

# Education and Ethnicity in Southeastern Massachusetts II: 1980 to 2000 (A Continuing Challenge)

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**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS  
DARTMOUTH**

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## 1.00 Introduction – Purpose of Report

There are significant numbers of Portuguese in Southeastern Massachusetts, which is a region comprised of forty-eight cities and towns in Bristol, Plymouth, and Norfolk Counties.<sup>1</sup> A “Portuguese Archipelago” cuts a swath across the eastern and southern sections of the Southeast region and consists of 21 cities and towns in Bristol and Plymouth Counties.<sup>2</sup> The Portuguese Archipelago has a total population of 516,612 (U.S. Census 2000). The major cities in the area, which account for about 55 percent of the area’s population, are Attleboro, Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton.

More than thirty percent (30.5%) of the residents in this ethnic archipelago (N=132,376) are primarily of Portuguese heritage, which is nearly three times that of any other ancestry group in the area.<sup>3</sup> Approximately half of Fall River’s residents (49.6%), 43.0 percent of Dartmouth’s residents, 41.2 percent of New Bedford’s residents, and 39.4 percent of Somerset’s residents claim Portuguese as their primary ancestry (U.S. Census STF3, 2000). Other communities in this archipelago, including Acushnet, Swansea, Westport, Dighton, Fairhaven, Taunton, and Seekonk have more than twenty percent of their residents who are primarily of Portuguese ancestry.<sup>4</sup>

Historically, the area’s Portuguese-Americans have had lower levels of formal education in comparison to other ethnic groups in the state and region. This fact was first documented in a study by Toby E. Huff, which was published by the New England Board of Higher Education in 1989. Huff’s study on “Education and Ethnicity in Southeastern Massachusetts” examined the educational attainment levels of the Portuguese in Southeastern Massachusetts from 1950 to 1980.<sup>5</sup> His report analyzed variables correlated with educational attainment, such as patterns of immigration, assimilation, and language skills and concluded that while the educational levels of Portuguese Americans lagged those of many other ancestry groups in the area, there was also a “regional factor” that explained the lower educational attainment levels in Southeastern Massachusetts in comparison to the state as a whole.

Huff’s regional factor was primarily correlated to the recent arrival of the Southeast region’s foreign-born population, particularly its Portuguese American immigrants, when compared to other groups and areas of the state. Large numbers of Portuguese immigrated to Southeastern Massachusetts during the late 1960s and early 1970s, which was much later than many other European ethnic groups residing in the area. More than two-thirds (66.9%) of the area’s foreign born Portuguese immigrated during these two decades, which was a time when the Portuguese government only required four to six

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<sup>1</sup> There is no standard definition of Southeastern Massachusetts. The region is often defined to include the four cities of Bristol County (Attleboro, Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton) and their surrounding towns, while another definition includes all of Bristol County and parts of Plymouth County (Southeast Regional Planning & Economic Development District). The region is sometimes defined as Bristol, Plymouth, and Barnstable Counties (Massachusetts Office of Business Development). This report uses the definition of Southeastern Massachusetts developed by the Massachusetts Benchmarks Project (see, <http://www.benchmarks.org>).

<sup>2</sup> The definition of the Portuguese Archipelago for this report is based on the Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) definitions from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Persons of Portuguese heritage in this report do not include Brazilians or Cape Verdeans. In 2000, there were 11,057 Cape Verdeans and 1,233 Brazilians in the Portuguese Archipelago.

<sup>4</sup> Ancestry refers to a person’s ethnic origin or descent, cultural heritage, or the place of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before arrival in the United States. In the U.S. Census, the term “primary ancestry” includes persons who report only Portuguese as their ethnic group or persons who report Portuguese first and then some other group. The term “secondary ancestry” includes persons who report Portuguese second and some other group first (2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing).

<sup>5</sup> Huff, Toby E. 1989. “Education and Ethnicity in Southeastern Massachusetts,” *New England Board of Higher Education: Issues in Planning and Policymaking* (Boston: New England Board of Higher Education, ), pp. 1-8.



years of formal education. Thus, most Portuguese immigrants arrived in the region with very little formal educational attainment. Thus, lower levels of educational attainment in Southeastern Massachusetts were only partially attributed to the cultural orientation of the Portuguese population, but the report's conclusion also anticipates that their educational attainment should improve over time, particularly as immigration slowed and second generation Portuguese Americans benefited from educational opportunities in the United States.

Given their numbers in the regional population, the expectation of educational improvement was considered highly important to the region's future economic and civic development. First, the correlation between incomes and formal education has been growing stronger in the United States over the last three decades.<sup>6</sup> In 1975, full-time, year-round workers with a bachelor's degree had 1.5 times the annual earnings of workers with only a high school diploma. By 1999, this ratio had risen to 1.8 times the earnings of 1975 high school graduates. Additionally, workers with advanced degrees, who earned 1.8 times the earnings of high school graduates in 1975, averaged 2.6 times the earnings of workers with a high school diploma in 1999.<sup>7</sup> During the same period, the relative earnings of the least educated workers fell. In 1975, full-time year-round workers without a high school diploma earned 0.9 times those with a high school diploma. By 1999 this group was earning only 0.7 times the average earnings of high school graduates. Beyond earnings, education also has a major affect on the types of jobs for which people qualify, their ability to change jobs, the chances of promotion, and it generally exerts an influence on a person's overall quality of life. The more highly educated a person, the less likely they are to experience unemployment. Furthermore, it is well-established in the academic literature on political behavior and civic participation that low levels of political and civic participation are strongly correlated with low educational attainment and low incomes.<sup>8</sup>

This report is a follow-up to Huff's 1989 study that examines changes in the formal educational attainment of Portuguese Americans in the Portuguese Archipelago from 1980 to 2000. It compares the educational attainment of persons of Portuguese ancestry to non-Portuguese residents and to those of other ancestries in the area.<sup>9</sup> The report explores several factors that are correlated with educational attainment, such as foreign birth, year of immigration, age, and English ability, while it also compares the educational attainment of foreign born to native born Portuguese. Finally, the report examines some of the outcomes of education correlated with educational attainment such as income and occupation.

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<sup>6</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 1989* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989); National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2004* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. *The Big Payoff: Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings*. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Raymond E. Wolfinger and Steven J. Rosenstone, *Who Votes?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

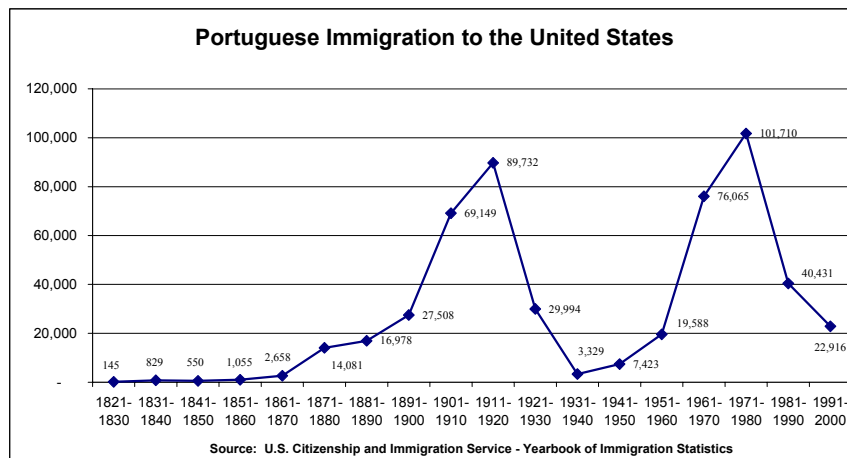
<sup>9</sup> The majority of the education data in this report was obtained from the U.S. Census PUMS data files. While the geographic definitions of the PUMS areas have changed from 1980 to 1990 to 2000, the core of each geographic definition has remained essentially the same. Because there are significant differences in the geographic definitions before 1980, this report does not examine data prior to 1980.



## 2.00 Portuguese of the United States

Portugal and its former colonies historically have one of the highest emigration rates in Europe.<sup>10</sup> Portuguese immigrants from the Azores, the Madeiras, the Cape Verde islands, and continental Portugal have arrived in the United States since the early 1800's. U.S. immigration figures do not distinguish among the various origins of Portuguese immigrants, and historical records of emigration from Portugal are poor, but most studies estimate that Azoreans constitute between two-thirds and three-fourths of all Portuguese in the United States.<sup>11</sup> Portuguese immigration to the United States occurred mainly during two major waves related to economic (1890-1910) and political (1950-1970) factors in Portugal (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



The first recorded group of Portuguese immigrants arrived in the United States in 1820. The majority of these immigrants were Azorean men who worked on American whaling vessels. An expanding whaling industry and poor living conditions in the Azores increased the level of Portuguese immigration during the 1860's and 1870's, which was the heyday of U.S. whaling trade.<sup>12</sup> Azorean migration to the United States accelerated in the early 1900's as social networks developed between native Azoreans and friends and family members who resided in America.<sup>13</sup> These social networks played a major role in determining where Portuguese immigrants settled in the United States. Much of the first wave of Portuguese immigration was concentrated in a number of Southeastern Massachusetts communities, where immigrants soon found employment in the area's booming textile, apparel, and

<sup>10</sup> Barrow, Clyde W. ed., 2002. *Portuguese-Americans and Contemporary Civic Culture in Massachusetts* (North Dartmouth, MA: Center for Portuguese Study and Culture, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth).

<sup>11</sup> Graves, A.R. "Immigrants in Agriculture: The Portuguese Californians, 1850-1970s" (PhD. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles), 34-38.

<sup>12</sup> Everett S. Allen, *Children of the Light: The Rise and Fall of New Bedford Whaling and the Death of the Arctic Fleet* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1973).

<sup>13</sup> Jerry R. Williams, *And Yet They Come: Portuguese Immigration from the Azores to the United States* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1982).



fishing industries.<sup>14</sup> By 1900, Massachusetts temporarily surpassed California in having the largest Portuguese population in the country.

Portuguese immigration began to slow in the 1920's due to new U.S. immigration policies, which purposely restricted immigration from southern Europe by establishing literacy requirements and a quota system. Substantial Portuguese immigration would not occur again until the 1960's when the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 eliminated the quota system and replaced it with a system of preferential categories. The Act gave immigration preference to the spouses, siblings, sibling's spouses, and sibling's children of U.S. residents who applied to enter the United States. These preferences were used heavily by Portuguese immigrants.<sup>15</sup> Following this change in U.S. immigration policy, at least 177,775 Portuguese immigrants arrived in the United States and, by 1975, the number of immigrants arriving from Portugal exceeded that of every other country in Europe.<sup>16</sup>

Portuguese immigration to the United States has slowed considerably since the home country's political revolution, although the United States is still the world's largest host to Portuguese immigrants. The U.S. Census estimates that there were 916,581 persons of Portuguese ancestry in the United States in 2000, an increase from 900,060 in 1990 (U.S. Census SF3 2000). The Portuguese are primarily concentrated in eight states, with the highest numbers of Portuguese in California and Massachusetts, although Rhode Island contains the highest percentage of Portuguese as a percentage of the state total (see Table 1). There are significant regional differences within the United States in the patterns of Portuguese immigration. Portuguese immigrants to California are primarily from the Azores, while immigrants to Hawaii are primarily from the Madeiran islands and the island of Sao Miguel in the Azores. Emigrants from Sao Miguel and Madeira settled primarily in the East, including the Portuguese Archipelago, while Portuguese immigrants to western Massachusetts are generally from the mainland.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 1**

The Portuguese of the United States Primary Ancestry Portuguese				
State	1990		2000	
	Number	% State Total	Number	% State Total
California	275,492	1.00%	254,541	0.88%
Massachusetts	241,173	4.30%	232,472	4.26%
Rhode Island	76,773	8.20%	74,323	8.13%
New Jersey	56,928	0.80%	63,568	0.86%
Florida	23,975	0.29%	37,113	0.28%
Connecticut	35,523	1.20%	36,255	1.23%
New York	34,455	0.20%	34,282	0.21%
Hawaii	39,748	5.20%	32,156	2.95%
All Other States	115,993	0.10%	151,871	0.10%
Total:	900,060		916,581	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, STF3 File

<sup>14</sup> Aluisio Medeiros da Rosa Borges. 1990. *The Portuguese Working Class in the Durfee Rosa Borges, The Portuguese Working Class in the Durfee Mills of Fall River, Massachusetts* (Binghamton: State University of New York, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1990); Philip T. Silvia, Jr., *The Spindle City: Labor, Politics, and Religion in Fall River, 1870-195*, 2 Vols. (New York: P.T. Silvia, 1973).

<sup>15</sup> see, Ribeiro, *Portuguese Immigrants and Education*.

<sup>16</sup> Curriculum Research and Development Center, *The Need to Develop a System for the Assessment/Testing of Portuguese Speaking Students* (Kingston, RI: University of Rhode Island, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> Williams, Jerry R. *In Pursuit of Their Dreams: A History of Azorean Immigration to the United States* (North Dartmouth, MA: Center for Portuguese Study and Culture. University of Massachusetts Dartmouth., 2005), p. 26.



### 3.00 Portuguese of Massachusetts

There are 232,472 residents in Massachusetts who claim Portuguese as their primary ancestry, or 4.3% of the state’s total reported ancestries (U.S. Census SF3 2000). 7 (see Figure 2). Fall River (49.6%), Dartmouth (43.0%), New Bedford (41.2%), Somerset (39.4%), and Acushnet (36.9%) have the highest percentage of residents who are primarily of Portuguese ancestry, although there are 24 towns and cities statewide that have a Portuguese population of 10 percent or greater (see Table 2).

Figure 2

### The Portuguese of Massachusetts

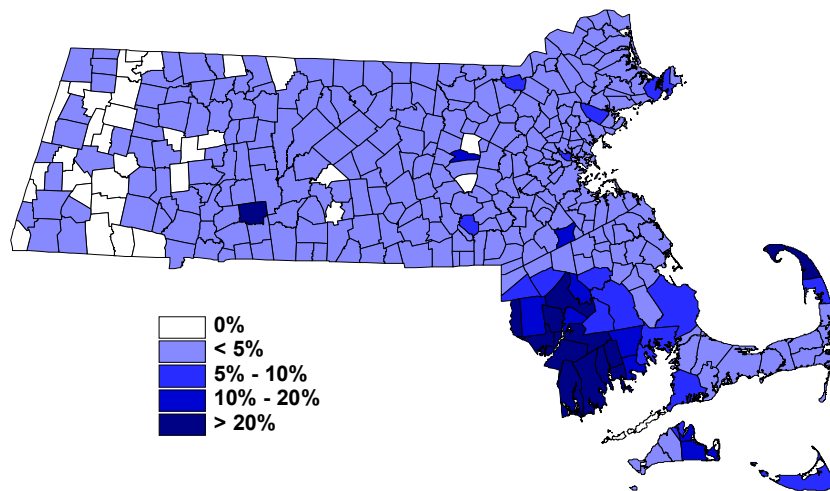


Table 2

Major Portuguese Communities in Massachusetts, 2000					
Primary Ancestry Portuguese					
<u>Town/City</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Town/City</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Fall River	39,475	49.6%	Truro	458	23.2%
Dartmouth	11,054	43.0%	Provincetown	672	22.6%
New Bedford	33,308	41.2%	Seekonk	2,644	22.3%
Somerset	6,621	39.4%	Rehoboth	1,815	19.9%
Acushnet	3,380	36.9%	Berkley	973	19.5%
Swansea	4,935	34.3%	Hudson	2,112	13.1%
Westport	4,263	34.2%	Mattapoisett	679	12.7%
Dighton	1,723	33.2%	Raynham	1,257	12.3%
Fairhaven	4,357	30.8%	Rochester	486	11.8%
Freetown	2,111	28.4%	Stoughton	2,573	11.0%
Taunton	13,440	28.3%	Edgartown	347	10.5%
Ludlow	4,322	25.2%	Oak Bluffs	359	10.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, STF3 File



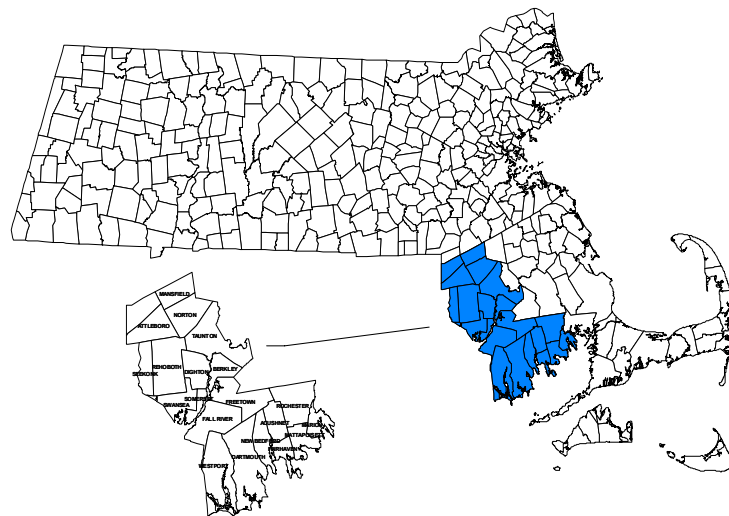


## 4.00 Background of the Portuguese Archipelago

The Portuguese Archipelago consists of 21 cities and towns in Bristol and Plymouth Counties (see Figure 3).<sup>18</sup> The area has a total population of 516,612 (U.S. Census 2000). The major cities in the area, which account for about 55 percent of the area's population, are Attleboro, Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton. The Portuguese Archipelago is geographically and economically diverse. The coastal areas are occupied by working ports, upscale marinas, and pristine beaches. National historical districts are within walking distance of advanced research laboratories, while farms and cranberry bogs surround traditional manufacturing centers that are in the process of shifting to computer-assisted production technologies.

**Figure 3**

### Portuguese Archipelago



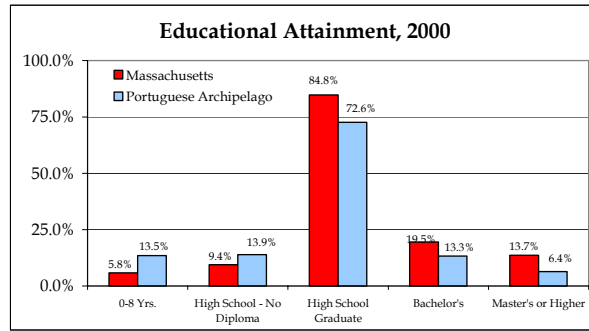
The area has nearly always been perceived as distinct from the rest of the state primarily because of its location and because of income, employment, and educational levels that lag Massachusetts and United States averages by considerable margins. This is especially true of the area's urban centers – Fall River, New Bedford, Taunton, and to a lesser degree Attleboro, - although many of the area's rural and suburban towns have educational attainment levels that are also well below state averages. For example, 27.4 percent of residents in the Portuguese Archipelago did not have a high school diploma in 2000, compared to 15.2 percent statewide (U.S. Census 2000). Similarly, only 19.7 percent of the area's residents had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 33.2 percent statewide (see Figure 4). Per capita income in the Portuguese Archipelago is only \$20,757 (1999), while per capita income is \$25,952 statewide.

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<sup>18</sup> There is no standard definition of Southeastern Massachusetts. The region is often defined to include the four cities of Bristol County (Attleboro, Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton) and their surrounding towns, while another definition includes all of Bristol County and parts of Plymouth County. The definition for this report is based on the Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) definition from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2000.

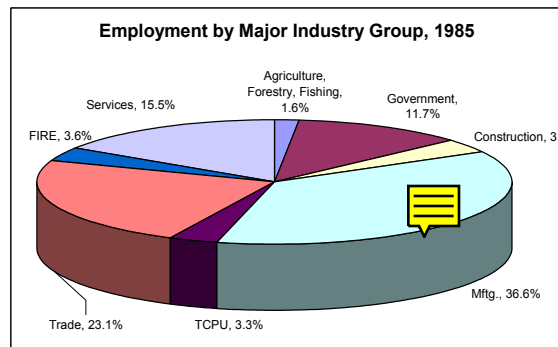


**Figure 4**

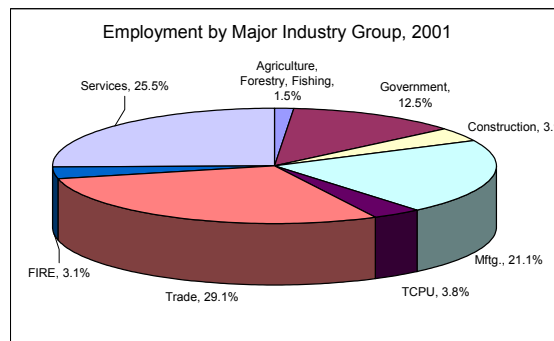


The Portuguese Archipelago also contains pockets of high unemployment. For example, the 2004 annual average unemployment rate was 8.1 percent in Fall River and 8.4 percent in New Bedford, compared to a statewide average of 4.7 percent (LAUS 2004). Furthermore, the most significant employment growth in the area has occurred in low-wage retail and services industries, while the area's higher-paying manufacturing jobs continue to disappear. In 1985, for example, manufacturing employment accounted for 43.4% of total employment in New Bedford and 42.7% in Fall River, whereas manufacturing accounted for only 21.1% of total employment statewide in Massachusetts. However, between 1985 and 2003, manufacturing employment fell by 67.0 percent in New Bedford and 45.7 percent in Fall River. Manufacturing now accounts for only 19.1 percent of employment in New Bedford and 24.5 percent of employment in Fall River, although Fall River and New Bedford are still twice as dependent on manufacturing jobs as the state as a whole. The pie charts below show employment comparisons by major industry group for 1985 and 2001 for the Portuguese Archipelago.

**Figure 5**



**Figure 6**



A consequence of the historically low levels of educational attainment among Portuguese-Americans in the area, like many newly arrived immigrant groups, has been that a significant number are employed in lower-skill jobs, such as manufacturing, and thus this group is affected to a greater degree by the loss of these jobs in the new economy.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the manufacturing jobs that remain require ever-higher skill levels as these jobs become more specialized and technology-based in an age of computer assisted design and manufacturing. It is therefore increasingly important for those who remain employed in these industries to learn the new skills necessary to compete in a knowledge-based economy. The Portuguese of the area have often been lauded for their work ethic, but increasingly their world of work is requiring them to work smart rather than simply work hard.

This also means that for younger Portuguese-Americans, the focus of educational attainment is no longer simply finishing high school, but attaining college experience, especially as the correlation between educational attainment and personal income becomes stronger due to the growing importance of computer, technical, and professional competencies in the workplace. It is no accident that Massachusetts has rebuilt its postwar economy on industries such as financial services, health care, scientific and medical research, and high technology. Massachusetts has the second most highly educated population in country -- and one of the most educated populations in the world. In contrast, the Massachusetts SouthCoast, where Portuguese-Americans are clustered the most densely, not only has one of the lowest rates of educational attainment in Massachusetts, but its income and employment levels are considerably below state averages.

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<sup>19</sup> Toby E. Huff, "Education and Ethnicity in Southeastern Massachusetts," *New England Board of Higher Education: Issues in Planning and Policymaking* (Boston: New England Board of Higher Education, 1989), pp. 1-8.



## 5.00 Portuguese of the Portuguese Archipelago

### 5.10 Major Ancestry Groups

More than thirty percent (30.5%) of the residents in the Portuguese Archipelago (N=132,376) are primarily of Portuguese heritage.<sup>20</sup> This percentage is nearly three times that of any other ancestry group (see Table 3). Eleven of the twenty-one cities and towns in the area have at least twenty percent of residents who claim Portuguese as their primary ancestry.

**Table 3**

Major Ancestry Groups in Portuguese Archipelago		
<u>Primary Ancestry</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>
Portuguese	30.9%	30.5%
Irish	11.8%	12.4%
French	11.2%	9.1%
English	10.9%	8.7%
French Canadian	7.2%	6.6%
Italian	4.7%	6.4%
Polish	3.8%	3.3%
Cape Verdean	no data	2.6%
Puerto Rican	2.4%	2.5%
German	3.5%	2.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, SF3 File; Puerto Rican data from Census SF4 File

### 5.20 Year of Entry and Country of Emigration

More than two-thirds of the Portuguese living in the Portuguese Archipelago arrived between 1960 and 1980 (see Table 4) with nearly all arriving from mainland Portugal/Madeira (74.5%) or the Azores (22.2%) (see Table 5). It is often asserted that a higher percentage of the Portuguese Archipelago's Portuguese emigrated from the Azores. One cause for the lower percentage reported in the Census data is that many Azoreans may have listed Portugal as their country of origin rather than the Azores. Though it has been thirty years since the last major wave of Portuguese immigration ended, the Portuguese are still a newer immigrant group to the area compared to other European ancestries, with the majority of the Portuguese in the area being first or second generation immigrants. However, it is generally accepted that subsequent generations of immigrants become increasingly assimilated to their new country and therefore one would expect that the educational levels of the Portuguese will increase over time.

<sup>20</sup> Persons of Portuguese heritage in this report do not include Brazilians or Cape Verdeans. In 2000, there were 11,057 Cape Verdeans and 1,233 Brazilians in Southeastern Massachusetts, although there is evidence of a much larger population of illegal Brazilian immigrants.



**Table 4**

<b>When Did the Portuguese Arrive?</b>		
<u>Period</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Before 1950	1,008	2.6%
1950 - 1960	2,430	6.4%
1960 - 1970	11,375	29.9%
1970 - 1980	14,069	37.0%
1980 - 1990	6,390	16.8%
1990 - 2000	2,792	7.3%

Note: Data represents Portuguese who were living in the year 2000.  
Source: U.S. Census PUMS 5% File

**Table 5**

<u>Primary Ancestry</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Portugal (Includes Madeira)	28,339	74.45%
Azores Islands	8,439	22.17%
Mexico	244	0.64%
Brazil	243	0.64%
Africa	139	0.37%
Canada	136	0.36%
Cape Verde	114	0.30%
Germany	83	0.22%
Puerto Rico	77	0.20%
Venezuela	48	0.13%
Bolivia	48	0.13%
India	43	0.11%
England	24	0.06%
Bermuda	19	0.05%
Lebanon	18	0.05%
Guam	16	0.04%
South Africa	16	0.04%
Argentina	10	0.03%
Spain	8	0.02%

Note: Data represents those who indicate that they are primarily Portuguese and who were living in the year 2000.  
Source: U.S. Census PUMS 5% File



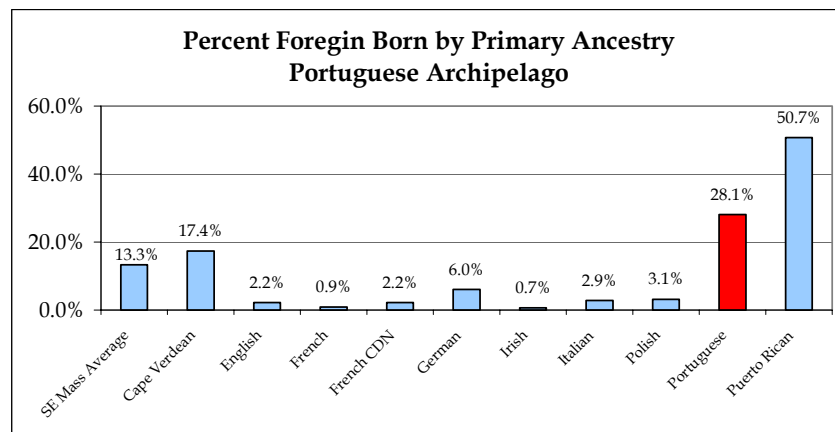
### 5.30 Foreign Born

The education attainment levels of immigrant groups can depend heavily on their country of origin and their time of immigration. Immigrants arrive in the United States with varying levels of formal education, which primarily depends on the educational requirements of their home country and the country's tradition of education. Comparatively newer immigrants to the Portuguese Archipelago, such as those from Portugal, Cape Verde, and Puerto Rico, have had less time to assimilate to America in comparison to earlier arrivals. One would expect the education levels of these first and second generation immigrants to be lower than more established immigrant groups, but that over time, the education gap will narrow.

Many Portuguese also arrived in the United States knowing little English, which had a great effect on their educational pursuits and ultimately their economic success once they settled in this country.<sup>21</sup> Adult Portuguese immigrants, most who had low levels of formal education, were unable or unlikely to enroll in American schools, and even if they desired to do so, their English ability was a major roadblock to success. Additionally, younger Portuguese immigrants with limited English ability who enrolled in American schools likely had more difficulties than students who spoke English well. In fact, students who are the first in their family to attend college are at a disadvantage in terms access and completion of postsecondary education. Once in college, their relative disadvantage continues with respect to academic performance. First-time college students have lower bachelor's degree completion rates even after controlling for a wide range of interrelated factors, including students' demographic backgrounds, academic preparation, and academic performance.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the percentage of foreign born immigrants, coupled with their year of immigration, can have a great effect on educational levels and educational success. The Portuguese have one of the highest foreign-born populations in the area, with 28.1% being foreign-born and first or second generation (see Figure 7).<sup>23</sup> This fact has often been attributed as one of the primary factors for the low levels of educational attainment among the area's Portuguese-Americans.

**Figure 7**



<sup>21</sup> Huff, Toby E. 1989. "Education and Ethnicity in Southeastern Massachusetts," *New England Board of Higher Education: Issues in Planning and Policymaking* (Boston: New England Board of Higher Education), pp. 1-8.

<sup>22</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. 2005. *First-Generation Students in Post-Secondary Education*. U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences.

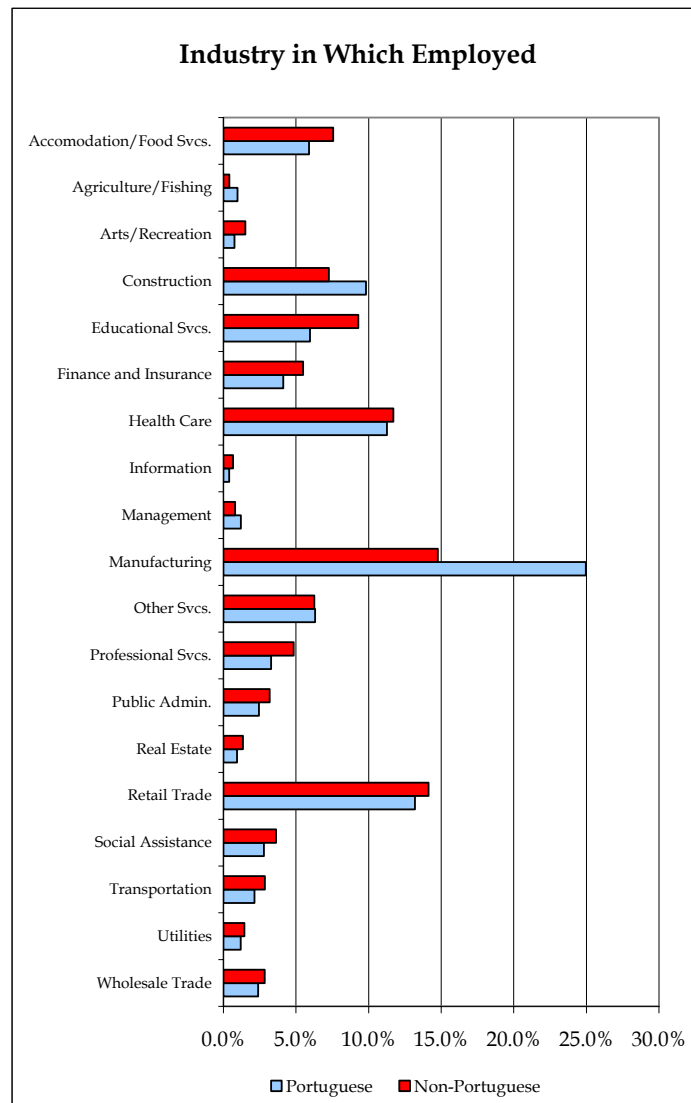
<sup>23</sup> Foreign-born does not include those born in U.S. territories or foreign-born of American parents.



## 5.40 Industry and Occupation

Low skill manufacturing jobs have historically been a point of entry into the workforce for immigrant groups in the area. Traditional manufacturing jobs, especially in the textile and apparel industries, required little education or language ability and immigrants were often hired through family or ethnic ties. Despite the significant loss of manufacturing jobs in the area over the last thirty years, many Portuguese continue to work in these industries; a quarter of Portuguese (25.0%) in the area are employed in manufacturing industries, a much higher percentage than non-Portuguese (14.8%) (see Figure 8). High percentages of Portuguese are also employed in the retail (13.2%), health care (11.3%), and construction (9.8%) industries). Portuguese are also more likely to be employed in construction (9.8%), other services (6.3%), management (1.2%), and agriculture/fishing (1.0%). However, those employed in management positions are employed predominately in manufacturing, which is a declining sector in the area (see Table 6).

Figure 8



Source: PUMS 5% File 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau)

Adults 16 years of age and older.



The Portuguese of the Portuguese Archipelago are primarily employed in lower skill and lower wage occupations such as sewing machine operators, home health aides, secretaries, production workers, construction laborers, janitors and building cleaners, ground maintenance workers, and retail salespersons, although there are also significant numbers employed in higher skill occupations such as teachers and registered nurses (see Table 6).

**Table 6**

Primary Occupation and Wage, 2000					
	Portuguese		SE Mass Non-Portuguese		
	Number	% Total Occupations	Number	% Total Occupations	Annual Median Wage
Sewing Machine Operators	3,713	4.5%	1,574	0.7%	\$ 19,672
Nursing, Psychiatric, and Home Health Aides	2,457	3.0%	4,960	2.2%	\$ 24,619
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	2,345	2.8%	6,417	2.8%	\$ 27,454
Other Production Workers	2,143	2.6%	3,083	1.3%	\$ 21,580
Retail Salespersons	1,984	2.4%	6,349	2.8%	\$ 18,235
Cashiers	1,817	2.2%	6,144	2.7%	\$ 17,248
Driver/Sales Workers and Truck Drivers	1,761	2.1%	5,423	2.4%	\$ 31,844
Janitors and Building Cleaners	1,648	2.0%	2,963	1.3%	\$ 22,901
Construction Laborers	1,574	1.9%	1,898	0.8%	\$ 40,140
Elementary and Middle School Teachers	1,524	1.8%	5,848	2.6%	\$ 51,046
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales Workers	1,313	1.6%	4,515	2.0%	\$ 32,846
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Production Workers	1,272	1.5%	2,168	0.9%	\$ 44,497
Waiters and Waitresses	1,266	1.5%	3,591	1.6%	\$ 19,037
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	1,264	1.5%	3,592	1.6%	\$ 18,097
Carpenters	1,236	1.5%	2,659	1.2%	\$ 35,555
Customer Service Representatives	1,208	1.5%	4,097	1.8%	\$ 29,568
Office Clerks, General	1,011	1.2%	2,502	1.1%	\$ 24,011
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1,004	1.2%	2,961	1.3%	\$ 29,296
Registered Nurses	1,003	1.2%	4,931	2.2%	\$ 45,106
Grounds Maintenance Workers	949	1.1%	1,210	0.5%	\$ 25,384

Source: Employment Data: U.S. Census PUMS 5% File 2000  
Average Median Wage Data: Massachusetts Division of Career Services/Unemployment Assistance, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2003  
% total occupations represents the percentage for each group, not a percentage of the total occupations in the region.





## 6.00 Portuguese and Education

Most of the Portuguese immigrants to the area arrived with very little educational capital as Portugal has one of the lowest levels of schooling in the European Union. Only three years of education was compulsory until 1956, when the number of years was increased to four years.<sup>24</sup> The number of years increased to six years in 1964 and to nine years in the mid-1980s. The Portuguese education system currently consists of nine years of compulsory education for children between 6 and 15 years of age. Secondary education - public, private and cooperative - is not compulsory and consists of a three-year cycle after basic education. It is estimated that during the 1990s only 30 percent of children attended secondary schools (which at that time were roughly equivalent to junior and senior high schools in the United States) and only 12 percent were enrolled in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>25</sup> In 2002, the average years of school completed for the adult Portuguese population (25 to 64 years of age) was 8.0 (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development).<sup>26</sup> Of the thirty OECD countries, only Mexico has a lower educational attainment rate (7.4 years).

Attending a Portuguese university before the Revolution of 1974 was confined almost exclusively to students from wealthy families. However, college attendance in Portugal has increased steadily since this period. For example, in 1971, only 7.9 percent of adults 20 to 24 years of age were enrolled in an institution of higher education. This percentage increased to 11.0% in 1981, 24.4% in 1991, 44.3% in 1996, and 49.6% in 2003.<sup>27</sup>



## 6.10 Educational Attainment by Primary Ancestry

### 6.11 High School Graduates

The Portuguese of the Portuguese Archipelago have a significantly lower percentage of high school graduates in comparison to most of the major ethnic groups in the area and the state average. For example, in 1980, 31.9% of Portuguese attained a high school diploma. In 2000, just over half (55.2%) of Portuguese Americans in the area had a high school diploma.<sup>28</sup> Puerto Ricans are the only group with a lower percentage of adults with a high school diploma in 2000.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Only for boys. It was increased to 4 years for girls in 1960.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.country-studies.com/portugal/education.html>

<sup>26</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Education at a Glance Tables: <http://www.oecd.org/>

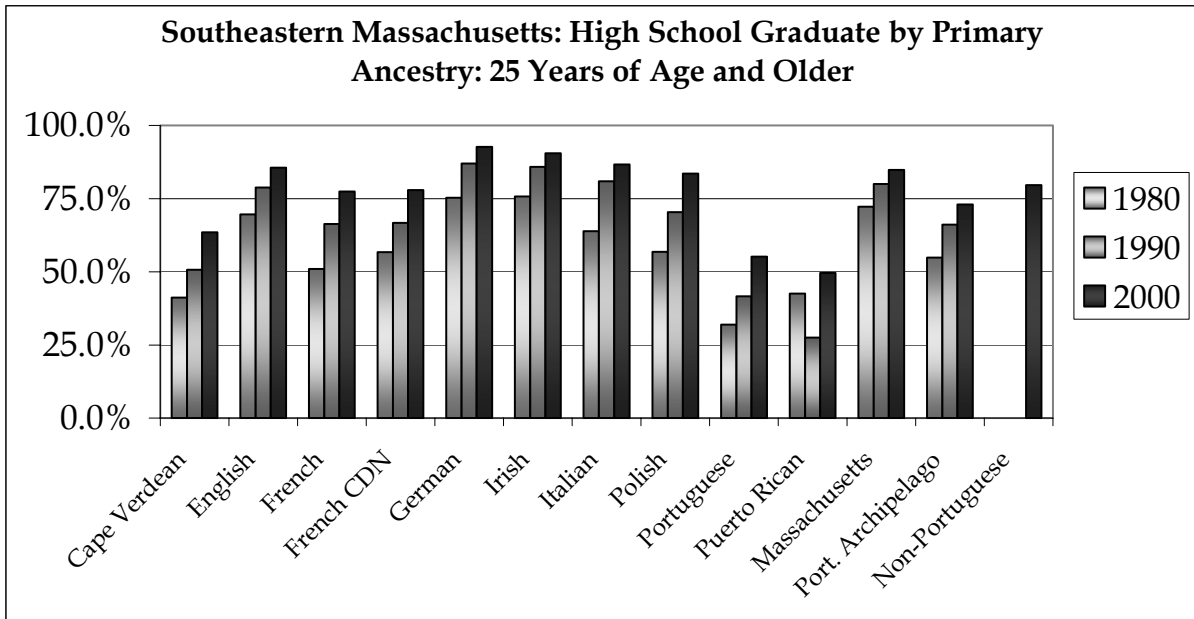
<sup>27</sup> Dima, Ana-Maria. 2005. *Higher Education in Portugal – Country Report*. Center for Higher Education Policy Studies, University of Twente, The Netherlands.

<sup>28</sup> Data for non-Portuguese is only available for 2000.

<sup>29</sup> The 1980 U.S. Census asked respondents to indicate the highest grade of schooling completed. In the 1990 and 2000 Census respondents were provided categories, e.g. high school diploma, some college, Bachelor's degree.



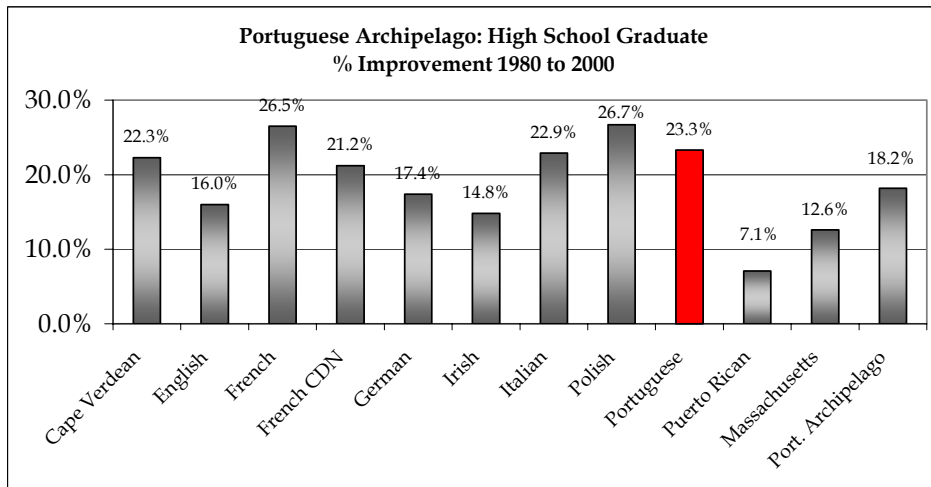
**Figure 9**



Source: 2000 - U.S. PUMS 5% File, U.S. Census Bureau; 1980 & 1990 Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota. (Residents 25 years of age and older). Note: There is no data for the Portuguese Archipelago for 1980 and 1990.

As Figure 10 shows, the increase in the percentage of Portuguese who were high school graduates increased by 23.3% from 1980 to 2000, which is the third highest increases among the major ancestry groups and is higher than the average improvement of 18.2% among these groups.

**Figure 10**



Source: 2000 - U.S. PUMS 5% File, U.S. Census Bureau; 1980 & 1990 Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota. (Residents 25 years of age and older).



## 6.12 College Graduates

While the Portuguese have made one of the highest gains among the major ancestry groups in terms of high school graduation, they have made only a small improvement in college level attainment. A college education is becoming a necessity to compete in new sectors and new occupations of the post-industrial economy. It is now estimated that nearly two-thirds of the new jobs created in the United States requires some level of post-secondary education. Approximately one-third of the new jobs are expected to require at least a baccalaureate degree, while another one-third are expected to require a two-year associate's degree or certification by a technical-vocational institute.<sup>30</sup> With an economy based on financial services, business and professional services, and high-tech manufacturing, Massachusetts has become the archetype of a post-industrial economy. Indeed, consistent with earlier projections, the 2000 U.S. Census reports that 33.2 percent of Massachusetts residents now have a bachelor's degree or higher, while nearly 85 percent have at least a high school diploma.

On the other hand, formal educational attainment in the Portuguese Archipelago remains far behind the state as a whole and current high school drop-out rates do not bode well for the future. Whereas high school graduation was a path to success in the region's old manufacturing economy, college graduation is ever more crucial to compete in the new post-industrial economy. Thus, even as the Portuguese catch up to the demands of the region's declining old economy through improved high school graduation rates, the economic base is shifting ahead of them by requiring more college experience, which means that the Portuguese are being left behind by post-industrial economy despite some improvement in their educational attainment.

In the baseline year of 1980, only 5.0% of Portuguese held a Bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>31</sup> This rate improved to 7.2% in 1990 and 9.7% in 2000. In comparison, 27.0% of residents in the area and 33.2% of residents statewide held a Bachelor's degree or higher in 2000 (see

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<sup>30</sup> William B. Johnston, *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the Twenty-First Century* (Indianapolis: Hudson Institute, 1987); G.T. Silvestri and J.M. Lukasiewicz, "Projections 2000: A Look at Occupational Employment Trends to the Year 2000," *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 110, No. 9 (September 1987): 46-69; Garth L. Mangum, *Youth and America's Future* (New York: William T. Grant Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship, 1989).

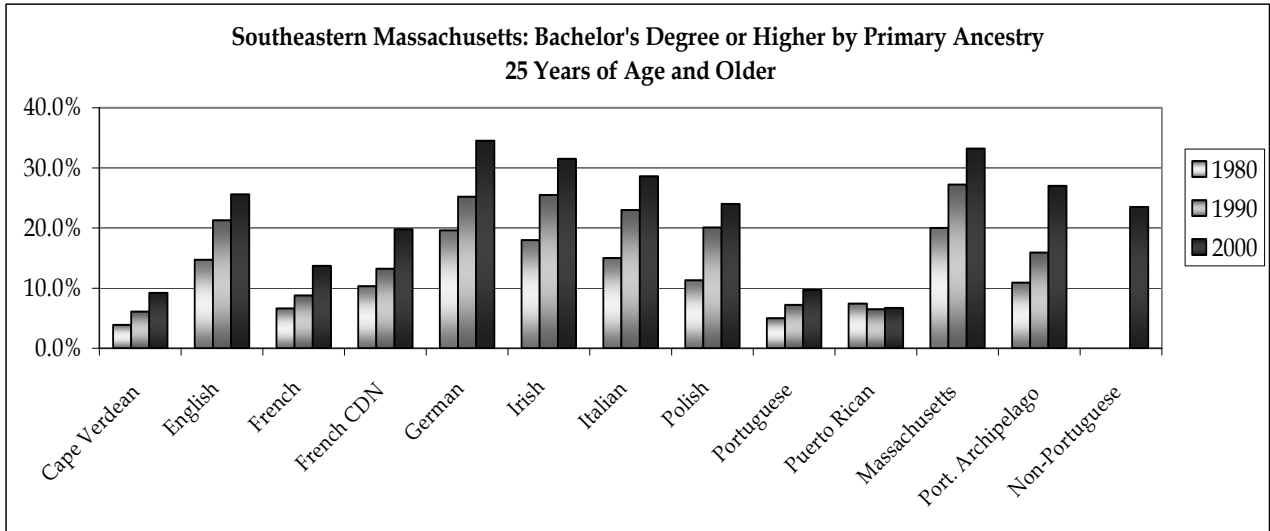
<sup>31</sup> Data for non-Portuguese is only available for 2000.



Figure 11).



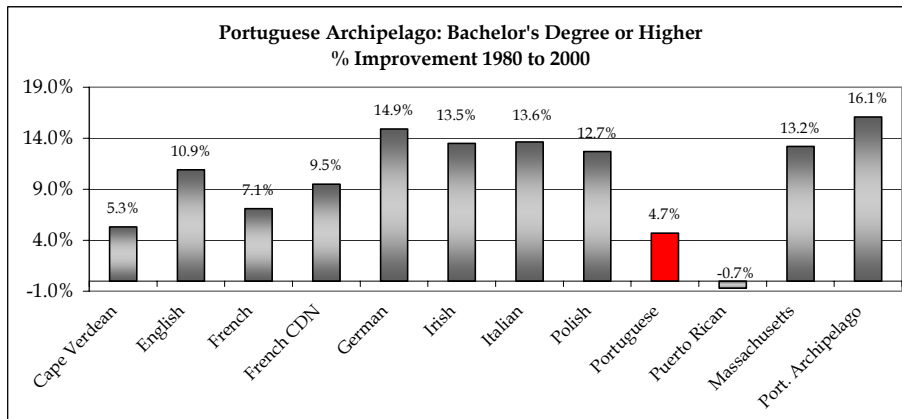
**Figure 11**



Source: 2000 - U.S. PUMS 5% File, U.S. Census Bureau; 1980 & 1990 Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota. (Residents 25 years of age and older). Note: There is no data for the Portuguese Archipelago for 1980 and 1990.

The rate of improvement in the percentage of Portuguese who attained a four year degree or higher is much lower in comparison to most other major ancestry categories. From 1980 to 2000, the percentage of Portuguese with a Bachelor's degree or higher increased by only 4.7%, compared to 13.2% area-wide and 16.1% statewide (see Figure 12). This is a small gain considering the low levels of college graduation among Portuguese in the baseline year.

**Figure 12**



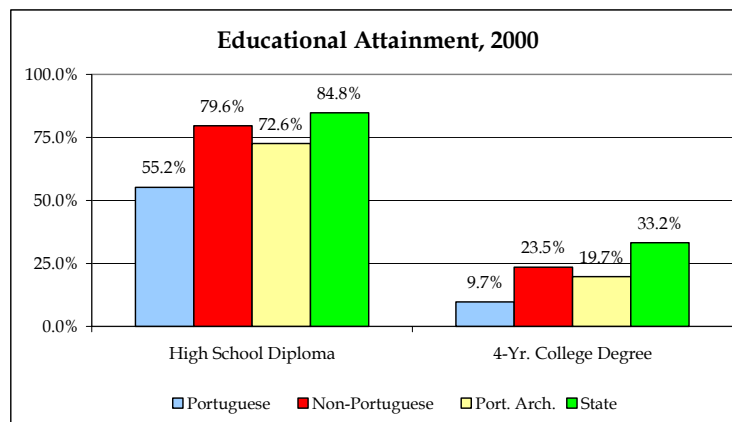
Source: 2000 - U.S. PUMS 5% File, U.S. Census Bureau; 1980 & 1990 Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota. (Residents 25 years of age and older).



## 6.20 Educational Attainment of Portuguese and Non-Portuguese

The high school and college educational attainment rates of the area's Portuguese are below the area, state, and non-Portuguese averages (see Figure 13). For example, just over half of Portuguese had a high school diploma in 2000, compared to 79.6% of non-Portuguese, 72.6% of the area, and 84.8% statewide. Similarly, 9.7% of Portuguese residents have a four-year college degree, compared to 23.5% of non-Portuguese, 19.7% of the area, and 33.2% of the state. Importantly, education levels of non-Portuguese in the Portuguese Archipelago are below state averages, especially in terms of four-year college degrees. Thus, lower levels of educational attainment in the Portuguese Archipelago are not simply a result of low educational levels among the Portuguese, but are partly a result of low education levels among all residents, which was also a conclusion of Huff's 1989 study.

Figure 13



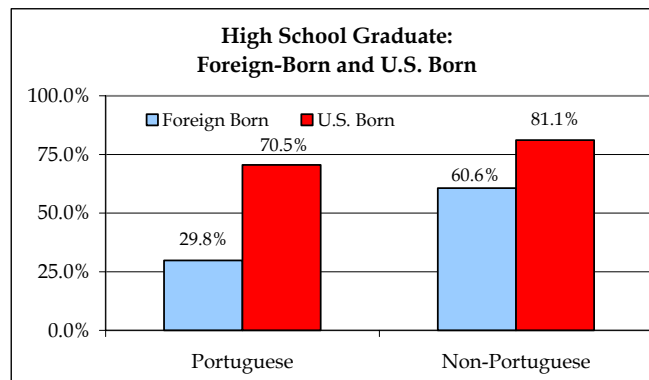
Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000)  
Residents 25 years of age and older.



## 6.21 Foreign Born and Native born by Education

There are significant differences in the educational levels between foreign born and Native born Portuguese and this difference explains some, but not all, of the difference between the educational levels of Portuguese and non-Portuguese residents in the area. For example, only 29.8% of foreign born Portuguese have a high school diploma, compared to 70.5% of their American born counterparts, although this percentage is still below the state average (see Figure 14). The difference is smaller among non-Portuguese, although still significant; 60.6% of foreign born non-Portuguese have a high school diploma compared to 81.1% of native born non-Portuguese. Thus, low levels of Portuguese education in the Portuguese archipelago are partly a result the Portuguese education system rather than a systemic problem with residents who are native born.

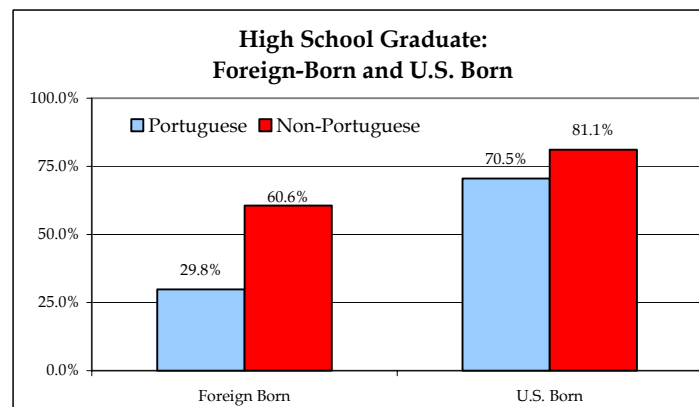
**Figure 14**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000)  
Residents 25 years of age and older.

There also exist major differences in the percentage of college graduates between foreign-born Portuguese and foreign born non-Portuguese; 29.8% of foreign-born Portuguese are high school graduates, compared to 60.6% of foreign born non-Portuguese (see Figure 15). The difference is smaller in terms of Native born Portuguese and non-Portuguese, although it is still greater than 10 percent.

**Figure 15**

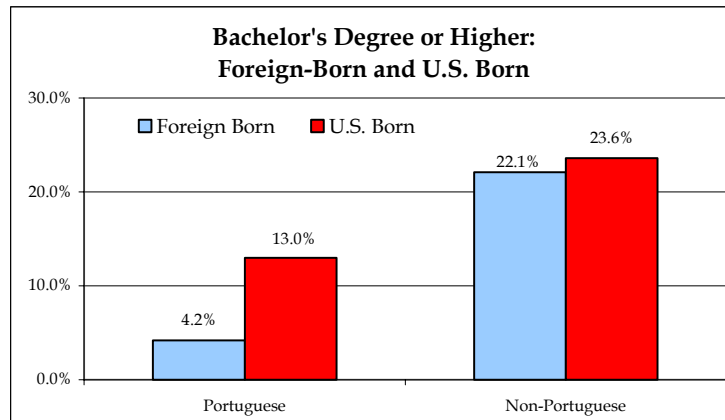


Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000)  
Residents 25 years of age and older.



The same trend between foreign born Portuguese and Native born Portuguese is evident among residents who have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher, with nearly three times the percentage of Native born non-Portuguese (13.0%) attaining a four-year college degree or higher in comparison to foreign born Portuguese (4.2%) (see Figure 16). There exist only small differences in college achievement between foreign born non-Portuguese and Native born non-Portuguese.

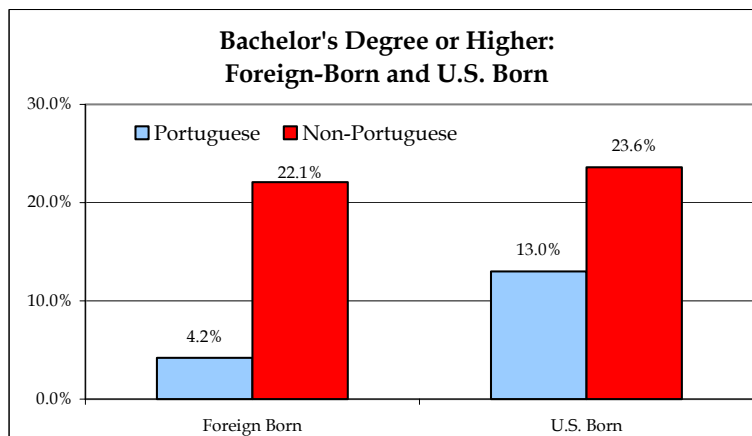
**Figure 16**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000)  
Residents 25 years of age and older.

Four-year college graduation rates are significantly lower for both foreign born and Native born Portuguese in comparison to non-Portuguese groups. For example, only 4.2% of foreign born Portuguese have attained at least a four-year degree compared to 22.1% of foreign born non-Portuguese (see Figure 17). Similarly, 13.0% of Native born Portuguese have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 23.6% of Native born non-Portuguese. Thus, while lower rates of educational attainment among the Portuguese can be attributed to the foreign-born, there are still significant differences, especially at the college level, between Native born Portuguese and non-Portuguese.

**Figure 17**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000)  
Residents 25 years of age and older.



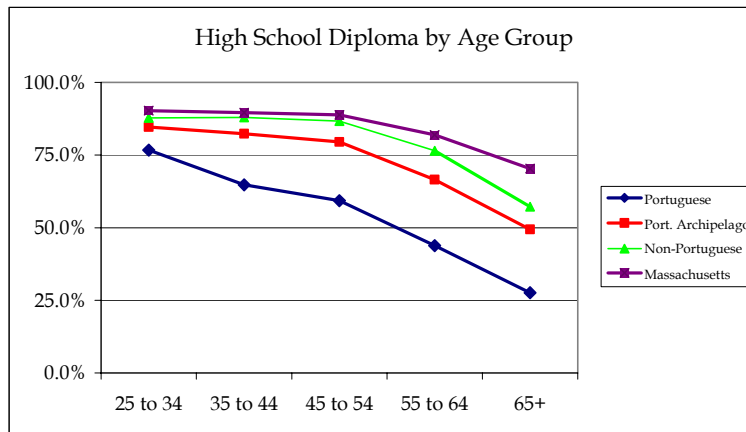


### 6.30 Education by Age Group

As noted earlier, the majority of Portuguese Americans arrived in Southeastern Massachusetts during the 1960's and 1970's, most with very low levels of formal education and limited language skills. One would expect that subsequent generations of Portuguese would achieve higher levels of education or that younger Portuguese immigrants to the area would possess higher levels of education in light of improvements in the Portuguese education system and increased access to higher education.

As Figure 18 shows, the younger the age group, the higher the percentage that have attained their high school diploma and the closer the education gap. This holds true for Portuguese, non-Portuguese, area, and the state averages. However, the Portuguese in each age group still lag their counterparts. For example, in 2000, 76.7% of Portuguese 25 to 34 had a high school diploma, compared to 84.6% of all of the region, 87.8% of non-Portuguese residents, and 90.3% of residents statewide. This pattern holds true for each of the five age categories. Some of the difference may be attributed to a comparatively high percentage of foreign-born Portuguese in each age category.

Figure 18

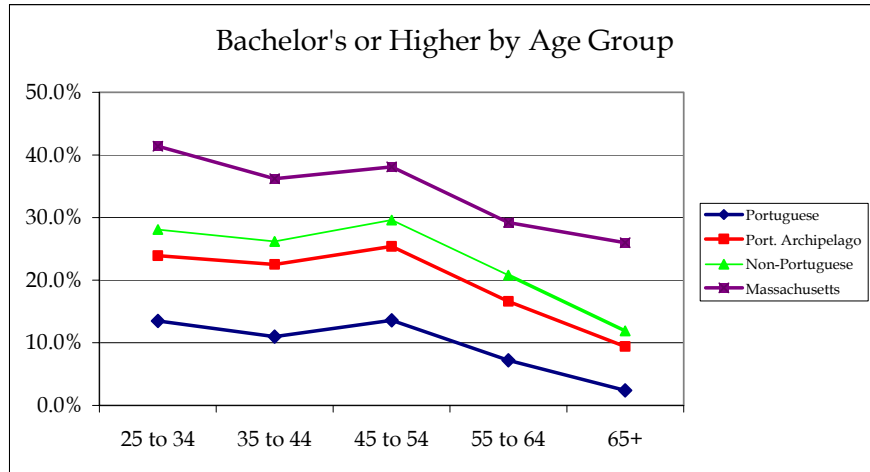


Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).  
Residents 25 years of age and older.



Differences in the percentage who have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher by age category among Portuguese and other groups are even more prominent (see Figure 19). For example, 13.5% of Portuguese age 25 to 34 have a Bachelor's degree or higher, which compares to 23.9% of all residents in the Portuguese Archipelago, 28.1% of non-Portuguese, and 41.4% of residents statewide. Again, this pattern extends to all five age groups.

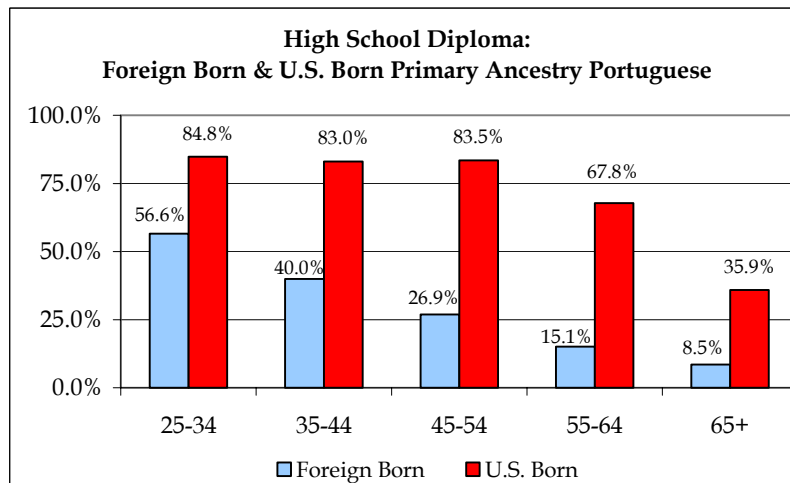
**Figure 19**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Residents 25 years of age and older.

Again, some of the difference in educational attainment between Portuguese and other groups by age can be explained by differences among Native born and foreign born Portuguese. For example, the percentage of foreign born Portuguese in the 25-34 age group who have a high school diploma is 56.6%, compared to 84.8% of Native born Portuguese. This gap increases with each age category, though is narrowed a bit with residents 65 years of age and older (see Figure 20). Foreign born Portuguese also attain four-year college degrees at a lower rate than their U.S. counterparts in terms of each age category (see Figure 21).

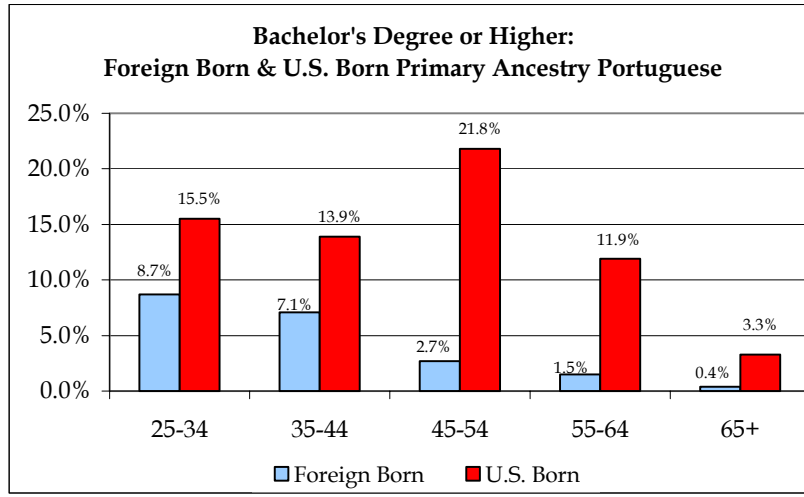
**Figure 20**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Residents 25 years of age and older.



**Figure 21**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).  
Residents 25 years of age and older.

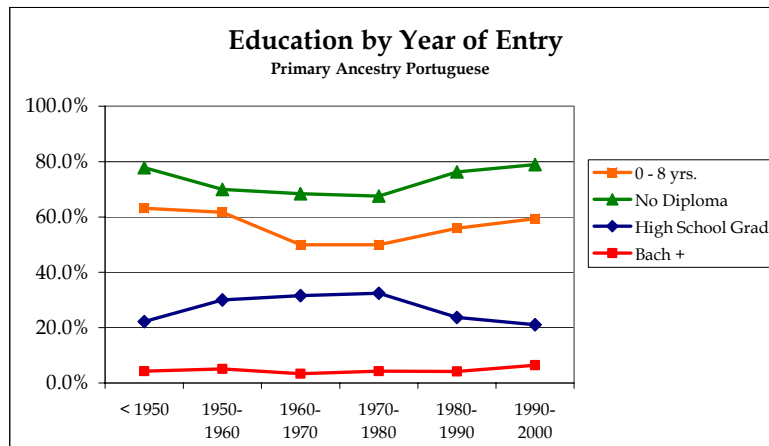


## 6.40 Education by Year of Entry

More than sixty percent of the Portuguese in the area emigrated when only four to six years of formal education was required.<sup>32</sup> Newer immigrants generally come to this country with lower levels of education. Education levels rise as these immigrants assimilate and subsequent generations are born. Thus, the year of entry of Portuguese immigrants may help to explain lower levels of education, even when age is taken into account. For example, American-born Portuguese in the 25-34 year age group have higher levels of educational attainment in comparison to foreign-born individuals of the same age group. Thus, a look at the year of entry may help to explain why Portuguese in similar age groups have lower levels of education.

How educated is the new Portuguese immigrant to the Portuguese Archipelago? As Figure 22 shows, the educational levels of Portuguese immigrants to the area have not improved significantly since 1950. In fact, the overall educational levels of Portuguese immigrants to the Portuguese Archipelago have actually declined over the past thirty years. For example, the percentage of immigrants without a high school diploma is now at its highest level: 79.0% in 2000 compared to 77.8% before 1950. Similarly, the percentage of high school graduates in 2000 was 21.0% compared to 22.2% for those who immigrated before 1950 (see Figure 22).

**Figure 22**



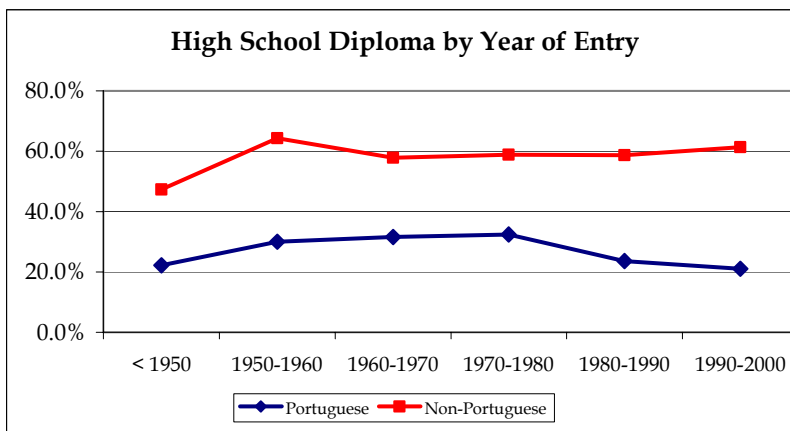
Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).  
Residents 25 years of age and older.

Portuguese immigrants also have significantly lower levels of education compared to non-Portuguese immigrants, regardless of when they arrived in the United States (see Figure 23 and Figure 24). For example, the percentage of Portuguese with a high school diploma who immigrated between 1990 and 2000 is 21.0%, which compares to 61.3% for non-Portuguese. Even more striking, only 6.5% of Portuguese who immigrated between 1990 and 2000 have a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 27.0% of non-Portuguese who immigrated to the area during this period.

<sup>32</sup> The Portuguese education system now requires nine years of study, until the age of fifteen.

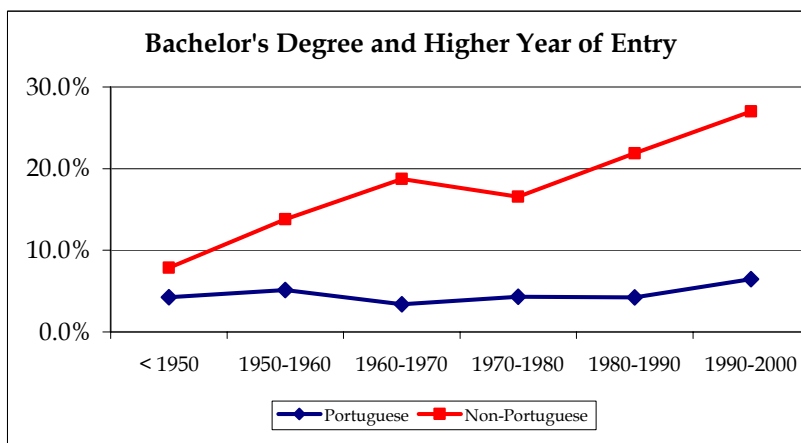


**Figure 23**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).  
Residents 25 years of age and older.

**Figure 24**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).  
Residents 25 years of age and older.

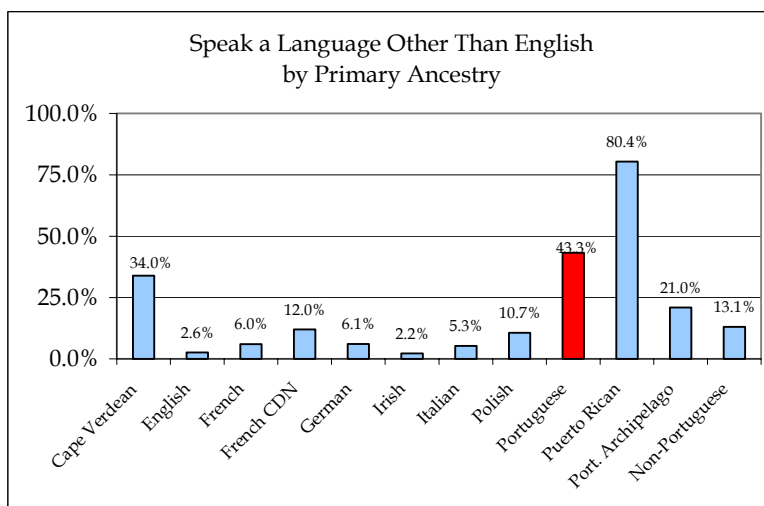


## 6.50 English Ability

Language ability can have a great effect on education. Students who do not speak English well or at all may be more likely to drop out of school than their fluent counterparts. Limited English speakers are also more likely to be restricted in the types of occupations for which they qualify or limited in their chances of promotion. Finally, many Portuguese, especially in the area's urban areas, reside in ethnic neighborhoods, where Portuguese is commonly spoken and where they have access to Portuguese language television, radio, and newspapers, and where they can find employment with little interaction outside their established ethnic boundaries. Since the existence of these enclaves does not encourage Portuguese-Americans to become fluent in English, they remain isolated from the educational process. Thus, a good education alone is not enough. The ability to speak English is becoming increasingly vital to economic success.<sup>33</sup>

On average, an immigrant college graduate who speaks English well earns about \$20,000 less than an immigrant college graduate who speaks only English at home. Thus, the ability to speak English is critical even for those with high educational credentials.<sup>34</sup> More than forty percent (43.3%) of Portuguese in the Portuguese Archipelago speak a language other than English at home (PUMS 5% File 2000). This is higher than the area average of 21.0% and the non-Portuguese average of 13.1% and higher than all of the major ancestries except Puerto Ricans (see Figure 25).

**Figure 25**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).  
Residents 5 years of age and older.

While the Portuguese have the second lowest English-only speaking rate among the major ancestry groups in the area, most are not linguistically isolated. For example, 75.1% of the Portuguese in the area, who primarily speak a language other than English, speak English well (56.9%) or very well (20.0%). This compares to 83.5% of non-Portuguese who speak the language well (20.0%) or very well

<sup>33</sup> MassInc and the Center for Labor Market Studies. 2005. *The Changing Face of Massachusetts*. The Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth.

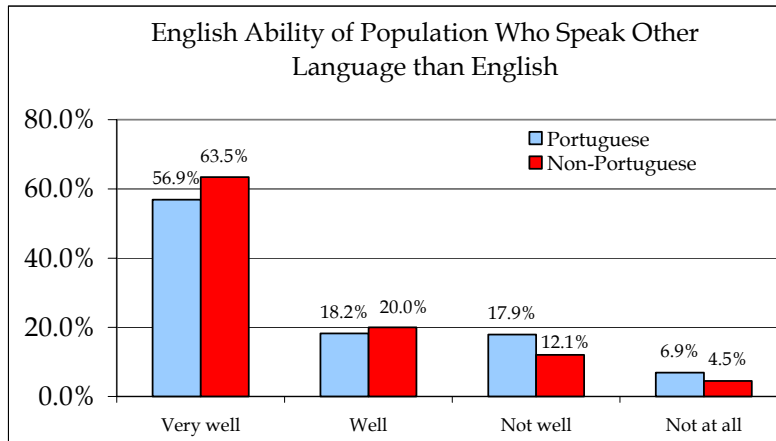
<sup>34</sup> MassInc. 2000. *New Skills for a New Economy: Adult Education's Key Role in Sustaining Economic Growth and Expanding Opportunity*. The Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth.



(63.5%) (see Figure 26). Thus, most Portuguese are not linguistically isolated, especially those in the younger age groups. However, the fact that 43.3% of Portuguese do not speak English as a first language no doubt affects educational success, though it is difficult to measure the degree of that effect.

Foreign born Portuguese speak English less well than other for foreign born residents in the area. For example, 62.2% of foreign born Portuguese speak English very well or well, compared to 72.6% of other foreign born residents.

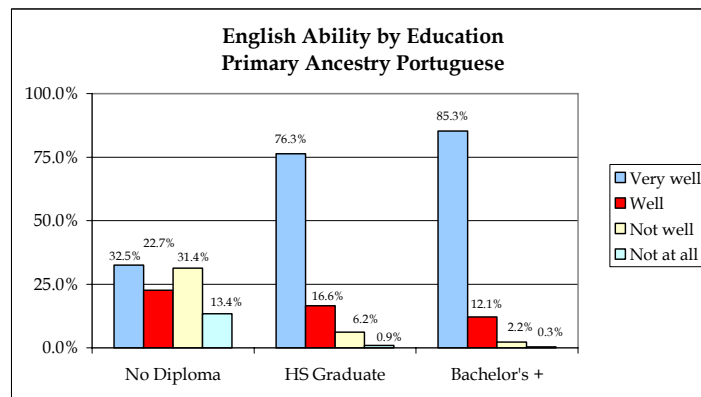
**Figure 26**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).  
Residents 5 years of age and older.

English ability and one's level of education go hand in hand (see Figure 27). For example, 76.3% of Portuguese who are high school graduates speak English very well, compared to significantly lower percentages with less English skills. Similarly, 85.3% of Portuguese with a Bachelor's degree or higher speak English very well, compared to lower percentages who speak English less well. Not surprisingly, the English speaking ability of foreign born Portuguese is lower than native born Portuguese (see Figure 28). Because limited English skills and low levels of education often go hand in hand, these individuals face the most difficult challenge making their way in the new economy.

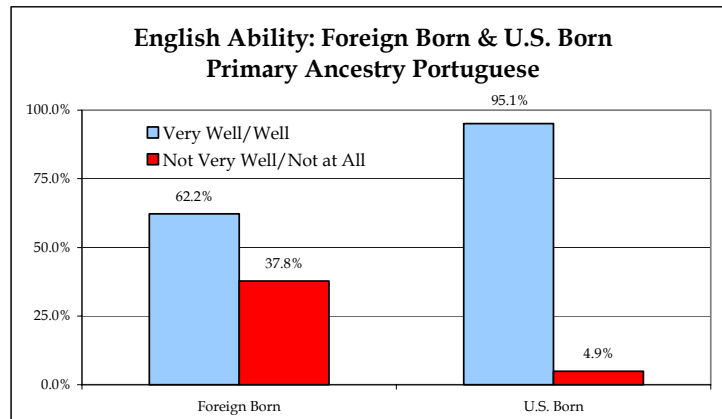
**Figure 27**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).  
Residents 25 years of age and older.



**Figure 28**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Residents 5 years of age and older who primarily speak a language other than English.



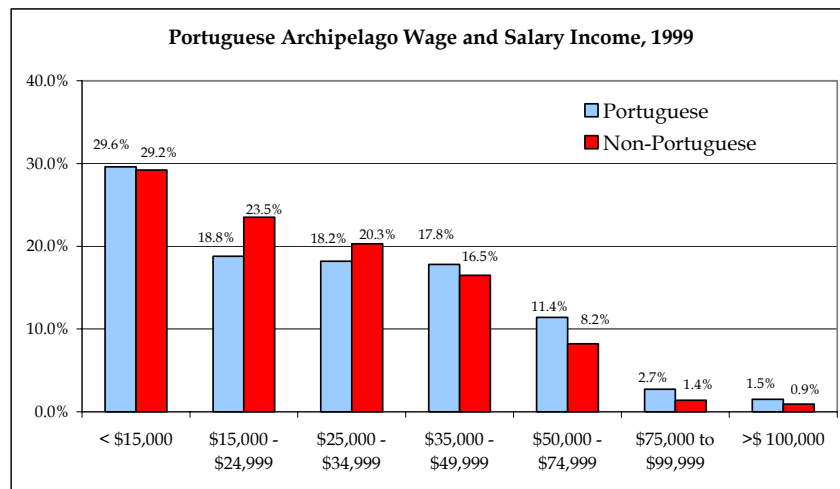


## 6.60 Wages and Income

The link between education and income is well documented. Because the Portuguese have comparably low levels of education, they are often employed in low skill and low-paying jobs.<sup>35</sup> An obvious hypothesis, therefore, is that the wages and incomes of the Portuguese will be lower than those of other residents in the area. However, an analysis of income and wages shows the Portuguese compare well with other residents in the area. In fact, for incomes above \$35,000, the percentage of Portuguese in each wage category is actually higher than those for non-Portuguese residents (see Figure 29). The difference in the average number of hours worked weekly by Portuguese and non-Portuguese is small and this does not explain similar wage levels between the two groups despite lower levels of educational attainment among the Portuguese.

While the Portuguese on average have slightly lower total incomes than other residents in the area, the differences are not particularly significant, especially considering their lower levels of education (see Figure 30).<sup>36</sup> However, this is a double edged sword. On the one hand, the Portuguese have achieved income parity with other residents in the area, but they have done so in an area that has some of the lowest average wage levels in Massachusetts. As noted in earlier tables, they have managed to achieve some degree of success in blue-collar occupations like construction, fishing, and manufacturing. While the Portuguese have been able to overcome educational deficiencies in terms of wages and income by seeking employment in higher paying blue-collar occupations, it is unlikely that the new economy will be as forgiving in the long run as these sectors of the economy continue to shed employment.

**Figure 29**



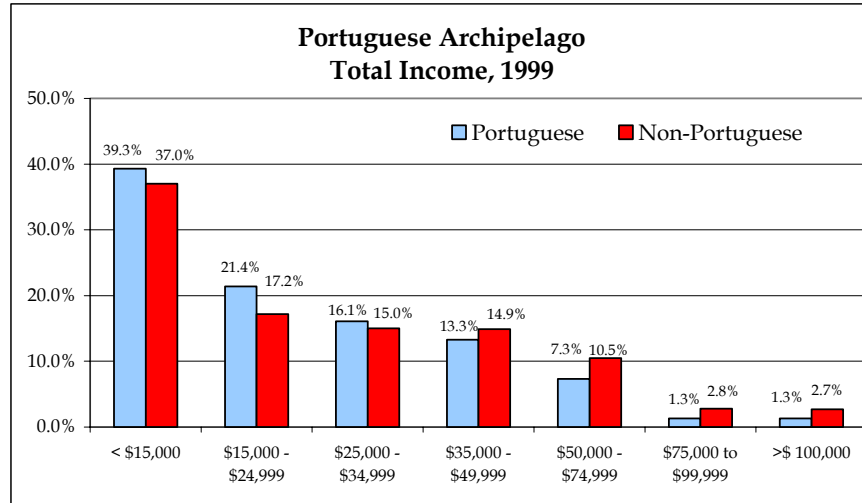
Source: PUMS 5% File: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000  
Includes only those who had wages in 1999. Universe: 15 years of age and older.

<sup>35</sup> Toby E. Huff, "Education and Ethnicity in Southeastern Massachusetts," *New England Board of Higher Education: Issues in Planning and Policymaking* (Boston: New England Board of Higher Education, 1989), pp. 1-8.

<sup>36</sup> Total income includes salaries and wages, rents, royalties, interest, dividends, and capital gains.



**Figure 30**

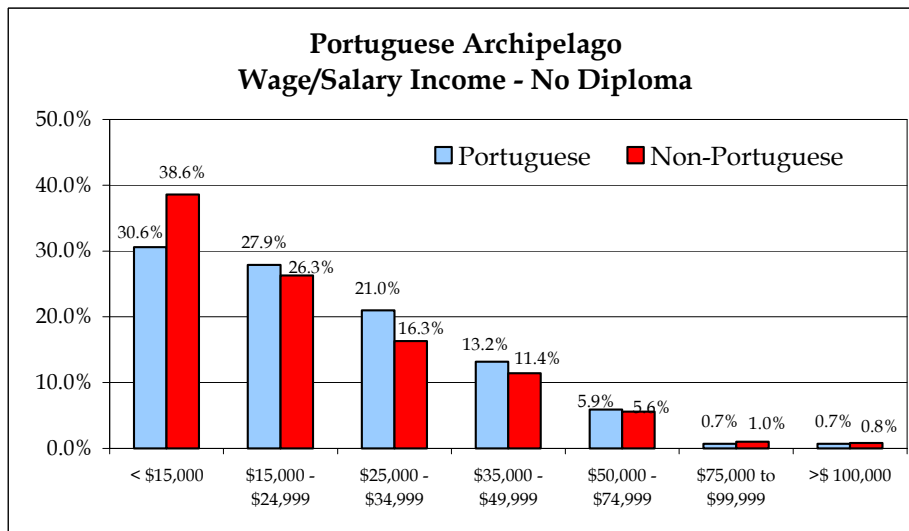


Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Residents 15 years of age and older (Does not include individuals who reported a loss).

### 6.61 Wages by Education

An analysis of wages by education shows that the Portuguese with no diploma are higher middle-wage earners in comparison to their non-Portuguese counterparts, while there are minor differences in the higher-end wage categories.

**Figure 31**

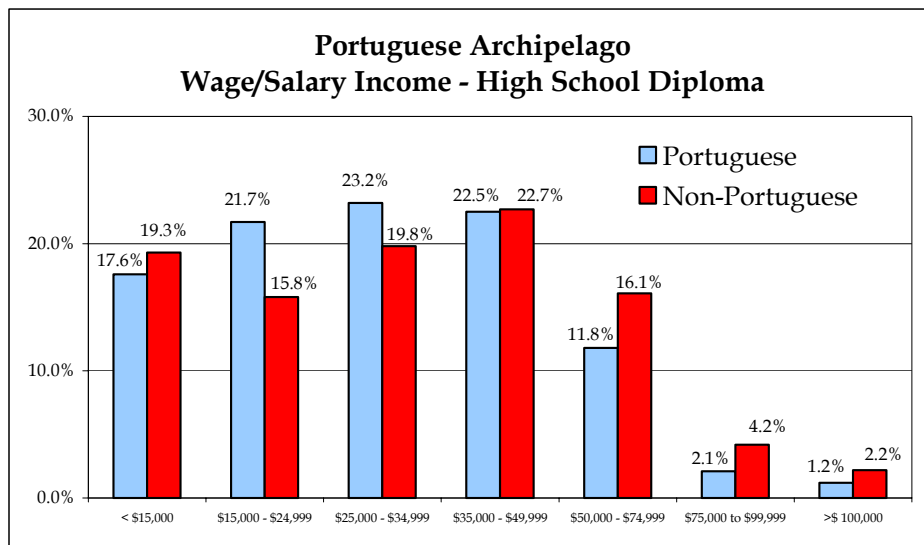


Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Residents 15 years of age and older.



However, in comparing wage/salary levels of Portuguese and non-Portuguese with higher levels of education, we see that the Portuguese do not do as well in the higher income categories; while a higher percentage of Portuguese in the lower income categories earn more, they earn less as the wage/salary level increases (see Figure 32). The difference also pertains to those with a college degree (see Figure 33). An interesting note is that higher percentages of non-Portuguese have incomes of \$50,000 and greater in comparison to non-Portuguese, even though their educational levels are the same. This may be explained by a lack of employment and political networks among the Portuguese, their concentration in declining sectors of the economy, or a lack of advancement opportunities within companies. In a 2000 survey of Portuguese Americans residing in the ethnic archipelago, 32 percent reported that they had “felt discrimination” because of their ethnicity,<sup>37</sup> while data in later sections reveals that college educated immigrants from English speaking countries also enjoy higher incomes that college educated Portuguese immigrants.

**Figure 32**

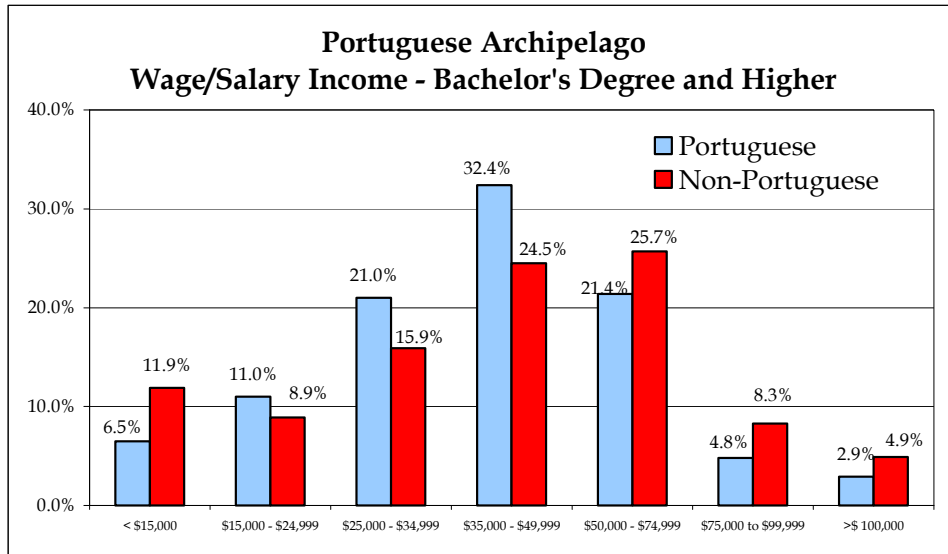


Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Residents 15 years of age and older.

<sup>37</sup> Barrow, *Portuguese-Americans and Contemporary Civic Culture in Massachusetts*, p. 129.



**Figure 33**

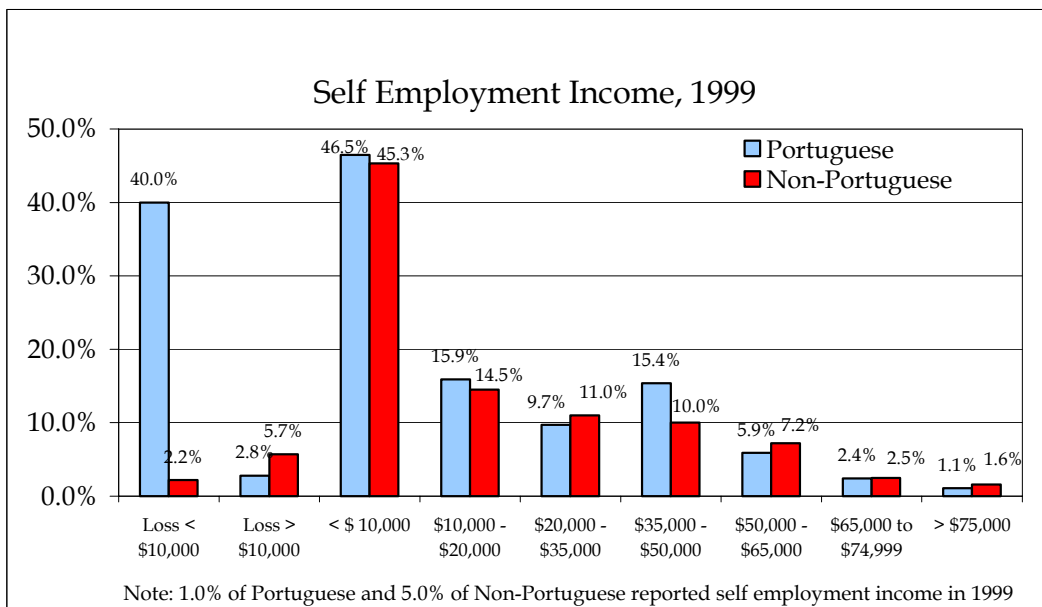


Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Residents 15 years of age and older.

### 6.62 Self Employment Income

Figure 34 details self employment data for Portuguese and non-Portuguese in the Portuguese Archipelago. An interesting note about the data is that only 1.0% of Portuguese reported self employment income in 1999 compared to 5.0% of non-Portuguese.

**Figure 34**



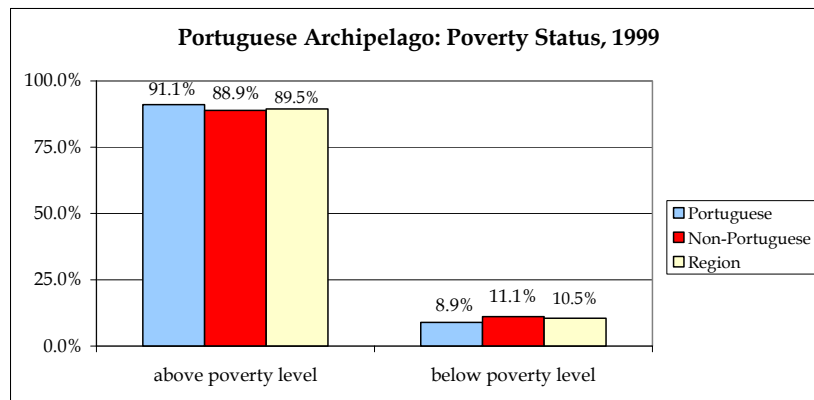
Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Residents 15 years of age and older.



## 6.70 Poverty

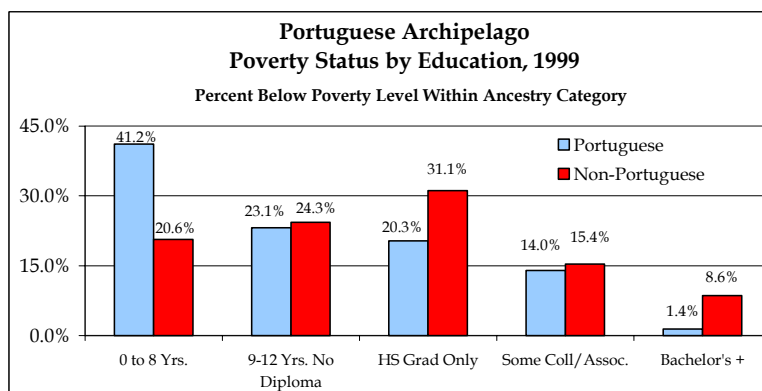
As shown in the previous section, despite having educational levels that are well below the state and area averages, the Portuguese of the area have wage and salary earnings that are comparable to other groups in the area. This is reflected in rates of poverty, where the area's Portuguese have a slightly lower poverty rate than other residents in the area (see Figure 35). However, Portuguese with less than 9 years of education are much more likely to live in poverty than are Portuguese at other levels of education (see Figure 36). Conversely, Portuguese with higher levels of education compare well to non-Portuguese in terms of poverty.

**Figure 35**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000)

**Figure 36**



Source: PUMS 5% File (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).



## 6.80 Conclusion

The Portuguese of the Portuguese Archipelago have educational attainment levels that are well below the area, state, and non-Portuguese averages. While Portuguese are graduating high school in higher numbers, there have only been minor improvements in college graduation rates. The increase in high school graduation rates may be a result of more second and third generation Portuguese who have attended American schools since the age of five and also to the fact that Portuguese-Americans have placed an increased importance on graduating high school. One might expect that more high school graduates would translate into greater college graduation rates, but this has not been the case, with only a 4.7% increase in the number of college graduates from 1980 to 2000. As the percentage of Portuguese who graduate high school continues to climb, efforts that emphasize college attendance, rather than simply graduating high school will be important to their future success. However, low college graduation rates affect the entire Southeast area and not just the Portuguese. It remains a systemic in much of the Southeast, particularly the SouthCoast, rather than a problem confined to just one ethnic group. Yet, despite an education gap in the entire Portuguese Archipelago, the Portuguese still trail most other major ethnic groups in the area in educational attainment and they fall below state and area averages as a whole in education.

Much of the educational differences among the Portuguese are still attributable to foreign-born Portuguese, who have educational levels that are half those of native born Portuguese. Many Portuguese immigrants came to this country from rural areas or fishing villages and at a time when only a few years of formal schooling were required in the home country. However, one promising sign is that the younger a foreign born Portuguese person, the higher their educational attainment. This generalization extends to both high school and college graduation. This is especially promising because data shows that newer Portuguese immigrants to the area are not more educated than those who arrived two or three decades ago. Thus, it would appear that regional efforts to emphasize the importance of educational, and particularly in the Portuguese community, are having some effect insofar as younger Portuguese immigrants appear to be continuing their education once they arrive in the United States.

As the Portuguese assimilate and their English language skills improve, it is expected that educational attainment will come into line with other residents in the area. However, this should not be the only aspiration among the Portuguese, as the overall educational attainment level in the area is well below the state average. The new economy is requiring more education and new skills, and as the data document, it will be less forgiving to those who have only a high school diploma or speak English poorly. Thus, to fully participate in the new economy, the Portuguese of the Portuguese Archipelago need to look beyond high school.

The Portuguese who have graduated high school, and even those who have not, have generally been able to find well-paying jobs, but most of these jobs are in manufacturing and it may well be that many of them are working more than one job to attain income parity even in a low-income part of the state. But as manufacturing jobs continue to leave the area, they are being replaced by even lower paying jobs in the retail and service industries and this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Thus, the need to move beyond high school and on to college is a more important message than it was in 1980. In addition, upgrading the workforce skills of those who do not attend college is essential so adult education and job training are particularly important to the Portuguese in Southeastern Massachusetts. MassInc's *New skills for a New Economy* identified three specific skills needed to succeed in the knowledge economy: a minimum of a high school diploma, the ability to speak English proficiently, and



strong literacy and numeracy skills.<sup>38</sup> Most Portuguese and Portuguese immigrants face at least one, and many all three, of these challenges. For instance:

- In 2000, just over half (55.2%) of Portuguese Americans in the area had a high school diploma. Only 9.7% of Portuguese have a four-year college degree.
- More than forty percent (43.3%) of Portuguese in the area speak a language other than English at home.
- A quarter of Portuguese in the area (24.9%) do not speak English well or do not speak it at all.

The economic cost for those who are not educated is large and it will continue to grow larger as the state's economy continues its evolution by requiring that workers to possess higher levels of education and be able to speak English well. And simply being able to speak English may not be enough, as the new economy requires a higher standard of literacy.<sup>39</sup> The ability to read and write basic English is not enough – workers are increasingly required to calculate equations, solve problems, and write reports. The job opportunities will continue to narrow for those with low educational capital, especially as traditional manufacturing jobs continue to leave Southeastern Massachusetts.

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<sup>38</sup> MassInc., *New Skills for a New Economy: Adult Education's Key Role in Sustaining Economic Growth and Expanding Opportunity*. Boston: The Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



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