

Who Are *New England's* Immigrants

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When asked, “What areas of the country do you associate with immigrants?” most Americans would respond with a litany of southern and western states—Texas, California, Florida. East coast cities like New York and Washington DC might get a mention, but few people’s first response would be “New England.”

Given the relative size of the region’s immigrant population, it is an understandable omission—less than 5 percent of the 31 million foreign-born persons in the United States live in the six New England states. But for New Englanders, these 1.4 million immigrants make up nearly 10 percent of the population, and they significantly shape the region’s economy, culture, and character.

In fact, the region is becoming increasingly dependent on these individuals. Between 1990 and 2000, growth in the foreign-born population was responsible for almost half of New England’s total population growth. In Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, immigrants accounted for even larger shares of these states’ growth—as much as 76 percent in Connecticut. Overall, the region’s population grew only 5.4 percent over the decade, but without foreign immigration, it would have been virtually stagnant.

Who are the region’s immigrants? To better understand the demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic characteristics of New England’s foreign-born population, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston is undertaking an analysis of the region’s immigrants. Where do they emigrate from? Where in the region do they live? How do their income, homeownership, and employment opportunities compare with those of the native population? The research, based on data from the U.S. Census, has revealed several attributes that set New England’s immigrants apart from the rest of the nation.

A Collection of Diverse Nationalities

New England's foreign-born population embodies many nationalities, and unlike the United States, no single group constitutes an overwhelming majority. In particular, there is a striking lack of Mexican immigrants in the region. In 2000, 9.2 million Mexicans were recorded in the U.S. Census, by far the largest single group of immigrants in the country. However, while they account for over 30 percent of all U.S. immigrants, only 26,000 Mexican immigrants reside in New England, making up less than 2 percent of the region's foreign-born population.

In general, the composition of the region's immigrant population differs greatly from that of the United States. The nation's five largest foreign-born countries of origin—Mexico, China, the Philippines, India, and Vietnam—contribute only 15 percent of the region's immigrants, and only two are among the major sources of New England immigration. Instead, Portuguese immigrants are the region's largest immigrant group, while thanks to the region's northern neighbor, Canadians are the second largest. Immigrants from China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan), the

Dominican Republic, Italy, the United Kingdom, Brazil, India, Haiti, and Poland each make up another 3 to 5 percent apiece, and together, these ten nationalities represent about half of the region's immigrants.

World Regions

The significant absence of Mexican immigration to the region has not lessened the presence of Latin American immigrants in New England. Thirty percent of the region's foreign-born persons are from Latin America. But, unlike the rest of the United States, the bulk of New England's Latino population traces its roots to countries in the Caribbean and in South America.

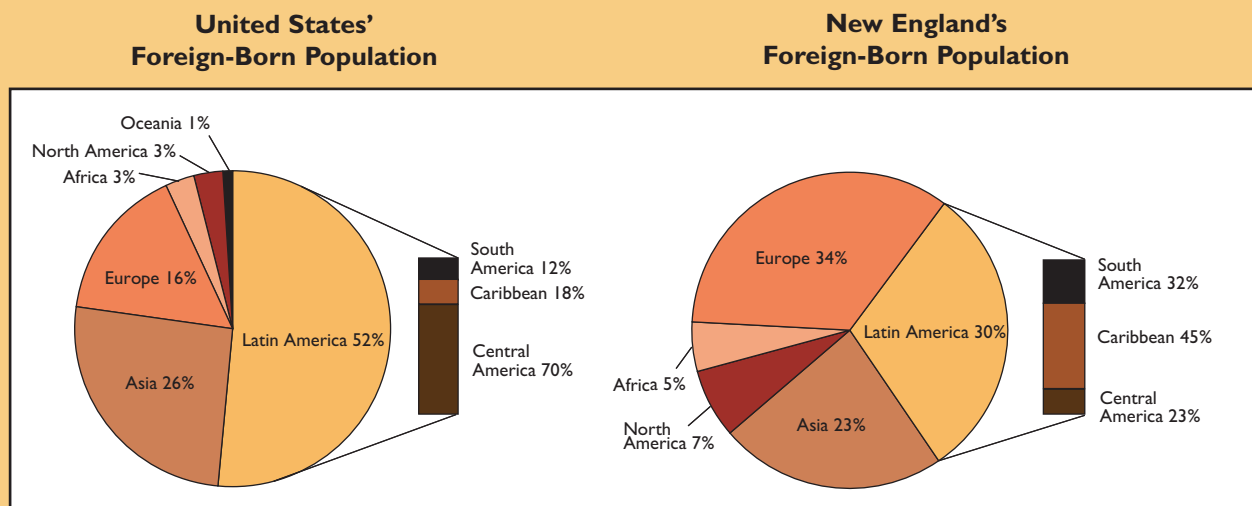
Among the regions of the world, however, Europe accounts for the largest fraction of New England's foreign-born population. Thirty-four percent of the region's immigrants are European, more than double the national fraction of 16 percent. Importantly, most of the region's Europeans immigrated to the United States before the 1980s. For instance, three-quarters of the region's Portuguese population arrived in this country more than two decades ago, and 89 percent of Italians arrived before

1980. With the exception of some recent immigration from Eastern Europe, this timing is characteristic of the bulk of the region's European population. Undoubtedly, the large presence of these older European immigrants contributes to the region's relatively high percentage of older, more established immigrants. Overall, nearly a quarter of New England's foreign-born population has been in the country for more than 30 years, compared with only 15 percent of immigrants nationwide.

Fastest Growing Groups

Despite the region's large fraction of older immigrants, 39 percent of New England's foreign-born population arrived after 1990. In this stream of new arrivals, European immigrants have largely been replaced by Latin Americans and Asians. In terms of raw numbers, Latin American immigrants were the fastest growing foreign-born population, doubling their size over the decade. This growth was led by immigrants from the Dominican Republic, whose population nearly quadrupled, and by the 33,000 Brazilians who moved to the region. However, a large number of Mexicans, Guatemalans, Haitians, Colombians, Jamaicans, and

Immigrant Population by Region of Origin, 2000



Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

Salvadorans also came to New England in the 1990s.

Large streams of immigrants from Asia also characterized the decade. Over 33,000 Chinese immigrants settled in New England in the 1990s, as well as large numbers of Indian and Vietnamese immigrants. All three groups have doubled their populations from a decade ago. Of note, the foreign-born population from Africa increased 198 percent between 1990 and 2000, the largest percentage increase for any world region. In 2000, over 47,000 African immigrants lived in New England.

City Dwellers

While nationalities differ, New England's immigrants are much like their U.S. counterparts in their settlement patterns. Across the nation, most immigrants live in urban areas, and many live in concentrated ethnic communities, choosing to settle near those who share their language, culture, and history. How do these geographic choices

play out in New England's communities?

Most of the region's foreign born live in the cities of southern New England. In fact, while New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine house one-quarter of the region's total population, less than 9 percent of the region's immigrants live in these three northern states (a full third of these immigrants are from Canada). Farther south, on the other hand, Massachusetts is home to 56.2 percent of New England's immigrants. Another 26.9 percent live in Connecticut, and the remaining 8.7 percent are Rhode Islanders. New England's five largest cities are in these states, causing much of this disproportional balance. Boston, Springfield, and Worcester, Massachusetts, Providence, Rhode Island, and Bridgeport, Connecticut, house one-fifth of the region's foreign-born population within their city limits, with many more living in the surrounding metro areas.

While many native New Englanders live in cities, the region's foreign born are more likely to be city dwellers. Forty-

four percent of all immigrants, but only 22 percent of all New Englanders, live in the region's 25 largest cities and towns. In total, 55 percent of New England's foreign-born population lives in cities, defined as areas with a population of at least 50,000 people. The region's more recent immigrants are even more likely to live in urban centers, and 63 percent of immigrants who arrived in this country after 1990 live in the region's 25 largest cities and towns.

Boston and Providence, not surprisingly, are the top two addresses for immigrants. Foreign-born residents make up one-quarter of each city's population. The communities neighboring these and other large cities also have substantial immigrant populations. Central Falls, Rhode Island, just outside of Providence, has the highest ratio of immigrants to natives in the state, with the city's foreign born making up 35 percent of the population. In nearby Pawtucket, Rhode Island, 23 percent of residents are immigrants. Close to New York City, Stamford, Connecticut's

Ten Largest Immigrant Groups in 2000

United States			New England		
Country of Origin	Population	Percent of Total U.S. Foreign-Born Population	Country of Origin	Population	Percent of Total New England Foreign-Born Population
Total Foreign Born in United States	31,107,889		Total Foreign Born in New England	1,376,317	
1. Mexico	9,177,487	29.5	1. Portugal	101,980	7.4
2. China	1,518,652	4.9	2. Canada	98,853	7.2
3. Philippines	1,369,070	4.4	3. China	74,774	5.4
4. India	1,022,552	3.3	4. Dominican Republic	72,920	5.3
5. Vietnam	988,174	3.2	5. Italy	60,391	4.4
6. Cuba	872,716	2.8	6. United Kingdom	53,914	3.9
7. Korea	864,125	2.8	7. Brazil	49,246	3.6
8. Canada	820,771	2.6	8. India	48,322	3.5
9. El Salvador	817,336	2.6	9. Haiti	43,819	3.2
10. Germany	706,704	2.3	10. Poland	42,257	3.1

Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

New England's Changing Immigrant Groups

New England's Fastest Growing Immigrant Groups Ranked by Population Increase between 1990 and 2000

Country of Origin	Population in 1990	Population in 2000	Difference	Percent Change
Dominican Republic	27,689	71,262	43,573	157
China	41,283	74,944	33,661	82
Brazil	14,778	48,147	33,369	226
India	20,366	48,388	28,022	138
Vietnam	16,742	38,166	21,424	128
Mexico	7,993	27,874	19,881	249
Guatemala	9,597	28,129	18,532	193
Haiti	23,068	41,389	18,321	79
Colombia	17,431	33,876	16,445	94
Jamaica	25,095	38,740	13,645	54

New England's Fastest Shrinking Immigrant Groups Ranked by Decline in Population between 1990 and 2000

Country of Origin	Population in 1990	Population in 2000	Difference	Percent Change
Italy	78,144	58,169	-19,975	-26
Canada	113,151	96,399	-16,752	-15
Portugal	109,908	98,266	-11,642	-11
Ireland	27,240	23,860	-3,380	-12
Scotland	10,277	7,158	-3,119	-30

Note: Population numbers here differ from those in the table on page 12 because this table uses Public Use Microdata in order to make comparisons between 1990 and 2000.

Source: 1990 and 2000 Public Use Microdata, U.S. Census Bureau.

population is 30 percent foreign born, neighboring Danbury's is 27 percent, and Bridgeport's and Norwalk's populations are both 20 percent foreign born. These four cities have the highest concentrations of foreign-born residents in Connecticut. In the Bay State, 16 Massachusetts cities and towns have at least one immigrant for every six residents living in them. All sixteen are in the greater Boston metropolitan area.

Several of New England's smaller cities have seen dramatic increases in their foreign-born population as new immigrant communities pop up throughout the region. In Lawrence and Somerville, Massachusetts, nearly one in three residents is foreign born, up from one in five in 1990. Similarly,

22 percent of Randolph, Massachusetts' population was foreign born in 2000, climbing from 12 percent a decade before. In Chelsea, Massachusetts, 36 percent of residents are foreign born, with two-thirds having immigrated since 1990.

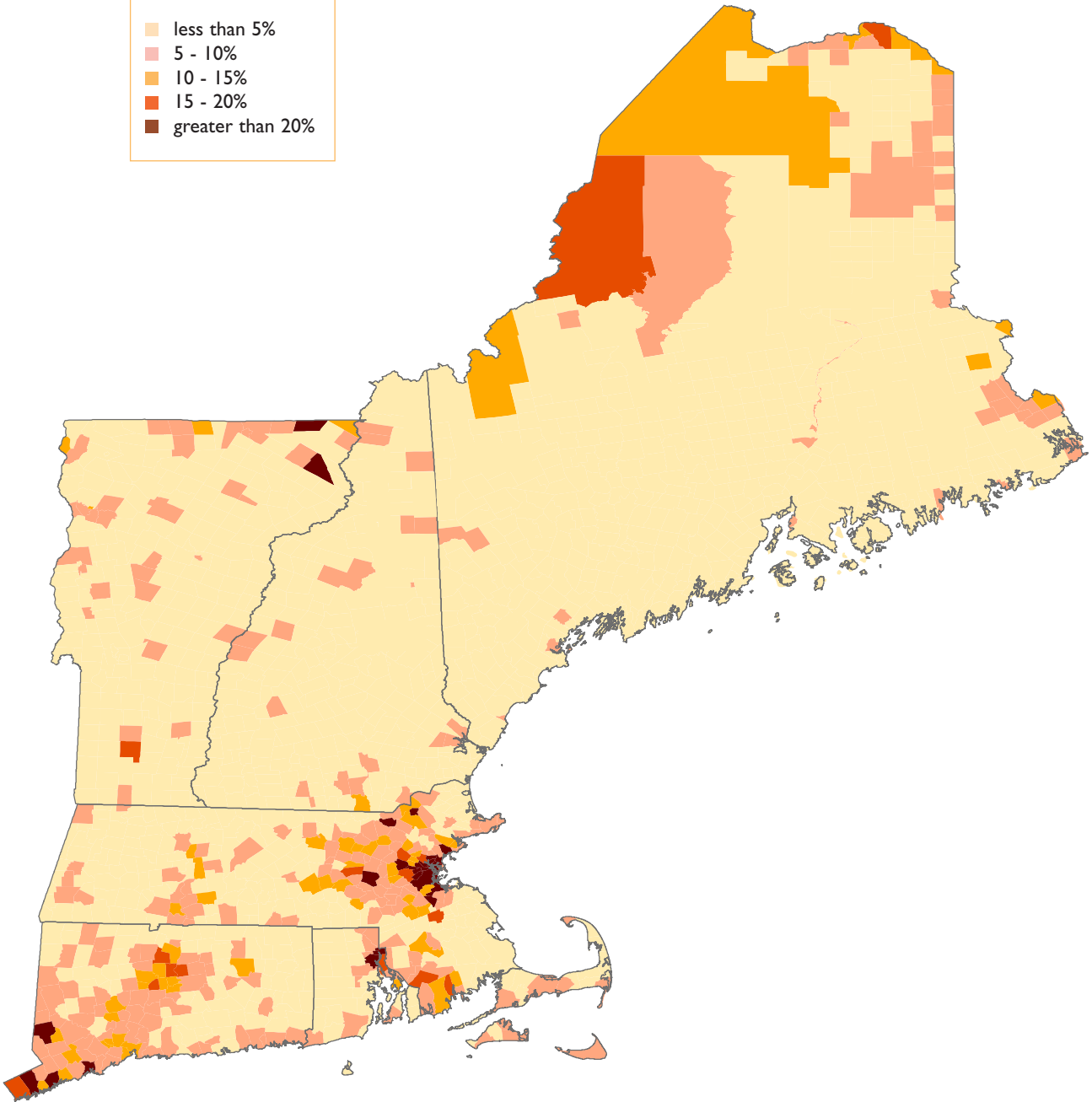
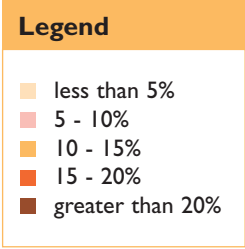
Concentrated Neighborhoods

In many cases, new immigrant communities are composed largely of one nationality. Family ties and other networks create patterns of settlement that build communities of shared backgrounds, language, and traditions, in turn attracting more individuals of the same nationality. For example, the Portuguese have strong communities in

southern Massachusetts and Rhode Island, where this group has lived for over a century (see sidebar, page 15). Fall River and New Bedford, Massachusetts, account for 26.8 percent of New England's Portuguese population, with an additional 20 percent living in neighboring cities and towns, including communities in Rhode Island.

The Portuguese are one of the few older immigrant groups that remain highly concentrated. Typically, it is the region's more recent immigrants who live in highly concentrated communities. For example, 60 percent of New England's Dominicans live in three cities—Lawrence, Massachusetts (21 percent), Providence, Rhode Island (19

**Percent of Total Population that is Foreign Born
in New England Cities and Towns, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

United by a Language

New England is a hub for Portuguese-speaking people—be they from Portugal, Brazil, or Cape Verde. Portuguese immigrants are the region's largest foreign-born group. Brazilians constitute one of the leading groups of recent immigrants, and more Cape Verdeans live here than anywhere else in the United States. The Portuguese language has drawn these three groups to New England, but today it is one of the few things to unite them.

New England's lusophone immigration traces its roots back to the 1800s and the days of Moby Dick. In the 19th century, whaling drew thousands of Portuguese immigrants to southern Massachusetts. Providing a vital source of fuel, whaling was a booming industry and New Bedford, Massachusetts, was at its center. Boats leaving from Buzzards Bay in search of sperm whales in the eastern Atlantic would often dock in the Azores, Cape Verde, and Madeira to restock their ships with food, water, and other supplies. These were all Portuguese territories, and as captains returned home with their bounty, they brought hundreds of Portuguese sailors with them.

Soon, Portuguese communities were flourishing in New Bedford, Fall River, and other nearby areas, and even after the whaling industry collapsed, thousands of new immigrants from the Portuguese colonies and the mainland flocked to the area. For decades, new Portuguese immigrated to southern New England, seeking better economic opportunities and escape from the dic-

tatorship that was stifling freedom in their home country. It was not until 1976, when Portugal's longstanding fascist regime fell and economic opportunities improved dramatically, that the stream of Portuguese immigrants slowed to what today is a mere trickle. However, the remaining cultural and linguistic networks became a critical draw for the next major wave of Portuguese-speaking immigrants to New England—Brazilians.

According to the U.S. Census, 23.2 percent of the more than 200,000 Brazilians living in the United States in 2000 made their home in New England. However, these figures likely underestimate the region's Brazilian population. According to Lois Josimovich of the Massachusetts Alliance for Portuguese Speakers (MAPS), "The Census figures are inaccurate due to serious undercounting. Many Brazilians are undocumented, and many others do not access the Census for a variety of reasons." The Brazilian Consulate in Boston estimates that there are at least 200,000 Brazilians living in Massachusetts alone.

This new wave of Portuguese speakers has settled primarily in Boston, Framingham, and Somerville, Massachusetts, and in Danbury, Connecticut. "Brazilians are coming to the United States primarily for employment opportunities," says Elsa Gomes, development and communications assistant at MAPS. "Many are choosing to settle in New England because they hear about the region's strong concentration of Portuguese language and culture."

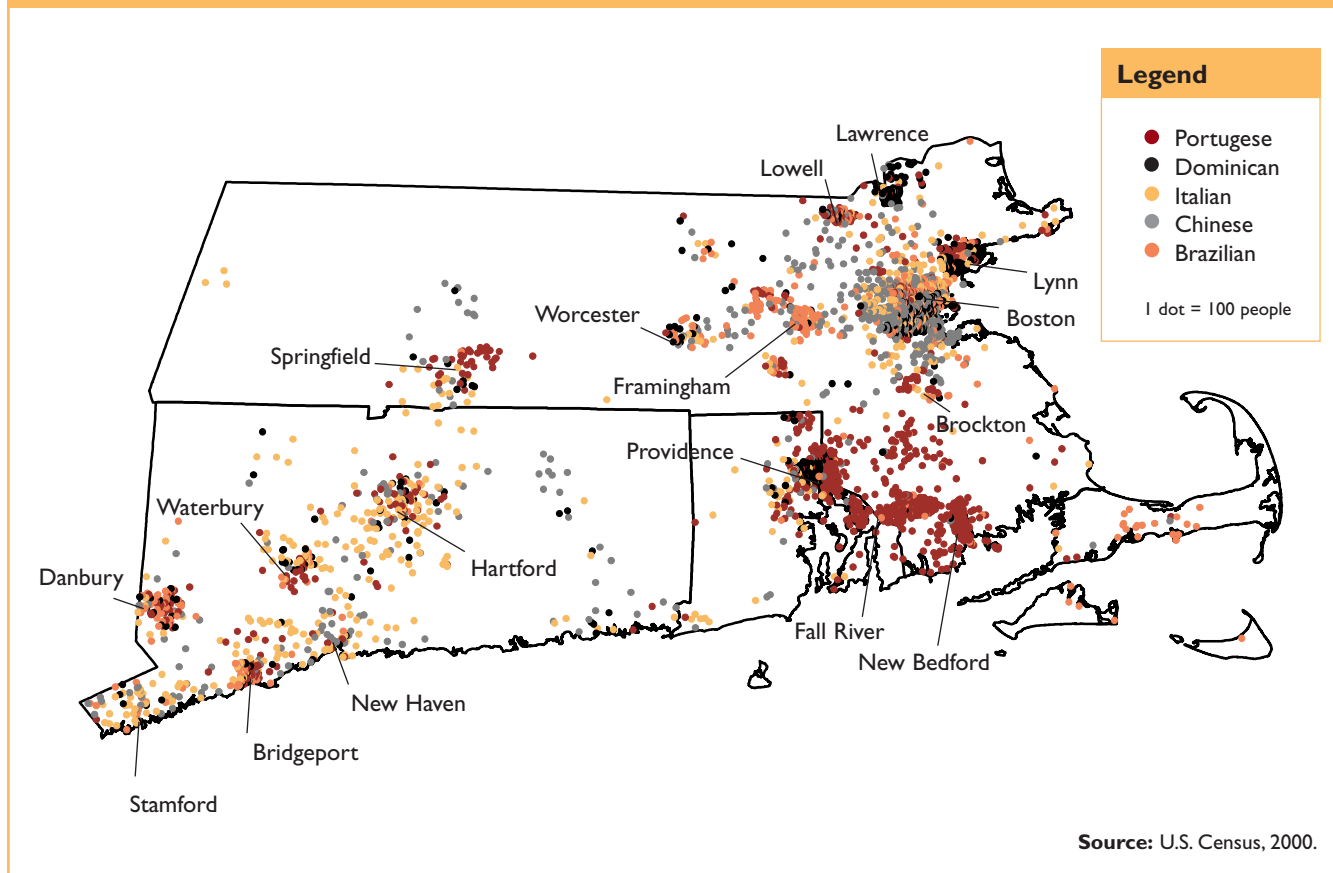
Despite being drawn by the region's existing Portuguese and Cape Verdean networks, Brazilians have not smoothly integrated with these groups. For example, separate Cape Verdean, Brazilian, and Portuguese organizations provide and advocate for the services their populations need, and these groups have yet to embrace one another. "MAPS is currently the only organization in New England that brings all Portuguese-speaking people together," says Gomes.

"Building relationships among the groups takes a certain amount of adjustment on everyone's part," says Gomes. "Many of the older generation have forgotten what it was like to be new to this country, and life was different when they arrived. Today's immigrants face a new array of challenges that older immigrants can't relate to. Regardless of differences, we have this language in common. It can bring us together and help us to address the needs of New England's entire Portuguese-speaking community."



One of the many bilingual businesses in downtown Framingham, Massachusetts.

Immigrant Settlement Patterns in Southern New England, 2000



percent), and Boston, Massachusetts (17 percent). The majority of Jamaican immigrants (66 percent) live in Connecticut, with particularly large populations in Hartford (18 percent) and Bridgeport (12 percent). Moreover, 23 percent of Guatemalans live in Providence; 27 percent of the region's Cambodian population lives in Lowell (see sidebar, page 17); and 23 percent of Vietnamese live in Boston.

Even within the 48 square miles of Boston, recently immigrated groups tend to reside in specific pockets of the city. Over half of the city's Chinese immigrants live in the Chinatown neighborhood of central Boston or in the Allston/Brighton area. Haitians are mainly clustered in the neighborhoods of Mattapan, Hyde Park, South Dorchester, and Roxbury. These same four neighborhoods are home to many other Caribbean immigrant groups,

with significant populations of Dominicans, Jamaicans, Trinidadians, and others nestled there. On the other side of town, in the neighborhoods of East Boston and Allston/Brighton, many of New England's Central and South American populations have made homes. For examples, 56 percent of Salvadorans live in East Boston and the surrounding communities. These neighborhoods also support large populations of Colombians, Brazilians, Guatemalans, and Mexicans.

For some New England towns, one of these concentrated clusters can make up a significant percentage of the community's population. For instance, Chinese immigrants make up 5 percent of the population in Quincy, Massachusetts. In Central Falls, Rhode Island, Colombians constitute 11.4 percent of the total population, while in Framingham, Massachusetts, Brazilians

account for 6.6 percent. Polish immigrants make up 8.8 percent of New Britain, Connecticut's population, and Dominicans are 21.4 percent of the residents in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Whether it is the Salvadorans in Chelsea, Massachusetts, the Canadians in Madawaska, Maine, or the Jamaicans in Bloomfield, Connecticut, immigrants settle in communities that they hope will support them as they establish themselves in this country.

How well are New England's immigrants doing on the road to success? The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's research is finding that by some indicators, the region's immigrants are better off than most U.S. immigrants. They are set apart by their high levels of educational attainment, income, and occupational status. However, while the region's immigrant population is doing better than average,

Welcome to Lowell

Over the past two decades, Lowell, Massachusetts, has experienced a large influx of Cambodian refugees. In 1975, civil war broke out in Cambodia. The next 16 years were filled with genocide, violence, and poverty as the brutal Khmer Rouge regime struggled to control the country. Thousands of Cambodians fled their nation and sought refuge in the United States, Canada, and other countries.

In the early 1980s, moved by the plight of these Cambodians, a number of Lowell agencies and churches sponsored several hundred Cambodian refugees and helped them set up new lives in Massachusetts. The city's Cambodian population began to rapidly expand in the second half of the decade as refugees across the nation decided to resettle in Lowell. Solid economic opportunities, such as assembly line jobs at Wang Laboratories, initially drew these resettled Cambodians. With the construction of the Traitanaram Buddhist Temple and the proliferation of Cambodian culture in the city, Lowell became a mecca for Cambodian immigrants.

Their population skyrocketed. In 1991, the Boston Globe reported that Lowell schools were practically adding a classroom a week to keep up with the flow of Cambodian children to the area. In no time, there were

numbers are hard to come by for this government-wary group.) Many are employed as city employees, and the first Cambodian elected to office in the United States sits on the Lowell City Council.

It has not been all roses, however. Lowell's Cambodians have been victims of racial prejudice and crime, while many suffer from

traumas they endured in Cambodia. Finding quality affordable housing in the city is a problem, and language barriers sometimes reduce access to opportunities. Several Cambodian community groups are working specifically to address these and other issues faced by Lowell's refugee population. At the same time, Cambodians as a whole are working for the revitalization of Lowell's economy. The refugees have brought a base of new consumers and workers to the city and have contributed committed leadership, helping to drive reinvestment and development in Lowell.



Shopping in one of Lowell's Cambodian neighborhoods.



two temples, a Cambodian cable T.V. show, a radio program, and a monthly newspaper. Cambodian-owned businesses lined Middlesex Street and filled Pailin Shopping Plaza. Lowell had the second-largest Cambodian population in the United States; only Long Beach, California, housed more Cambodians. Today, Cambodians make up at least 5 percent of the city's population. (Definite

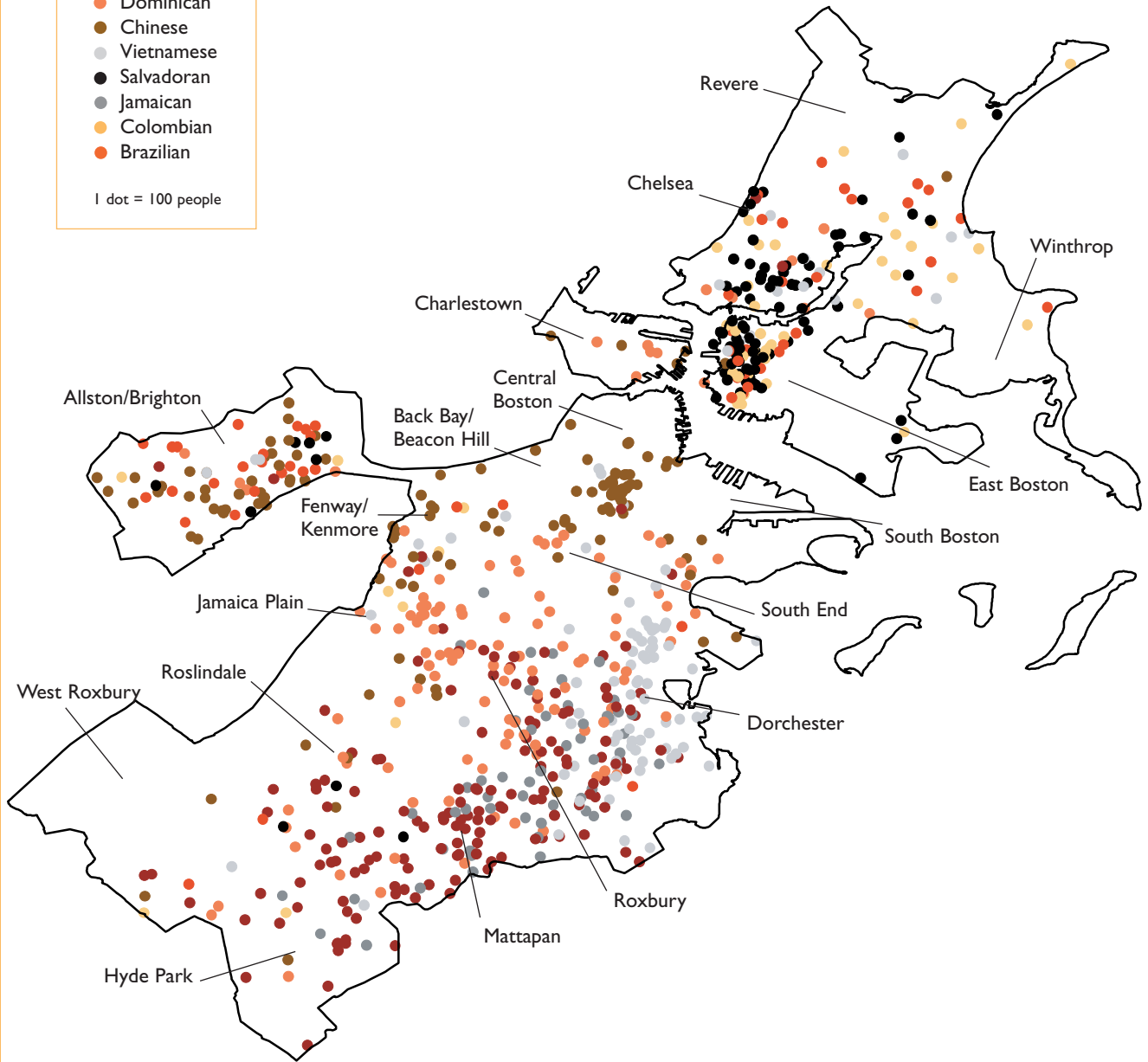


Immigrant Settlement Patterns in the City of Boston and Suffolk County, 2000

Legend

- Haitian
- Dominican
- Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Salvadoran
- Jamaican
- Colombian
- Brazilian

1 dot = 100 people



Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

they remain several steps behind New England natives.

Educational Attainment

The region's foreign-born population exhibits a bimodal pattern of educational attainment—they are less likely than natives to have completed high school yet more likely to have an advanced degree. While 87 percent of natives have a high school degree, only 69 percent of immigrants have reached this level of educational attainment. However, some 14.2 percent of the region's foreign-born hold an advanced degree, compared with only 12.3 percent of natives. This high percentage of advanced degrees also drives the slightly greater levels of educational attainment for immigrants in the region versus the rest of the country. While high school and college completion rates are comparable for New England and U.S. immigrants, only 11.9 percent of all U.S. immigrants have an advanced degree.

The educational attainment rates of the region's immigrants who came to the United States after 1990 show an even more accentuated bimodal pattern. On the one hand, only 73.7 percent have completed high school. However, 38.3 percent have graduated from college, and 19.2 percent have advanced degrees—significantly higher rates than the immigrant population as a whole, and surpassing those of the native population.

Household Income

New England immigrants have higher household income levels than the rest of the U.S. immigrant population. In 2000, the median household income for all U.S. foreign-born households² was \$39,200, while New England's median immigrant household income was \$42,900.

New England's immigrants, however, are more likely to lag behind their native counterparts than other immigrants. The median household income of the region's native-born population is

² Defined as households in which the head of the household is foreign born.

Occupational Status				
	United States		New England	
	Native	Foreign Born	Native	Foreign Born
Percent of the Total Population in Each Occupation				
Management	12.8	9.5	14.5	11.1
Professional	19.4	16.7	22.6	21.4
Service	15.3	20.9	14.7	19.9
Sales and Office	28.0	20.7	27.4	19.0
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	0.6	2.4	0.5	0.4
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance	9.4	10.7	8.3	7.3
Production and Transportation	14.4	20.3	12.1	20.7
Percent of the College Educated Population in Each Occupation				
Management	25.9	22.0	26.2	21.9
Professional	49.8	51.0	46.7	52.1
Service	4.9	6.8	4.8	6.2
Sales and Office	18.9	18.3	18.0	13.5
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance	1.9	2.6	1.7	1.7
Production and Transportation	3.0	5.6	2.4	4.3
Note: Statistics are for the population age 16 and over. Source: U.S. Census, 2000.				

13 percent higher than that of New England's foreign-born households. Moreover, 31 percent of New England's foreign-born households fall in the lowest income quartile of all New England households. Nationally, only 29 percent of immigrant households are in the lowest quartile.

The region's oldest immigrant households lag especially behind. Twenty-nine percent of the region's households that are headed by an immigrant who has been in the country for more than 20 years are in the lowest income quartile, compared with only 26 percent nationwide. Additionally, the median household income in the region for these immigrants is \$45,120—7.5 percent lower than for New England's native-born households. Nationwide, established immigrant

households trail native-born households by less than 3 percent.

Perhaps the income differences are driven by the native population's higher rates of educational attainment. However, controlling for educational differences reveals even larger disparities. Among college graduates, the median income of an immigrant household was \$68,000, nearly 11 percent lower than the median for college-educated native-born households. Recently immigrated college graduates have particularly low household incomes compared with natives, likely driving much of this disparity. Controlling for college graduation does improve the financial picture of the region's established immigrants. The median income for households headed by foreign-born college graduates who immigrated

more than 20 years ago is \$79,800, higher than the \$75,750 earned by native college-graduate households.

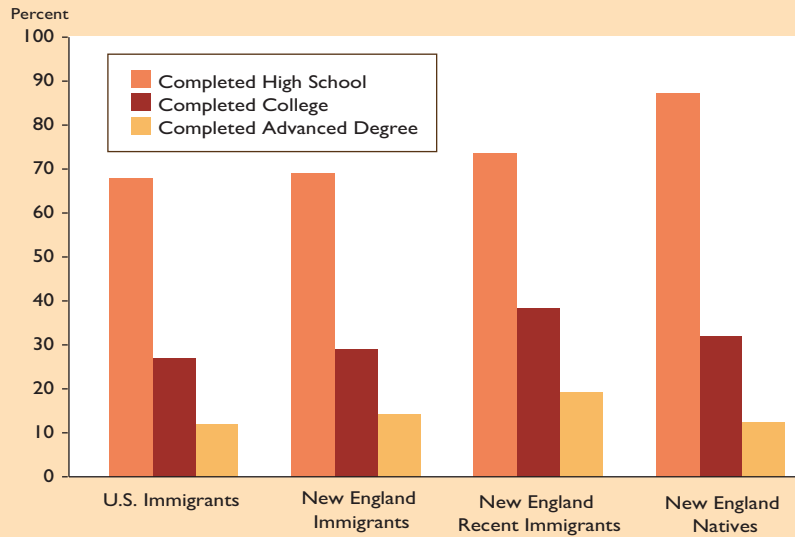
Occupational Status

Much of an individual's economic well-being is determined by employment opportunities. With higher levels of educational attainment and higher household income, New England's foreign born have a greater presence in high-skill occupations than U.S. immigrants as a whole. While only 26 percent of all U.S. immigrants are in management or professional occupations, 32 percent of the region's immigrants are in these types of high-skill jobs.

Most of New England's highly skilled immigrant workers are employed in professional occupations, such as doctors, lawyers, scientists, and engineers. Though they are less likely than natives to fill management roles, they have equal rates of employment in these professional trades. Among college educated New Englanders, immigrants are actually more likely than natives to be in professional occupations—52.1 percent versus 46.7 percent. The region's immigrants have particularly high participation rates in the hard sciences—computers, mathematics, architecture, engineering, and life and physical sciences—and they hold 16.5 percent of all science-related occupations in the region.

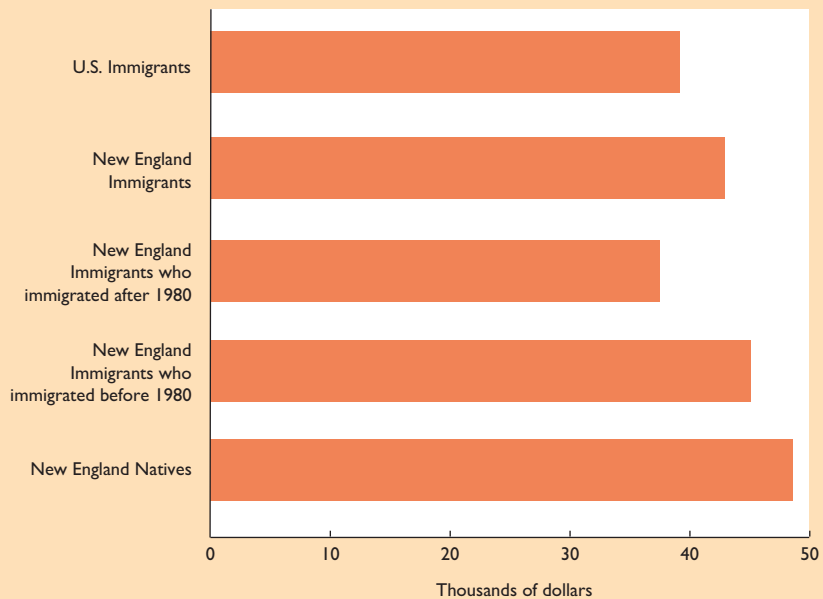
The remaining occupational breakdown of the region's immigrants mirrors that of the nation's immigrants. However, it differs from that of New England's native population, contributing to the socioeconomic gap between these two groups. The region's foreign born are less likely to be employed in traditionally higher paying sales and office support jobs and more likely to be employed as production or service workers. In fact, immigrants constitute 20 percent of all production workers and 15 percent of service workers in the

Educational Attainment, 2000



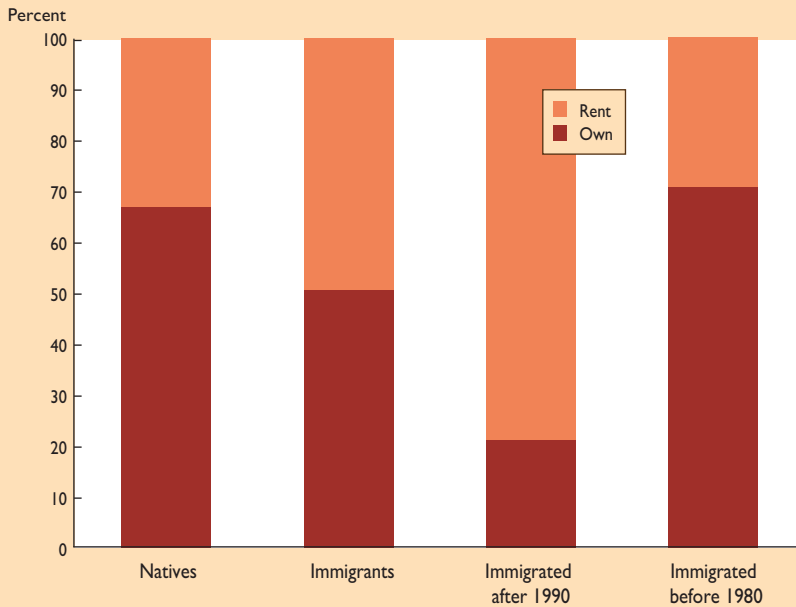
Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

Median Household Income, 2000



Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

Homeownership in New England, 2000



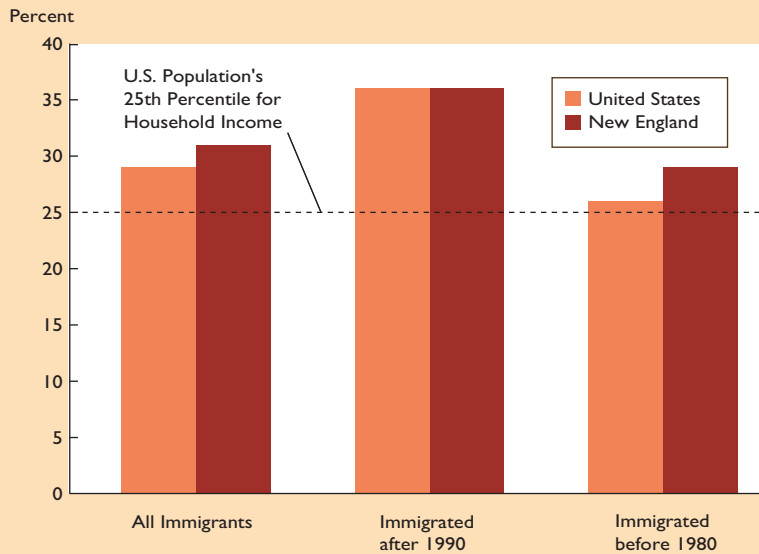
Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

region. Moreover, while the bulk of the region's college-educated persons are employed in high-skill occupations, a higher percentage of college-educated immigrants are employed in traditionally lower paying occupations. For example, 6.2 percent of college-educated immigrants are employed in service occupations, compared with 4.8 percent of native college graduates. Likewise, 3.3 percent of these immigrants have production jobs versus only 1.4 percent of natives.

Homeownership

New England immigrants are just as likely to be homeowners as immigrants throughout the United States. About half of all foreign-born households own their homes, lower than the native born homeownership rate, which nationally is close to 70 percent. Among more established immigrants, New Englanders are more likely to be homeowners than the rest of the U.S. foreign-born population; however, the reverse is true for more recent immigrants. Seeming to face higher barriers to homeownership than immigrants in the rest of the country, only 21 percent of the region's recent immigrants are homeowners, compared with 25 percent of all recent immigrants in the United States.

Low-Income Households, 2000



Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

Small, but Significant

Understanding the unique attributes of New England's foreign-born population is important since New England is increasingly reliant on foreign immigration to sustain its population, productivity, and economic growth. The region's immigrants are not the same as California's immigrants. They are unlike Florida's and Texas'. From their countries of origin to their length of residence, the region's foreign-born population is distinctly New England's own.

Detailed profiles of the region's foreign-born population are available on the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's Community Affairs web site: www.bos.frb.org/commdev