



# ***A Walk Through Time***

## **Changes in the American Commute**



**U.S. Census and the  
National Household Travel Survey**

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# In the last forty years there's been:

- Changes in family structure and increase in vehicle availability
- Changes in the working population
- Increases in private vehicle use and significant increases in commute time
- Growth in non-work travel changing the landscape of our peak periods—A trend expected to continue

# Changing Family Patterns

In 1960 61% of the households had:

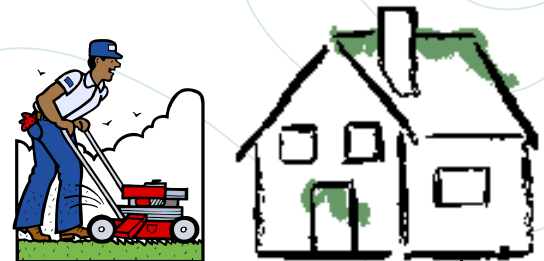
- a father working outside the home,
- a homemaker mother, and
- three children



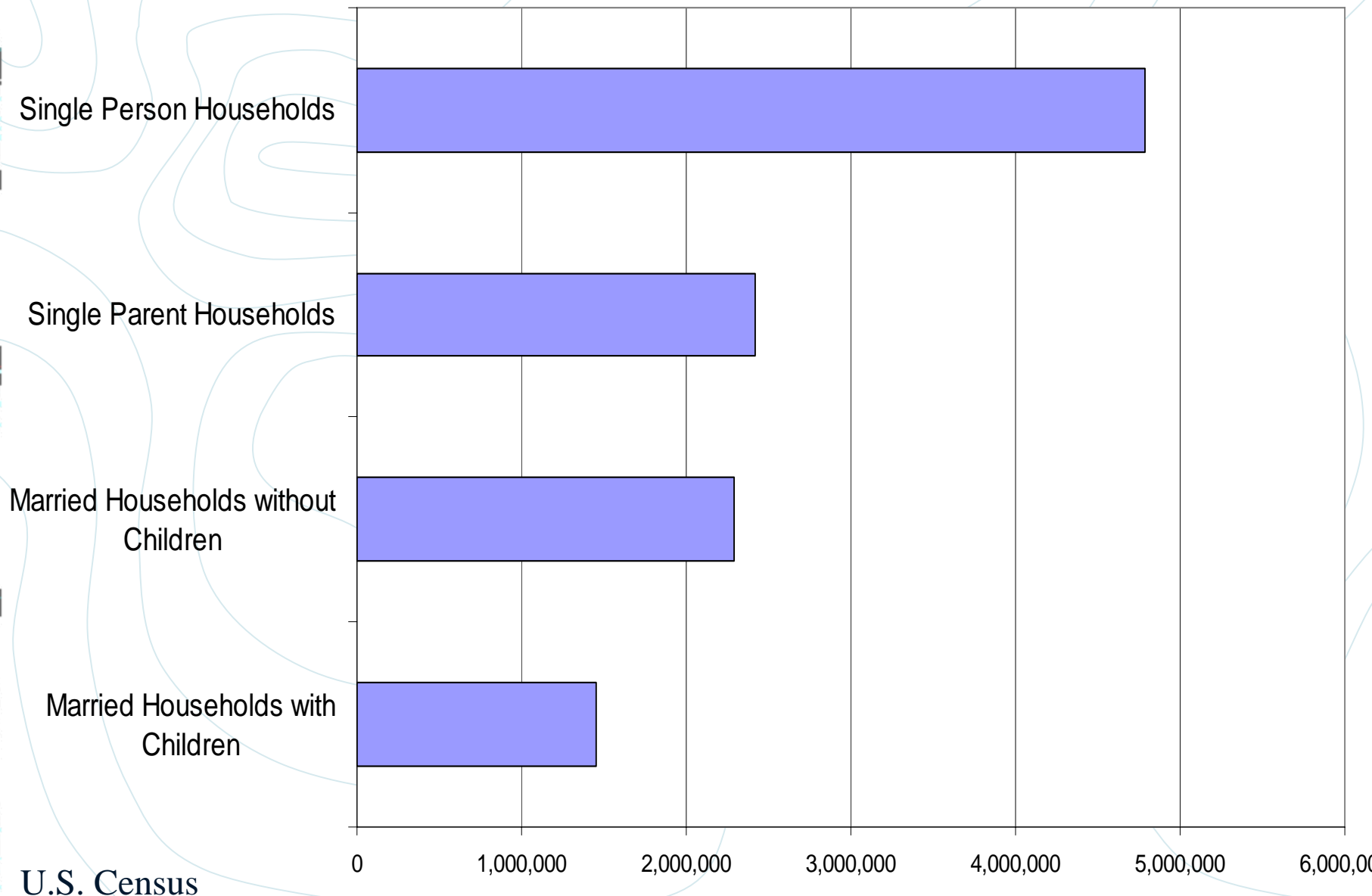
U.S. Census

In 2000 67% of households are **not** nuclear family:

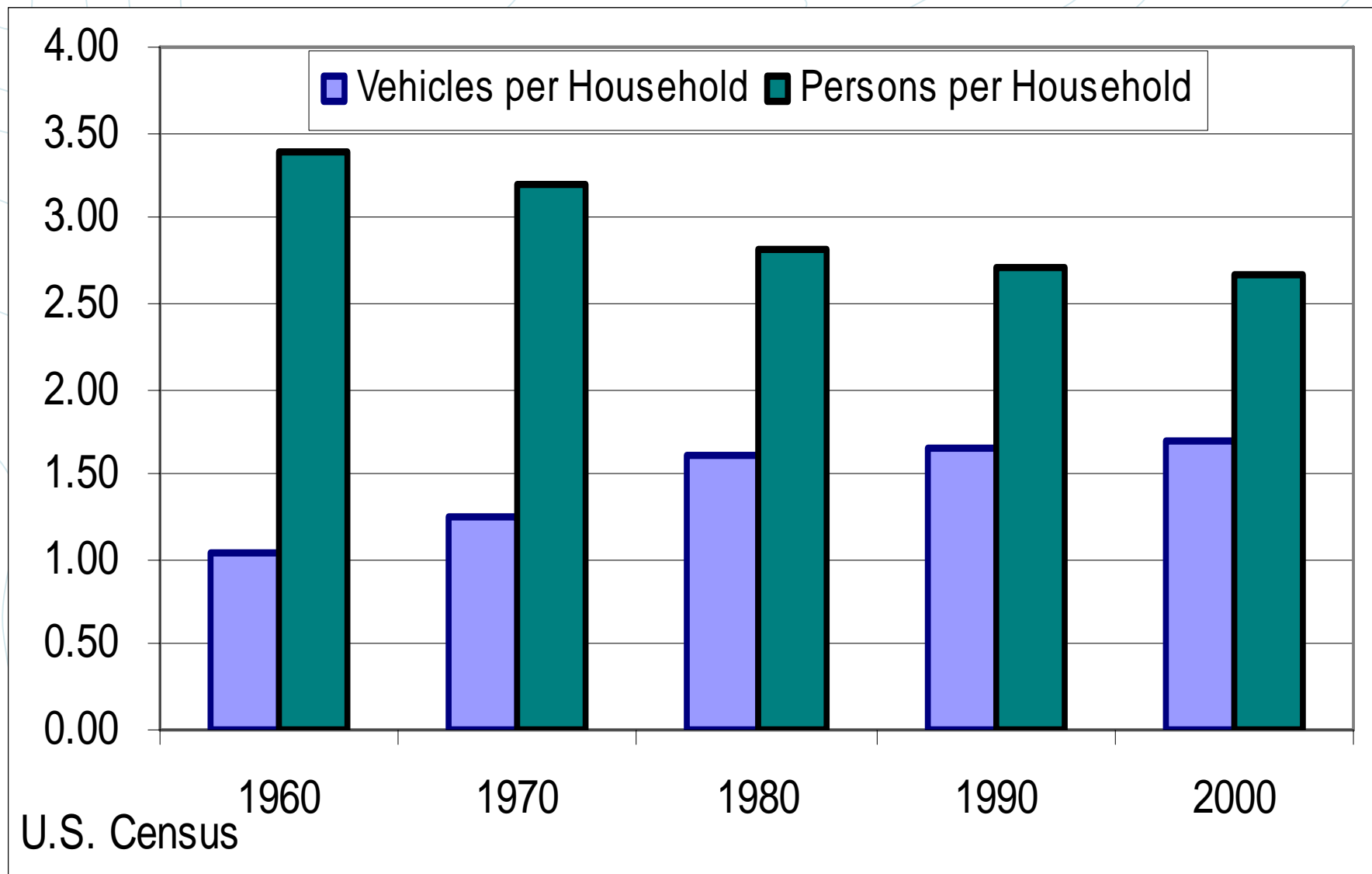
- 28 % are married with no children at home
- 26% are living alone
- 13% are other related or unrelated



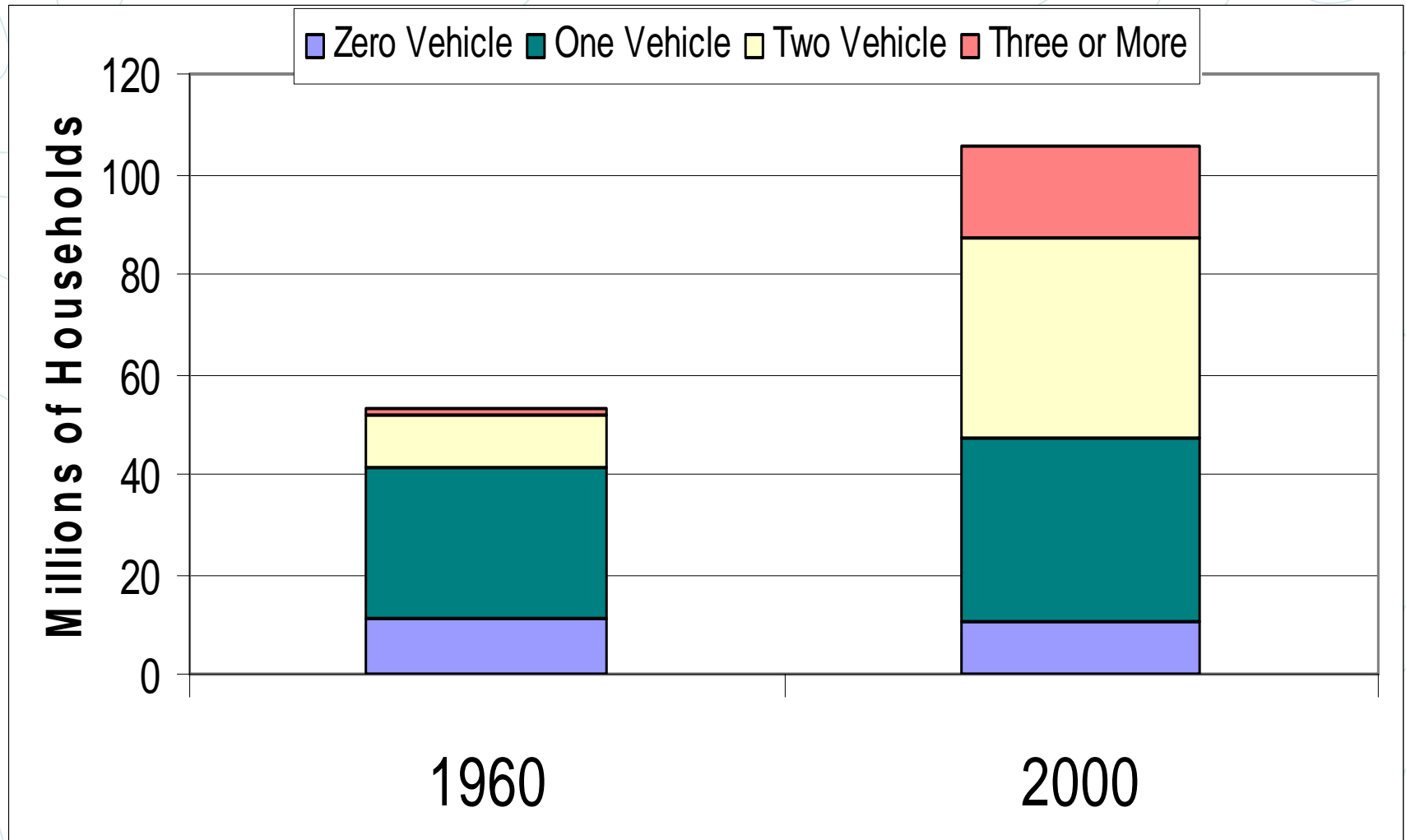
# More single-person households were added than other types...1990 - 2000



# Households are getting smaller with more vehicles...



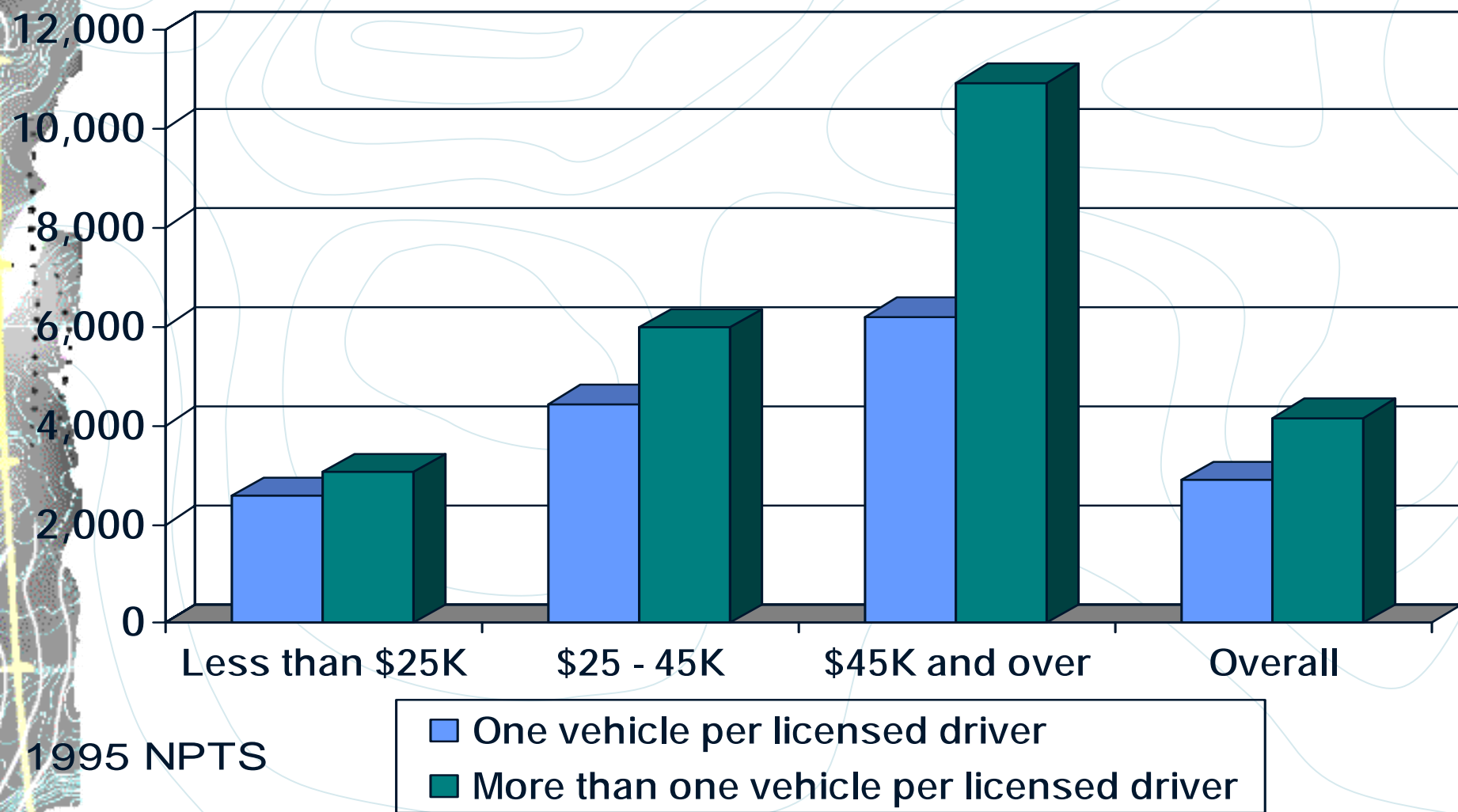
# Many households have multiple vehicles ...



U.S. Census



# Even though you can only drive one car at a time, more vehicles add more miles of travel....



# Changing Workforce



In 1960:

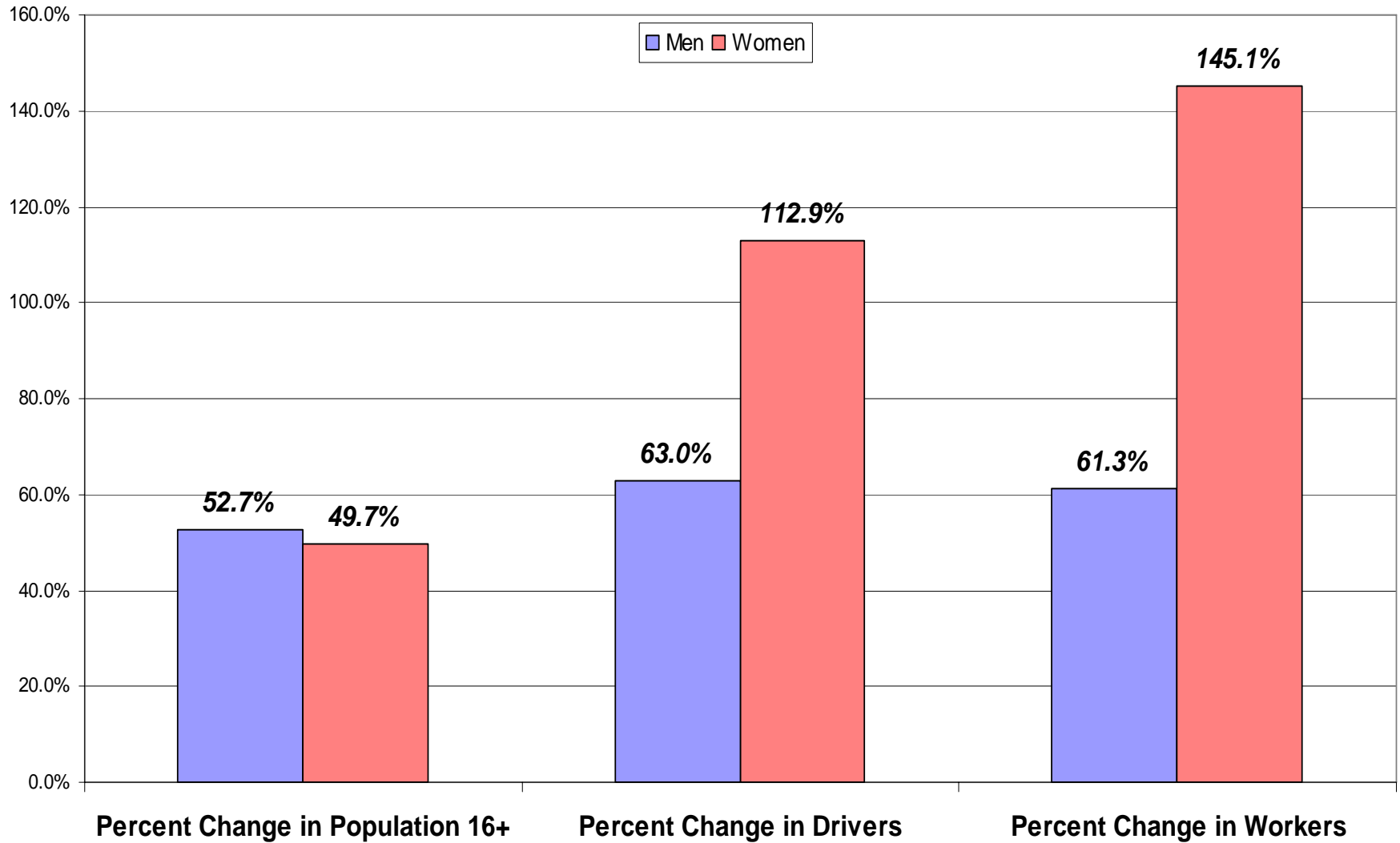
- 38 percent of all women work, but few women with young children go to work
- Majority of families have only one worker

In 2000:

- 61 percent of women work, including two-thirds of women with children under 6.
- Shift to dual-earner families, higher income households, and one vehicle per worker

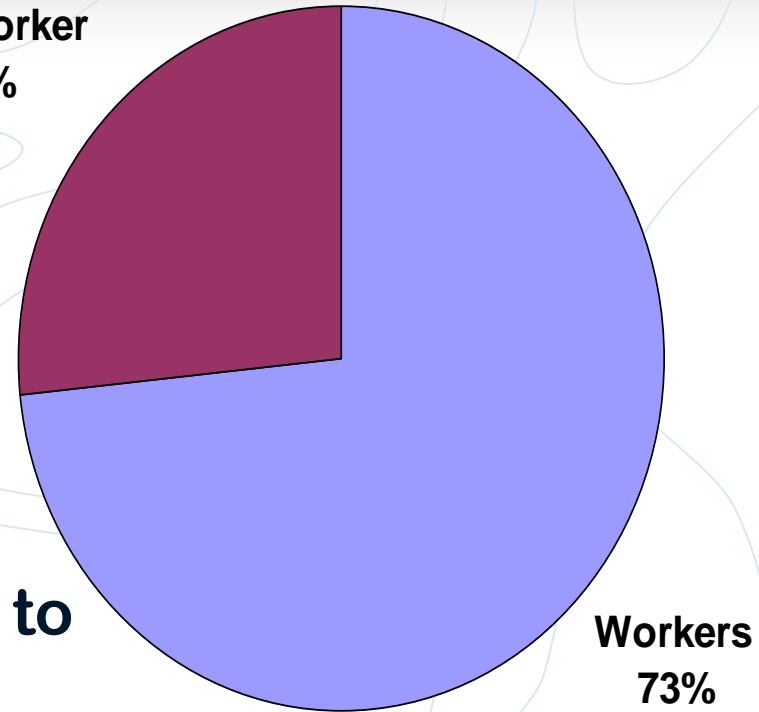


# Change in Population, Workers and Drivers 1969 - 2001





Non Worker  
27%

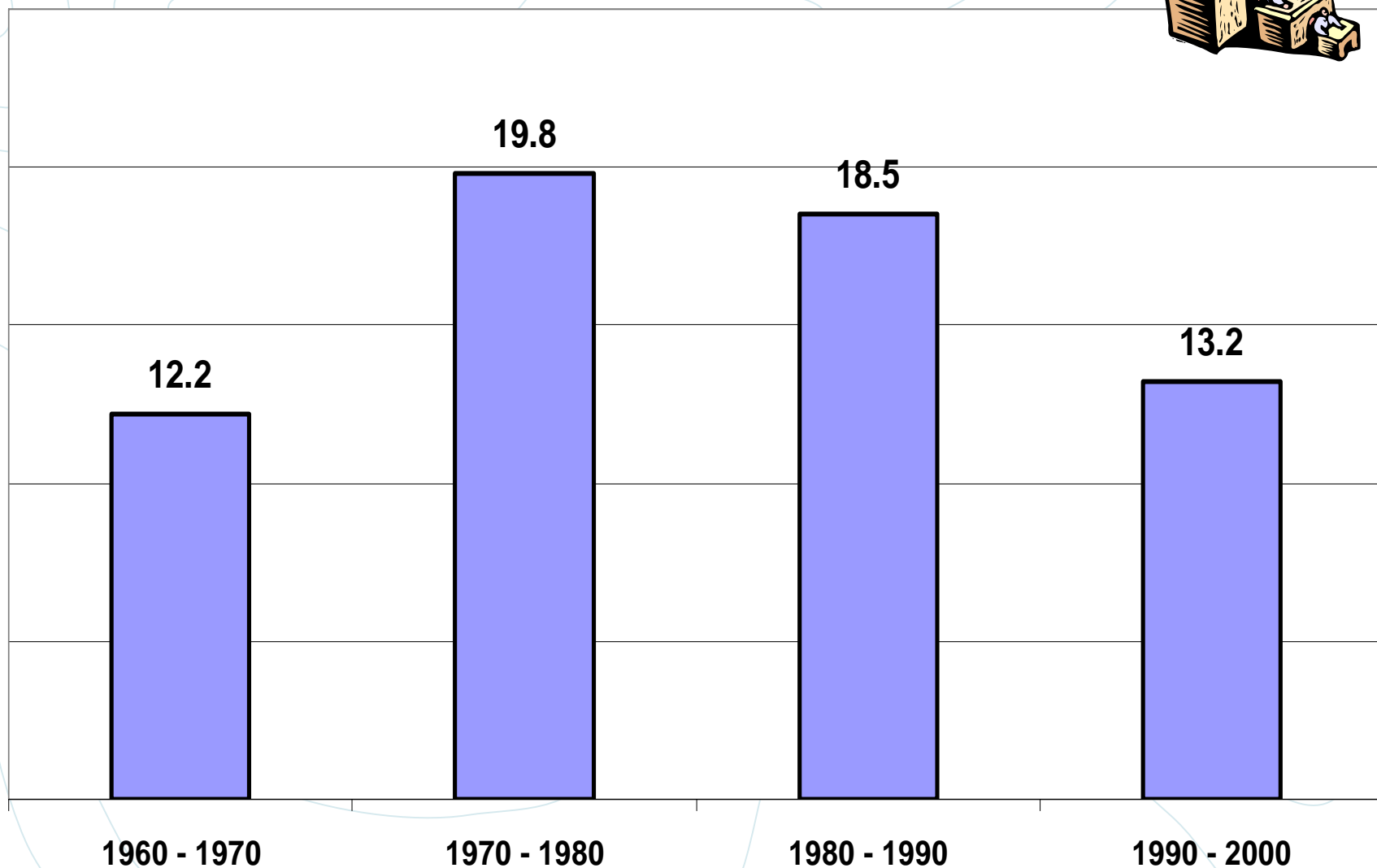
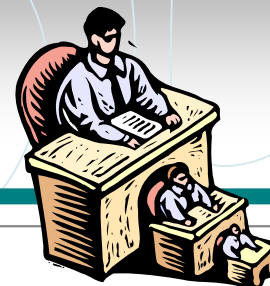


2001 NHTS

- Two-thirds of U.S. adults are workers (67%),
- 145 million workers compared to 71 million non-workers.
- Each worker travels on average 12 miles more per day, or
- 1.74 billion more miles a year than non-workers;
- That is 73 percent of total miles.

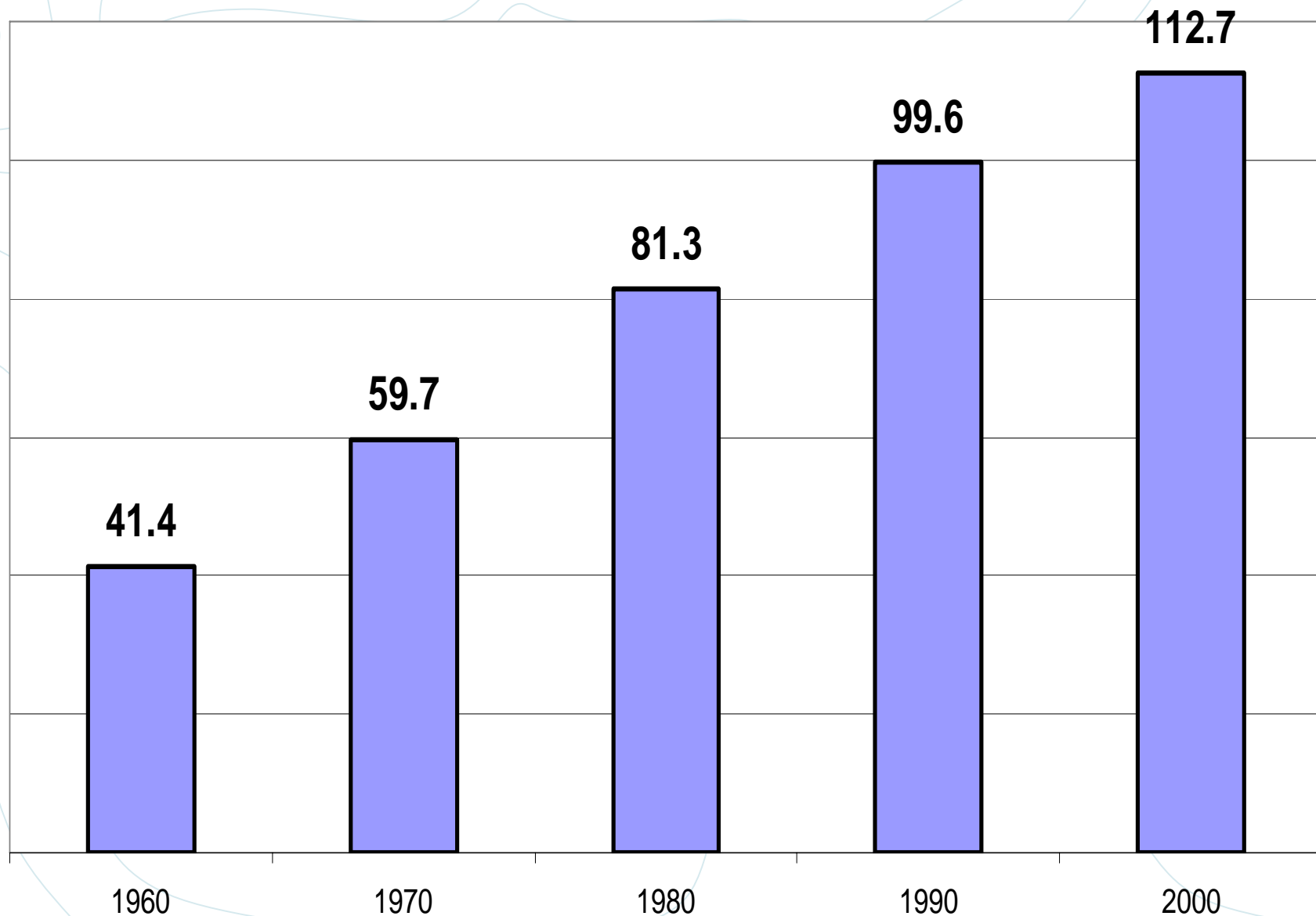
# The worker boom is over...

Millions of added workers per decade--U.S. Census

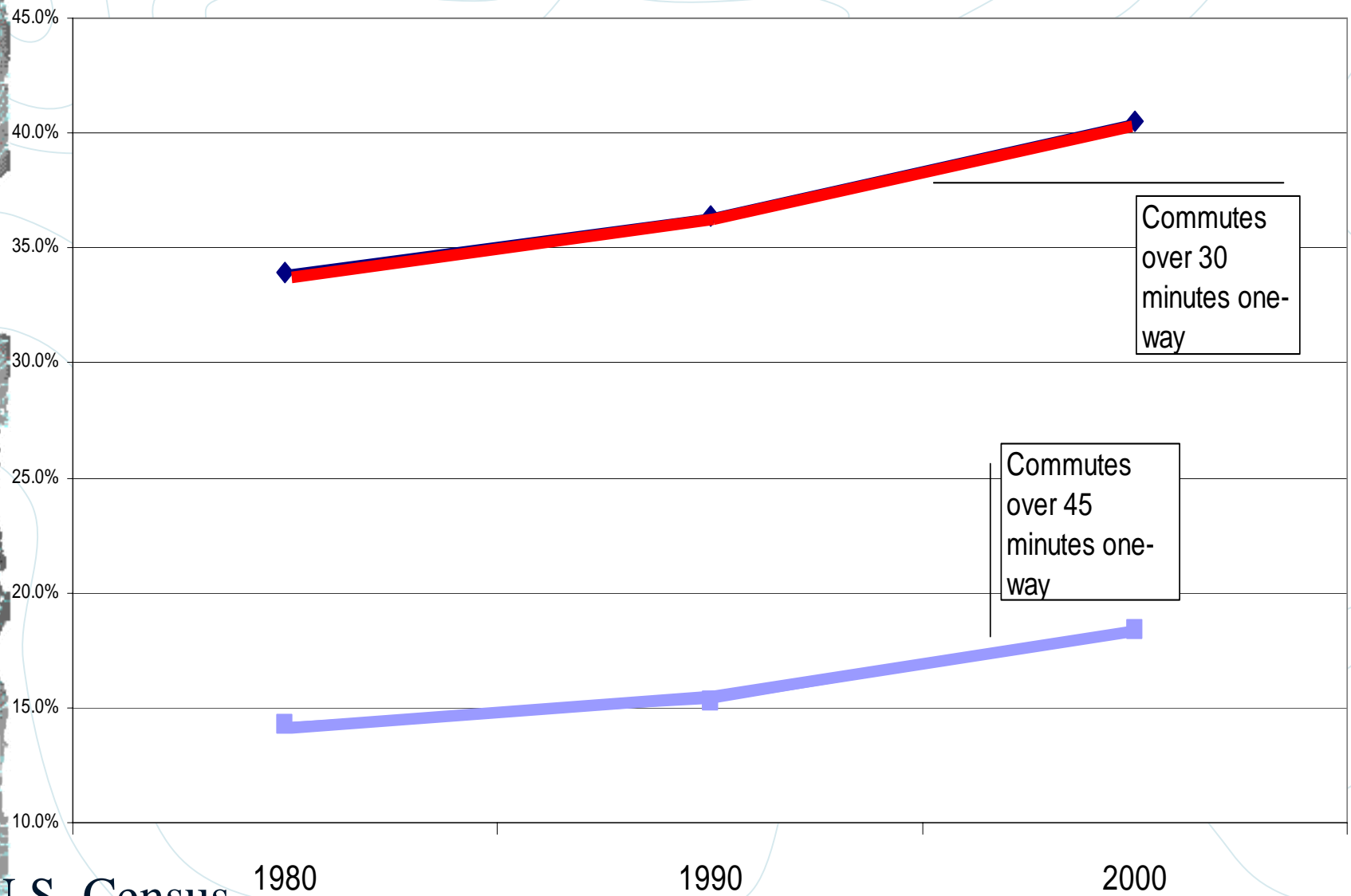


# More workers and more cars on the road...

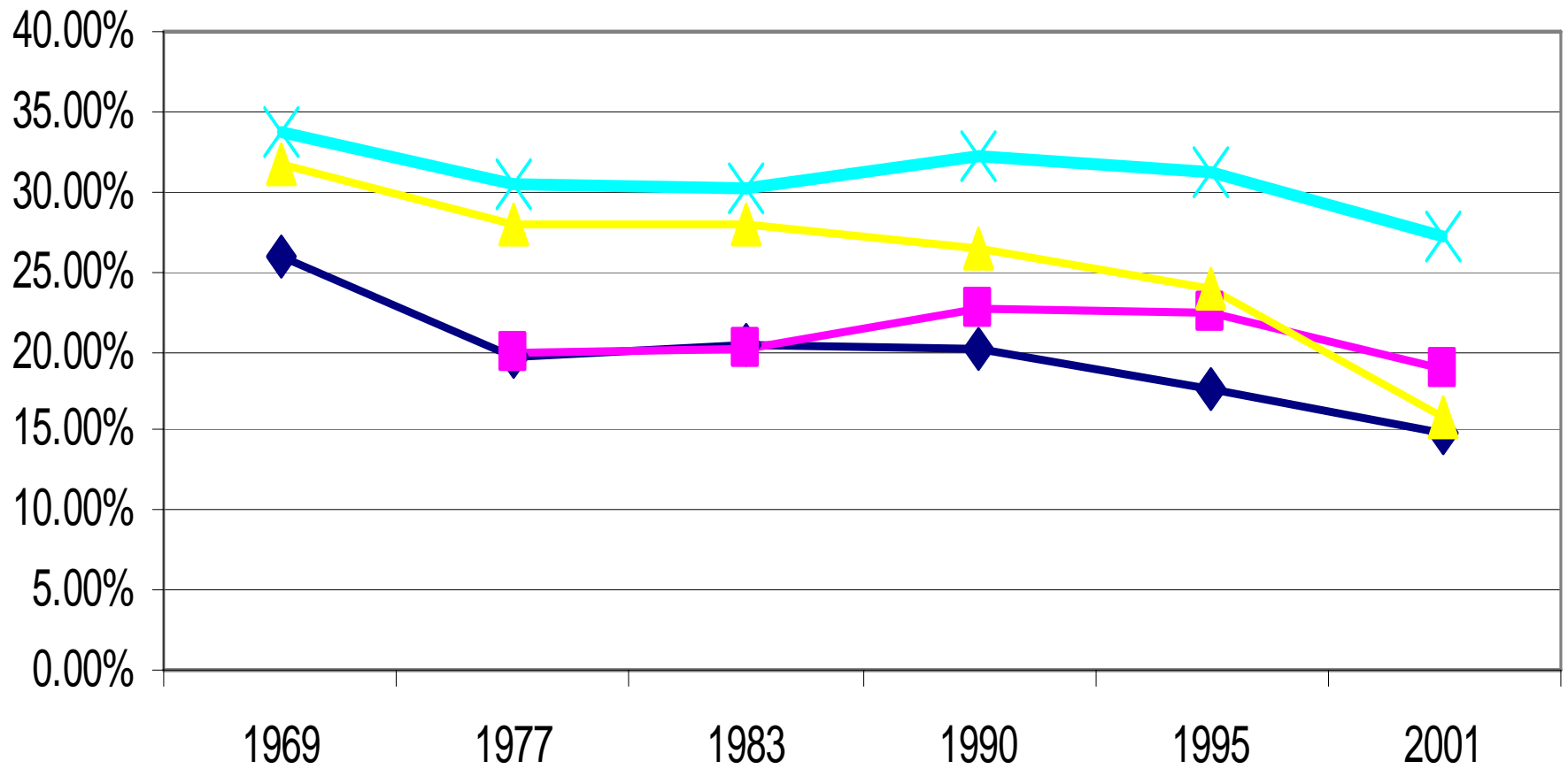
Millions of Workers commuting by POV—U.S. Census



# A Real Shift to Longer Commutes...



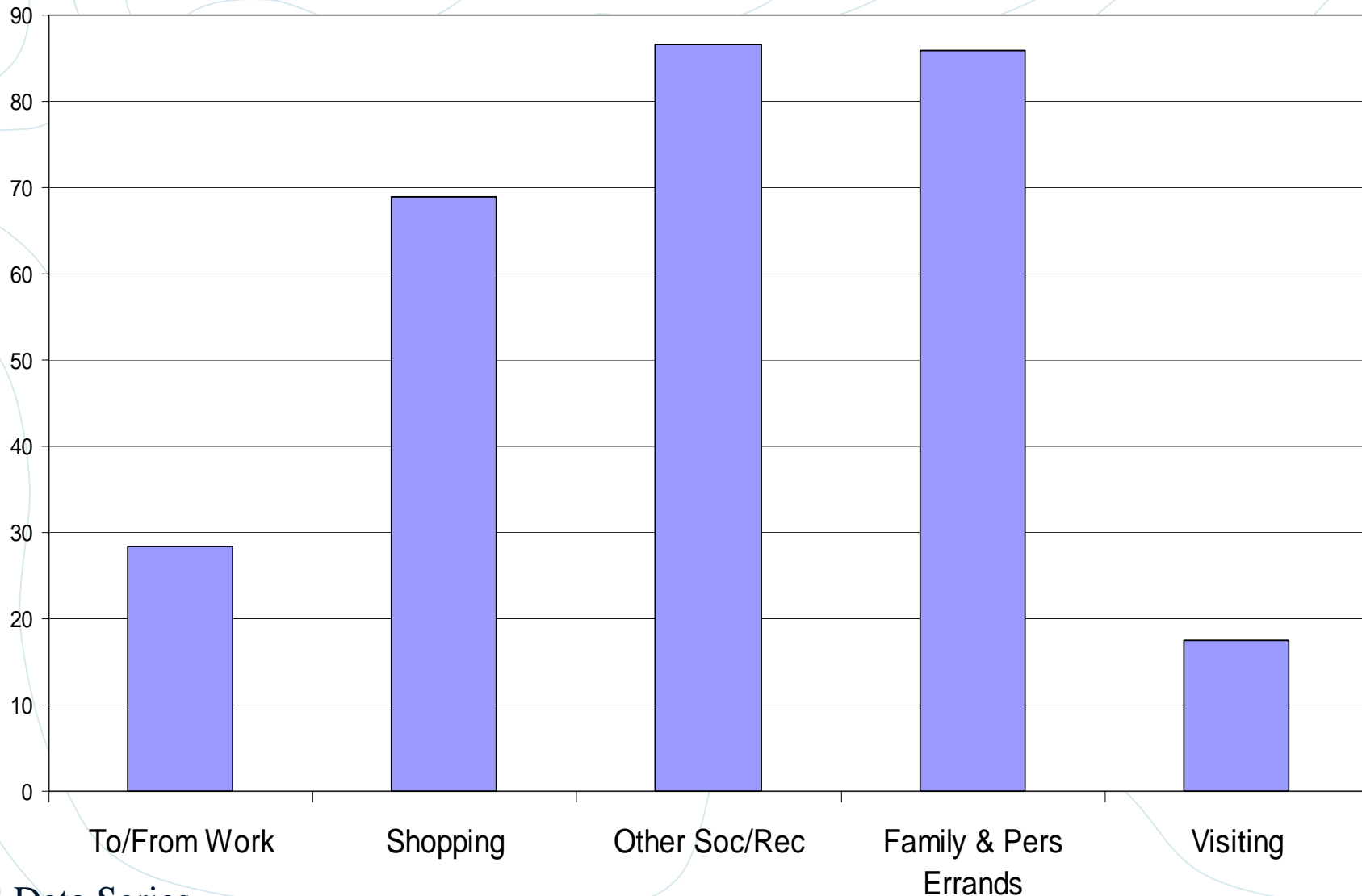
# However, commuting as a proportion of all travel is declining...



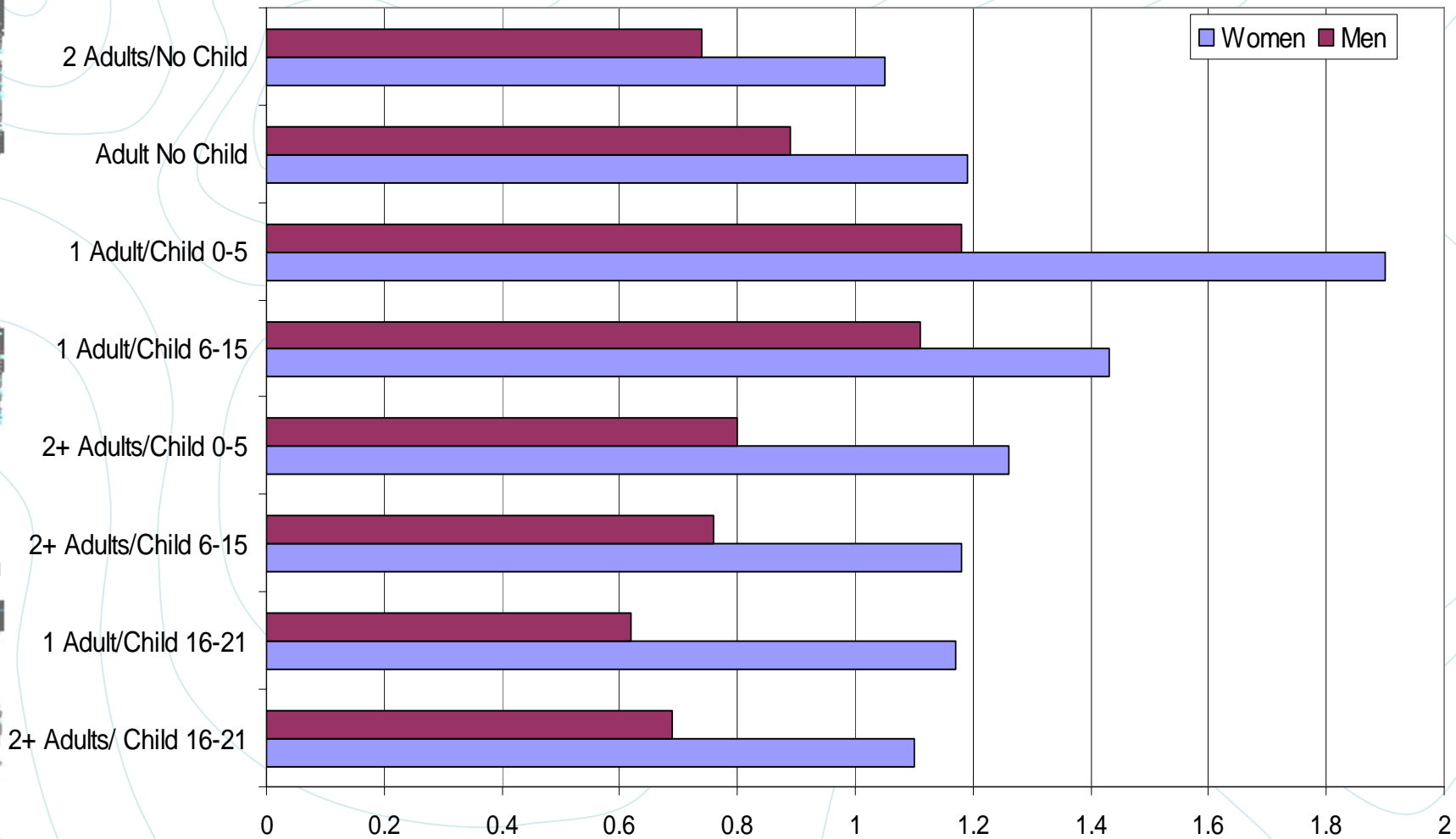
NPTS/NHTS Series

◆ Person Trips    ■ Person Miles of Travel    ▲ Vehicle Trips    ✕ Vehicles Miles of Travel

Since 1990 the average American added more recreation, errands and shopping than work trips.



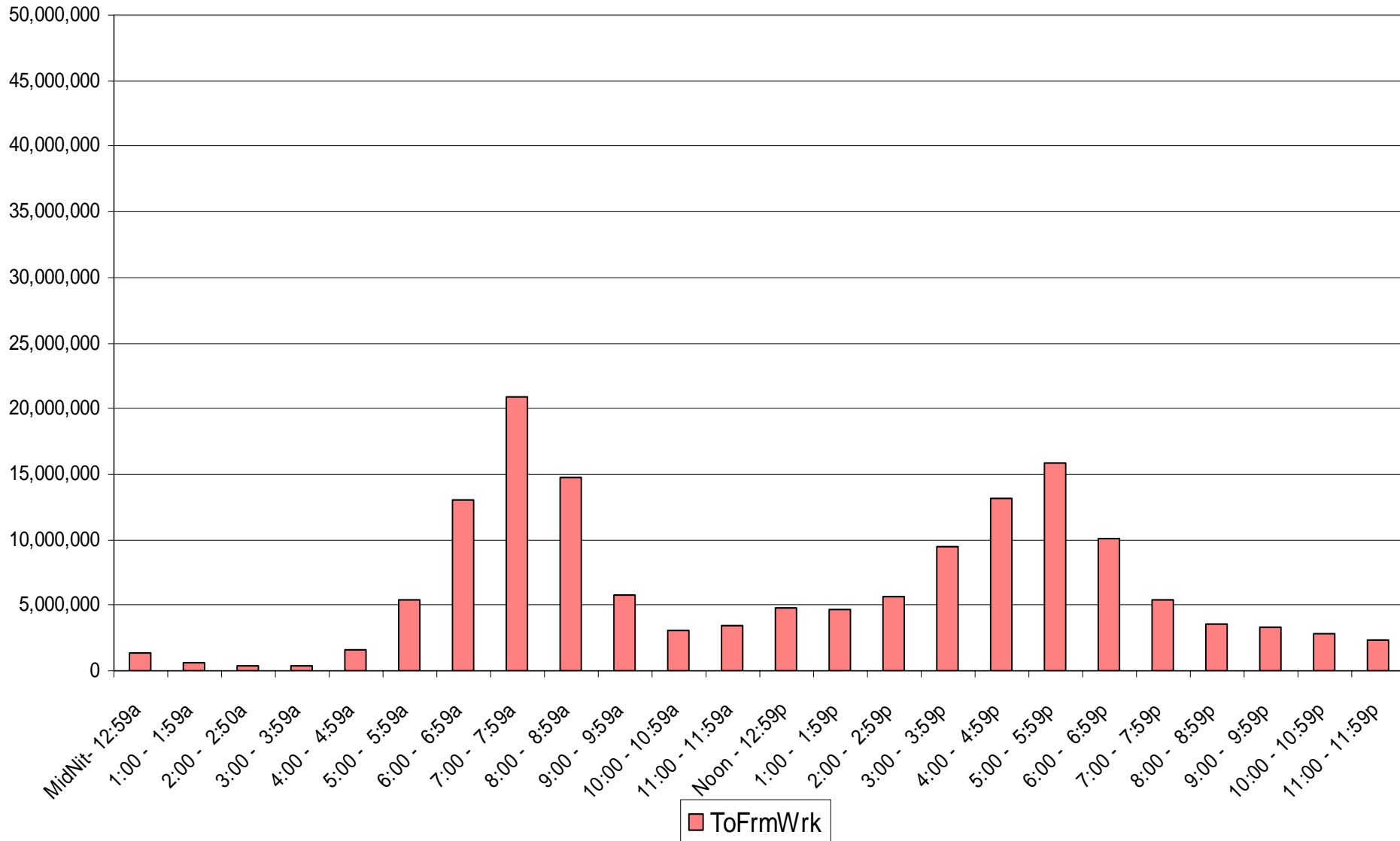
# Some of these trips have been added in stops on the way home from work (trip chains)



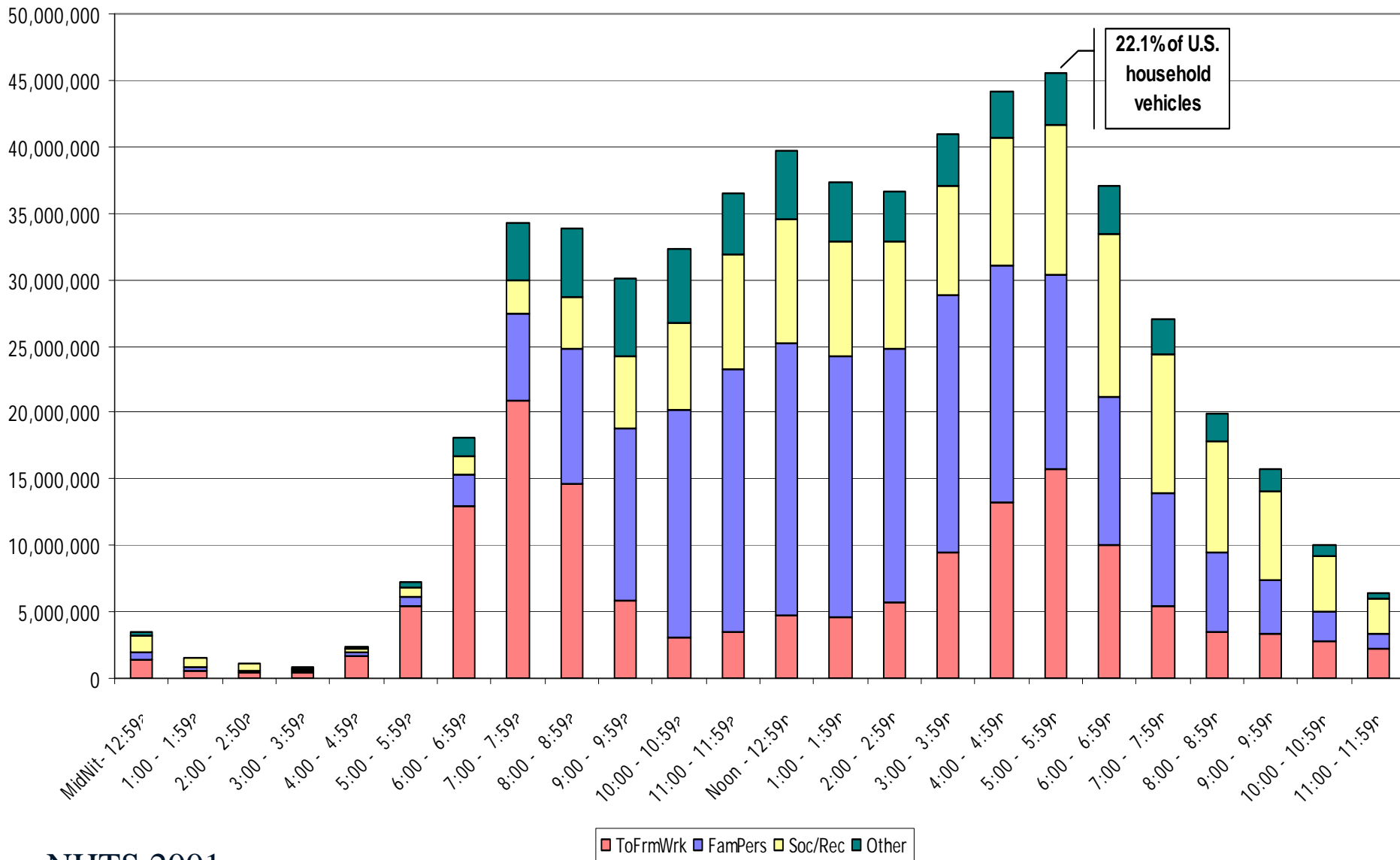
1995 NPTS

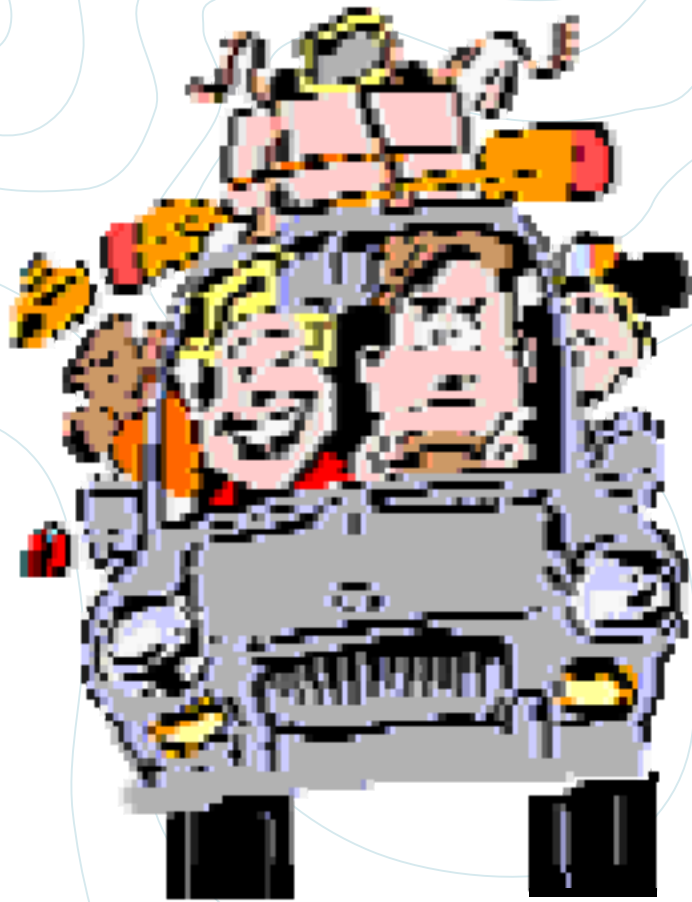


# Vehicles commutes by time of day...



# All Vehicles in Motion— The Changing Peak Period





- Changes in family structure, workforce and vehicle availability primarily effected mode choice in the 1980s
- People may have shifted to POV and drive alone to save travel time

- In the 1990s travel times have really shown significant increases...how will people respond?
- Expect a shift in departure times as workplaces become more flexible and people try to minimize their travel time.





# Americans are Spending More Time in Travel

- Increased travel time to work (Census) may indicate the effects of a better economy, sprawl, congestion, etc. Further research is necessary at small geography to untangle these issues.
- Increased total time in travel may be the effect of added trips for non-work purposes, either on the work trip (trip chaining), weekend and evening trips, or increased trip making by non-workers (especially retired)



# The purposes of the growth in travel is changing...

- Increased travel for non-work purposes is discretionary travel, social, recreational, and shopping.
- What will happen with the coming changes in the workforce (such as retiring baby-boomers) and discretionary travel?
- Stay Tuned!