

What Languages Does the United States Speak?

A Geographic Analysis of the Languages Spoken at Home in the United States, 2015-2019

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Introduction

- In 2019, the most widely spoken language in the country was English, but 22% spoke a different language at home.¹
- An updated ranking of languages is necessary.** In 2010, Spanish was the most widely spoken language other than English, followed by Chinese, French and French Creole, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.²
- Immigrant destinations in the U.S. are dynamic and this leads to new geographic areas of the country where non-English languages are spoken as well.**^{3,4}
 - In 2019, China replaced Mexico as the leading country of origin for immigrants in the U.S., and as a result, the number of people speaking Chinese in the U.S. increased as well.
- The current study aims to **assess the prevalence, trends, and distribution of languages spoken at in the U.S.**
- Most up-to-date information** is valuable in identifying the most prevalent languages in specific areas in the U.S. so that community development, resources, and services can be tailored to specific language-speaking populations.

Data and Methods

Data: 2006-2010 and 2015-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates
Universe: Persons (age 5+ years) who speak a language other than English at home
Variable of Interest: Language spoken at home other than English

Analyses:

- Ranking of top 10 languages other than English spoken at Home in 2015-2019
- Percent change in estimates for top 10 languages (2015-2019) since 2006-2010
- State-level geographic analysis of two most spoken languages (Spanish and Chinese), fastest growing (Arabic), and fastest declining (German) in top 10

Results

1) Top 10 Languages Ranking:

- There are seven languages with at least one million speakers.
- Spanish is the most common language other than English spoken in the U.S. (~40.7 million speakers), followed by Chinese (~3.4 million speakers).

2) Trends among Top 10 Languages Spoken at Home:

- Growing Languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Hindi, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog
- Declining Languages: German, Korean
- Fastest Growing Language in Top 10: Arabic (56.9%)
- Fastest Declining Language in Top 10: German (-18.5%)
- Growth in 7 out of 10 languages is greater than growth in total population

3) Language Geographic Analysis:

- Geographic distributions vary by language spoken

Discussion and Future Research

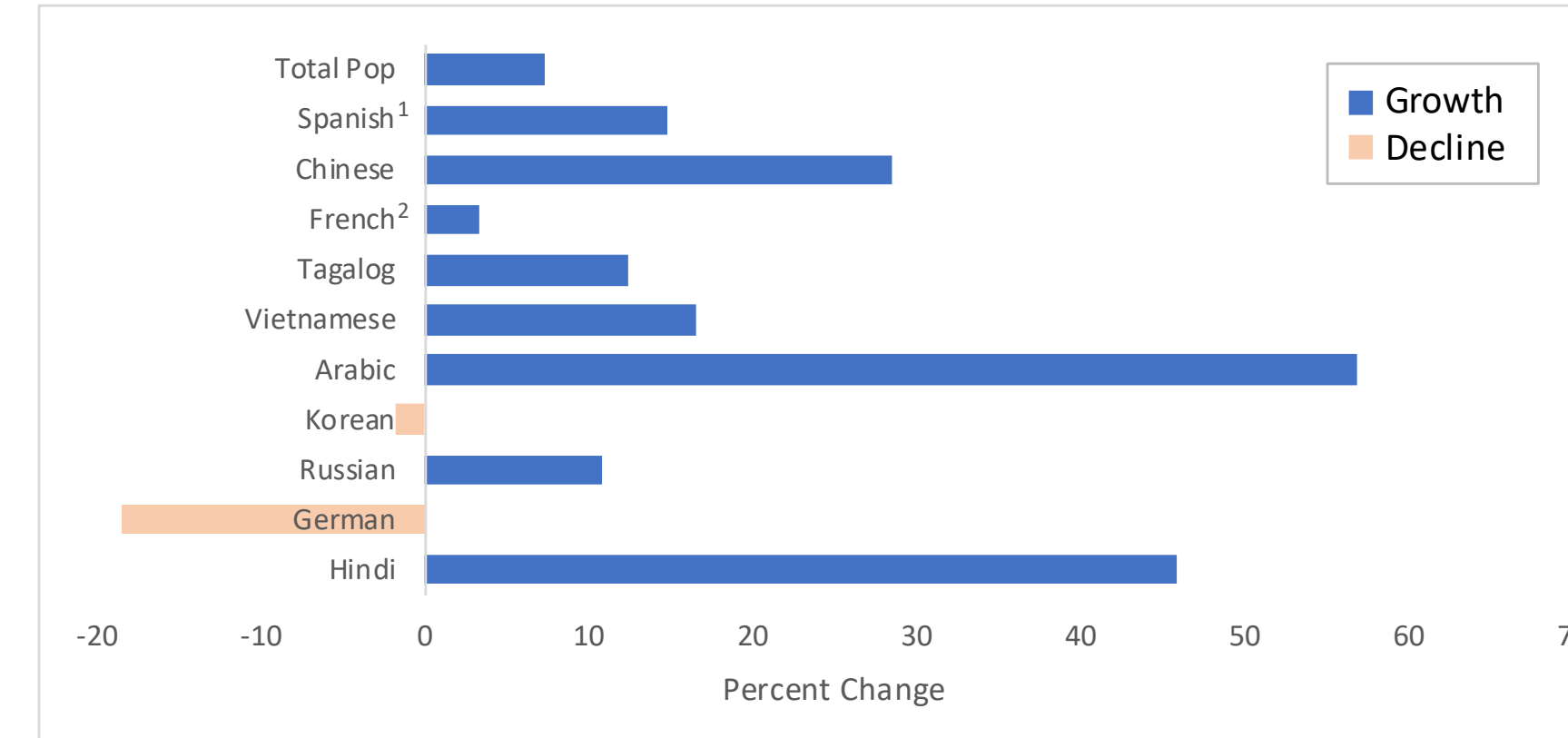
- Spanish is the most spoken language other than English in 2015-2019, followed by Chinese, French, and Tagalog.
- Arabic, Chinese, and Hindi speakers experienced the largest growth, while German and Korean speakers declined.
- Further explore the geographic differences in specific language growth/decline.

Table 1: Top 10 Languages other than English Spoken at Home, 2015-2019

Rank	Language	Estimate	% Tot Pop
1	Spanish ¹	40,709,597	13.4
2	Chinese	3,414,146	1.1
3	French ²	2,060,721	0.7
4	Tagalog	1,727,002	0.6
5	Vietnamese	1,507,354	0.5
6	Arabic	1,200,927	0.4
7	Korean	1,085,735	0.4
8	Russian	920,018	0.3
9	German	903,880	0.3
10	Hindi	850,975	0.3
Total Population (5+)		304,930,125	

¹ Includes Spanish Creole. ² Includes Cajun, Creole, and Haitian
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Figure 1: Percent Change for Top 10 Languages Spoken at Home in the United States 2006-2010 to 2015-2019



¹ Includes Spanish Creole. ² Includes Cajun, Creole, and Haitian
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Figure 2. Percentage Who Speak Spanish at Home, 5 Years and Older, in the United States: 2015-2019

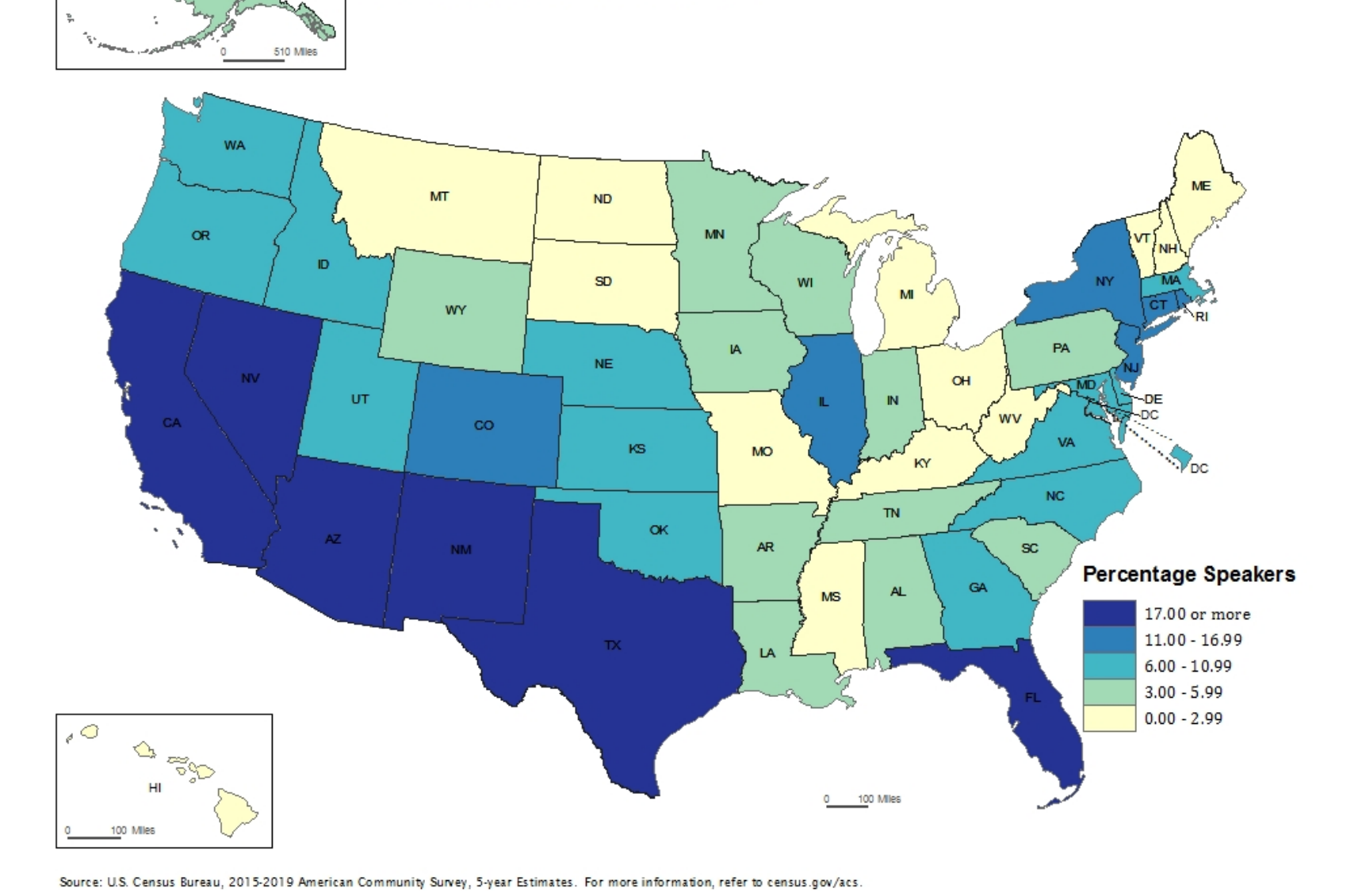


Figure 3. Percentage Who Speak Chinese at Home, 5 Years and Older, in the United States: 2015-2019

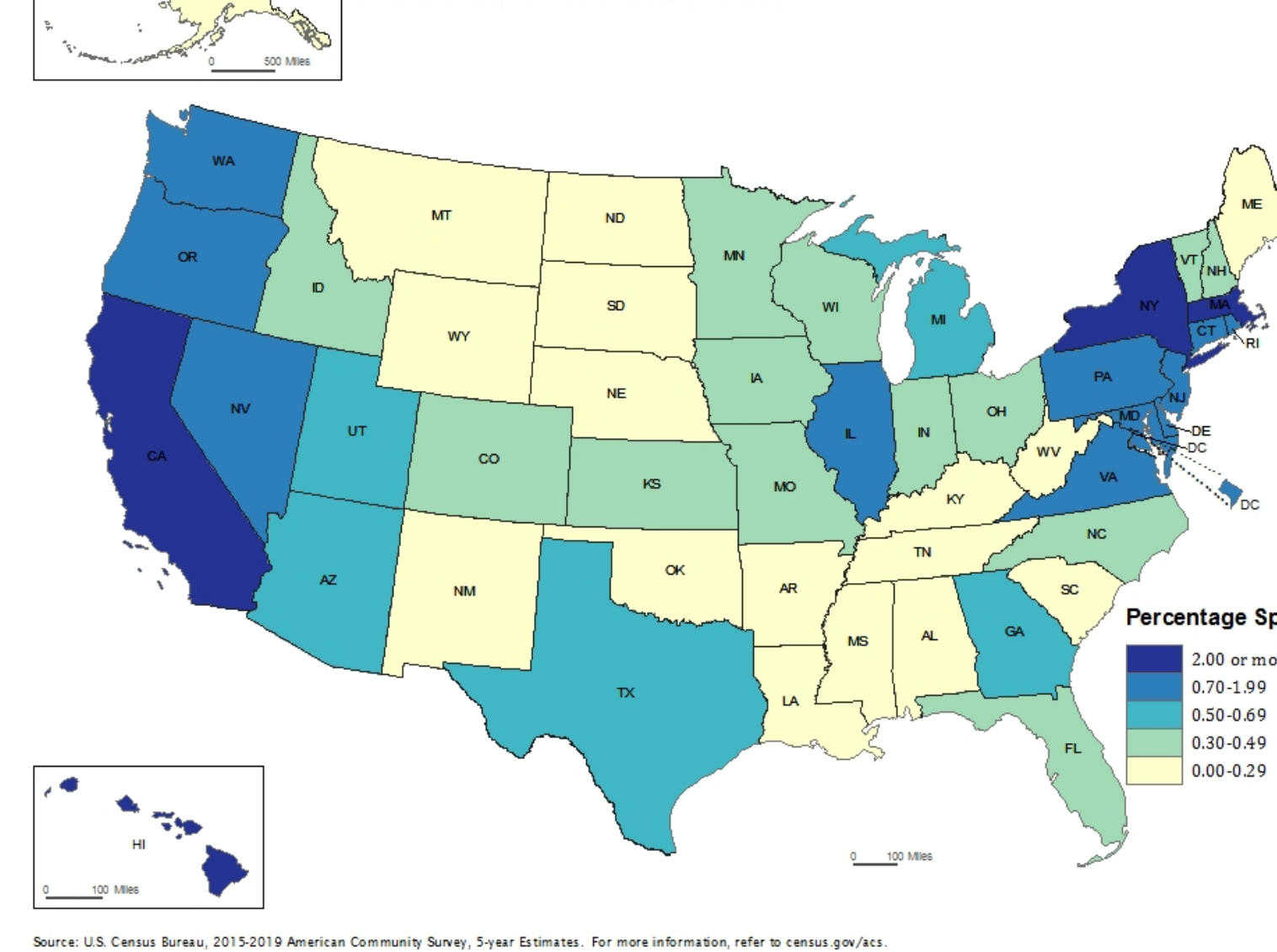


Figure 4. Percentage Who Speak Arabic at Home, 5 Years and Older, in the United States: 2015-2019

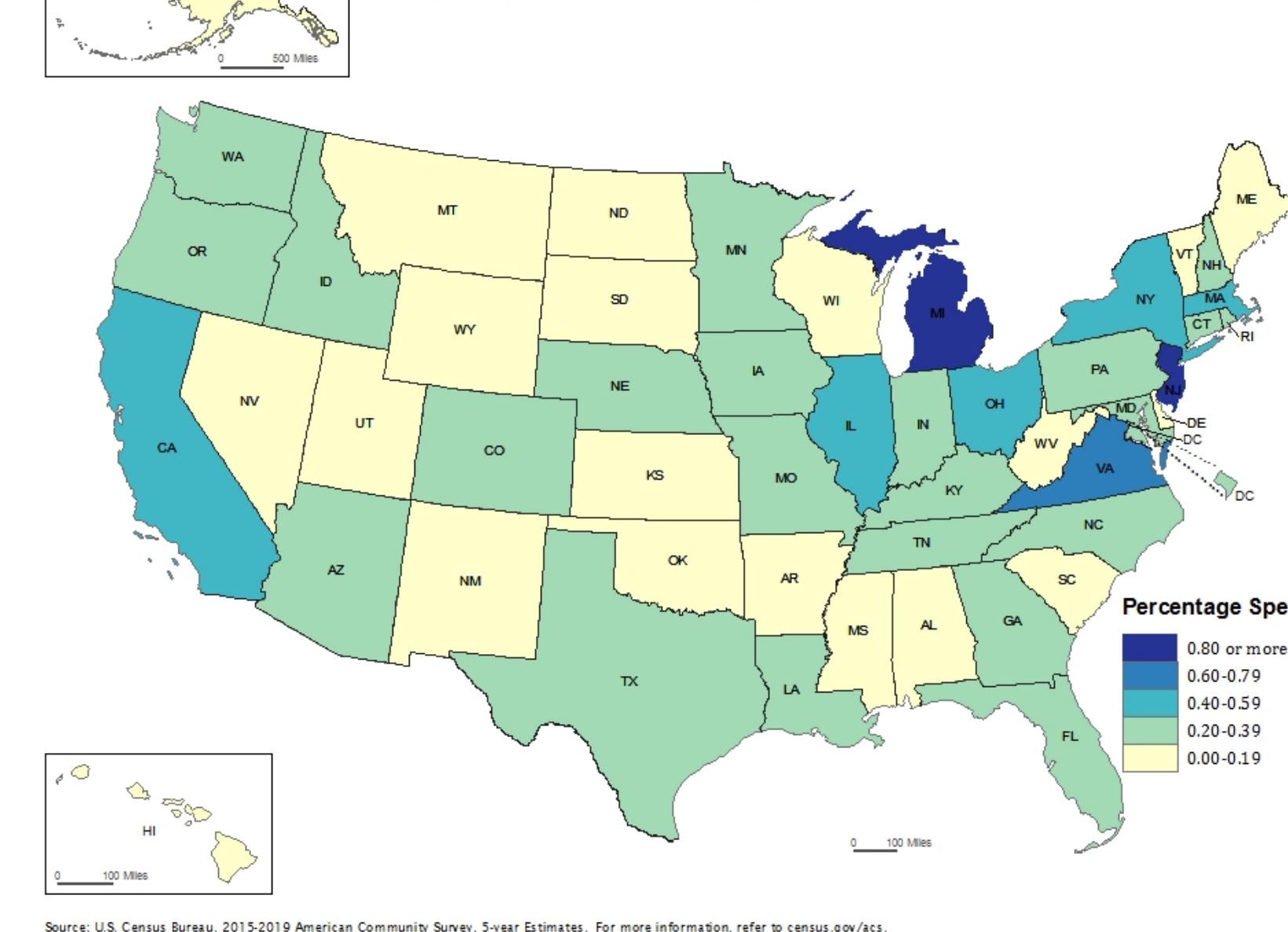
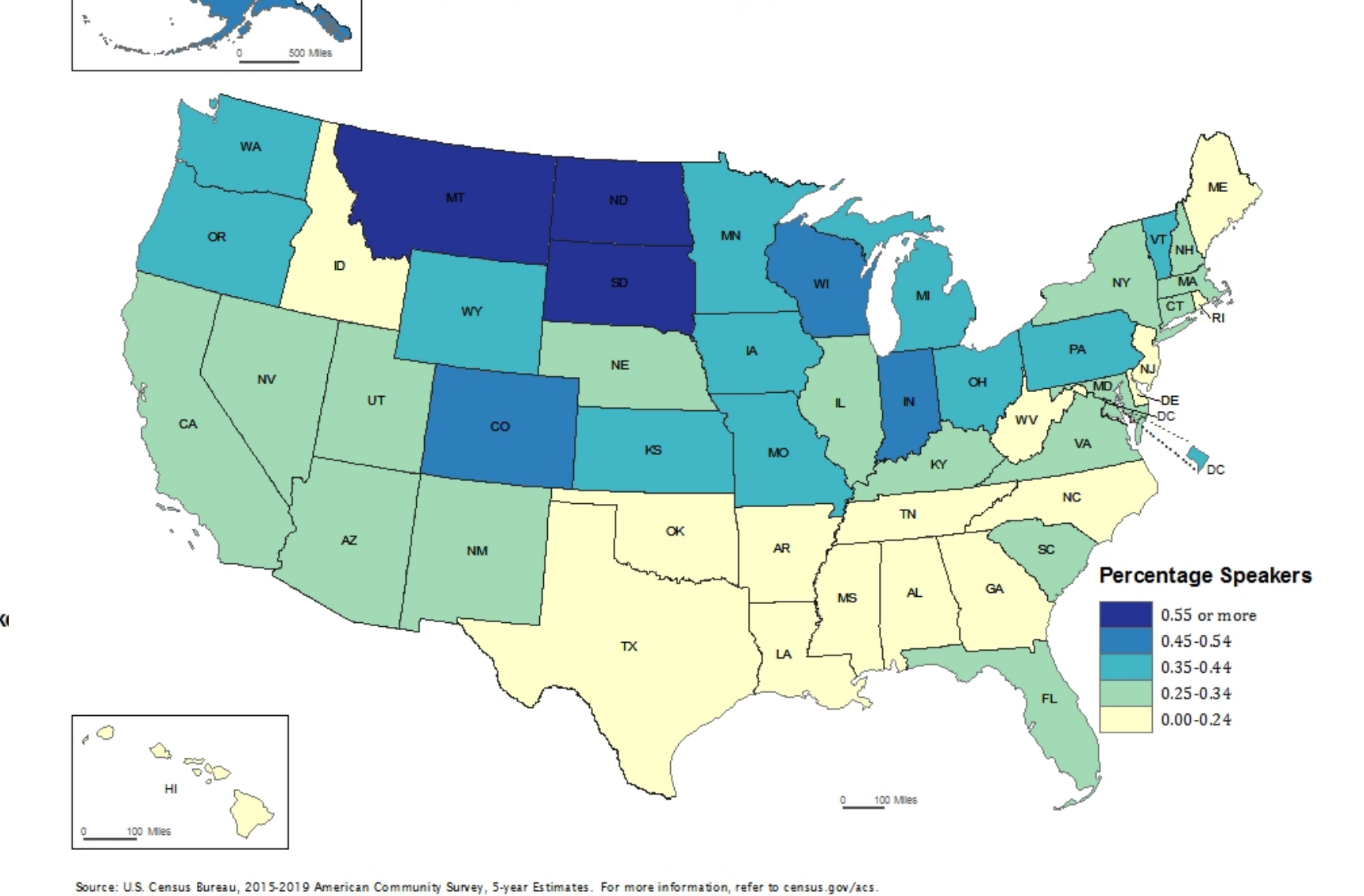


Figure 5. Percentage Who Speak German at Home, 5 Years and Older, in the United States: 2015-2019



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