

# **Factors associated with attitudes toward U.S. immigration, 2004–2016**

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# Importance

- We aim to understand what factors are shaping anti-immigration and pro-immigration feelings
- This topic has become more prominent in the public sphere due to the 2016 U.S. presidential election
  - Recent data captures social context of that election
- Inform the public about overall migration attitudes of the population

# Previous studies

- Political ideology
  - Liberals are more pro-immigration (Chandler, Tsai 2001; Haubert, Fussell 2006)
  - Association is not straightforward (Neiman, Johnson, Bowler 2006)
- Age and sex
  - Not always consistent (Espenshade, Hempstead 1996; Fetzer 2000; Chandler, Tsai 2001)
- Race
  - No association with migration attitudes (Chandler, Tsai 2001)
- Nativity and immigrant background
  - Immigrants are more pro-immigration (Haubert, Fussell 2006)
- Education
  - Higher educated are more pro-immigration (Berg 2010; Burns, Gimpel 2000; Chandler, Tsai 2001; Espenshade 1995; Haubert, Fussell 2006; Hood et al. 1997)
- Occupation
  - Blue-collar and service workers are less pro-immigration (Haubert, Fussell 2006)

# Our contribution

- Influence of individual-level and county-level variables
- Estimation of models to better understand an ordinal variable about immigration attitudes
- Associations for disaggregated categories of several independent variables
- Combination of variables on immigrant generation with race/ethnicity



# Data

- Analyze cross-sectional cumulative data from the General Social Survey (GSS), 2004–2016

Year	Sample size
2004	1,953
2008	1,273
2010	1,364
2012	1,237
2014	1,594
2016	1,801
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,222</b>

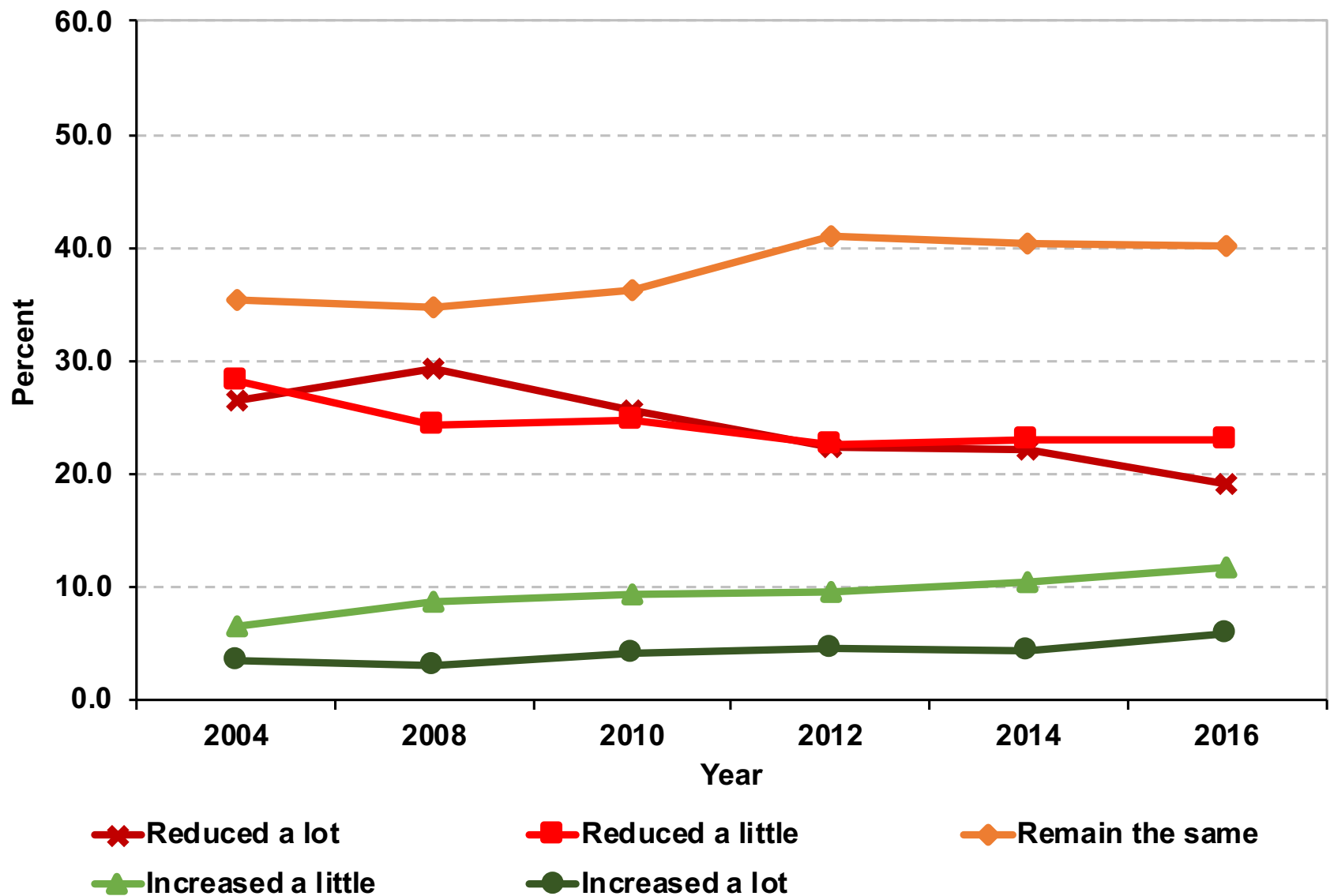
- Merged with 2006–2016 American Community Surveys (ACS) to include contextual variables



# Dependent variable

- Do you think the number of immigrants to America nowadays should be...
  1. Reduced a lot
  2. Reduced a little
  3. Remain the same as it is
  4. Increased a little
  5. Increased a lot

# Opinion about immigration





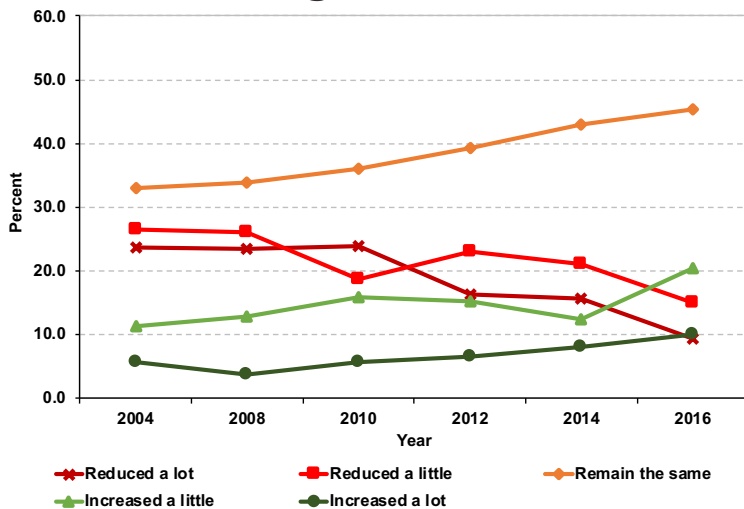
# Independent variables

- Individual-level variables
  - Year
  - Sex
  - Age group
  - Education degree
  - Generation of immigrants
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Religion
  - Occupation
  - Political party affiliation
  - Region of interview
- County-level variables (proportions)
  - Unemployment
  - College graduates
  - Protestants/Catholics
  - Immigrants

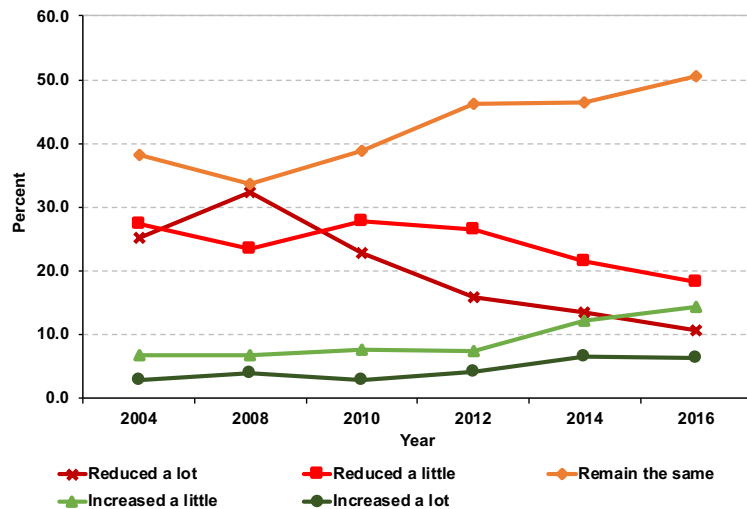


# Immigration opinion and party

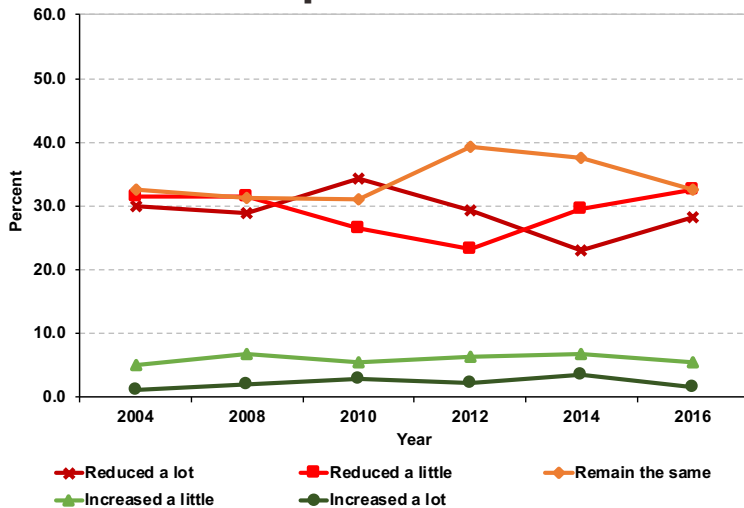
## Strong democrats



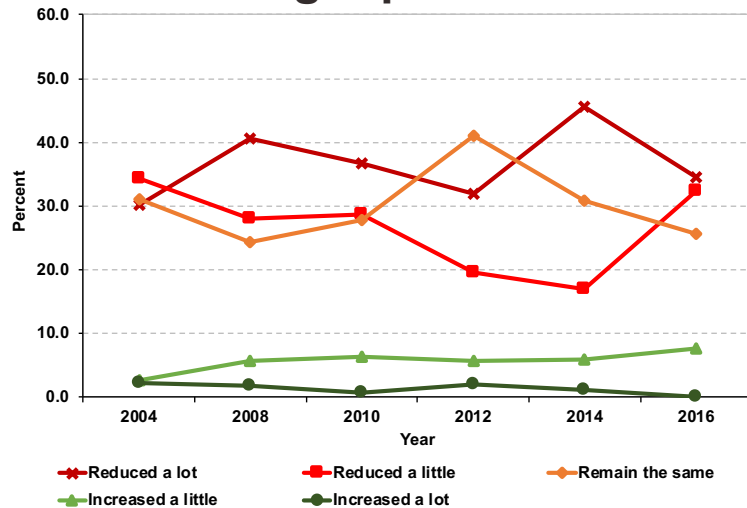
## Democrats



## Republicans



## Strong republicans



# Generation of immigrants and race/ethnicity

- 1st generation
  - Born outside the U.S.
- 2nd generation
  - Born in the U.S.
  - Parents' born outside the U.S.
- 3+ generation
  - Born in the U.S.
  - Parents' born in the U.S.
- Combine with race ethnicity
  - White, Black, Hispanic, Other



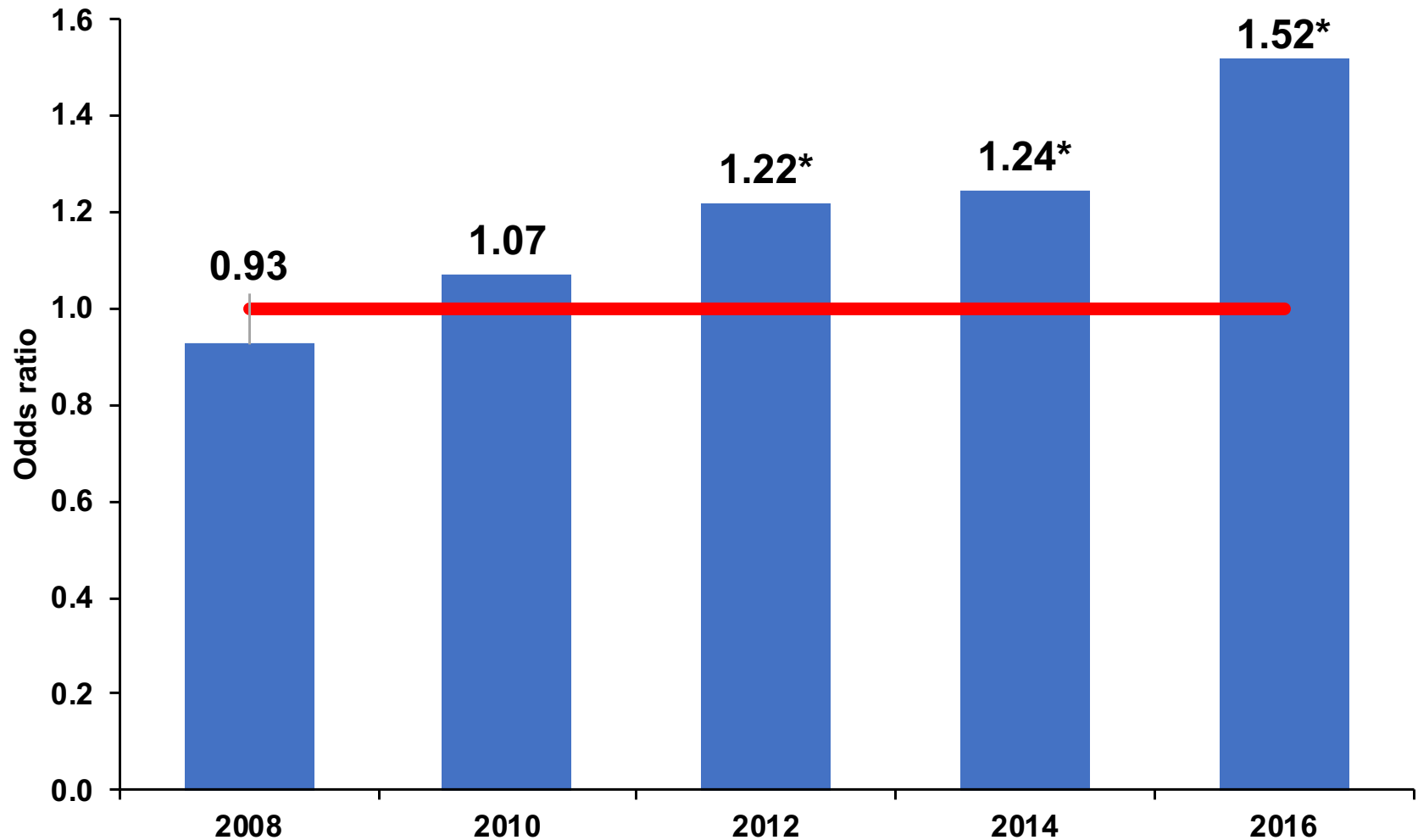
# Generalized ordered logit model

- Odds ratios indicate the factor change in odds of
  - Observing values above the specified category
  - Versus observing values at or below the specified category
- For migration attitude
  1. **Above reduced a lot (“wanting more”)**
  2. Above reduced a little
  3. Above remain the same
  4. Above increased a little



# Odds ratios of wanting more immigration versus wanting less

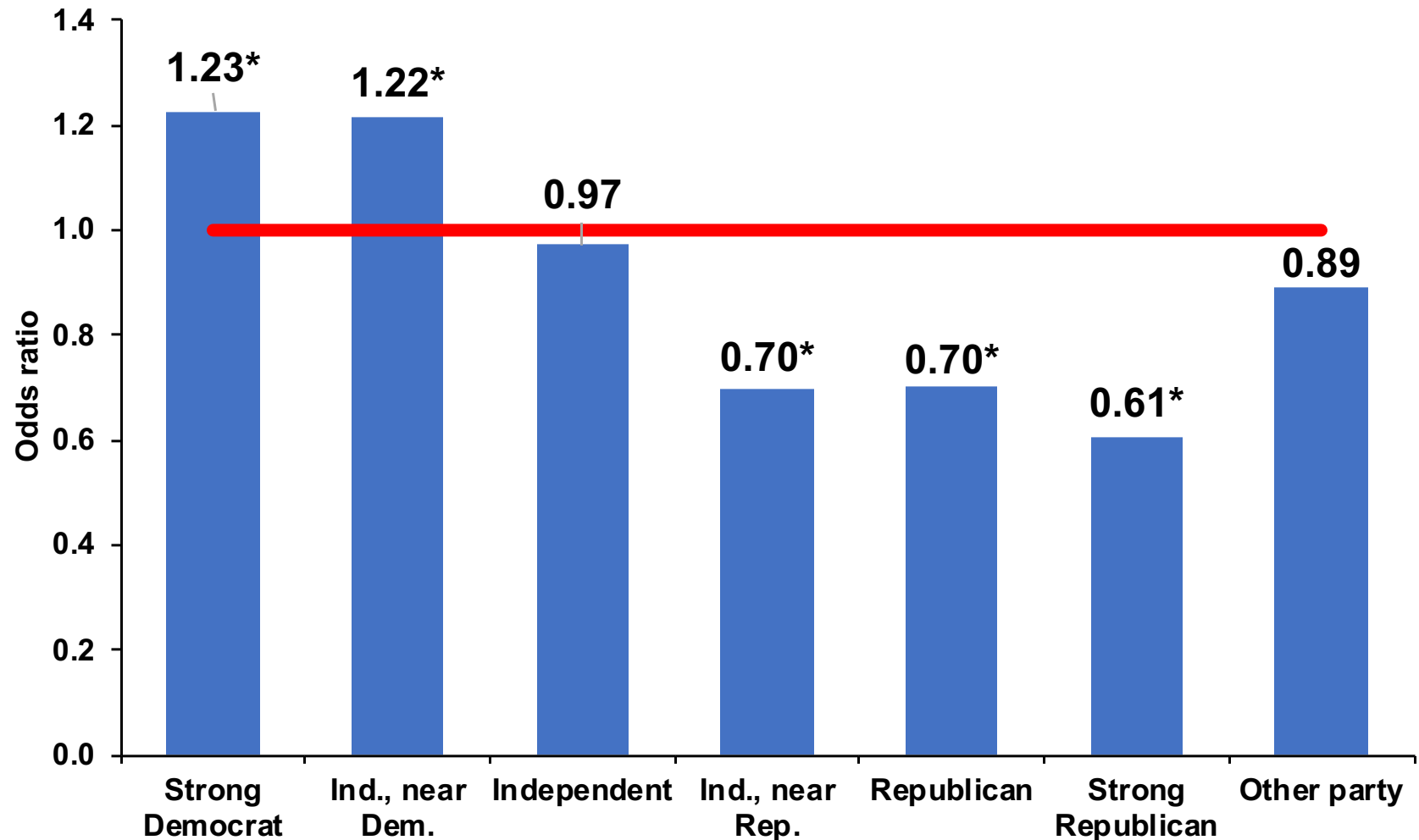
**2004 as reference**



\*Significant at least at  $p < .05$ . Source: 2004–2016 General Social Survey.

# Odds ratios of wanting more immigration versus wanting less

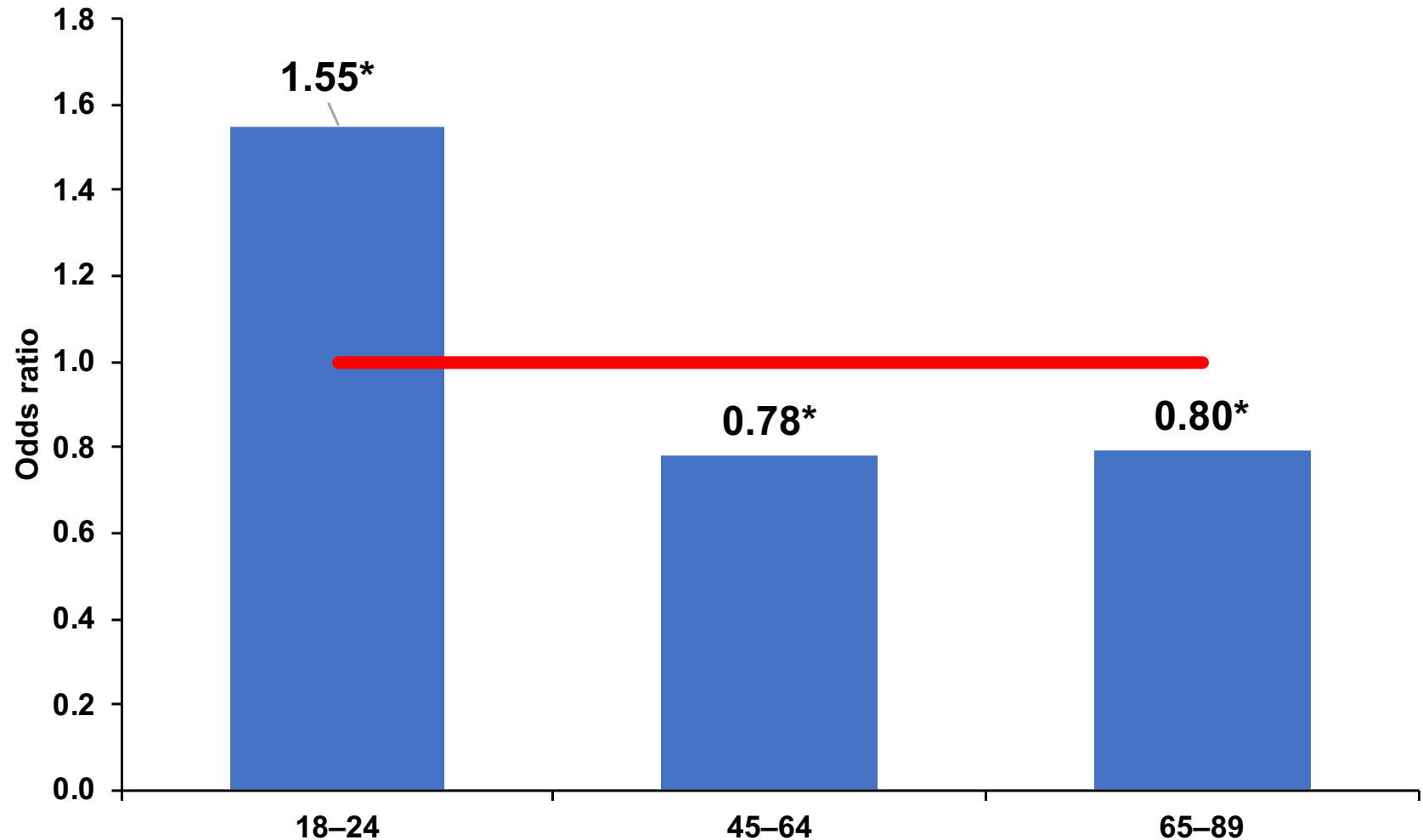
**Democrat as reference**



\*Significant at least at  $p < .05$ . Source: 2004–2016 General Social Survey.

# Odds ratios of wanting more immigration versus wanting less

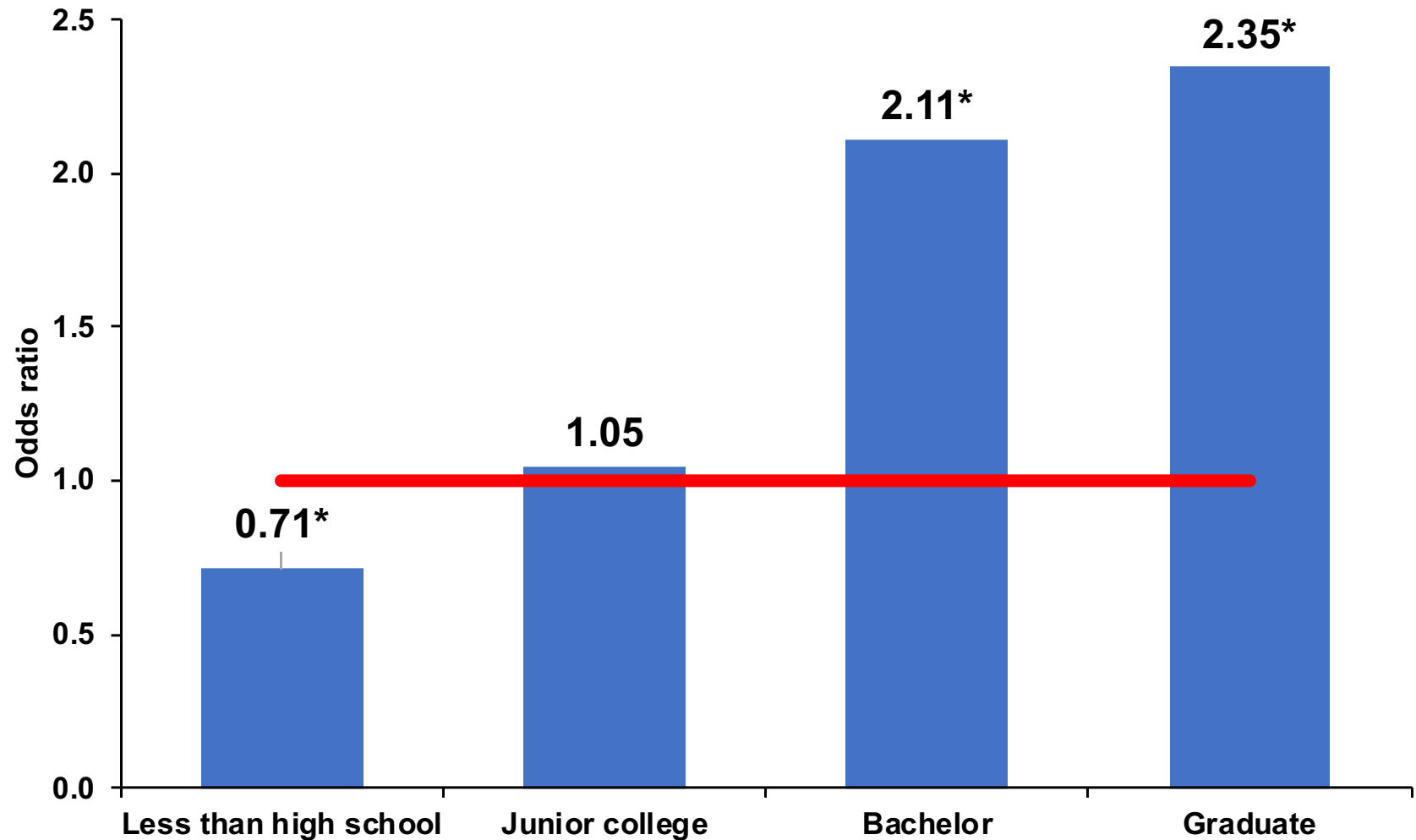
**25–44 as reference**



\*Significant at least at  $p < .05$ . Source: 2004–2016 General Social Survey.

# Odds ratios of wanting more immigration versus wanting less

High school as reference

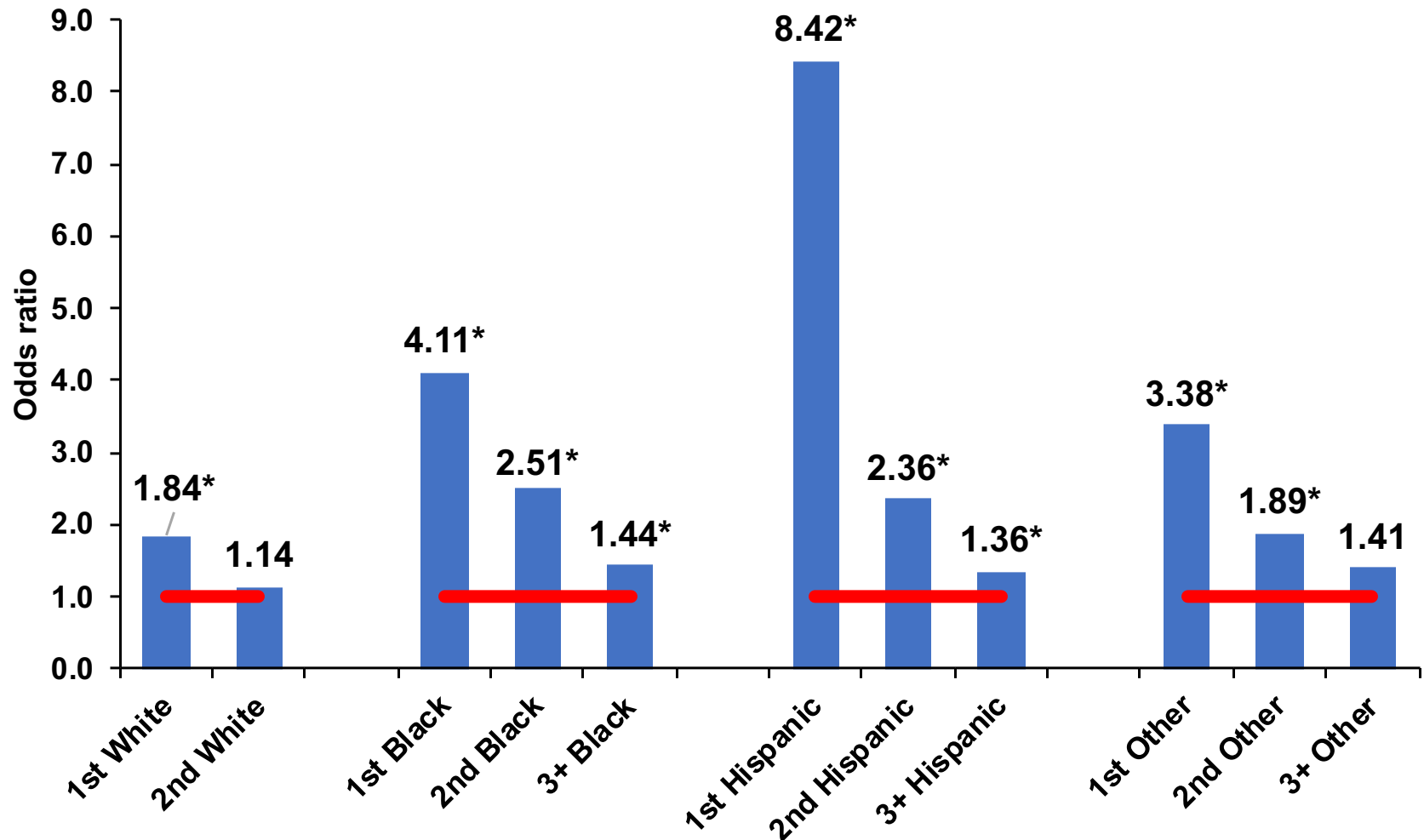


\*Significant at least at  $p < .05$ . Source: 2004–2016 General Social Survey.



# Odds ratios of wanting more immigration versus wanting less

**3+ White as reference**



\*Significant at least at p<.05. Source: 2004–2016 General Social Survey.

# Final considerations

- ***Race and social class divide in terms of attitudes***
  - Pro-immigration:
    - Non-whites
    - Higher educational attainment
    - Those living in counties with higher proportions of college graduates
  - Anti-immigration
    - Lower end of the occupational stratum
- ***Exposure to immigrants shapes pro-immigration***
  - Those living in counties with higher proportions of immigrants
  - More recent immigrants tend to be more pro-immigration
- ***Other factors that increase pro-immigration attitudes***
  - Support to immigration has been increasing over time
  - 18–24 age group
  - Non-Protestants
  - Those with liberal political inclinations





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