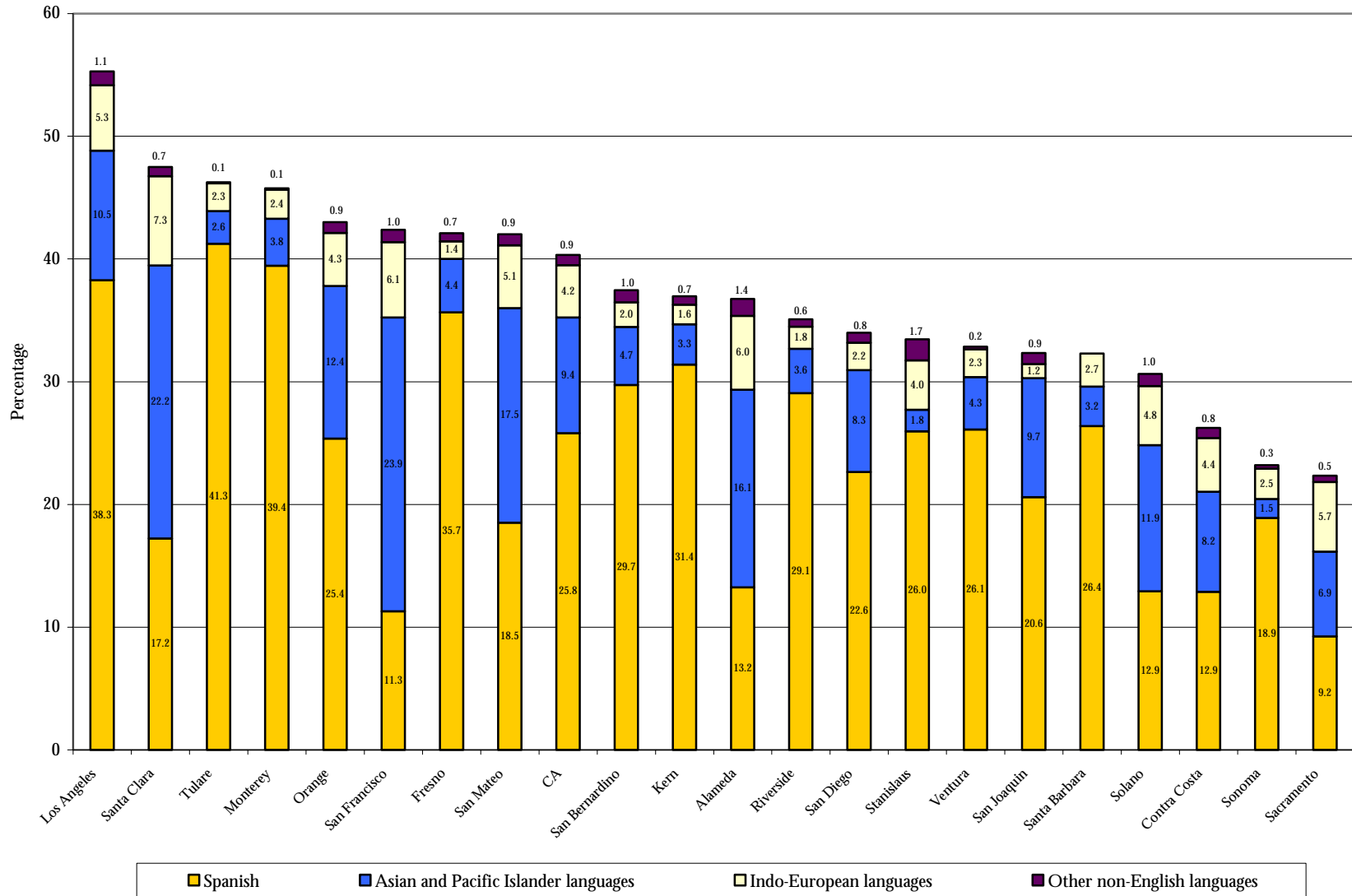
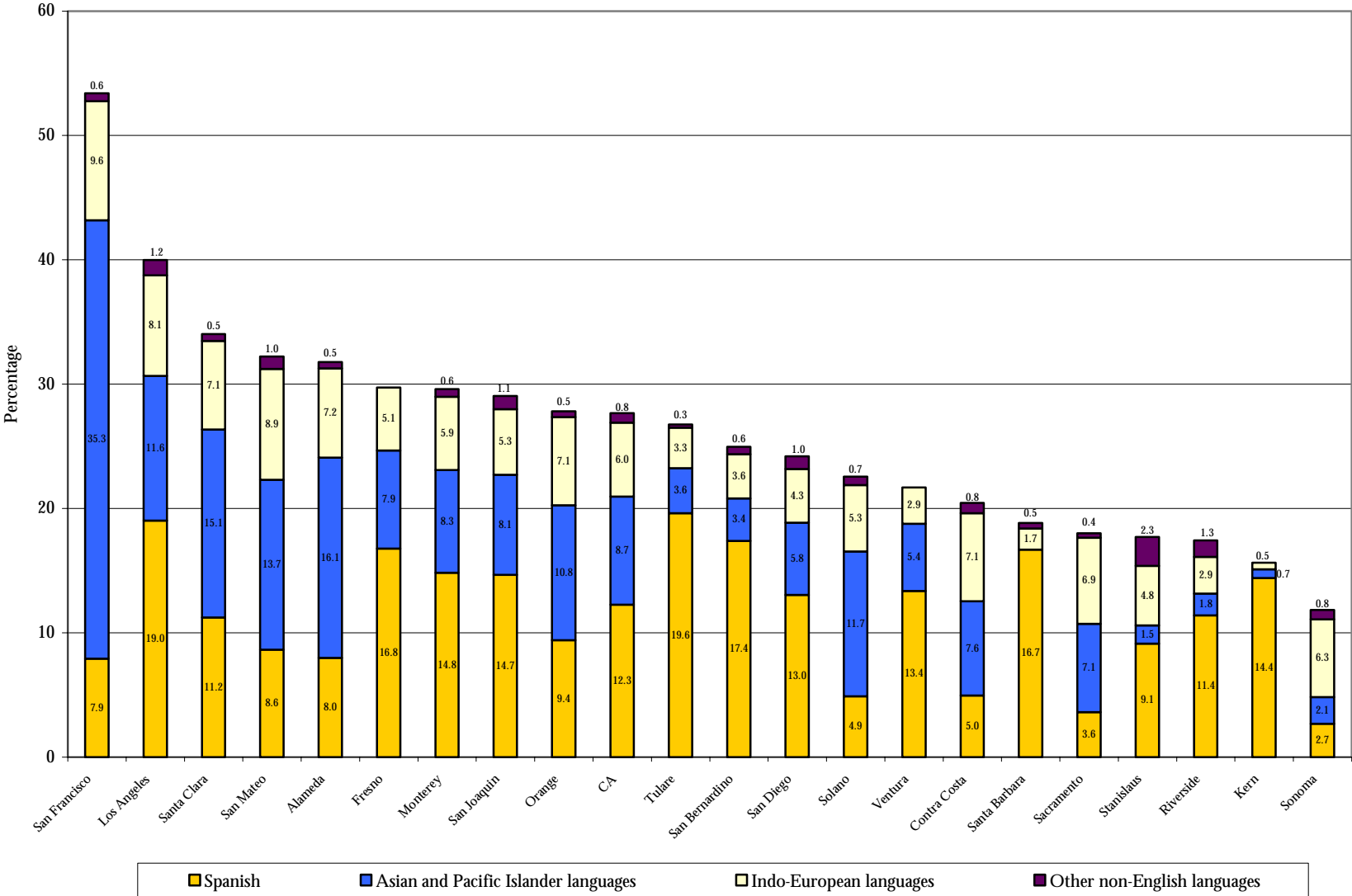


Figure 8: Non-English Language Use at Home--Adults Age 65+



- A larger percentage of people 65 years and older (72.3) speak “English only” at home than people age 18 to 64 (59.7) or age 5 to 17 (57.4).
- Spanish is the second most common language spoken in California, and a larger percentage of children ages 5 to 17 speak it (32.0), compared to adults age 18-64 (24.8) or age 65 and up (12.3).
- Of people who primarily use non-English languages at home, children ages 5 to 17 speak English better than adults, particularly adults age 65 and older. Also, people who speak Indo-European languages (besides Spanish) are the most likely to speak English “well” or “very well.” For the age groups 5-17 years and 18-64 years, Asian and Pacific Islander language speakers are the next most likely to speak English well or very well, and Spanish speakers are the least. For adults age 65 and up, however, just over half of the older adults who use Asian and Pacific Islander languages at home speak English “not well” or “not at all.”

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