

# The Gender Gap in Educational Attainment: Variation by Age, Race, Ethnicity, and Nativity in the United States

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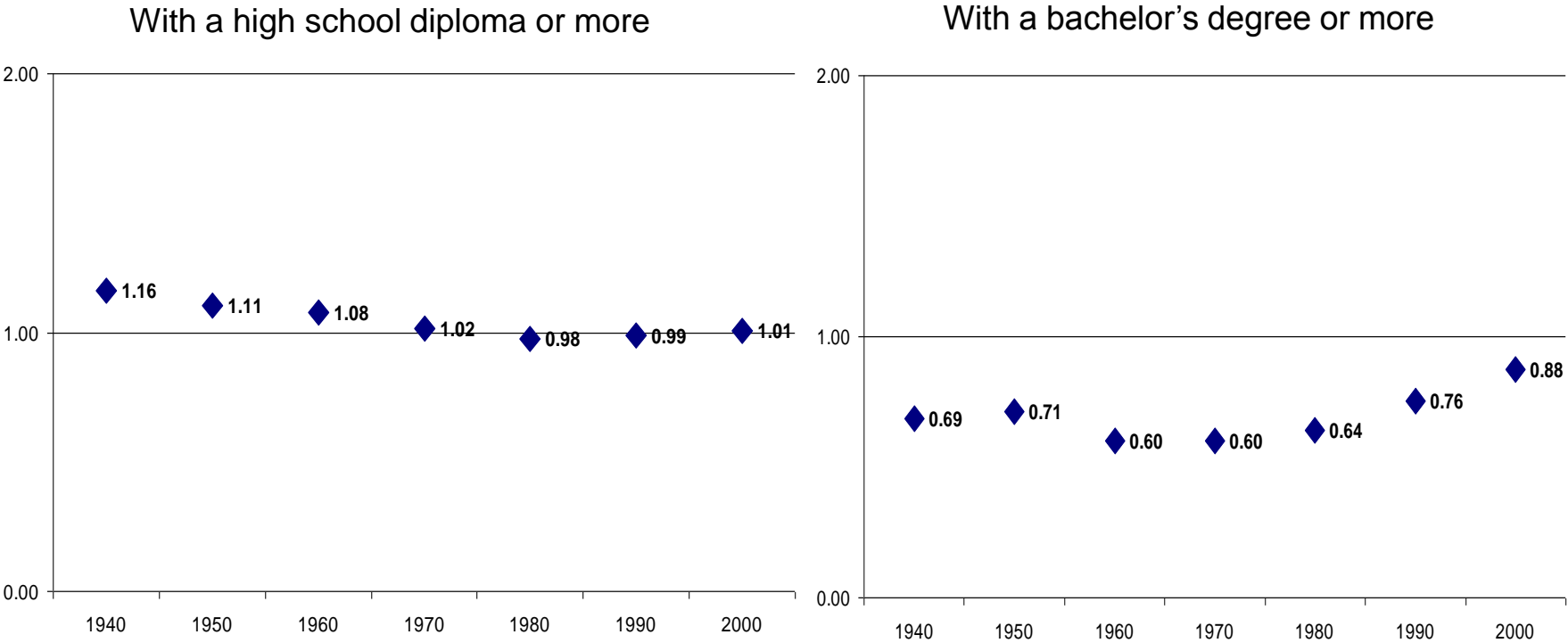
# Introduction

The gender gap in educational attainment has been changing in recent decades.

Compared to men, women are more likely to have completed high school and are almost as likely to have completed college.

Variation in educational experience by age, race/Hispanic origin, nativity, may contribute to differences in the gender gap by these characteristics.

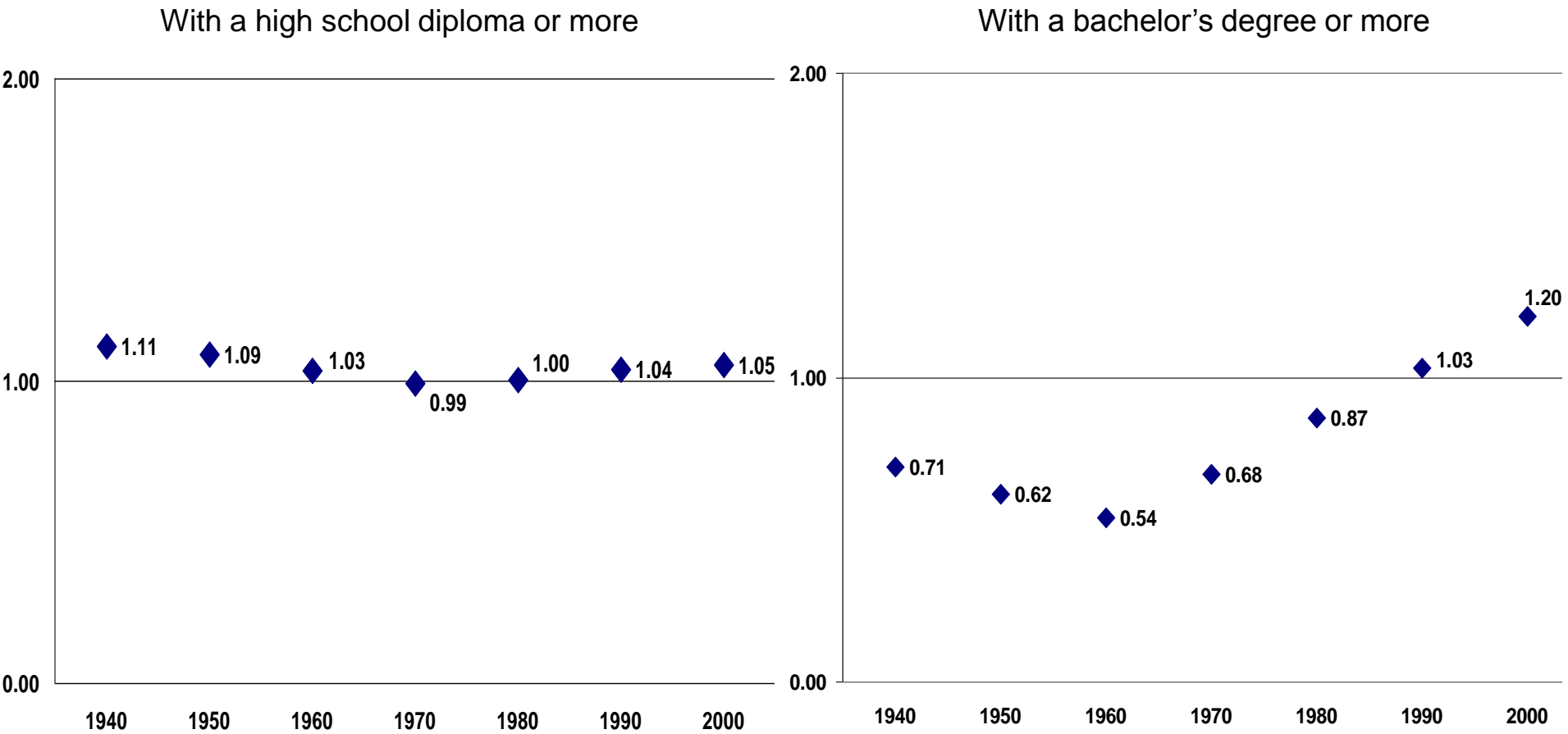
# Figure 1: Historical Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over: 1940 to 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census of population, 1940 to 2000.

How does this gender gap in educational attainment vary across the diverse US population?

# Figure 2: Historical Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 to 29 Years: 1940 to 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census of population, 1940 to 2000.

# Methods

Compute the ratio of the percentage of women to the percentage of men for two attainment levels: high school & bachelor's degree.

Compare this ratio across: age, race, Hispanic origin, nativity, place of birth, and year of entry.

Assess whether there are variations in the gender gap based on these demographic characteristics.

## **Data - 2005 American Community Survey (ACS)**

Annual survey of approximately 3 million households

Detailed social, housing, economic, and demographic data for geographic areas with populations of 65,000+

Most current source of demographic data on this scale

# Variables

## Race and Hispanic Origin

Data are shown for four race groups and by Hispanic origin. The groups are:

- Non-Hispanic White
- Non-Hispanic Black
- Non-Hispanic Asian
- Non-Hispanic Other (includes those who selected more than one race)
- Hispanic (may be of any race)

## Nativity

Information on place of birth and citizenship status are used to divide the native and foreign-born populations.

The native population includes anyone who was a U.S. citizen at birth. It also includes those born in the U.S., Puerto Rico, American

Samoa, Guam, the Northern Marianas, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as those born abroad of at least one American (U.S. citizen) parent.

The foreign-born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes respondents who indicated they were a U.S. citizen by naturalization or not a U.S. citizen.

## **Place of Birth**

In the ACS, respondents born outside the U.S. are asked to report their place of birth according to current international boundaries.

The foreign-born population is grouped into six world regions based on their reported place of birth.

- Latin America
- Africa
- Asia
- Europe

- Northern America
- Other (includes Oceania and those born at sea)

## **Educational Attainment**

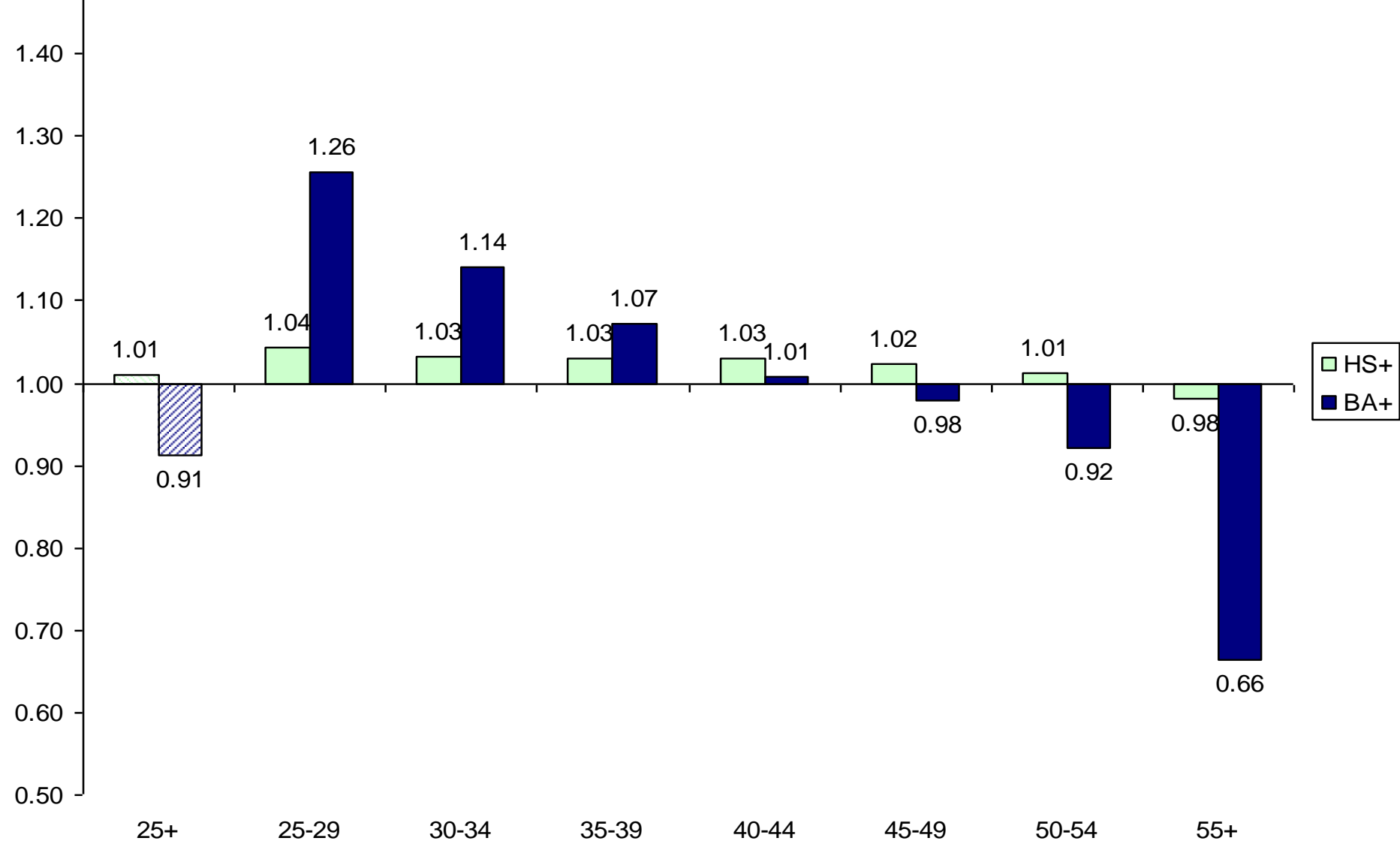
Highest degree or level of schooling completed:

**High school graduate or higher** – this category includes people whose highest degree was a high school diploma or its equivalent; people who attended college, but did not receive a degree; and people who received an associate's, bachelor's, master's, or professional or doctorate degree. People who reported completing the 12<sup>th</sup> grade but not receiving a diploma are not included.

**Bachelor's degree or higher** – this category includes people whose highest degree was a bachelor's, master's, or professional or doctorate degree.



# Figure 3: Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment and Age for the Population 25 Years and Over: 2005

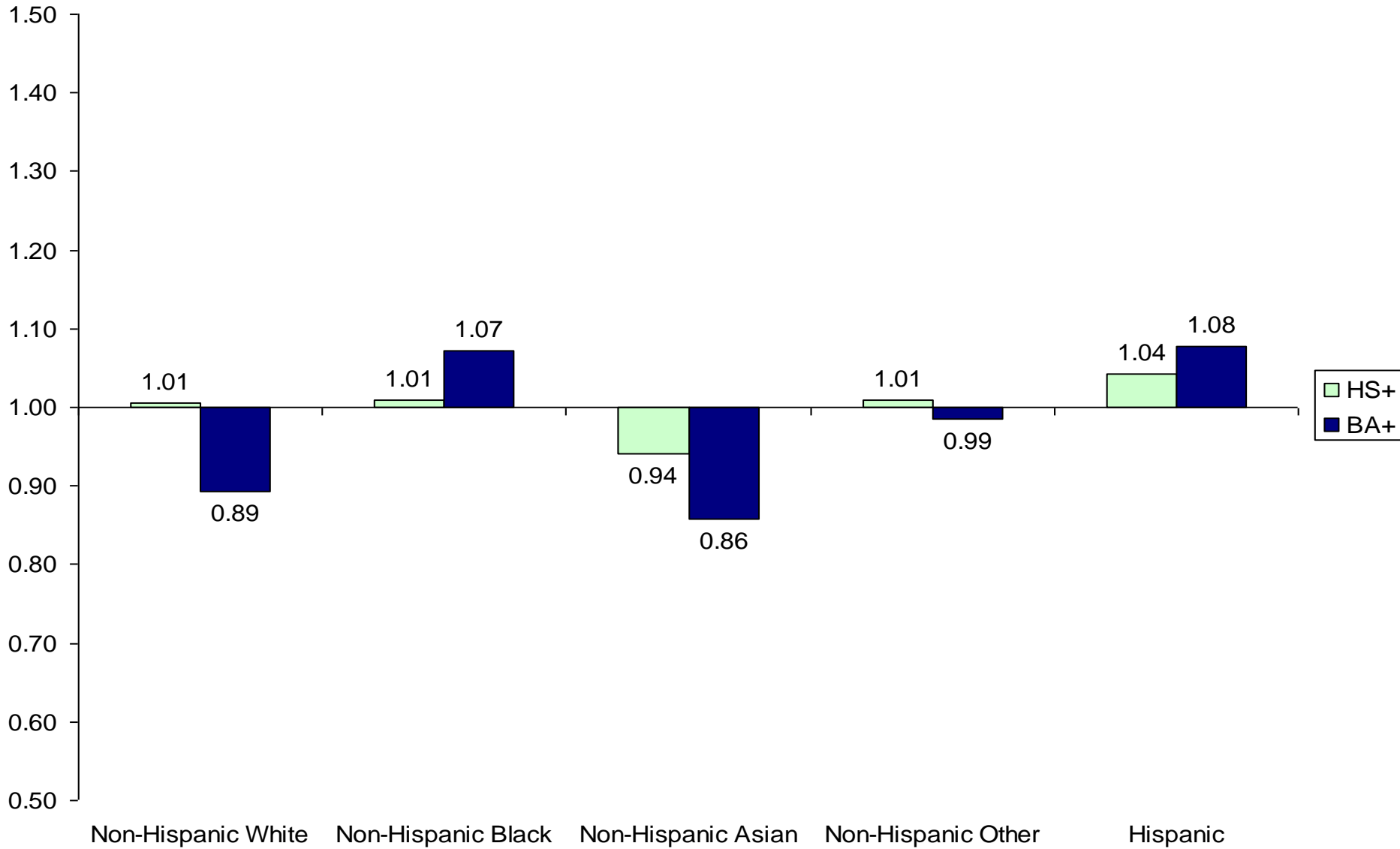


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

## Findings – Differences by age

- For the population 25 years and over, the gender gap in high school attainment was smaller than the gap in bachelor's degree attainment. A larger proportion of women had a high school degree, while a lower proportion of women completed a bachelor's degree compared with men.
- The gender gap in bachelor's degree attainment varied by age. The gap was largest for the 55 and over population, with a smaller proportion of women obtaining a BA relative to men. The gap for young adults (25 to 29 years) showed a higher proportion of women with a BA compared to men.

# Figure 4: Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the Population 25 Years and Over: 2005

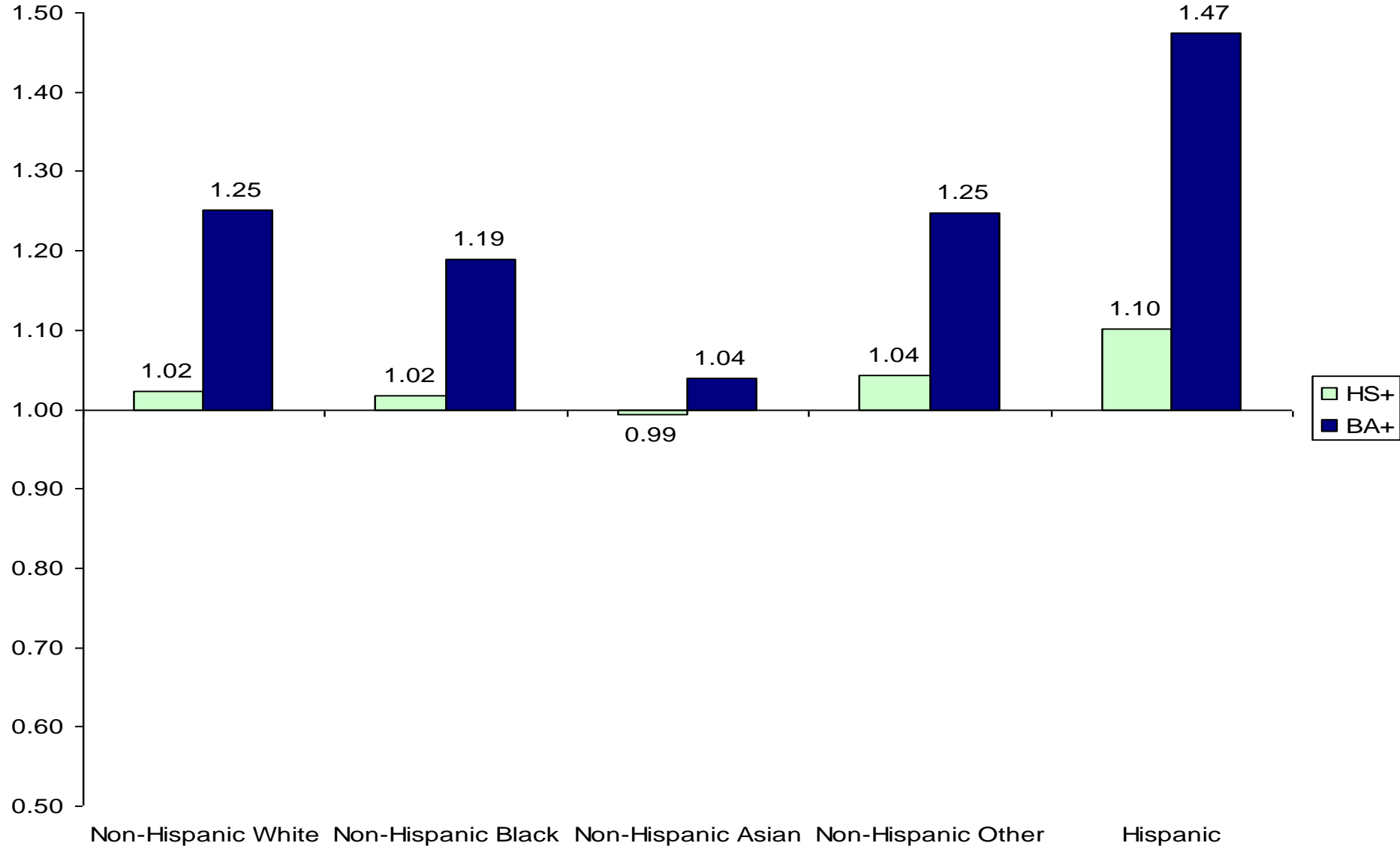


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

# Findings – Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin

- The gender gap for both high school and bachelor's degree attainment varied by race and Hispanic origin.
- The largest gap in both levels of attainment existed for Non-Hispanic Asian women, who had lower attainment compared to their male counterparts.
- Non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics had the highest ratio of women's bachelor's degree attainment to men's.

# Figure 5: Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the Population 25 to 29 Years: 2005

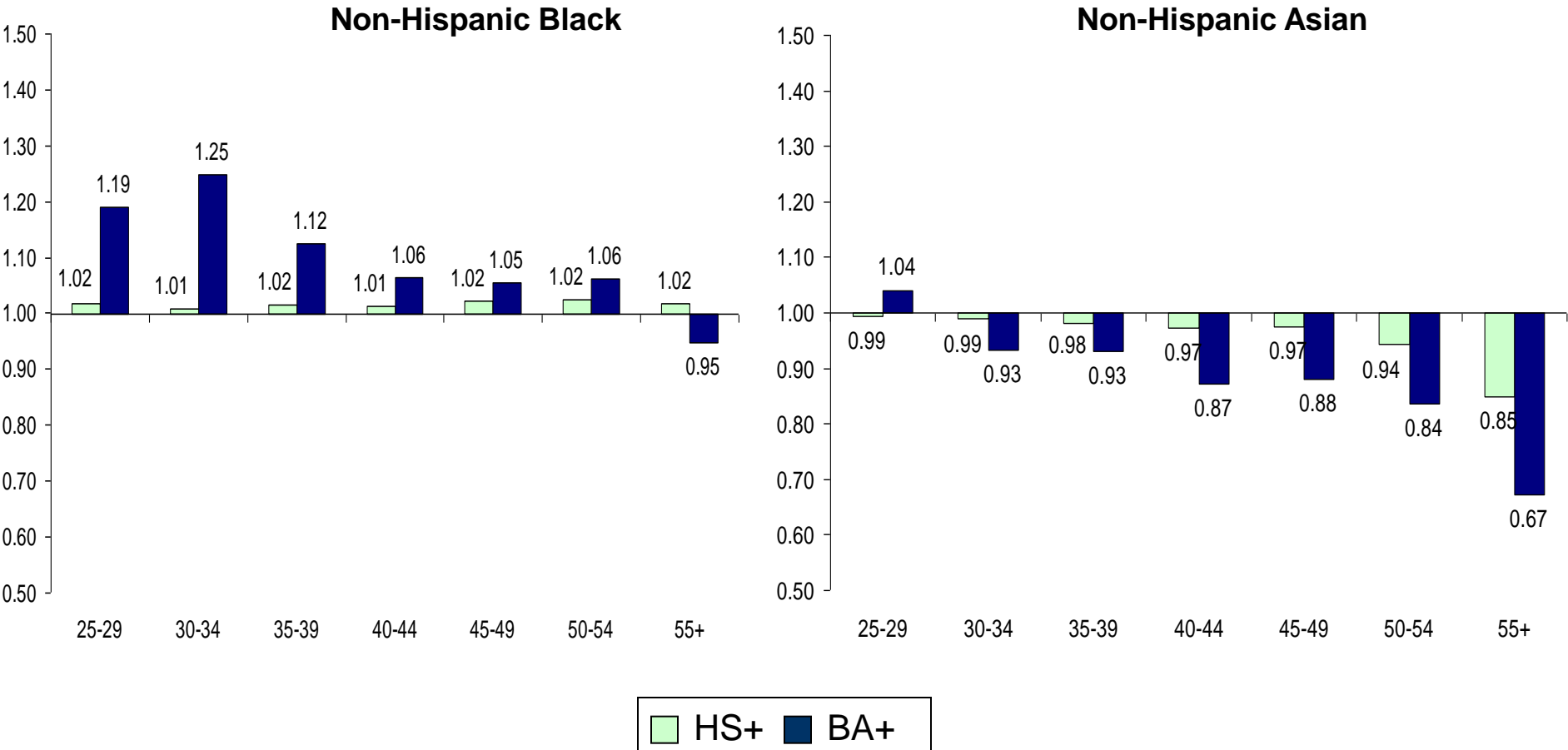


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

# Findings – Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin for Young Adults

- For young adults, 25 to 29 years, the gender gap was more pronounced at the bachelor's degree level.
- Across all race/Hispanic origin groups age 25 to 29, a higher proportion of women had a BA compared to men.
- The gap in BA attainment was highest for Hispanic women and lowest for non-Hispanic Asian women.

# Figure 6: Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment and Age for the Population 25 Years and Over: 2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

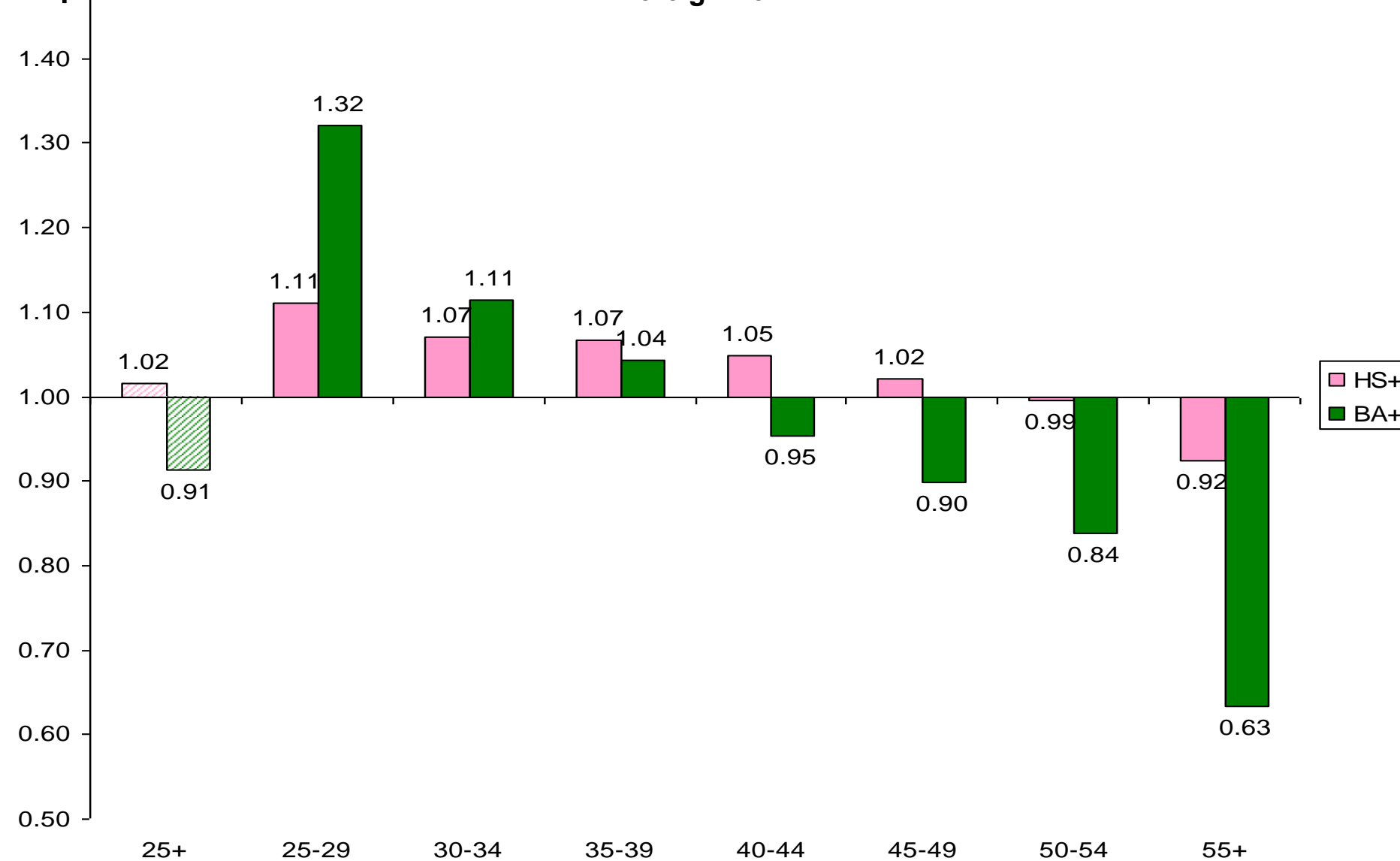
# Findings – Differences by Age and Race and Hispanic Origin

These additional charts reveal the age patterns of the gender gap in educational attainment by race/Hispanic origin.

- The largest gap in attainment for non-Hispanic Blacks was in bachelor's degree attainment for the 30-34 year age group (though not statistically different from the 25-29 year age group), where a larger proportion of women had a BA relative to men.
- For non-Hispanic Blacks, there was little variation in the gender gap at the high school level.
- Conversely, the largest gap for both attainment levels for non-Hispanic Asians was for those 55 years and over, where a smaller proportion of women had a high school or a bachelor's degree relative to men.

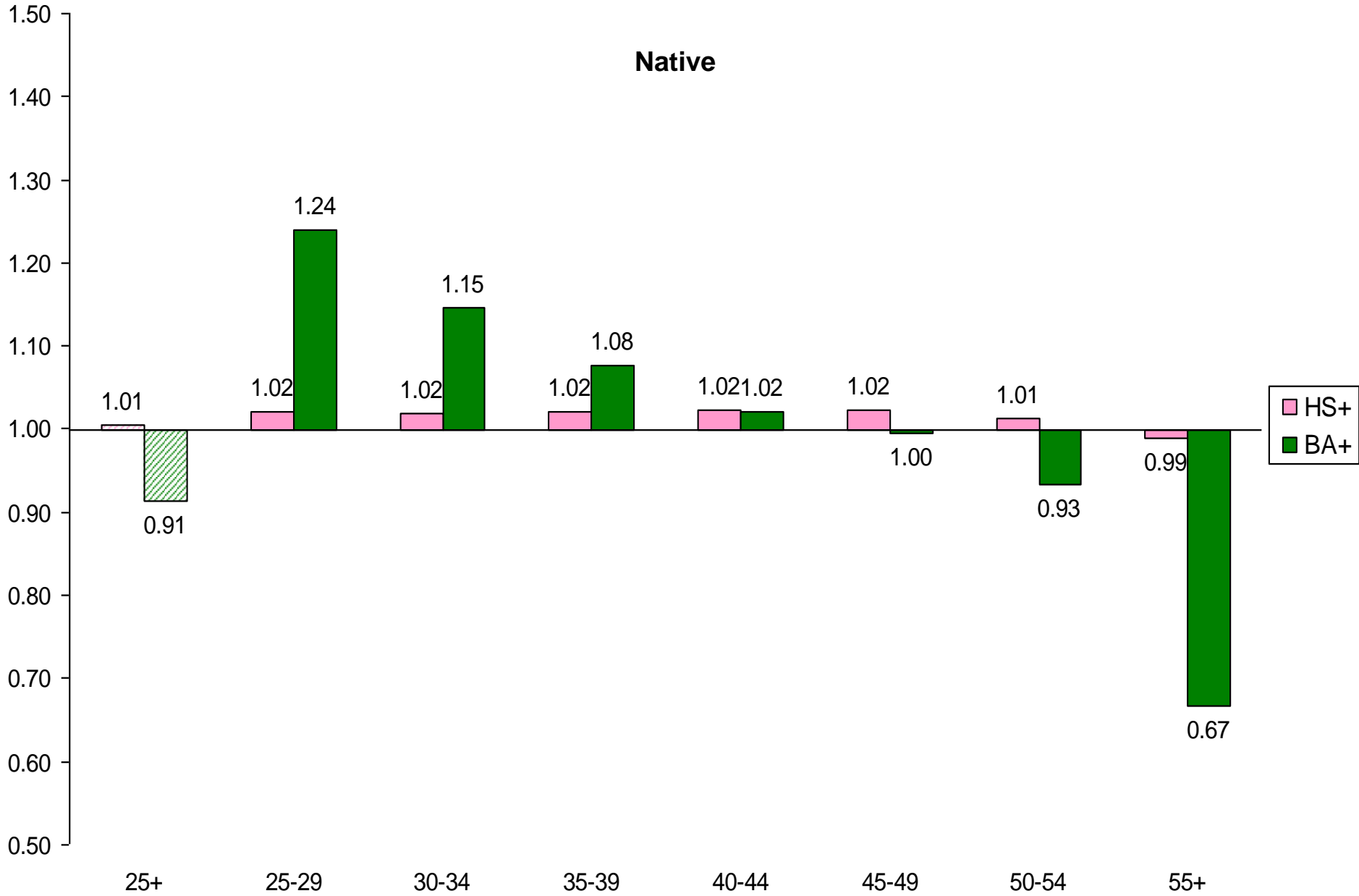


# Figure 7: Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment, Age, and Nativity for the Population 25 Years and Over: 2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

# Native

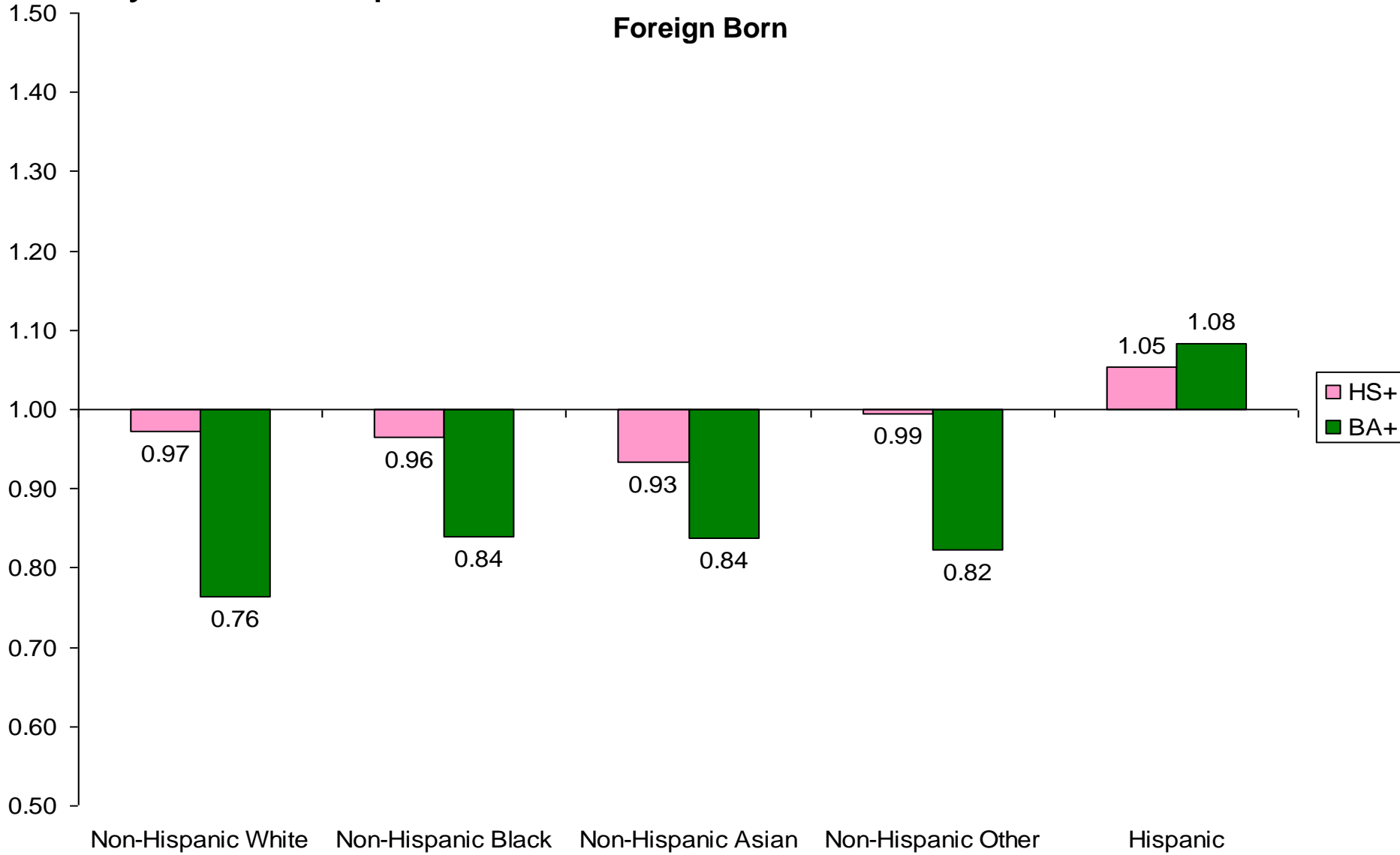


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

# Findings – Differences by Nativity

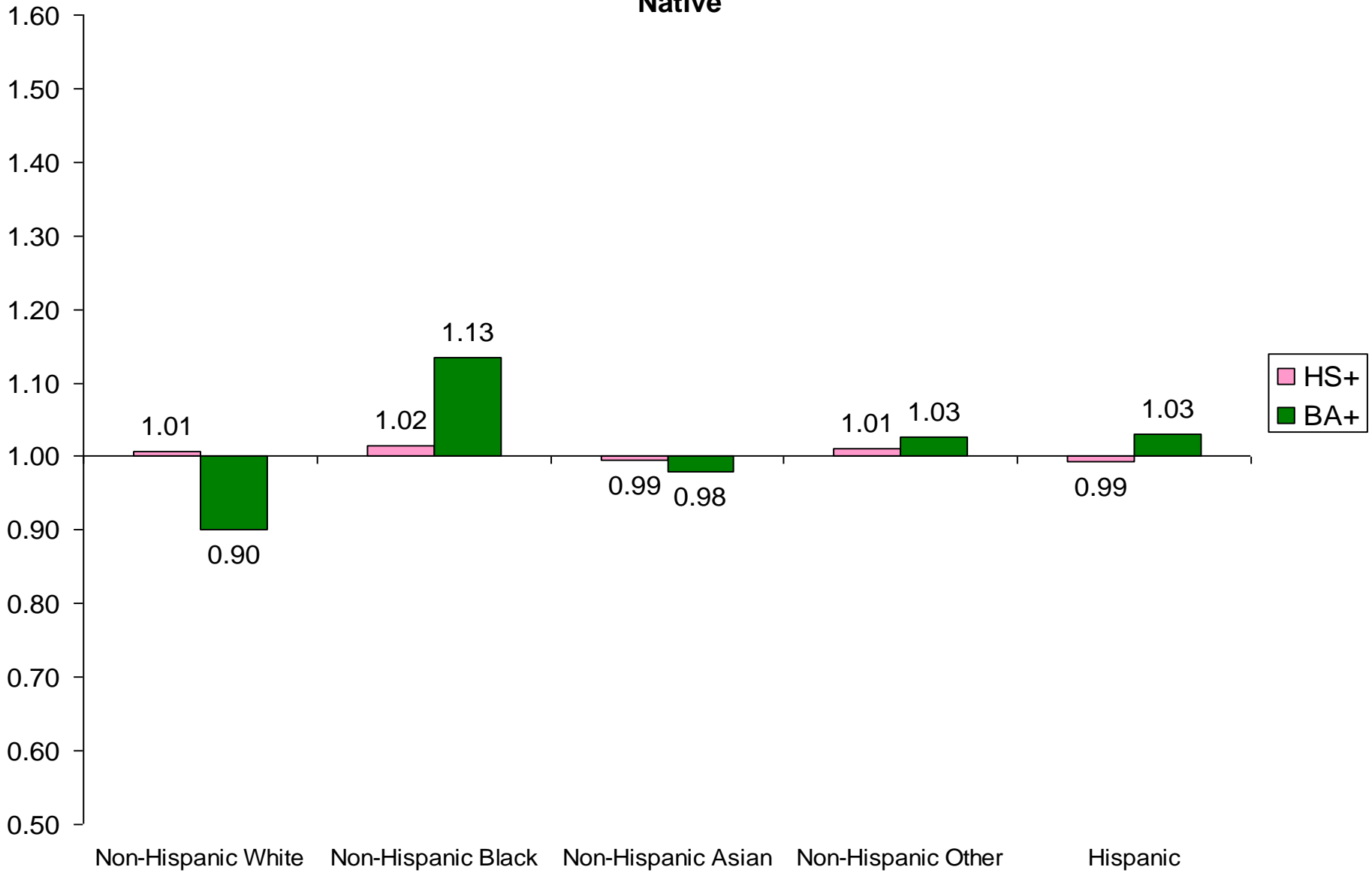
- The age pattern in the gender gap for attainment was similar for the native and foreign-born populations. The ratios for the population 25 and over were nearly identical at the bachelor's degree level.
- A lower proportion of both native and foreign-born women 25 years and over had a bachelor's degree compared to their male counterparts.
- The largest gender gaps in attainment for the native and foreign-born populations existed at the bachelor's degree level. In the younger age groups, women had higher attainment relative to men. While in older age groups, men had higher attainment than women.

# Figure 8: Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Nativity for the Population 25 Years and Over: 2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

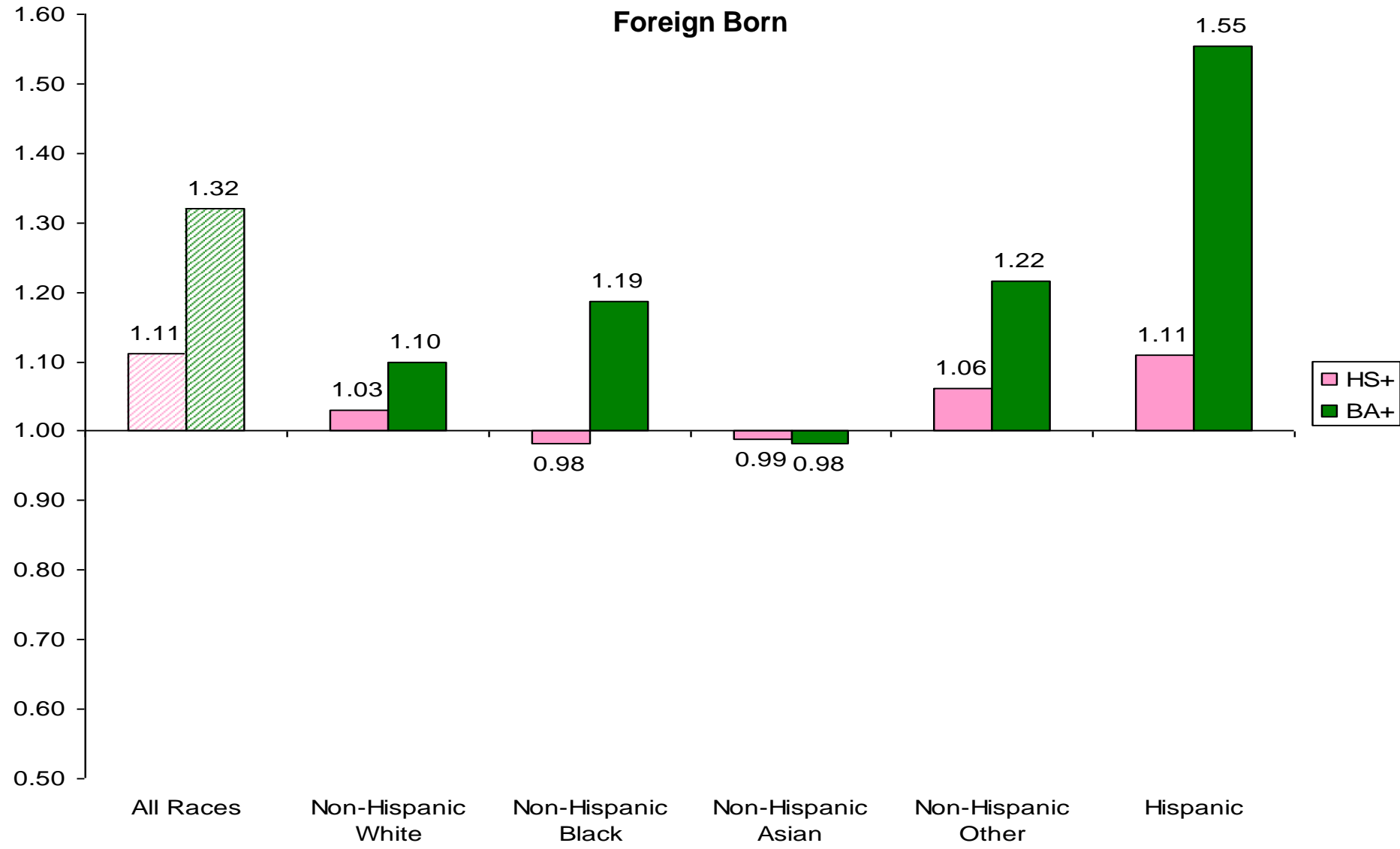
# Native



# Findings – Differences by Nativity, Race, and Hispanic Origin

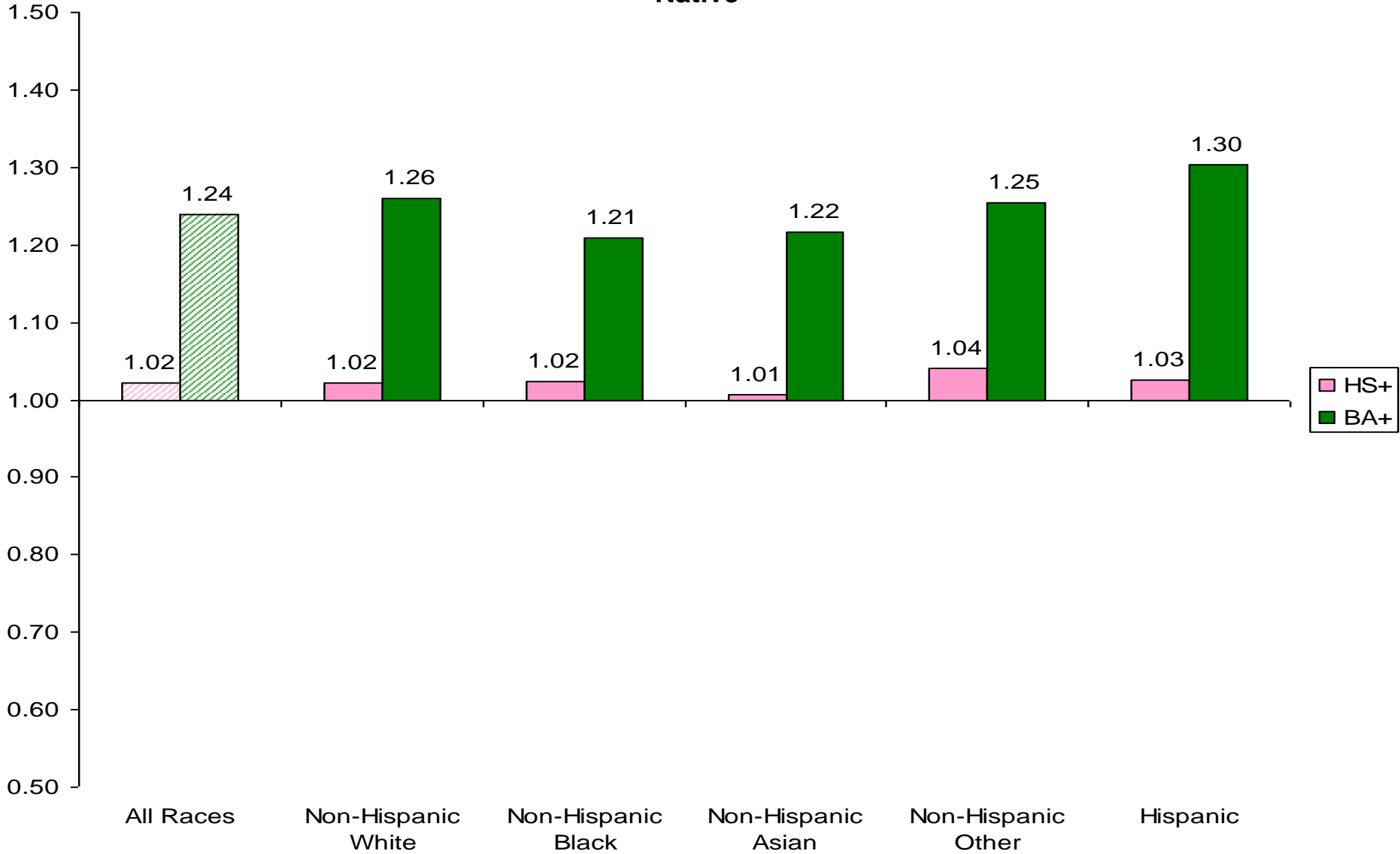
- The gender gap in attainment by race/Hispanic origin varied by nativity.
- Among the foreign born, non-Hispanic Whites had the largest gender gap for bachelor's degree attainment, but Hispanic women were the only group of women who had a higher proportion of bachelor's degree holders compared with their male counterparts.
- There was greater gender parity among the native population by race, particularly for high school attainment.
- Among natives, non-Hispanic Blacks had the highest gender gap in bachelor's degree attainment, with a higher percentage of women holding bachelor's degrees. The opposite occurred for non-Hispanic White women.

# Figure 9: Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Nativity for the Population 25 to 29 Years: 2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

# Native



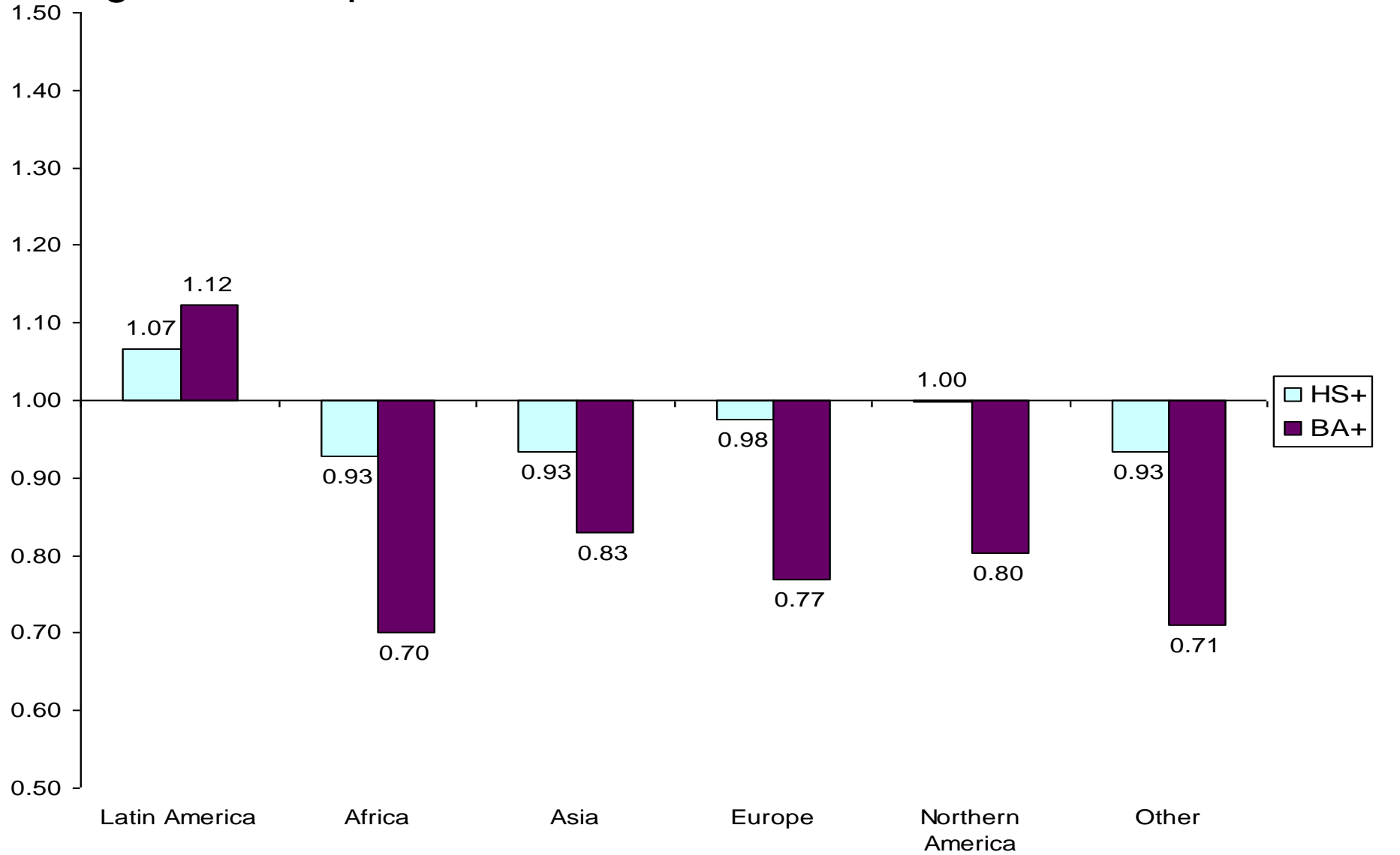
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.



# Findings – Differences by Nativity, Race, and Hispanic Origin for Young Adults

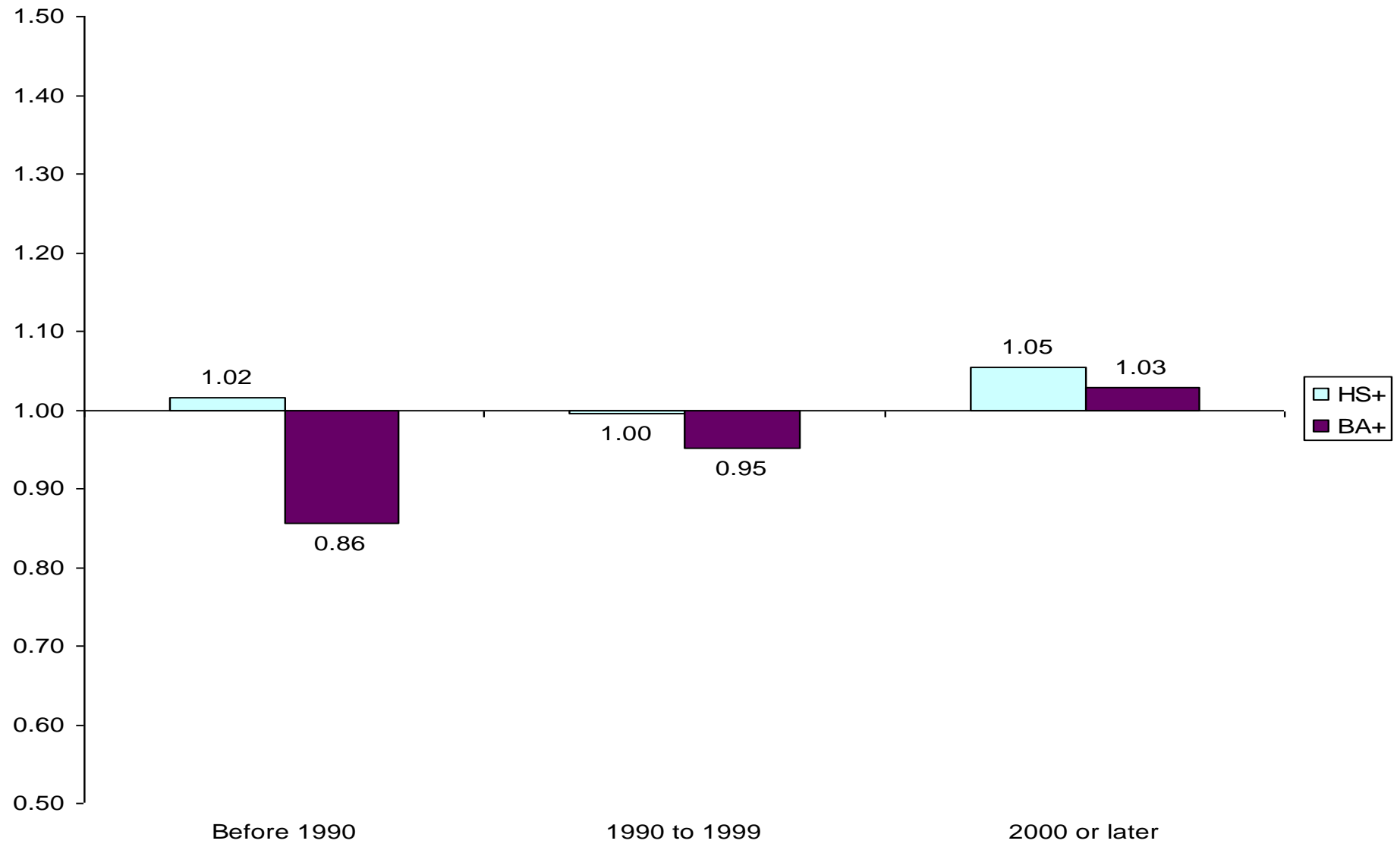
- Among young adults, 25 to 29 years, there was race variation in the gender gap at each attainment level between the foreign born and natives.
- The ratio of the proportion of foreign-born women to the proportion of foreign-born men with a BA ranged from 0.98 for non-Hispanic Asians to 1.55 for Hispanics.
- There were no significant differences at the bachelor's degree level by race for natives, as the gap ranged from 1.21 for non-Hispanic Blacks to 1.30 for Hispanics.
- At the high school level, there was almost no difference by race/Hispanic origin for natives.

# Figure 10: Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment and Region of Origin for the Foreign-Born Population 25 Years and Over: 2005



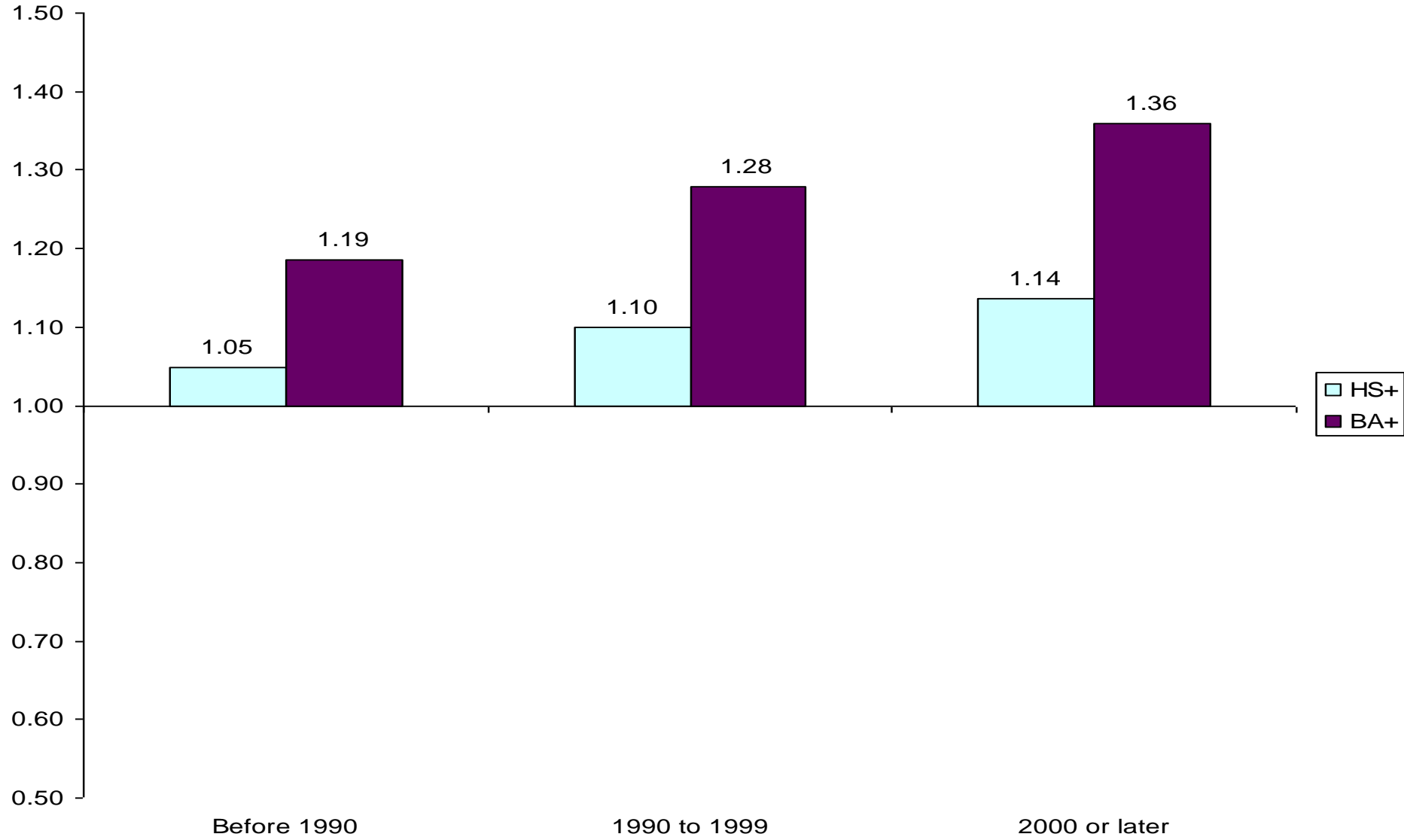
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

Figure 11: Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment and Year of Entry to the U.S. for the Foreign-Born Population 25 Years and Over: 2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

# Figure 12: Ratio of the Percentage of Women to the Percentage of Men by Educational Attainment and Year of Entry to the U.S. for the Foreign-Born Population 25 to 29 Years: 2005



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.

# Findings – Differences by Place of Birth and Year of Entry

- A larger proportion of women from Latin America had a high school diploma compared to men. Women from Latin America were also the only group to have a larger proportion of bachelor's degree attainment compared to men.
- The educational attainment gap varied by year of entry. At the high school level, the group that immigrated in 2000 or later had the largest gender gap with women having a larger proportion of high school diplomas.

# Findings – Differences by Place of Birth and Year of Entry (Cont'd)

- At the bachelor's degree level, the group that immigrated before 1990 had the largest gender gap with men having a larger proportion of BAs. However, for those who immigrated in 2000 or later, women had a higher proportion of BAs.
- In every year of entry category for the 25 to 29 population, women's educational attainment was significantly higher than men's at each attainment level. The smallest gap was at the high school level for those who immigrated prior to 1990.

# Conclusions

- A single statistic on the gender gap in education obscures the heterogeneity of the educational experiences in the U.S. population.
- At the bachelor's degree level, women across many segments of the population appear to have an advantage relative to men. This is particularly true for younger generations of women and for most race/Hispanic origin groups. The most striking finding is the consistent gender gaps across race/Hispanic origin for native women aged 25 to 29 years.
- Race, Hispanic origin, nativity, and age have an interactive effect on the gender gap in education. Immigration patterns, cohort effects, and school factors likely contribute to a complex pattern of gender differences in educational attainment in the U.S. population.

# Contact Information

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