

# Voting Behavior of Naturalized Citizens: 1996-2006

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- 2006: 36.5 million foreign born in U.S., 14.4 million naturalized
- Nativity effect = naturalized less likely to vote than native citizens
- Baseline estimates from 1996 Current Population Survey (CPS) from Bass and Casper (2002).
- Since 1996, more than 5 million new naturalized citizens. Total population has increased by roughly 21 million.
- Political debate on immigration and naturalization policy has grown heated

- Expands Bass and Casper's 1996 analyses from 1998-2006.

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

- RQ 1. Net of other predictors of voting behavior, are naturalized citizens less likely than native citizens to register and to vote in elections over the past decade?
  - Hypothesis: As found in 1996, nativity effect will exist from 1998-2006.

- RQ 2: Has the magnitude of the nativity effect changed across the last decade?
  - Hypothesis: With increasing and diversifying naturalized citizen population, nativity effect will decrease over time.
- RQ 3: Does nativity status have the same effect across election type?
  - Hypothesis: Nativity effect will be stronger in congressional elections since disengaged populations register and vote less frequently.

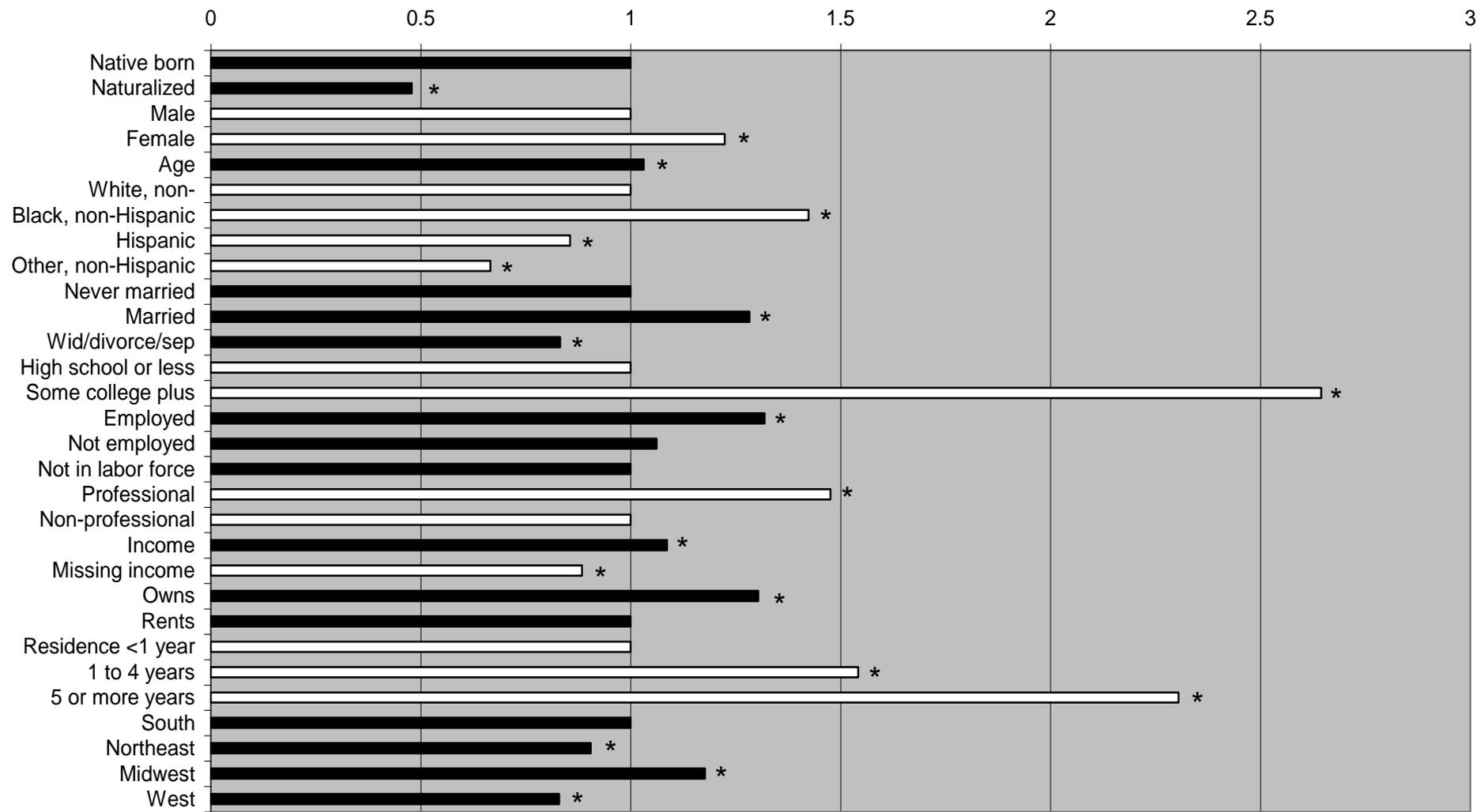
# DATA AND METHODS

- Data
  - CPS bi-annual November Voting Supplement 1996-2006
  - Representative of the U.S. non-institutionalized civilian population
  - Analytic sample sizes between about 77,000 and 89,000 for each year.

- Dependent variables
  - Two dichotomous voting behaviors for November election of survey year:
    1. Registered to vote
    2. Voted
- Independent variables
  - Nativity status
    - 1=naturalized, 0=native
  - Demographic control variables

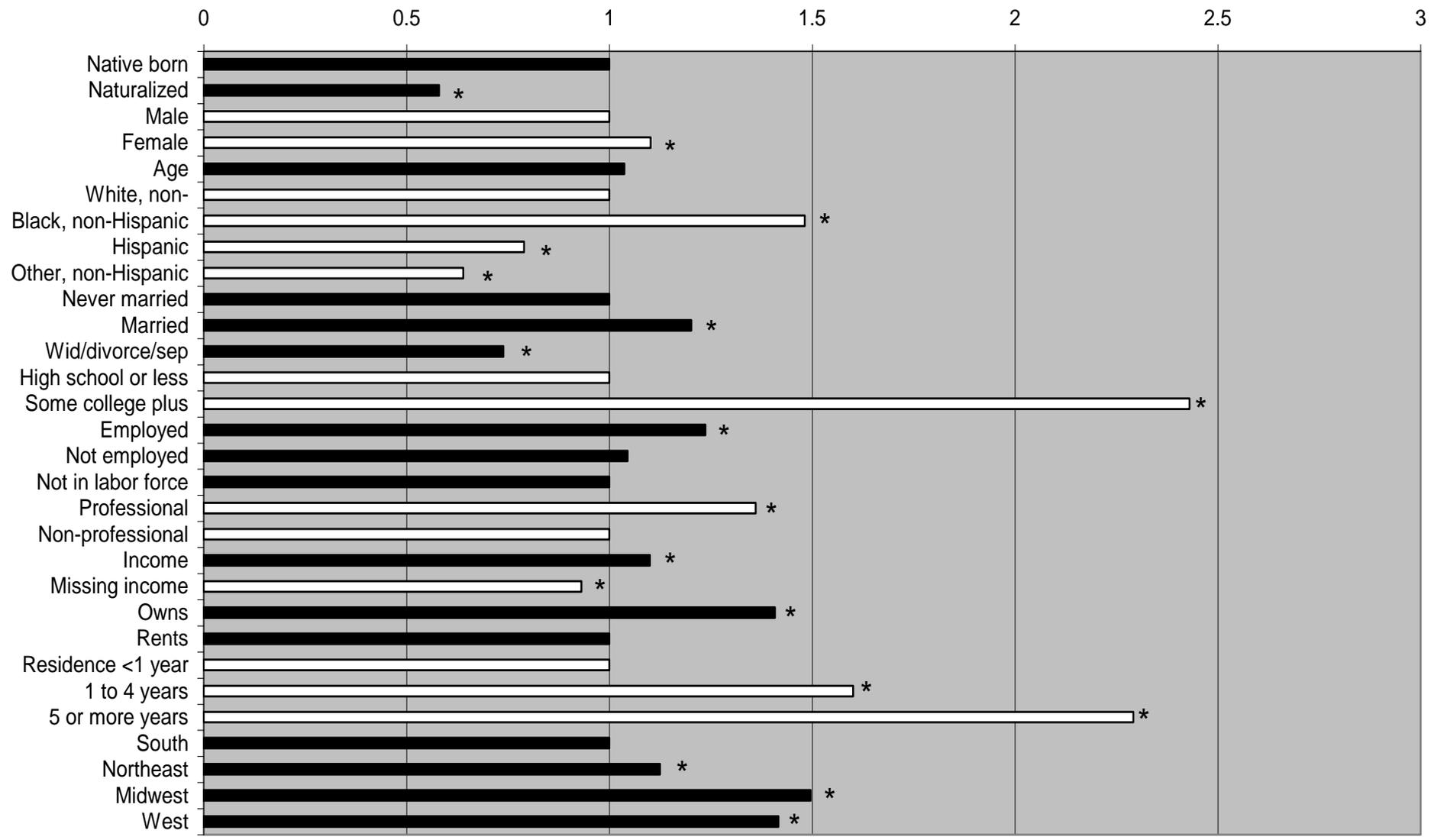
- Analytical Plan
  - Logistic Regression
    - Weighted models and standard errors adjusted for design effects
  - RQ 1: Estimate effect of nativity status for each survey year
  - RQ 2: Compare nativity coefficients across election years within election types
  - RQ 3: Compare nativity coefficients across election type with proximate years

# Figure 1: Odds Ratios from Logistic Regression Predicting Voter Registration: 2006



\* = Coefficient is statistically significant at the  $p < .10$  level

# Figure 2: Odds Ratios from Logistic Regression Predicting Voting: 2006



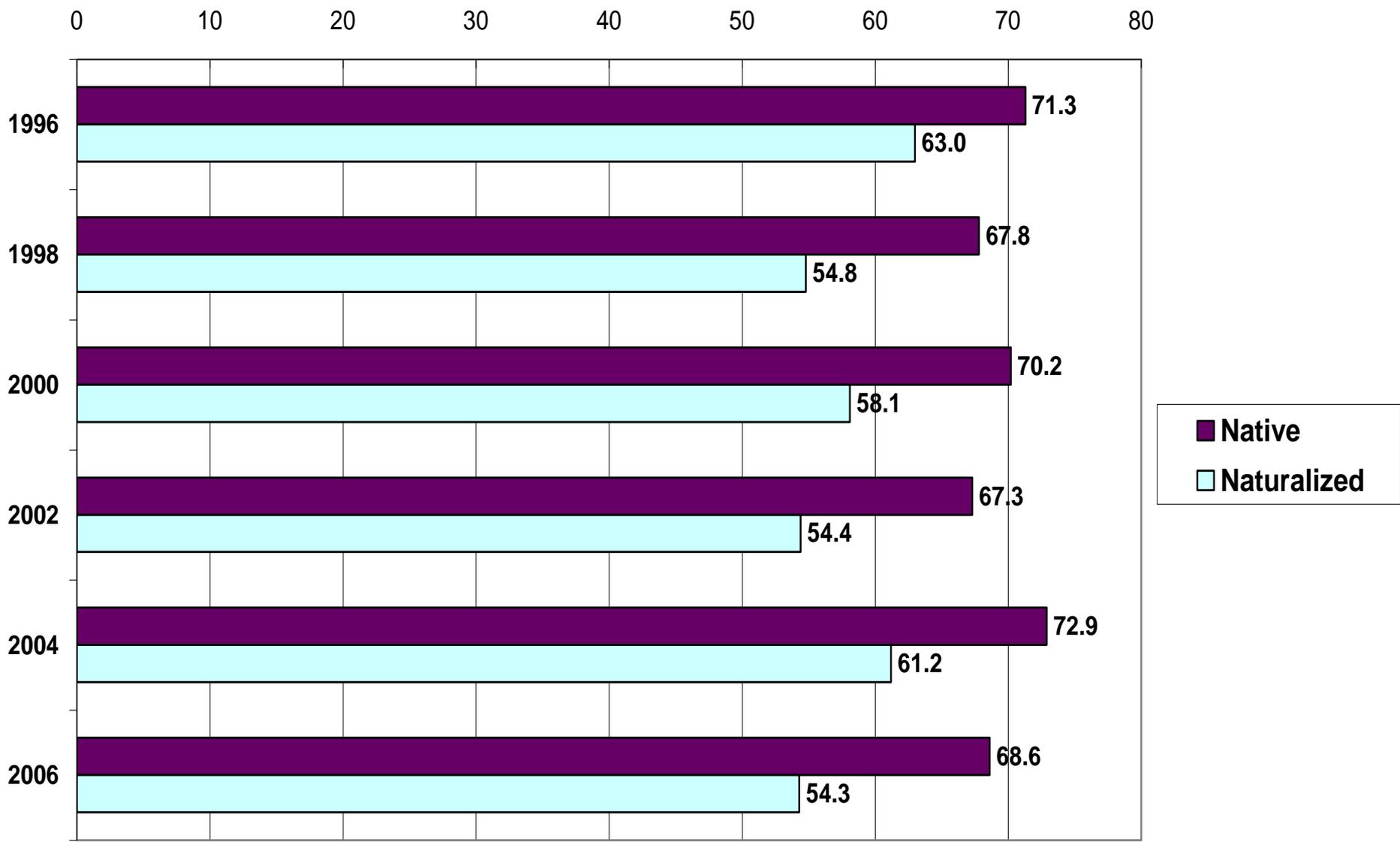
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**Table 1: Total Voting-Age Citizen Population Size, by Nativity Status and Year: 1996-2006**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Citizens, Age 18+</b>	<b>Native</b>	<b>Naturalized</b>
1996	179,936	171,713	8,223
	100.0	95.4	4.6
1998	183,451	173,862	9,588
	100.0	94.8	5.2
2000	186,366	175,679	10,687
	100.0	94.3	5.7
2002	192,656	180,473	12,183
	100.0	93.7	6.3
2004	197,005	183,880	13,125
	100.0	93.3	6.7
2006	201,073	187,132	13,941
	100.0	93.1	6.9

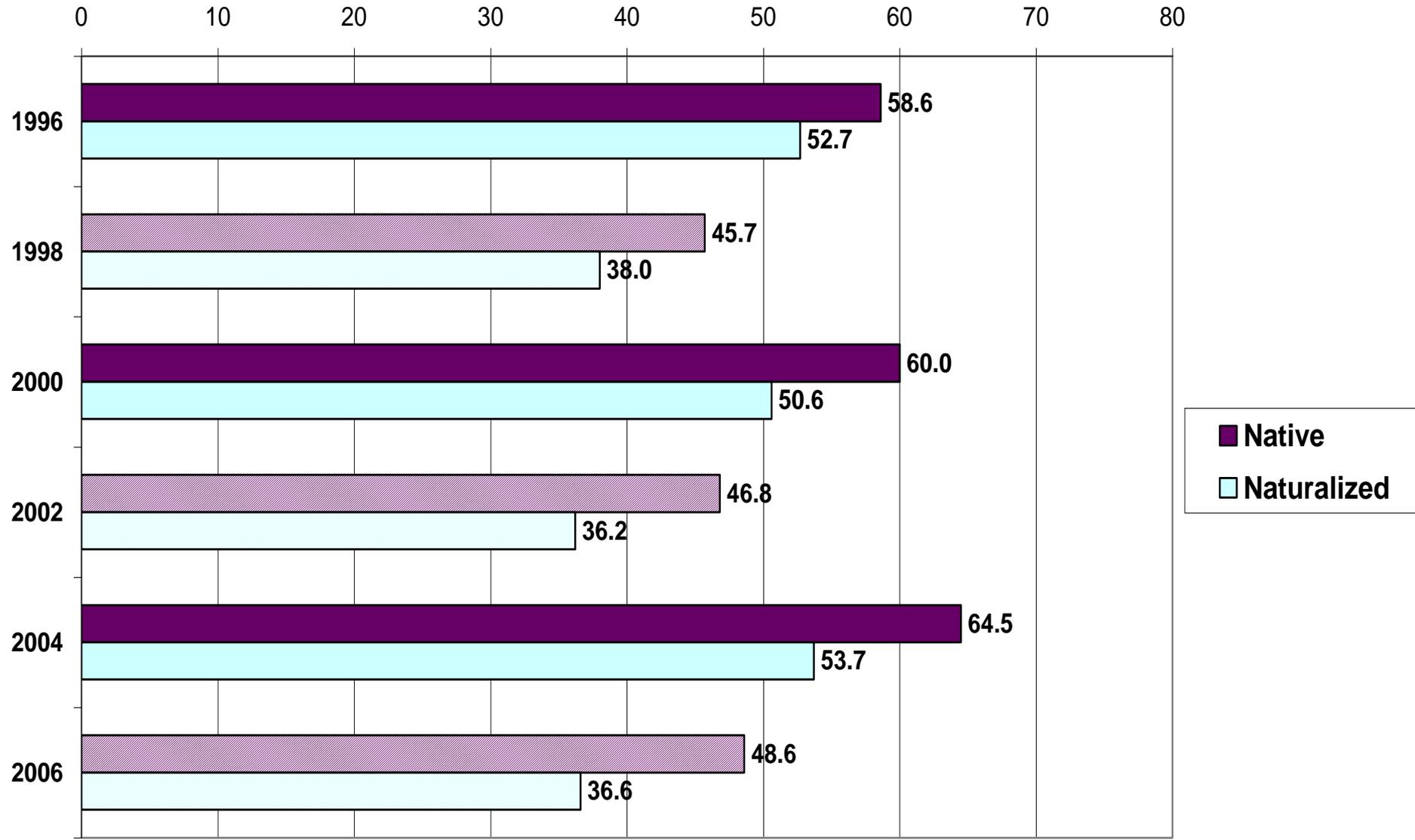
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Voting Supplements: 1996-2006  
 Numbers in thousands

# Figure 3: Percentage of Eligible Voting Population Who Registered to Vote, by Nativity Status and Year: 1996-2006



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Voting Supplements: 1996-2006

# Figure 4: Percentage of Eligible Voting Population Who Voted, by Nativity Status and Year: 1996-2006

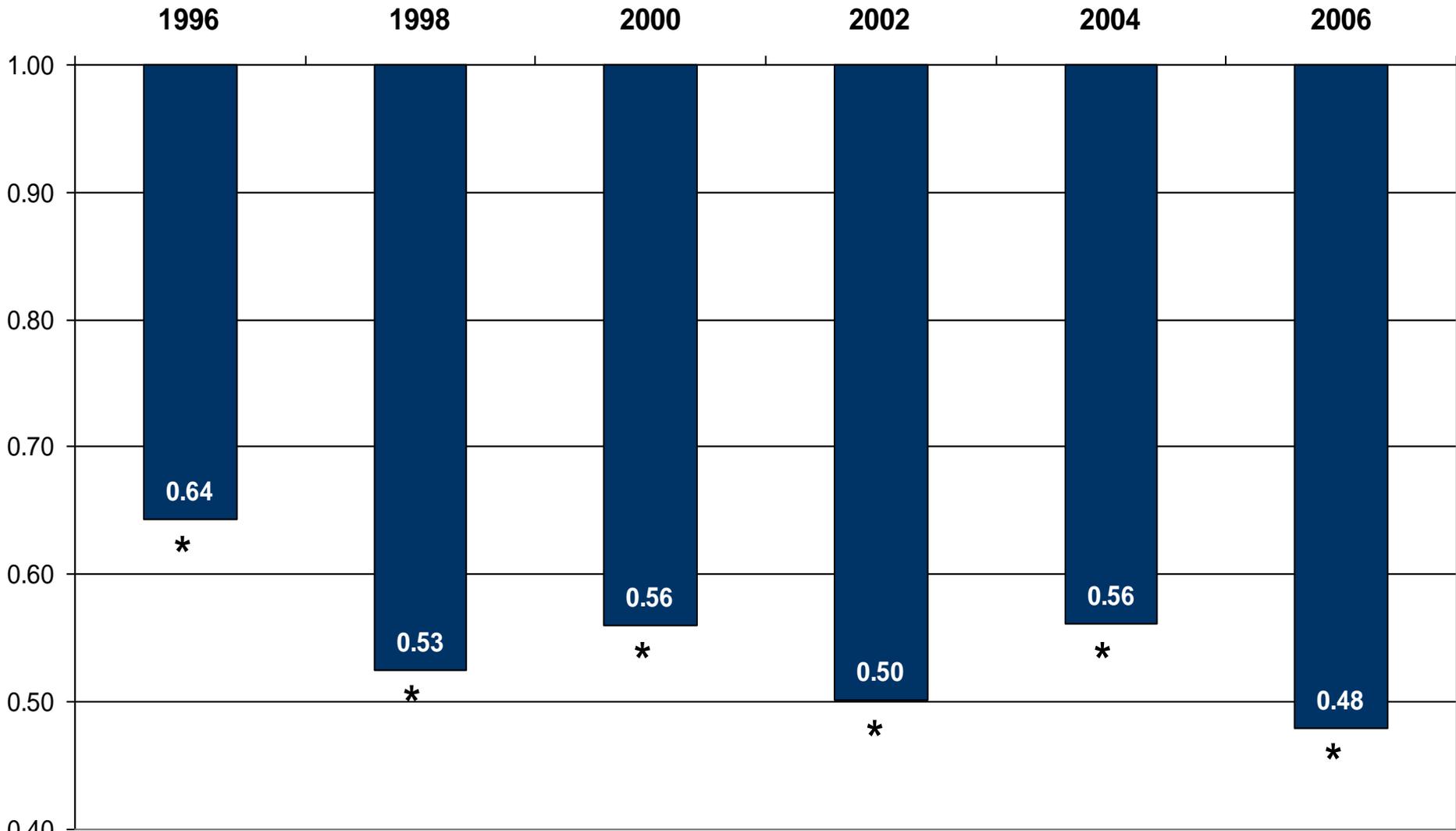


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Voting Supplements: 1996-2006

# RESULTS

- Descriptive Findings
  - Table 1: U.S. Citizens 18+ population grew from about 180 to 201 million between 1996-2006. Naturalized grew from 8 to 14 million
  - Figure 3: In each year, percentage of native citizens who registered to vote was statistically higher than naturalized
  - Figure 4: In each year, percentage of native citizens who voted was statistically higher than naturalized

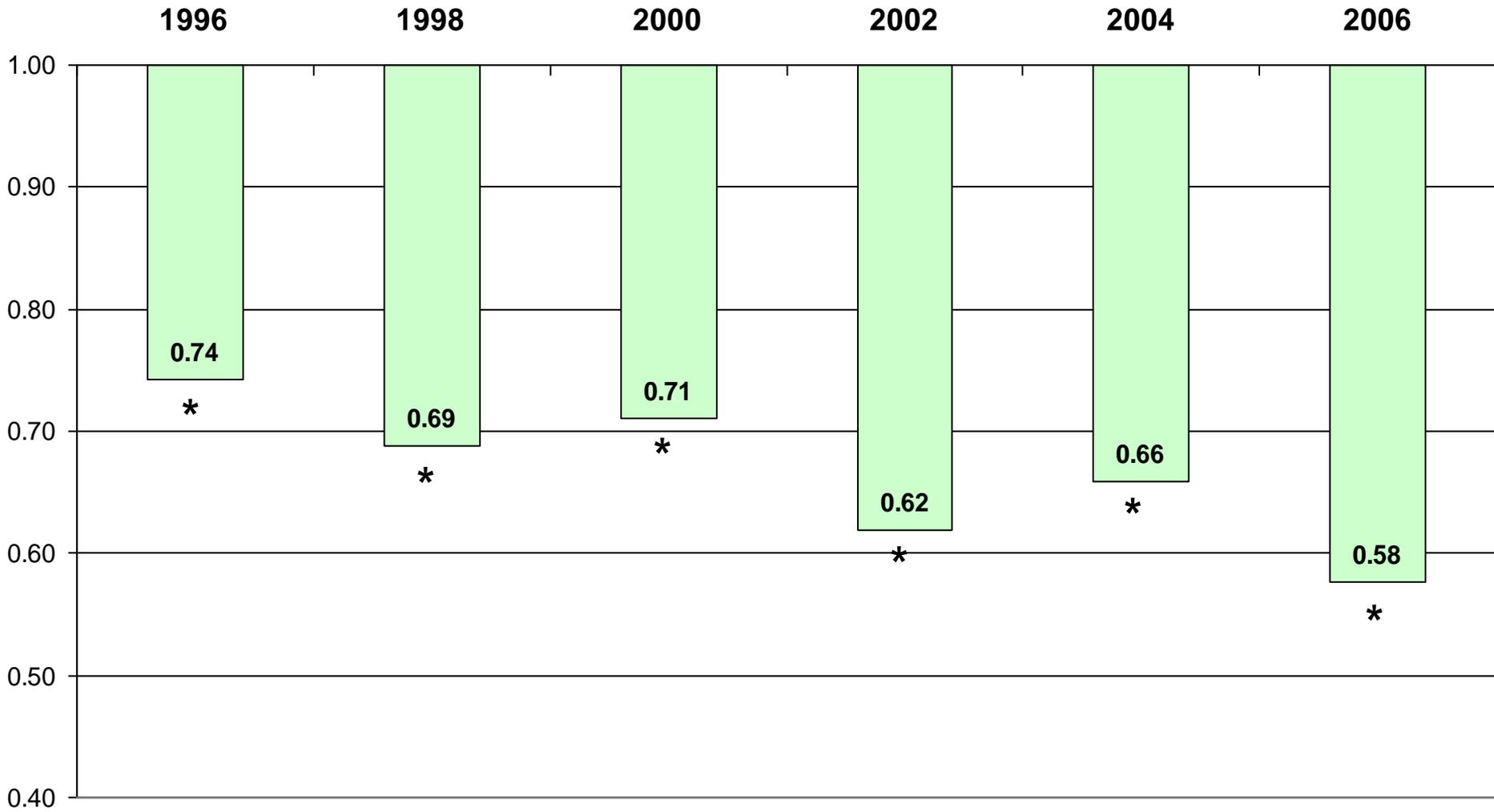
# Figure 5: Odds Ratios from Logistic Regressions Predicting Voter Registration for Naturalized Citizens Versus Native Citizens: 1996-2006



\* = Coefficient is statistically significant at the p < .10 level

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Voting Supplements: 1996-2006

# Figure 6: Odds Ratios from Logistic Regressions Predicting Voting for Naturalized Citizens versus Native Citizens: 1996-2006



\* = Coefficient is statistically significant at the p < .10 level

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Voting Supplements: 1996-2006

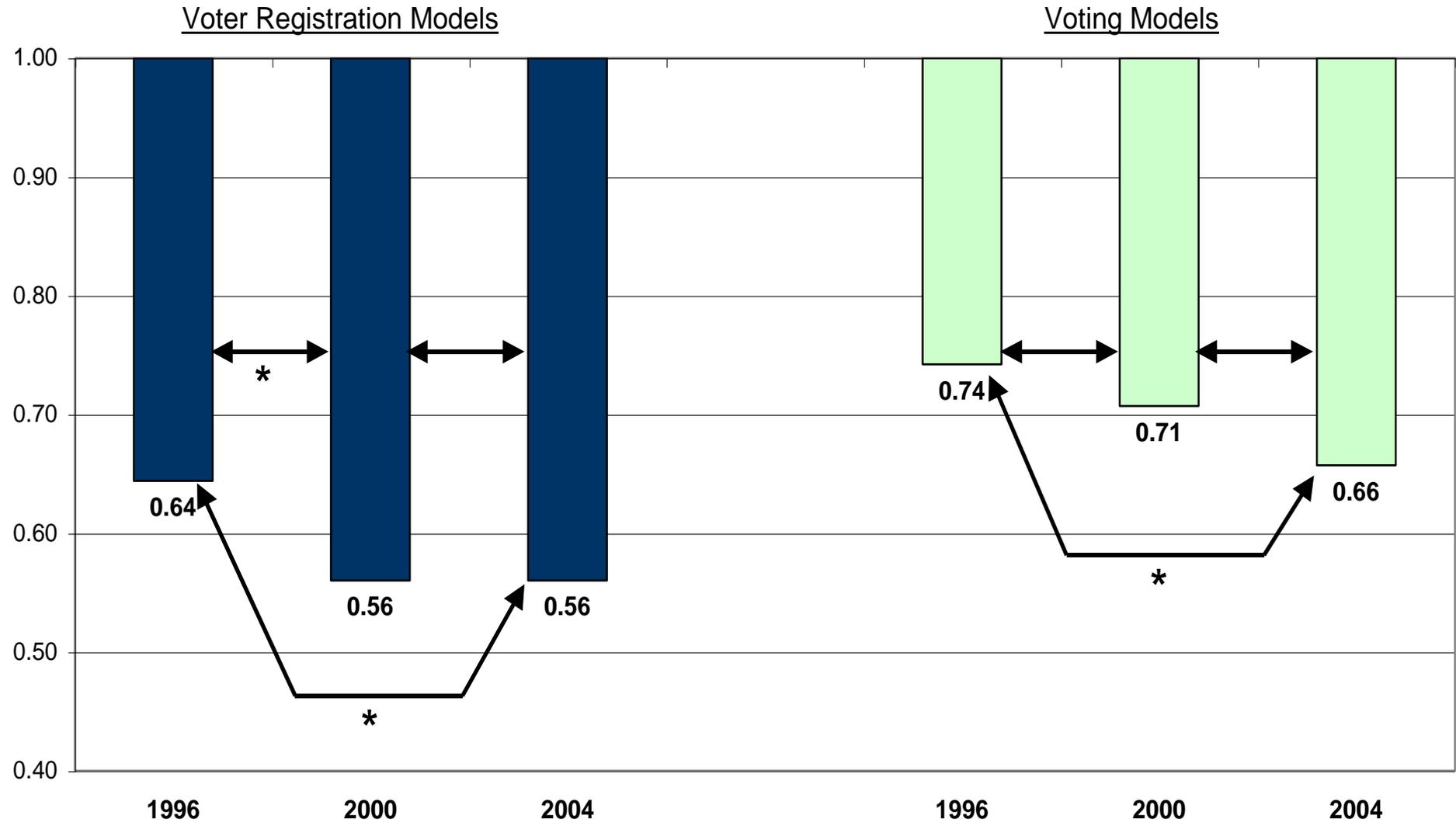
# RESULTS

- Multivariate Findings – RQ 1
  - Figure 5: Registration in Individual Years
    - In each year, naturalized citizens are statistically less likely than native citizens to register
    - In 1996, the odds of registering were about 35% lower for naturalized than native citizens
    - In 2006, the odds of registering were about 50% lower for naturalized than native citizens

– Figure 6: Voting in Individual Years

- Naturalized citizens statistically less likely than native citizens to vote each year
- In 1996, the odds of voting were about 25% lower for naturalized than native citizens
- In 2006, the odds of voting were about 40% lower for naturalized than native citizens

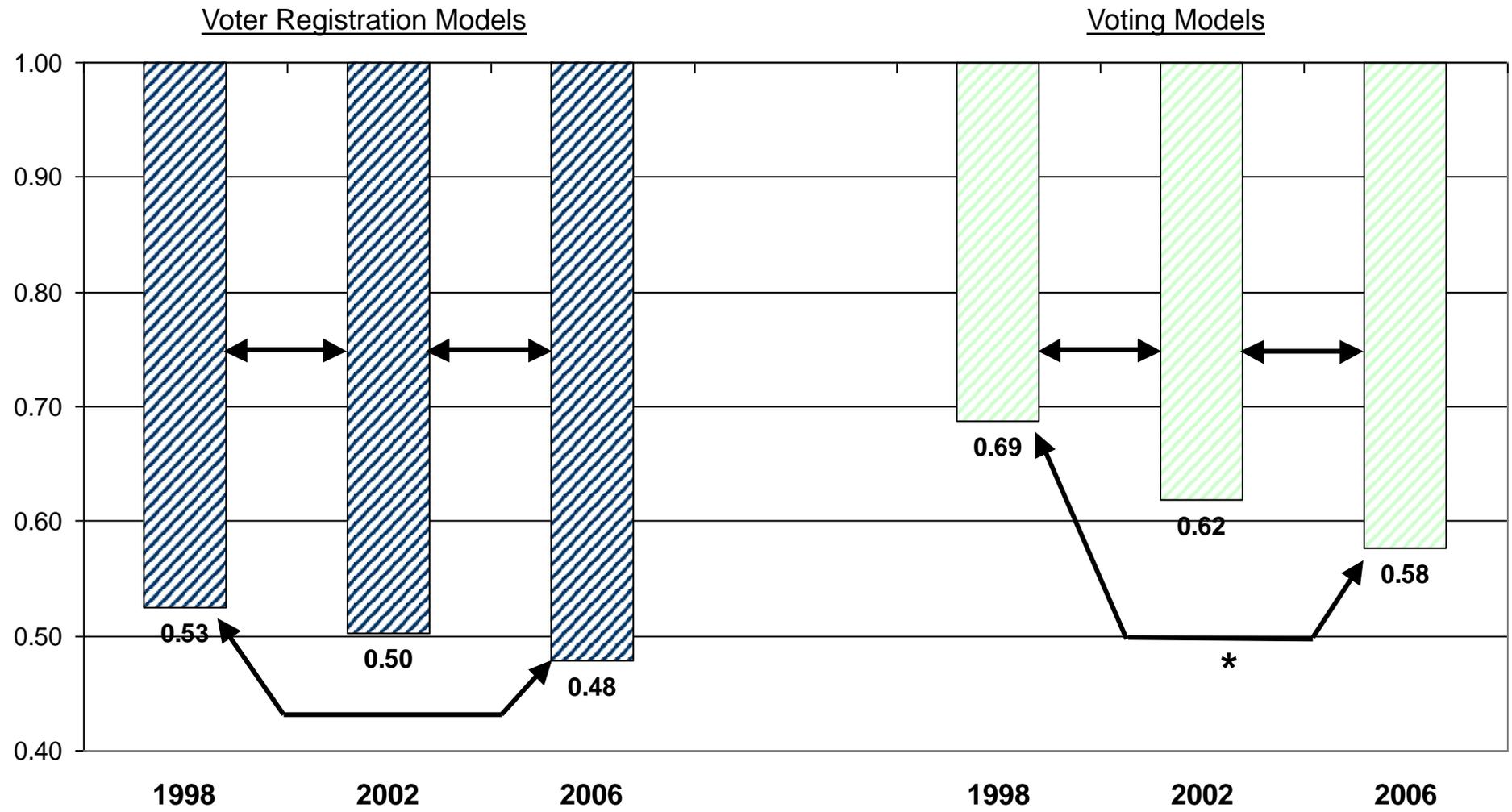
# Figure 7: Comparison of Ratios from Logistic Regressions Predicting Voting Behavior for Naturalized Citizens versus Native Citizens: Presidential Election Years 1996-2004



\* = Logistic regression coefficients are statistically different at the  $p < .10$  level

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Voting Supplements: 1996-2006

# Figure 8: Comparison of Ratios from Logistic Regressions Predicting Voting Behavior for Naturalized Citizens versus Native Citizens: Congressional Election Years 1998-2006



\* = Logistic regression coefficients are statistically different at the  $p < .10$  level

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Voting Supplements: 1996-2006

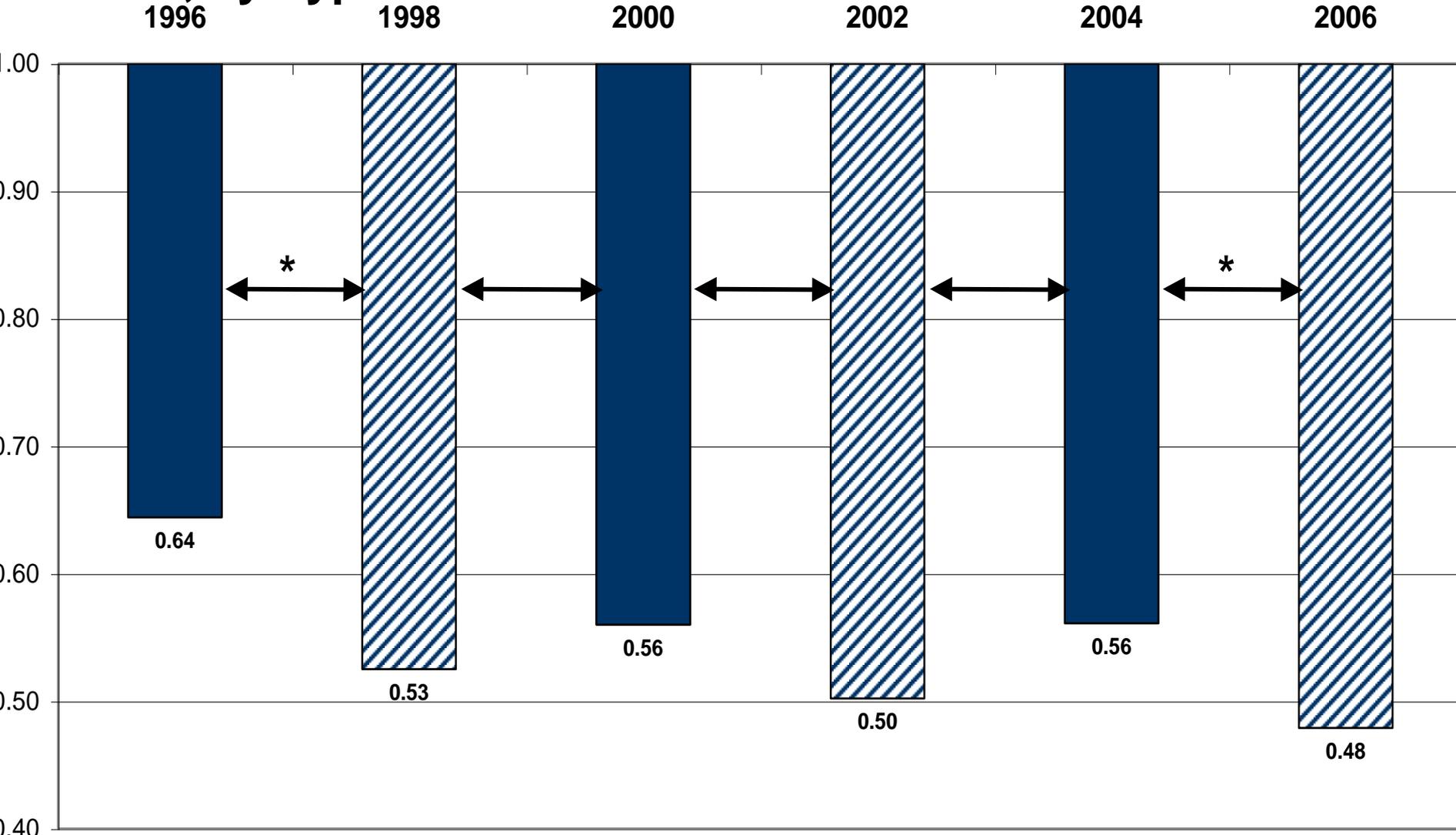
# RESULTS

- Multivariate Findings – RQ 2
  - Figure 7: Differences over Time (Presidential Election Years)
    - Odds ratio for nativity in registration models was statistically different between 1996 and both 2000 and 2004 – effect was weakest in 1996.
    - Odds ratio for nativity in voting models was statistically different from 1996-2004 – effect is weaker in 1996

– Figure 8: Differences over Time  
(Congressional Election Years)

- No statistically significant differences across models predicting registration
- Odds ratio for nativity in voting models statistically different between 1998-2006—effect is weaker in 1998

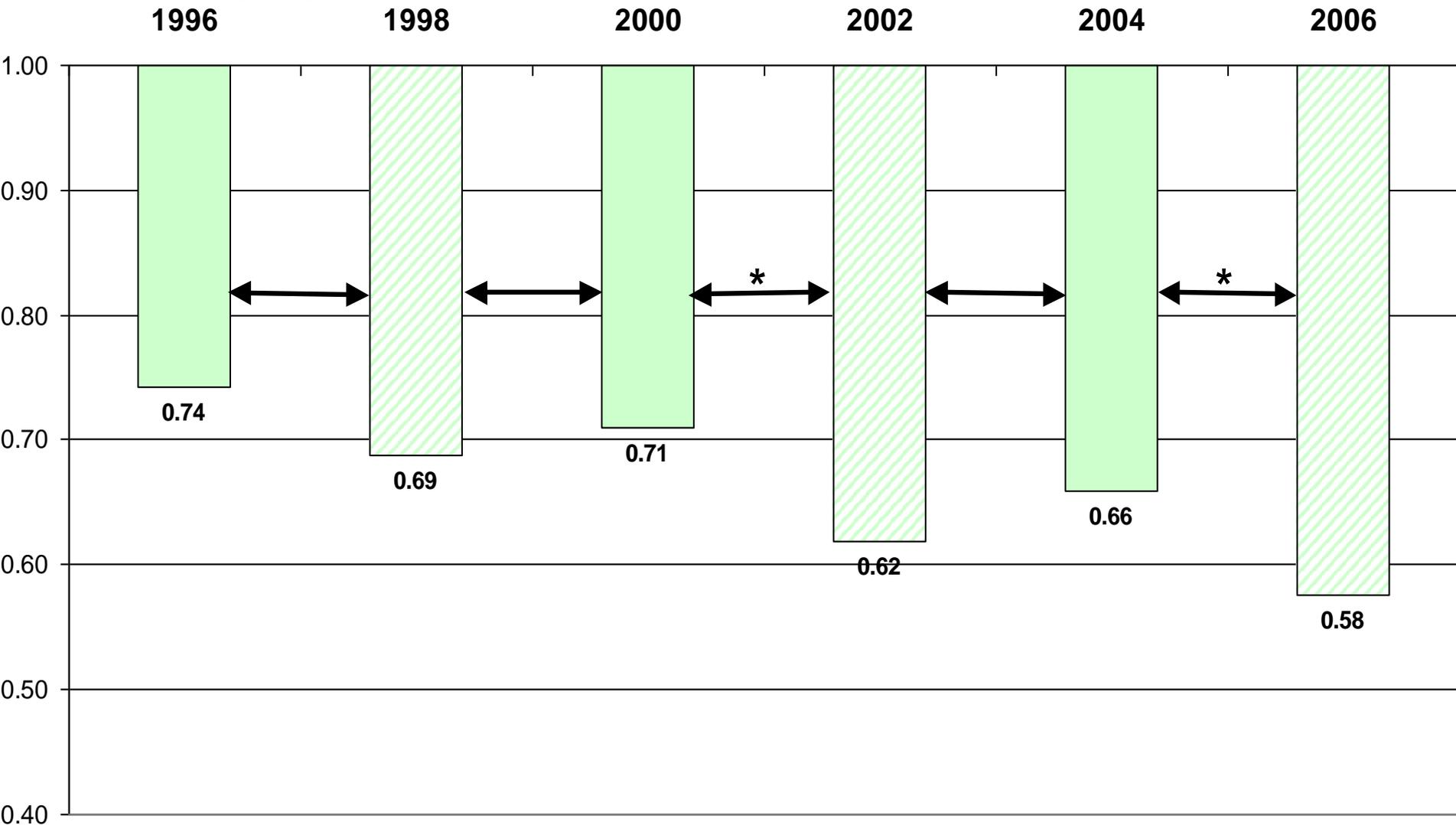
# Figure 9: Comparison of Odds Ratios from Logistic Regressions Predicting Voter Registration for Naturalized Versus Native Citizens, by Type of Election: Proximate Years 1996-2006



\* = Logistic regression coefficients are statistically different at the  $p < .10$  level

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Voting Supplements: 1996-2006

# Figure 10: Comparison of Odds Ratios from Logistic Regressions Predicting Voting for Naturalized Versus Native Citizens, by Type of Election: Proximate Years 1996-2006



\* = Logistic regression coefficients are statistically different at the  $p < .10$  level

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Voting Supplements: 1996-2006

# RESULTS

- Multivariate Findings – RQ 3
  - Figure 9: Registration by Election Type
    - Comparisons were statistically different in two comparisons:
      - 1996-1998
      - 2004-2006
    - In these two cases, the effect was stronger in congressional versus presidential elections

– Figure 10: Voting by Type

- Comparisons were statistically significant in two cases:
  - 2000-2002
  - 2004-2006
- In these two cases, the effect was stronger in congressional versus presidential elections

- RQ 1: Effect of Nativity
  - Support for hypothesis that naturalized citizens are less likely than native citizens to register and vote in elections in the past decade.
  - In 2006, naturalized citizens were 52% less likely to register and 42% less likely to vote compared to native citizens.
  - Provides further support for literature documenting lower electoral participation by naturalized citizens.

- RQ 2: Nativity Effect Over Time
  - Mixed evidence for hypothesis that effect has changed over time.
  - In presidential years, effect increased between earliest and latest year.
  - In congressional years, no time trend in registration but nativity effect was larger in latest year compared to earliest year for voting.
  - Participation by naturalized citizens is not increasing over time, and some evidence it is decreasing compared to native citizens.

- RQ 3: Nativity Effect by Election Type
  - Mixed evidence for hypothesis that effect varies by type.
  - For each statistically different comparison, the effect was stronger in congressional versus presidential elections.
  - Potentially, naturalized citizens are less likely to participate in congressional elections.

# CONCLUSIONS

- Nativity continues to be an important social predictor of voting behavior
  - Compared to native citizens, naturalized citizens are less likely to take advantage of their right to participate in the democratic process.
  - Effect of nativity has not decreased in recent years
  - Effect of nativity potentially stronger in congressional elections