

# Research Report



## A Portrait of New England's Immigrants

by Antoniya Owens



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## Letter from the Director

Many policymakers and business leaders are concerned about the adequacy of the region's labor force—a pillar of its economic vitality—because of recent changes in population, including a net loss of native New Englanders to other states. The number of immigrants coming to the region, in contrast, is growing. These new residents are a vital source of labor. “A Portrait of New England's Immigrants,” a new research report by the New England Public Policy Center, paints a rich profile of our region's immigrants, and their impact on its economic and civic life.

This report is the latest in a series of publications from the Center on the movement of people into and out of our region. These publications further our mission to provide the region's public policy community with objective analysis that can support informed decisions on issues affecting the New England economy.

Building on these efforts, this report draws on the latest figures from the U.S. Census Bureau to compare the characteristics of our region's immigrants with those of its natives, as well as with those of immigrants nationwide. This report also explores differences between the immigrant populations in the northern three New England states—Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont—and those in the southern three: Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

New England is home to 1.6 million immigrants. Their number is growing far faster than that of the native population. They are more likely than natives to be of working age. Moreover, they are better educated than immigrants nationwide, with more than three quarters having a high school diploma, and close to a third holding a bachelor's degree. For all these reasons, immigrants contribute importantly to the growth of the region's labor force.

The report reveals that despite the high educational levels of many immigrants, they are more likely to be poor, to live in crowded housing, and to lack health insurance than the native population. However, immigrants vary in the degree to which they tap public benefits compared with native citizens. For example, while immigrant non-citizens are less likely than natives to receive cash assistance and public health insurance, their use of other benefits—such as food stamps—is comparable.

Lastly, the report examines immigrants' civic contributions to their communities: their rates of naturalization and voting, volunteerism, and homeownership. Nearly half of New England's immigrants are naturalized U.S. citizens—one of the highest naturalization rates in the country. They are also more likely to vote or do volunteer work than their counterparts in other regions, although they still lag behind the region's natives.

This report sheds light on some of the challenges facing—and the opportunities presented by—a population that contributes significantly to our region. We hope these findings help the region's leaders to find ways to enhance immigrants' economic potential and to integrate them even more fully into the life of our communities.

Sincerely,



Robert Tannenwald, Director and Vice President  
New England Public Policy Center, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

## Executive Summary

# A Portrait of New England's Immigrants

In recent years, New England has experienced both slow native population growth and net domestic out-migration. The number of immigrants in the region, however, has continued to grow steadily. As a result, immigration has become a vital source of population and labor force growth for New England.

As higher numbers of immigrants settle in the region, they alter the face and character of their communities: they work for local employers and patronize local businesses; they send their children to school and seek medical care and other services; they become invested in their com-

munities through homeownership and volunteer work; they become U.S. citizens and vote.

To assess accurately immigrants' roles and contributions to the region's economic and civic life, policymakers need a comprehensive overview of the size, composition, and characteristics of New England's foreign-born population. This report uses the most recent available data—mostly as of 2006—to construct a detailed demographic, labor, and socioeconomic portrait of New England's immigrants.

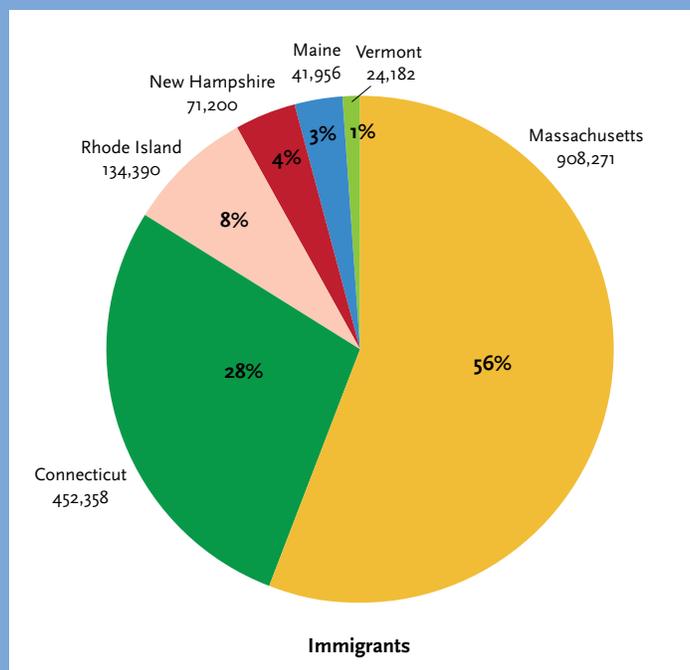
### How has immigration affected the size and composition of New England's population in recent years?

New England is home to more than 1.6 million immigrants, the vast majority of whom—92 percent—live in the three southern states (see Figure ES1). The region's immigrants are significantly more concentrated in urban locations than the native population. Thus large urban areas, particularly in southern New England, have much higher immigrant shares than more rural locations in northern New England—a geographical pattern that seems to have intensified over the last few years.

The number of immigrants in New England is growing far faster than the native population (see Figure ES2, next page). Immigration has therefore become an important driver of population growth. Without immigrants, the region's total population would have barely grown since 1990. These trends are mostly driven by the southern states. In 2006, immigrants constituted 13.6 percent of the total population in southern New England, compared with 4.2 percent in the three northern states.

New England's immigrants have more diverse national origins than immigrants nationwide. Over a third hail from Latin America,

**Figure ES1. New England is home to over 1.6 million immigrants, the vast majority of whom live in southern New England.**



Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

Note: Southern New England includes Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

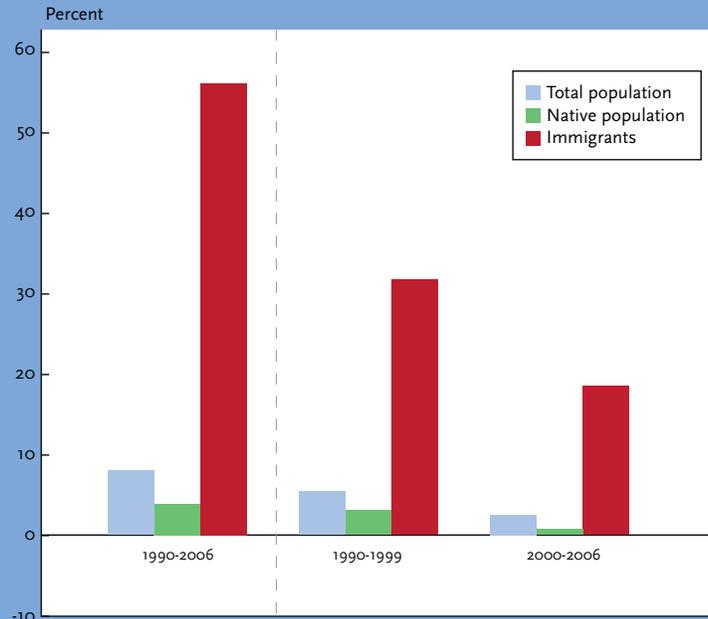
nearly 30 percent from Europe, and another quarter from Asia (see Figure ES3). Immigrants' national origins vary within the region itself. Northern New England states have much lower shares of Latin American immigrants and much higher shares of immigrants from Canada, compared with southern New England and the rest of the nation. Overall, a larger share of the region's immigrants comes from countries where English is spoken—such as Canada and the United Kingdom—than in the rest of the nation. As a result, close to 60 percent of the region's immigrants are proficient in English, compared with less than half in the country as a whole.

The origins of New England's immigrants have shifted significantly over time. Immigration from Canada and Europe has slowed considerably over the past three decades. In contrast, immigration from countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa has accelerated, mirroring national trends.

### How do New England's immigrants differ from the native population?

**Figure ES2. Across New England, the immigrant population is growing much faster than the native population.**

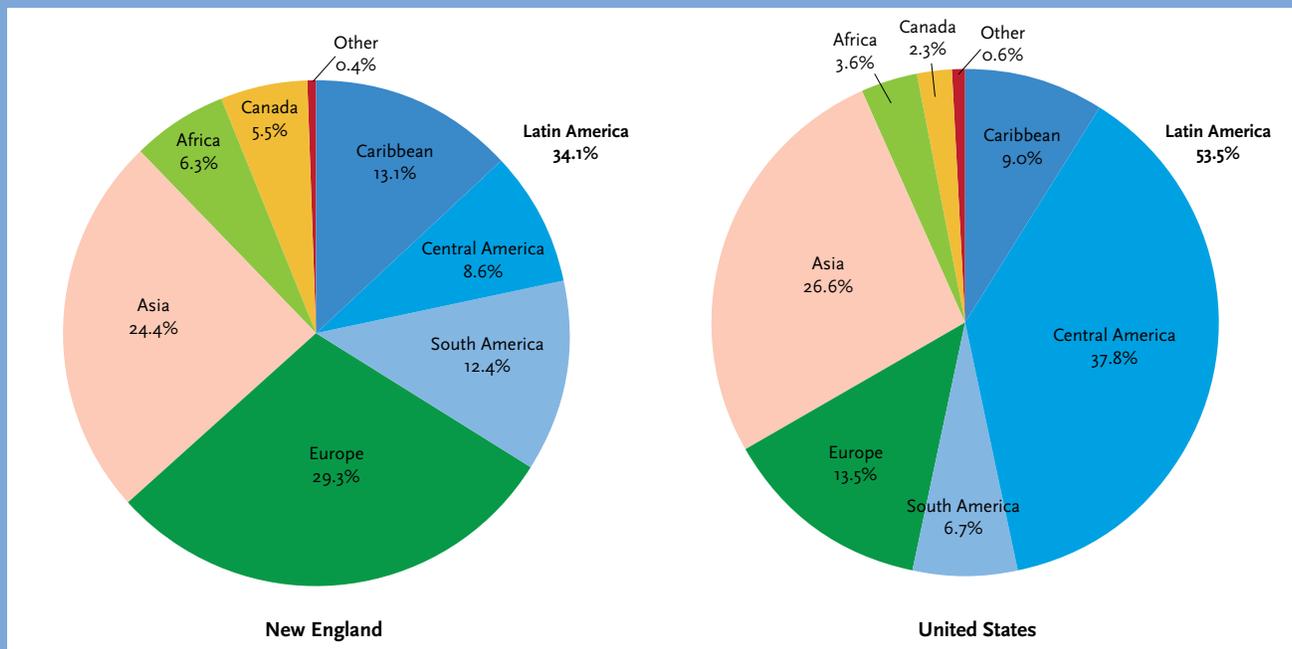
Rate of population growth over each period



Sources: 1990 and 2000 Census of Population and Housing; 2006 American Community Survey.

Immigrants in New England are more likely than natives to be of working age—between the ages of 18 and 64. Roughly 80 percent are

**Figure ES3. New England's immigrants have more diverse national origins than immigrants nationwide.**



Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

in this age group, compared with about 60 percent of the native population (see Figure ES4). The age distribution of immigrants varies somewhat across the region. Northern New England states have a heavier presence of elderly immigrants, owing to the fair number of older Canadian and European immigrants. In contrast, southern New England states—with larger economies and labor markets—attract many more working-age immigrants.

**Immigrants in the region are much more racially and ethnically diverse than native New Englanders.** Non-Hispanic whites comprise close to 87 percent of the region’s native population, but they account for only 42 percent of its immigrants. Asian and Hispanic immigrants each account for just over a fifth of the region’s foreign born. Black and multi-racial immigrants comprise 12 percent and 4 percent, respectively, of New England’s immigrant population.

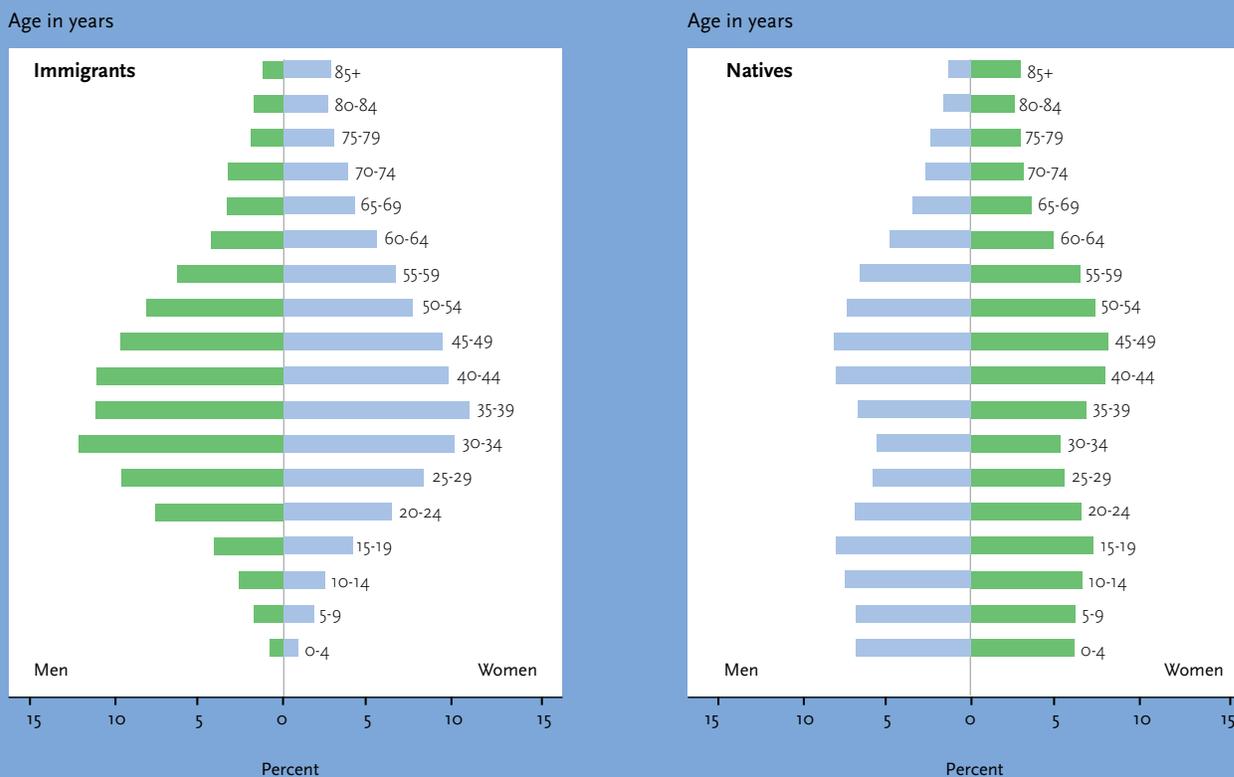
**New England’s immigrants are among the best educated in the nation.** More than three quarters of the region’s foreign born have at

least a high school diploma, and close to a third are college graduates (see Figure ES5, page 8). However, their educational attainment shows a bimodal pattern relative to that of the region’s native population: immigrants are more likely than natives to lack a high school degree, but are also more likely to hold a graduate degree. Overall, immigrants’ educational attainment is more heavily weighted toward the bottom of the educational spectrum.

### What role do immigrants play in New England’s labor market?

**Immigrants have played an increasingly important role in the growth of the regional labor force.** Without immigrant workers, New England’s labor force would have declined during the 1990s, and would have grown much more slowly since 2000 (see Table ES1). These trends are driven almost entirely by labor force dynamics in the southern states. Immigrants’ contribution to labor force growth in northern New England was much lower during both periods,

**Figure ES4. In New England, immigrants are more likely than natives to be of working age, regardless of gender.**



Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

although its relative importance increased over time.

Immigrant men are significantly more likely to participate in the labor force than native men, whereas the reverse is true for women. Among both immigrants and natives, men have higher labor force participation rates than women, but the gap is especially large for immigrants (see Figure ES6, next page). The unemployment rates of immigrant men are slightly lower than those of native men, while unemployment rates among immigrant women significantly exceed those of native women.

Immigrants' attachment to the labor force, whether male or female, is strongly related to their education and English proficiency. In New England, 78 percent of immigrants with graduate degrees are in the labor force, compared with only 54 percent of those without a high school diploma. Similarly, the labor force participation rate of immigrants proficient in English is 72 percent, compared with 66 percent of those with limited English skills.

While immigrants' and natives' employment choices differ somewhat by industry, these differences are especially apparent at the occupation level. Immigrants are more likely than natives to be employed in low-skilled and low-paid

**Table ES1. Without immigrant workers, New England's labor force would have shrunk during the 1990s, and would have grown more slowly since 2000.**

Civilian labor force members aged 16 and over

	1990–2000		2000–2006	
	New England	United States	New England	United States
<b>Labor force growth</b>				
Native	-1,700	8,716,500	183,400	7,231,300
Immigrant	181,000	5,726,500	253,900	6,295,000
Total	179,300	14,443,000	438,600	13,546,100
<b>Immigrants' share of net growth (percent)</b>	101	40	58	46

Sources: 1990 and 2000 Public Use Microdata, Census of Population and Housing; 2006 American Community Survey.

occupations, but they are also more likely to hold highly skilled professional positions that require advanced training. Thus the 10 most common occupations among immigrants are primarily a collection of very low-skilled jobs—housekeepers, janitors, health aides—and very highly skilled positions, such as software engineers and college professors (see Table ES2). Natives, in contrast, are more likely to hold medium-skill

**Table ES2. Immigrants are more likely than natives to be employed in low-skilled and low-paid occupations and, at the same time, more likely to hold highly skilled professional positions.**

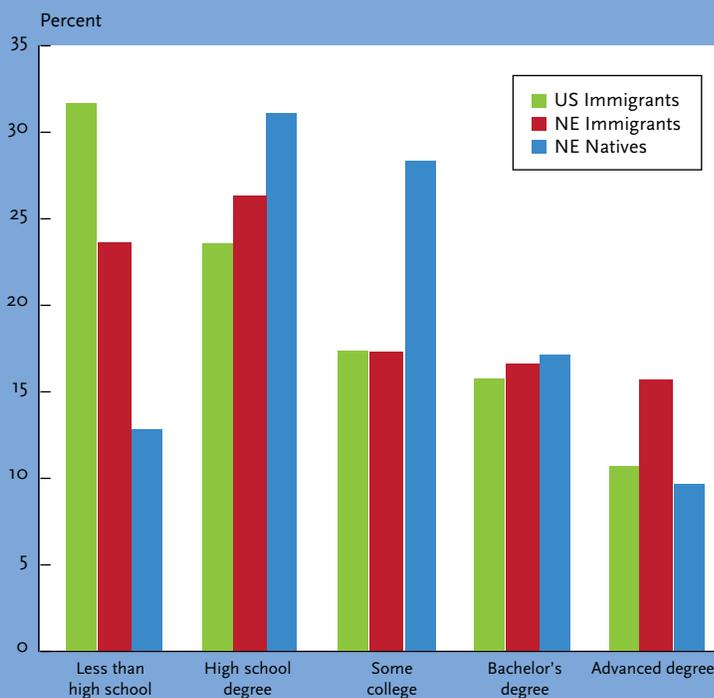
Percent employed in the 10 most popular occupations for each population

Immigrants			Natives		
1	Maids and housekeeping cleaners	3.9	1	Secretaries and admin. assistants	3.4
2	Health aides	3.2	2	Miscellaneous managers	2.7
3	Janitors and building cleaners	3.0	3	Elementary & middle school teachers	2.7
4	Cooks	2.6	4	Registered nurses	2.6
5	Computer software engineers	2.2	5	Retail sales managers	2.4
6	Cashiers	2.1	6	Truck and other drivers	2.0
7	Carpenters	1.9	7	Retail salespersons	1.9
8	Miscellaneous managers	1.9	8	Accountants and auditors	1.7
9	Postsecondary teachers	1.9	9	Carpenters	1.5
10	Retail sales managers	1.6	10	Janitors and building cleaners	1.4

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

### Figure ES5. New England’s immigrants exhibit a bimodal pattern of educational attainment relative to the native population.

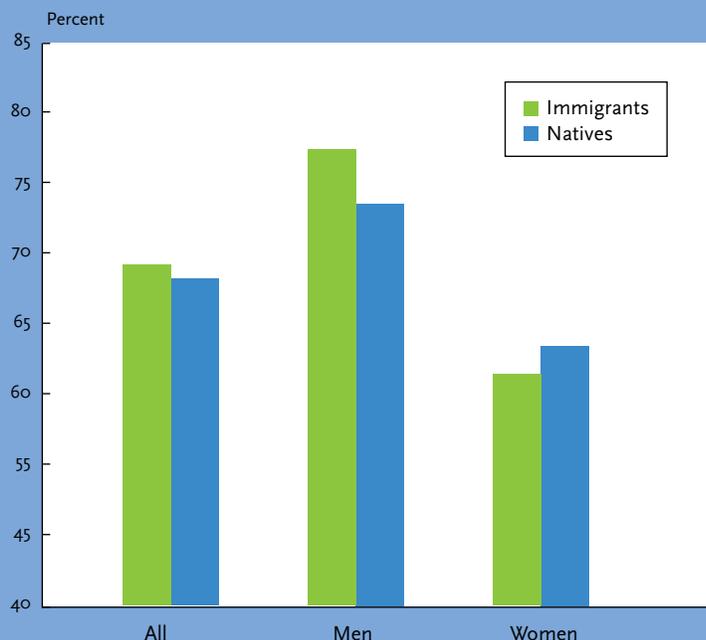
Educational attainment, 2006 (population aged 25 and over)



Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

### Figure ES6. Immigrant men are significantly more likely to participate in the labor force than native men but the reverse is true for women.

Labor force participation rates, 2006 (population aged 25 and over)



Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.  
Notes: The labor force participation rate is defined as the percent of the population aged 25 and over that is in the civilian labor force.

occupations that provide a more certain path to the middle class, such as administrative professionals, registered nurses, elementary school teachers, and accountants.

The larger concentration of immigrants in relatively low-skilled industries and occupations results in lower earnings relative to native workers. The median annual earnings of both male and female immigrant workers in the region are only 80 percent as high as those of their native counterparts (see Figure ES7). However, the relative earnings of immigrants and natives differ across the region. Both male and female immigrant workers in southern New England are substantially less well paid than native workers. In northern New England, by contrast, the gap in earnings is narrower among female workers, and non-existent or even reversed among male workers.

### How do immigrants shape the region’s socioeconomic profile and civic life?

Immigrants in New England have higher median household incomes and lower poverty rates than immigrants in the nation as a whole, but still lag behind the region’s natives (see Figure ES8). With weaker educational backgrounds, lower earnings, and larger family sizes, immigrant families are over 50 percent more likely to live in poverty than families headed by the native born. Immigrant families are also more likely to live in crowded housing conditions, and to be burdened by housing costs (that is, to spend 30 percent or more of their total income on housing). Immigrants in New England own homes at lower rates than natives, although more than half of them—54 percent—are homeowners.

Use of public benefits among low-income immigrants relative to low-income natives varies by type of benefit and by citizenship status. The receipt of food stamps is roughly comparable across households headed by non-citizen immigrants, naturalized immigrants, and native citizens. Non-citizen households, however, have the highest use rates of both the National School Lunch Program and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition assistance program. At the same time, non-citizen households are less likely than the other groups to

receive both public cash assistance and housing benefits. Regardless of their citizenship status, low-income immigrants are also less likely than natives to enroll in Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Nearly half of New England's immigrants are naturalized U.S. citizens—one of the highest naturalization rates in the country. Higher naturalization rates are typically associated with higher levels of voter turnout and civic participation. Indeed, in the November 2006 elections, New England's foreign-born citizens had the highest voter registration and turnout among all nine U.S. census divisions—although they still trailed behind the region's natives. Immigrants in New England are also more likely to do volunteer work than their counterparts in most other regions, although they are less likely than native citizens to do so.

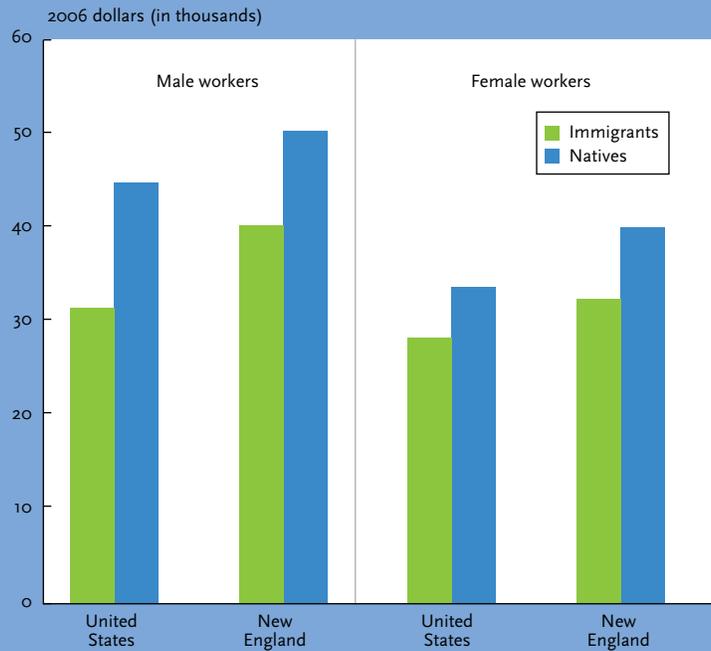
### Immigrants' role in New England's future

The region's immigrants differ from their national counterparts along a variety of dimensions. They are more diverse, both racially and in national origin; they are better educated and have stronger English skills; they face more favorable economic outcomes and become more involved in their communities. Yet the foreign born are still worse off economically—facing more poverty and more hardship—than native New Englanders.

New England has a distinct interest in fostering immigrants' long-term commitment to the region, as it cannot grow without them. Targeted human capital initiatives can boost immigrants' economic potential and expand the immigrant talent pool so vital to replenishing the regional labor force. For example, efforts to increase the educational attainment of immigrants and strengthen their English-speaking skills could help improve their employment prospects. Such initiatives would also benefit the region by decreasing immigrants' need for public assistance, enhancing their civic contributions, and promoting their successful integration into American society. Indeed, investing in immigrants' economic potential would generate benefits beyond economic prosperity: it would help sustain the diverse, vibrant, and dynamic society that immigrants have long helped shape.

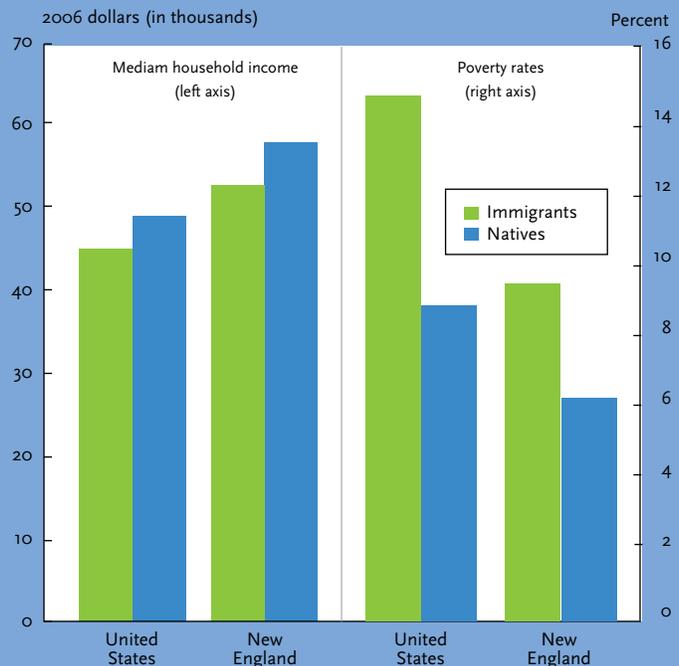
**Figure ES7. The larger concentration of immigrants in low-skilled industries and occupations is reflected in lower earnings compared with native workers.**

Median annual earnings, 2006 (population aged 16 years and over, with earnings, employed full-time and year-round)



Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

**Figure ES8. Immigrants have lower median household incomes and higher poverty rates than natives in both New England and the nation.**



Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

Notes: Immigrant and native households are those headed by an immigrant or a native householder, respectively.

Note: Poverty rates are defined as the percentage of families with incomes below the poverty thresholds set by the U.S. Census Bureau.



# A Portrait of New England's Immigrants

## Introduction

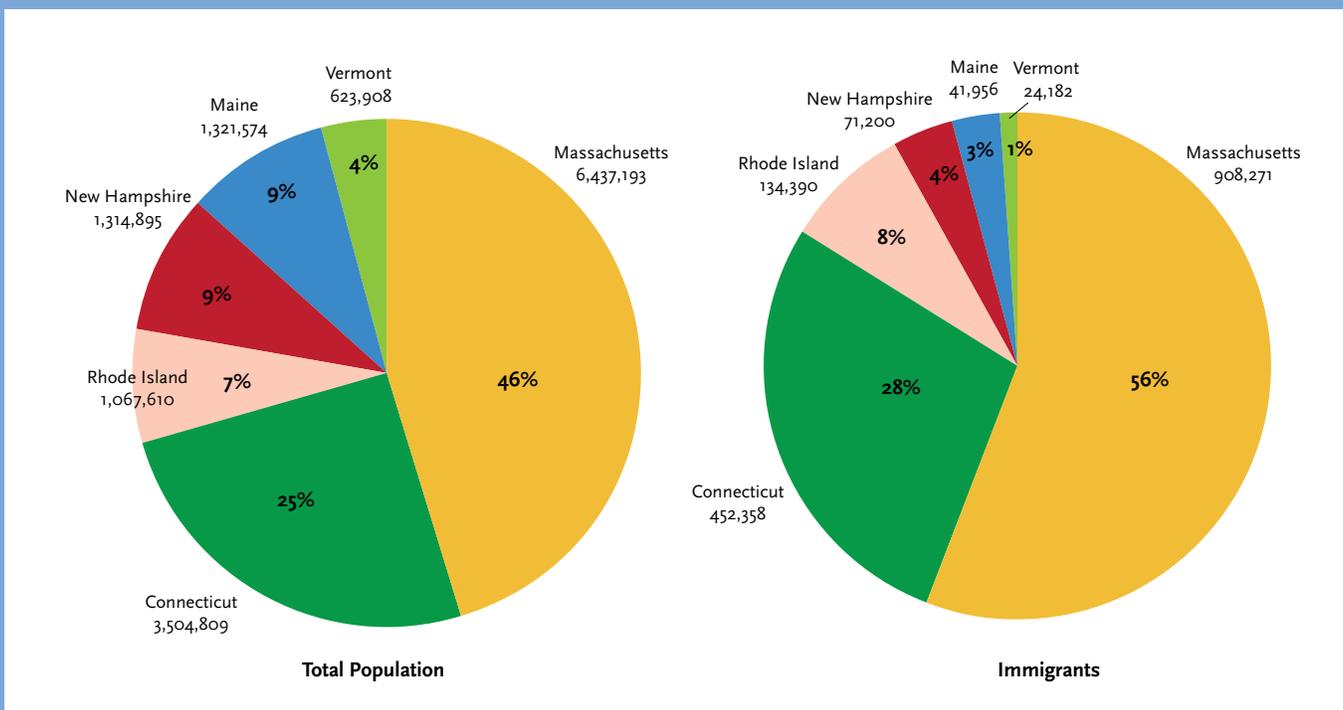
Over the past few years, scholarly research and media coverage have highlighted the importance of international immigration to New England. The influx of migrants from abroad has counteracted the net domestic out-migration and slow native population growth that have characterized the region in recent years.<sup>1</sup> As a result, immigrants have become a vital source of population and labor force growth for New England.

As more and more immigrants choose to settle in the region, their impact extends beyond pure additions to its population and workforce. As they integrate into society, immigrants alter the face and character of their communities:

they work for local employers; they patronize and start local businesses; they send their children to school and seek medical care and other services; they become invested in their communities through homeownership and volunteer work; they become U.S. citizens and vote.

To accurately assess immigrants' roles and contributions to New England's civic and economic life, policymakers need a comprehensive overview of the size, composition, and characteristics of the region's foreign-born population. This report uses the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau to construct a detailed demographic, labor, and socioeconomic portrait of New England's immigrants. Most of the demographic and labor characteristics come from the 2006

**Figure 1. While southern New England is home to three quarters of the region's total population, it hosts 92 percent of its immigrants.**



Source: 2006 American Community Survey.  
 Note: Southern New England includes Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

American Community Survey. For several socioeconomic indicators, the report relies on various years of the Current Population Survey, as well as the 2000 Census of Population and Housing.

The first section of the report evaluates the size, relative share, settlement patterns, and national origins of the region's immigrants, and explores how these have changed in recent decades. The following two sections describe the demographic characteristics of the region's foreign-born residents, and then analyze their labor force behavior.

The last section evaluates immigrants' reliance on public assistance as well as their civic contributions, using indicators such as poverty, receipt of public benefits, naturalization and voting patterns, volunteer work, and crime. The report concludes with several recommendations on how states in the region can sustain and enhance the economic potential and social integration of their immigrants.

## Immigrant stocks and flows in New England, 1990–2006

### Size and relative shares

New England is home to more than 1.6 million immigrants, a disproportionately high fraction of whom live in the three southern New England states: Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.<sup>2</sup> While those states are home to three quarters of New England's total population, they host 92 percent of its immigrants. More than half of the region's foreign-born population—just over 900,000 immigrants—live in Massachusetts; another 28 percent live in Connecticut (see Figure 1, previous page).

Although New England accounts for a relatively small share of the foreign-born population in the United States, immigration has become an increasingly important source of population for the region. In 2006, 11.4 percent of New England's population was foreign born—up from 7.9 percent in 1990, and 9.9 percent in 2000 (see Figure 2). In fact, immigrants' share of total population has been on the rise in each New England state, and has been especially pronounced in southern New England. In all three southern states, immigrants constitute more than 12 percent of the total population, with Massachusetts leading the group with 14.1 percent. In northern New England, the relative shares of immigrants are lower, ranging from 3.2 percent in Maine to 5.4 percent in New Hampshire.

### Geographical distribution

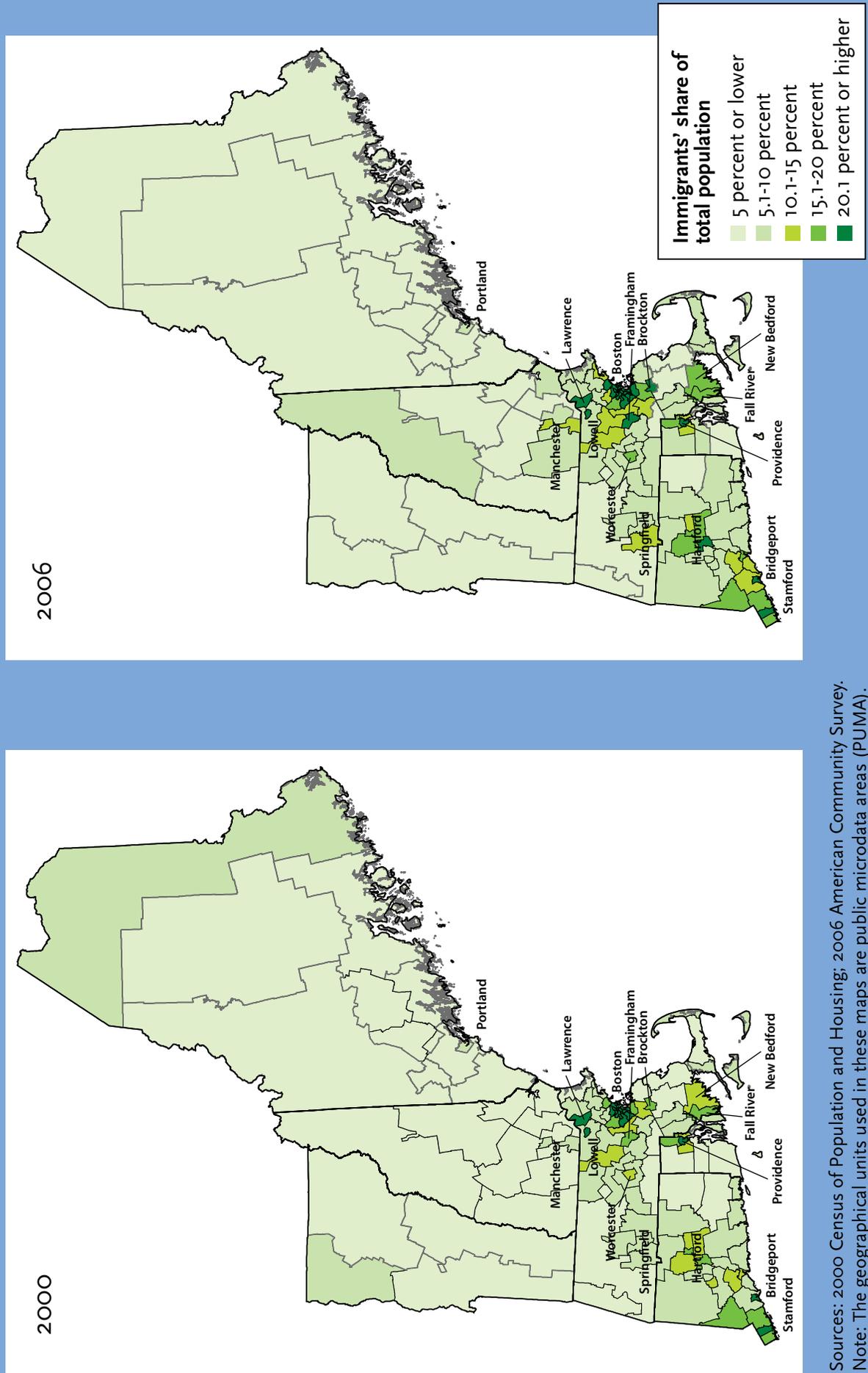
The geographical distribution of immigrants in New England is far from uniform, both within the region and within each state (see Figure 3). As in the United States as a whole, immigrants in the region are significantly more concentrated in urban locations than the native population. Thus large urban areas, particularly in southern New England, have much higher immigrant shares than more rural locations. In 2006, immigrants were especially well represented in the metropolitan areas of Boston, Framingham, Lawrence, Lowell,

**Figure 2. Immigrants' share of total population has been on the rise in each New England state, especially in southern New England.**



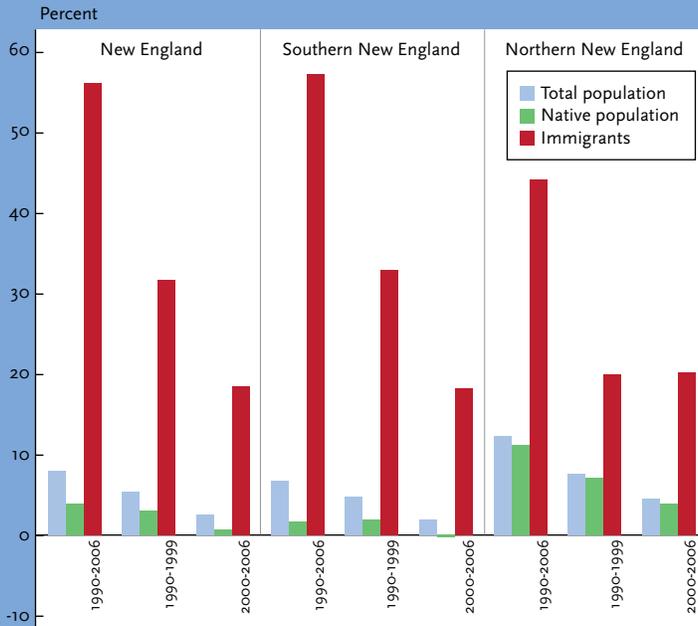
Sources: 1990 and 2000 Census of Population and Housing; 2006 American Community Survey.

**Figure 3. Large urban areas, particularly in southern New England, have much higher immigrant shares compared with more rural locations.**



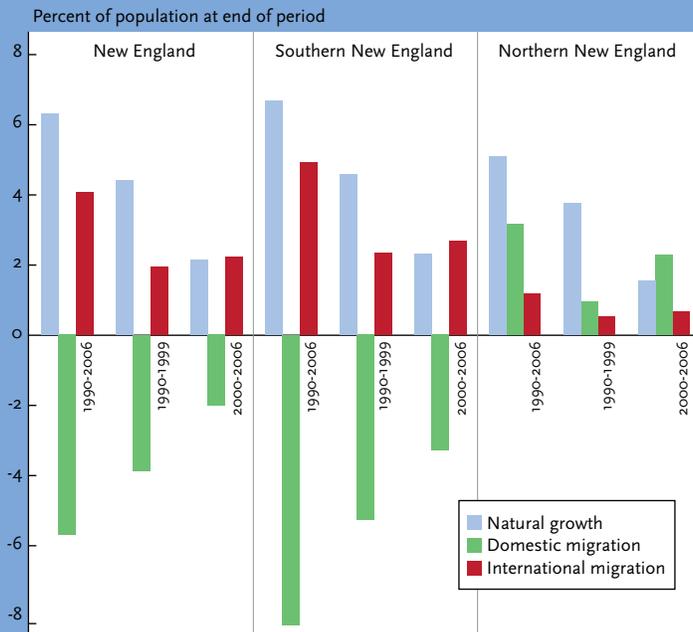
Sources: 2000 Census of Population and Housing; 2006 American Community Survey.  
 Note: The geographical units used in these maps are public microdata areas (PUMA).

**Figure 4. Across New England, the immigrant population is growing much faster than the native population.**



Sources: 1990 and 2000 Census of Population and Housing; 2006 American Community Survey.

**Figure 5. Without immigrants, the region’s total population would have barely grown since 1990. In the north, however, the importance of immigration to population growth is much less pronounced.**



Source: Annual estimates of components of population change from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Brockton, Providence, Hartford, Bridgeport, and Stamford. In each of these areas, more than one in five persons was foreign born; in parts of the Greater Boston and Providence regions, the ratio approached one in three.

These settlement patterns are by no means static, as areas with already high concentrations of foreign-born residents tend to attract larger numbers of new arrivals (see Figure 3). Between 2000 and 2006, for example, immigrants’ share of the total population grew in Greater Boston, Providence, southwestern Connecticut, and northwestern and southeastern New Hampshire. In contrast, northwestern Vermont and northeastern Maine both saw declines in their shares of the foreign born, likely because of declining immigrant flows from Canada into those areas of northern New England.

### Population growth

The steady increase in the foreign-born share of New England’s population reflects the fact that the growth rate in the number of immigrants far outpaces that of the native population. Since 1990, the immigrant population has grown by 57.7 percent in southern New England and by 44.5 percent in northern New England (see Figure 4). Interestingly, while the growth of immigrants in the three southern states has slowed since the 1990s, it has maintained a steady pace in the north. Between 2000 and 2006, the immigrant population in northern New England grew by about 20 percent—equaling its growth over the entire preceding decade—while the growth rate in southern New England fell from 33 percent to 18 percent.

Overall, immigration has become an important driver of population growth in New England, as its native population grew by less than 4 percent between 1990 and 2006. Most recently, the growth of the native population in the region was even more anemic, rising by only 0.7 percent between 2000 and 2006. During this period, the native population in southern New England actually declined slightly.

Indeed, without immigrants the region’s total population would have remained flat since 2000, and would barely have grown in the preceding decade. Between 2000 and

2006, international immigration accounted for as much of the region's population growth as did natural growth, and was just high enough to offset net domestic out-migration from the region (see Figure 5).

Immigration's role in population growth, however, is subject to clear intra-regional differences. In Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, international immigration is a vital component of population growth: without it, southern New England would have lost population both during the 1990s and since 2000. In northern New England, the importance of immigration, despite its steady growth, is still much less pronounced: between 1990 and 2006, immigration played a smaller role in population change than did both natural growth and domestic migration.

### Regions and countries of origin

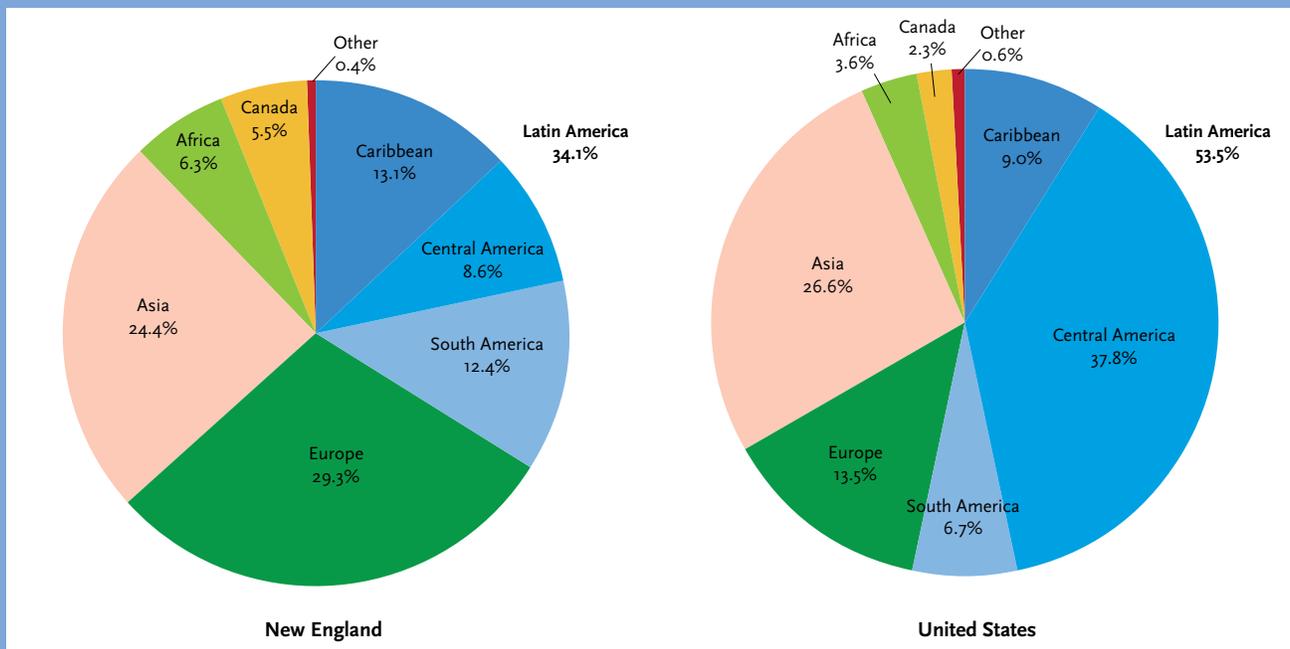
New England's immigrants have very diverse national origins. The largest shares of immigrants in New England hail from Latin America, Europe, and Asia, with each of these regions accounting for a quarter or more of

the foreign born (see Figure 6). Furthermore, the origins of northern New England's immigrants differ from those of the southern states' foreign born.

Whereas more than half of all immigrants in the United States come from countries in Latin America, that region accounts for only a third of New England's immigrants. The majority of the region's Latin American immigrants hail from countries in the Caribbean and in South America, in stark contrast to the nation, where more than 70 percent of Latin American immigrants come from Central America. This discrepancy is largely driven by immigration from Mexico, which is much more prevalent in the nation than in New England. Indeed, over 30 percent of U.S. immigrants hail from Mexico, whereas in New England their share is only 2 percent.

The highest share of Latin Americans in our region comes from Brazil. Brazilians comprise over 6 percent of region's foreign-born population, and form the largest group of immigrants to the region from a single country (see Table 1, next page). More than

**Figure 6. New England's immigrants have more diverse national origins than immigrants nationwide.**



Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.  
 Note: More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 1.

**Table 1. Immigrant population by country or region of origin**

Percent of immigrants from each country/region

New England			United States		
1	Brazil	6.1	1	Mexico	30.8
2	Eastern Europe	6.2	2	Philippines	4.4
3	Canada	5.5	3	India	4.0
4	Dominican Rep.	5.2	4	China	3.6
5	China	5.2	5	Eastern Europe	3.3
6	Portugal	4.8	6	Vietnam	3.0
7	India	4.8	7	Former USSR	2.8
8	Former USSR	4.7	8	El Salvador	2.8
9	Italy	3.2	9	Korea	2.7
10	Guatemala	3.1	10	Cuba	2.5

Northern New England			Southern New England		
1	Canada	21.2	1	Brazil	6.5
2	Eastern Europe	6.6	2	Eastern Europe	6.1
3	China	5.6	3	Dominican Rep.	5.6
4	United Kingdom	5.6	4	China	5.2
5	India	5.6	5	Portugal	5.1
6	Former USSR	5.2	6	India	4.7
7	Germany	4.4	7	Former USSR	4.6
8	Vietnam	2.7	8	Canada	4.1
9	Philippines	2.3	9	Italy	3.4
10	Korea	2.3	10	Haiti	3.4

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

Notes: Northern New England includes Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Southern New England includes Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

Eastern Europe includes Eastern and Central European countries from the former Communist bloc, excluding those from the former USSR.

97 percent of Brazilians in New England live in the three southern states, while the northern states have much lower shares of immigrants both from Brazil, and from Latin American countries in general.

Immigrants from Europe have greater representation in New England than elsewhere in the United States. At 29 percent, their share is more than twice as high as in the nation as whole (see Figure 6). While half of these Europeans are from countries that have historically sent many immigrants to the region—Portugal, Italy, Ireland, and Germany—more than a third are from countries in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and former Yugoslavia. Immigration from these

countries picked up significantly in the 1990s, and now accounts for more than one tenth of all immigrants to the region—almost twice as high as its fraction nationwide (see Table 1).

Asian countries are the third major source of immigration to New England: immigrants from Asia account for one in four foreign-born persons both in the region and nationwide (see Figure 6). Close to half of all Asian immigrants in New England, and 40 percent nationwide, originated from just three countries—China, India, and Korea (see Table 1).

Immigrants from Africa account for 6.3 percent of the region’s foreign-born population. Africans in northern and southern New England compose fairly similar shares of the immigrant populations but hail from different countries. In southern New England—a hub for Portuguese and Brazilian immigrants—more than a quarter of African immigrants are from Portuguese-speaking Cape Verde. Northern New England, on the other hand, hosts much larger shares of African refugees from war-torn countries such as Somalia and Sudan. These two countries alone account for 42 percent of African immigrants in the northern states.

Immigrants from Canada are more than twice as well represented in New England than in the nation, accounting for 5.5 percent of the region’s immigrants. In fact, Canada ranks second only to Brazil in sending the highest number of immigrants to the region. Canadian immigrants are especially well represented in northern New England. They form the single largest group of immigrants in the three northern states and comprise 21 percent of their foreign-born population.

### Period of arrival

The arrival of immigrants has ebbed and flowed over the past two centuries, affected by economic conditions and political climates in both the United States and their home countries as well as by U.S. immigration policy. While 27 percent of New England’s current immigrants arrived before 1980, only one in five foreign-born persons in New England and the nation alike arrived during the decade between 1980 and 1989 (see Table 2).

During the 1990s, immigration flows surged, particularly from Latin America, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union. Close to a third of all Latin American and Asian immigrants and 44 percent of immigrants from the former Communist bloc immigrated during that period. Aside from the booming U.S. economy and the collapse of communism, the heightened immigration in that decade may also reflect the fact that the 2.7 million undocumented immigrants granted amnesty under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act became eligible to bring over their relatives through family-based immigration.<sup>3</sup>

In the early 2000s, a weakening economy and stricter immigration policy in the aftermath of 9/11 contributed to a temporary slowdown in immigrant flows. The annual number of new immigrants declined by nearly a quarter between 2002 and 2003, but has picked up and remained steady since then. Overall, slightly more than a quarter of the region's and the nation's immigrants alike arrived after 2000, largely from countries in Latin America and Asia.

As in the nation as a whole, the origins of the foreign born in New England have shifted significantly over time. Immigration from Canada and Europe has slowed considerably over the past three decades: more than two thirds of Canadians and close to half of all Europeans now in New England immigrated before 1980, whereas only 11 percent and 17 percent of each respective group arrived between 2000 and 2006 (see Table 2).

In contrast, immigration from countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa has accelerated in recent years, mirroring national trends. For example, whereas only 14 percent of immigrants from Latin America came before 1980, a full third immigrated after 2000. Immigration from Asia and Africa has followed similar patterns. While Africans, in particular, still account for only 6 percent of the region's immigrants, their numbers have grown at the highest rate: three times as many Africans immigrated to the region between 2000 and 2006, compared with before 1980.

**Table 2. Immigrant population by region of origin and period of arrival.**

Percent of immigrants from each region arriving in each period

	Before 1980	1980 – 1989	1990 – 1999	2000 – 2006
<b>New England</b>				
All immigrants	27.2	18.6	28.0	26.2
Latin America	13.7	22.6	31.9	31.8
Europe	48.0	12.1	22.8	17.0
Asia	15.8	23.7	30.6	30.0
Africa	12.0	18.3	31.9	37.8
Australia	33.3	11.4	20.9	34.4
Canada	66.0	6.9	16.3	10.8
<b>United States</b>				
All immigrants	23.1	21.1	30.6	25.2
Latin America	19.1	22.1	32.0	26.8
Europe	43.6	12.4	26.1	17.9
Asia	20.1	25.3	30.2	24.4
Africa	11.0	15.5	35.8	37.7
Australia	24.8	16.4	27.7	31.1
Canada	48.3	11.1	22.2	18.3

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

## Demographic profile

The demographic characteristics of immigrants in New England have important implications for public policies aimed at promoting their civic and economic integration. This section constructs a demographic portrait of the region's foreign-born population as of 2006, placing particular emphasis on its age structure, racial and ethnic composition, educational attainment, and English proficiency.

### Age

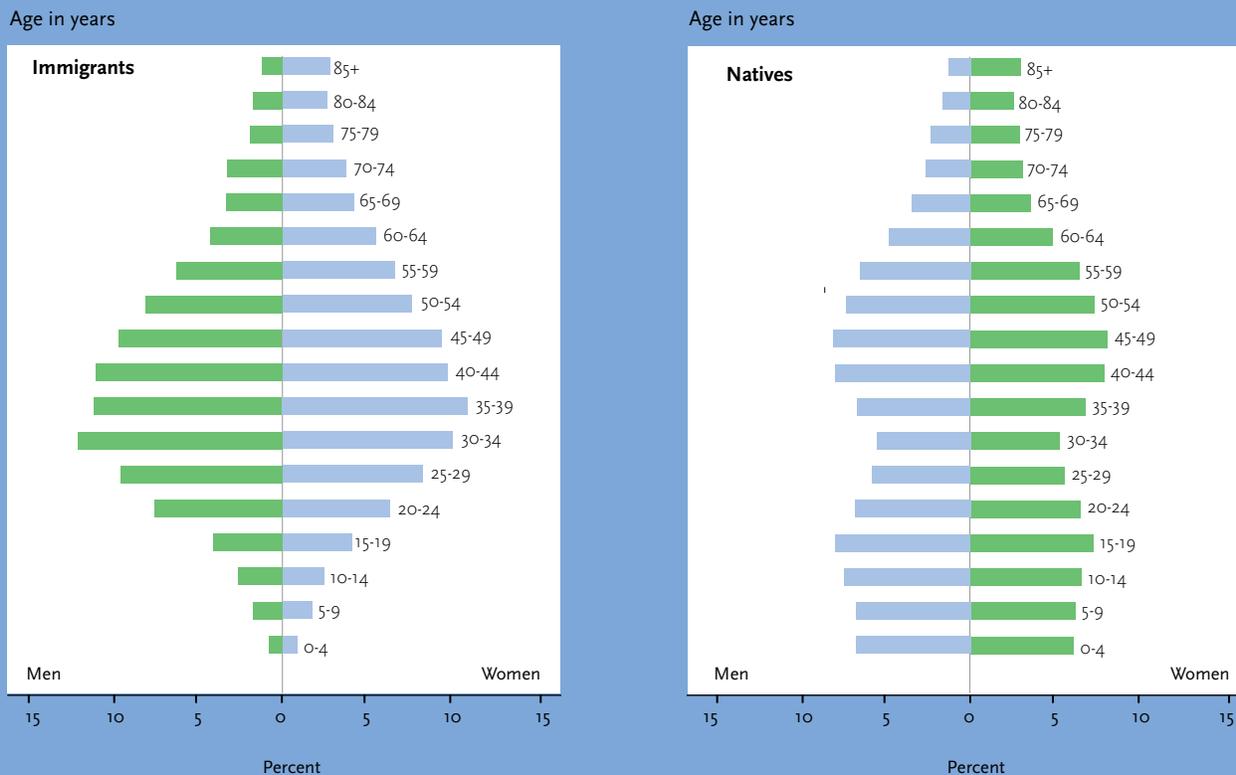
Relative to the native population, immigrants are more likely to be of working age—between the ages of 18 and 64 (see Table 3, next page). Thus their age structure is heavily skewed toward the working-age population, unlike that of natives, which is more evenly distributed across age groups (see Figure 7, next page). In both New England and the nation as a whole, roughly 80 percent of immigrants are in this age group, compared with about 60 percent of the native population. Higher numbers of working-age immigrants can be of significant

**Table 3. Age distribution of immigrants and natives.**

	Immigrants				Natives			
	Median age	Under 18	18 to 64	65 and over	Median age	Under 18	18 to 64	65 and over
	(years)	(percent)			(years)	(percent)		
Connecticut	41	8.6	77.1	14.4	39	25.5	61.3	13.3
Maine	47	12.4	67.6	20.0	41	21.6	64.0	14.3
Massachusetts	41	6.5	79.9	13.6	38	25.2	61.6	13.3
New Hampshire	43	7.1	78.7	14.0	39	23.5	64.2	12.2
Rhode Island	41	7.4	78.7	14.0	38	24.4	61.8	13.8
Vermont	48	8.2	69.6	22.3	40	22.0	65.1	13.0
New England	41	7.4	78.5	14.2	38	24.5	62.2	13.3
United States	40	8.1	80.5	11.5	36	27.0	60.5	12.5

Source: 2006 American Community Survey.  
 Note: More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 1.

**Figure 7. In New England, immigrants are more likely than natives to be of working age, regardless of gender.**



Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

benefit to the region, and the nation, as increasing numbers of baby boomers prepare to leave the labor force.

While the elderly constitute roughly com-

parable shares of both immigrant and native populations, immigrants are much less likely than natives to be under the age of 18—often three or four times less likely (see Table 3).

There are several possible explanations for this. Because most datasets count all immigrants regardless of their legal status, they include undocumented immigrants, who are more likely to have arrived in search of work.<sup>4</sup> These immigrants are more likely to arrive alone, at least at first, and to send money to their families back home. Further, children born to immigrants already living in the United States are U.S. citizens upon birth and are thus counted under the native population.

Interestingly, within New England, the age distribution of immigrants varies across states (see Table 3). Northern New England is home to a fair number of older Canadian and European immigrants who immigrated decades ago (or who may have arrived more recently in search of retirement locations). This results in a heavier presence of elderly immigrants and lower shares of working-age immigrants. In contrast, states in southern New England—with larger economies and labor markets—attract many more working-age immigrants who arrive in search of employment. Thus, Massachusetts has the highest share of immigrants between the ages of 18 and 64 in the region, but the lowest shares of elderly immigrants and immigrants under 18.

## Race and ethnicity

Immigrants in the region are much more racially and ethnically diverse than native New Englanders. While non-Hispanic whites comprise close to 87 percent of the region's native population, they account for only 42 percent of its immigrants (see Table 4). Asian and Hispanic immigrants are well represented, each accounting for just over a fifth of the region's foreign born. Black and multi-racial immigrants account for 12 percent and 4 percent, respectively, of New England's immigrant population.

The racial and ethnic breakdown of immigrants varies within the region itself. The three northern states have higher shares of white immigrants and much lower shares of black, multi-racial, and Hispanic immigrants compared with southern New England (see Table 4). Nearly 60 percent of all immigrants in northern New England are non-Hispanic

**Table 4. Immigrants and natives by race/ethnicity.**

Percent of each population belonging to each race

	White (non- Hispanic)	Black (non- Hispanic)	Asian (non- Hispanic)	Other/ multi-race (non- Hispanic)	Hispanic
<b>Immigrants</b>					
New England	42.3	11.8	21.4	3.7	20.8
United States	20.5	7.3	23.4	1.7	47.2
Southern New England	40.9	12.2	21.3	3.9	21.8
Northern New England	58.4	7.8	23.2	1.2	9.4
<b>Natives</b>					
New England	86.7	4.5	1.2	1.8	5.7
United States	72.7	12.9	1.6	2.7	10.2
Southern New England	83.6	5.8	1.4	1.9	7.2
Northern New England	95.9	0.6	0.5	1.7	1.2

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

Notes: Southern New England includes Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Northern New England includes Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

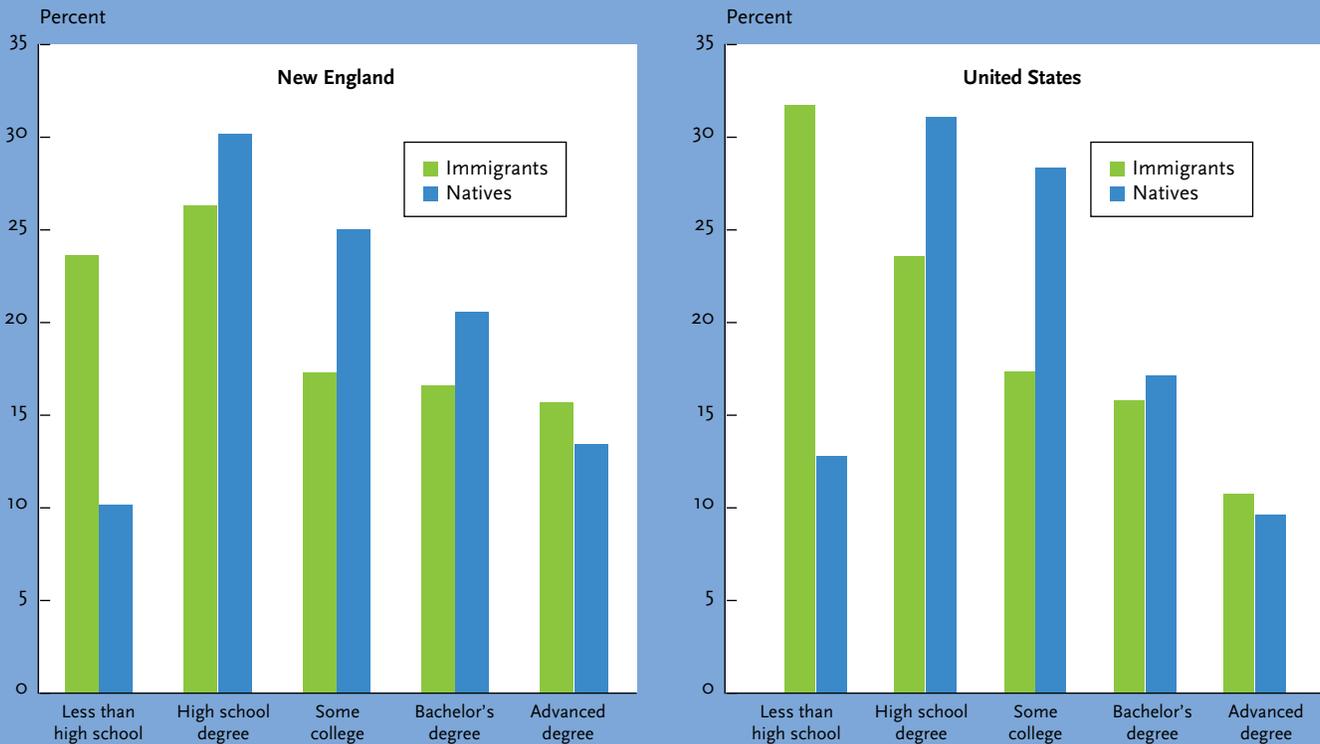
More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 2.

whites; in the southern states, their share is much lower at 41 percent. These racial breakdowns largely reflect differences in region of origin among immigrants settling in New England's northern and southern states.

Furthermore, in contrast to New England's native population, which is among the least diverse in the nation, the region's immigrants are more diverse than those in several of the other eight U.S. census divisions. The region has the second-highest share of non-Hispanic white immigrants, but it also boasts the highest shares of black and multi-racial immigrants (see Appendix Table 3). Because New England has a lower share of immigrants from Latin America compared with the rest of the nation, Hispanic immigrants are less well represented than in other regions. One in five foreign-born persons here is of Hispanic ethnicity, which is the lowest share nationwide, and far lower than in the West South Central and Mountain regions, for example: in those regions, close to three quarters and two thirds, respectively, of all immigrants are Hispanic.

**Figure 8. Both immigrants and natives in New England are better educated than their national counterparts.**

Educational attainment, 2006 (population aged 25 and over)



Source: 2006 American Community Survey.  
Note: More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 4.

**Table 5. English proficiency and educational attainment of the immigrant population**

Percent

		Educational attainment				
	Proficient in English	Less than high school	High school graduate	Some college	Bachelor's degree	Advanced degree
<b>Immigrants</b>						
New England	57.2	23.8	26.5	17.4	16.7	15.8
United States	47.6	32.0	23.8	17.5	15.9	10.8
Southern New England	55.9	24.5	26.5	17.2	16.3	15.6
Northern New England	71.5	15.9	25.9	19.7	20.7	17.9
<b>Natives</b>						
New England	—	10.2	30.4	25.2	20.7	13.5
United States	—	12.9	31.4	28.6	17.3	9.7
Southern New England	—	10.1	29.3	24.6	21.3	14.7
Northern New England	—	10.3	33.8	26.8	18.8	10.2

Source: 2006 American Community Survey.  
Notes: Immigrants proficient in English are defined as those aged 5 and over who speak English only or speak it very well. Educational attainment is restricted to the population aged 25 and over. More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 3.

## English proficiency and educational attainment

English proficiency and educational attainment are two key ingredients of successful civic and economic integration of immigrants and reliable predictors of their well-being. New England's immigrants perform better than their counterparts elsewhere on both indicators, attesting to a higher degree of social and economic integration.

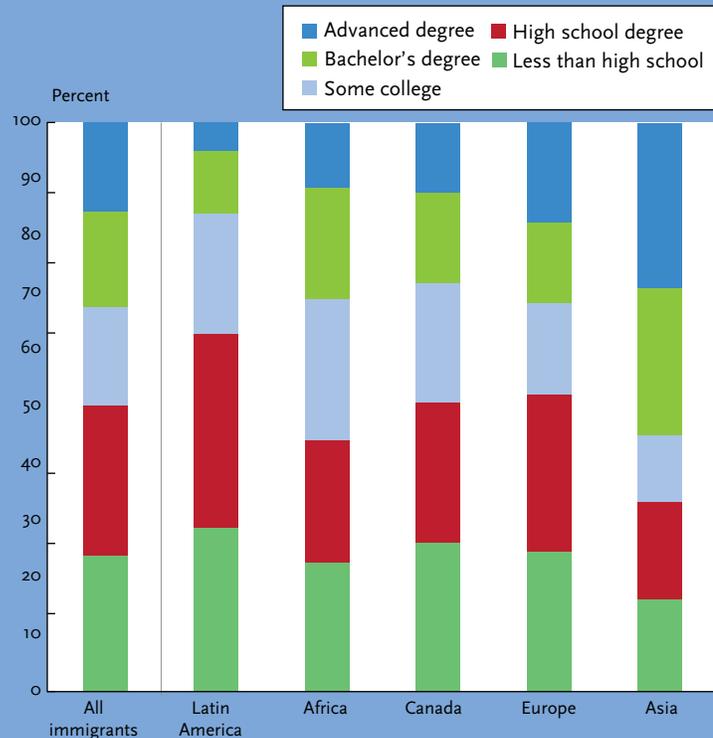
Immigrants in New England have higher English proficiency rates than their national counterparts: close to 60 percent of the region's immigrants over 5 years of age speak English only or speak it very well, compared with less than half in the country as a whole (see Table 5). English proficiency rates are especially high among immigrants in the northern New England states, owing to the large numbers of English-speaking immigrants from Canada and the United Kingdom and immigrants with longer tenure in the United States. Fully three quarters of immigrants in Maine and Vermont and two thirds in New Hampshire are proficient in English.

New England's immigrants are also among the best educated in the nation, which is consistent with the region's traditionally high levels of educational attainment (see Figure 8). More than three quarters of the region's foreign-born population have at least a high school degree, compared with just two thirds in the country as a whole. Additionally, 16 percent of New England's immigrants hold graduate or professional degrees, compared with 11 percent of all immigrants nationwide, and less than 8 percent of immigrants in the southern and southwestern parts of the country (see Appendix Table 4).

The educational attainment of New England's immigrants relative to its natives follows a bimodal pattern. In 2006, immigrants in the region were more likely to be high school dropouts and also more likely to hold advanced degrees than the native population (see Figure 8).<sup>5</sup> In each New England state, however, the educational attainment of immigrants is more heavily weighted toward the bottom of the educational spectrum. A quarter of all immigrants over age 25 lacks a high

**Figure 9A. The educational attainment of New England's immigrants is far from uniform and largely reflects the diversity of their origins.**

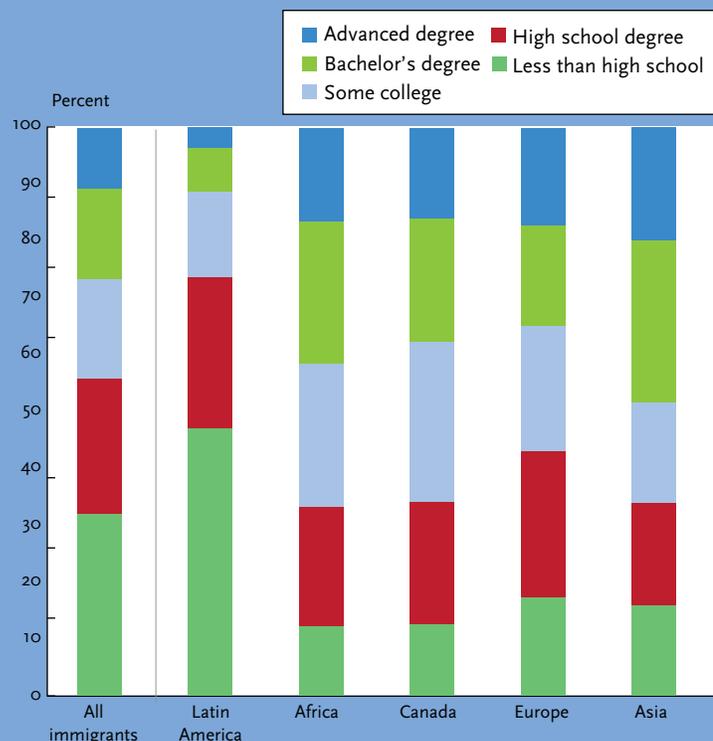
Educational attainment, 2006 (immigrants in New England aged 25 and over)



Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

**Figure 9B. Both in New England and in the nation, immigrants from Latin America are among the least educated, while those from Asia have the highest levels of educational attainment.**

Educational attainment, 2006 (immigrants in the United States aged 25 and over)



Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

**Table 6. Labor force growth, 1990–2000 and 2000–2006**

Civilian labor force members aged 16 and over

	1990–2000				2000–2006			
	United States	New England	Southern New England	Northern New England	United States	New England	Southern New England	Northern New England
<b>Labor force growth</b>								
Native	8,716,500	-1,700	-133,500	131,800	7,231,300	183,400	83,100	100,300
Immigrant	5,726,500	181,000	167,700	13,300	6,295,000	253,900	234,700	19,200
Total	14,443,000	179,300	34,200	145,100	13,546,100	438,600	319,600	119,000
<b>Immigrants' share of net growth (percent)</b>	40	101	491	9	46	58	73	16

Sources: 1990 and 2000 Public Use Microdata, Census of Population and Housing; 2006 American Community Survey.

school diploma, compared with only one in ten natives. The difference among professional and graduate degree holders is smaller, with 16 percent of immigrants holding an advanced degree, compared with 14 percent of native New Englanders.

Educational attainment is far from uniform within the foreign-born population, and largely reflects immigrants' origins. Immigrants from Latin America are among the least educated in New England, with two thirds having no formal schooling beyond high school. For the nation as a whole, that share is even higher, at close to three quarters (see Figures 9A and 9B, previous page). In contrast, Asian immigrants to the region display the highest levels of educational attainment: more than half have at least a bachelor's degree, and 29 percent hold a graduate degree. For European immigrants, these shares are 32 percent and 18 percent, respectively.

The correlation between immigrants' regions of origin and their educational attainment is particularly evident in northern New England. These states host higher shares of Asian, European, and Canadian immigrants than of Latin American immigrants, resulting in even lower shares of immigrant high school dropouts, and higher shares of immigrants with at least a bachelor's degree (see Table 5).

## Labor market characteristics

Given current demographic trends among the native population, New England, along with the rest of the nation, is finding itself more and more reliant on immigrants as a source of labor supply. This section focuses on the labor force behavior of New England's immigrants, highlighting their contribution to the growth of the regional labor force and comparing their employment choices and earnings with those of native workers.

## Labor force participation and employment status

In recent decades, immigrants have played an increasingly important role in the growth of the national labor force, and even more so in New England (see Table 6). During the 1990s, the number of immigrants in the region's civilian labor force grew by roughly 181,000, whereas that of natives declined by 1,700. Thus, foreign-born workers were responsible for the entire net growth of the region's labor force in that decade. Between 2000 and 2006, New England's outflow of native workers reversed, and its native-born workforce added more than 183,000 new members. However, immigrants continued to account for the majority—58 percent—of regional labor force growth during that period.

These trends are especially pronounced in the southern New England states.<sup>6</sup> During the

1990s, the native-born labor force in southern New England shrank by more than 133,000 workers. The foreign-born labor force, however, grew by 168,000 workers, accounting for nearly five times the net growth in the labor force in that decade. Between 2000 and 2006, the southern states added 83,000 new native-born workers and nearly 235,000 new foreign-born members. Thus, while the role of immigration in southern New England's labor force growth over these six years declined compared with the 1990s, immigrants still accounted for three quarters of the net work-force growth.

In northern New England, immigrants' contribution to labor force growth was much lower during both periods; however, its relative importance has increased over time. During the 1990s, foreign-born workers accounted for only 9 percent of overall work-force growth. Between 2000 and 2006, their share of the growth had risen to 16 percent—an increase of more than three quarters over the previous decade.

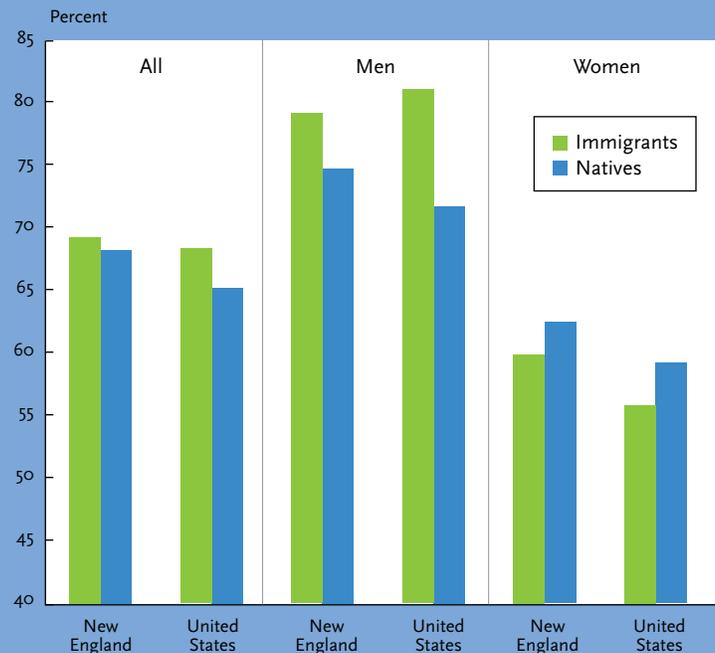
The impact of immigrants on the labor force, however, depends not only on the absolute number of working-age foreign-born persons, but also on their likelihood of participating in the labor market. A widely used measure of this likelihood is the labor force participation rate, which indicates the share of people in a certain population who are either employed or unemployed and actively seeking work.

In 2006, immigrants and natives aged 25 and over had virtually equal rates of labor force participation in New England. This apparent equality, however, masks significant variations in labor force behavior across gender, especially among immigrants (see Figure 10). Immigrant men are significantly more likely than immigrant women to participate in the labor force—79 percent of immigrant men in New England do, compared with 60 percent of immigrant women. In the United States, the difference between immigrant men's and women's labor force participation rates is even more striking: more than 80 percent of immigrant men are in the labor force, compared with just over half of their female counterparts.

The labor force participation rates of

**Figure 10. Immigrant men are significantly more likely to participate in the labor force than both native men and immigrant women.**

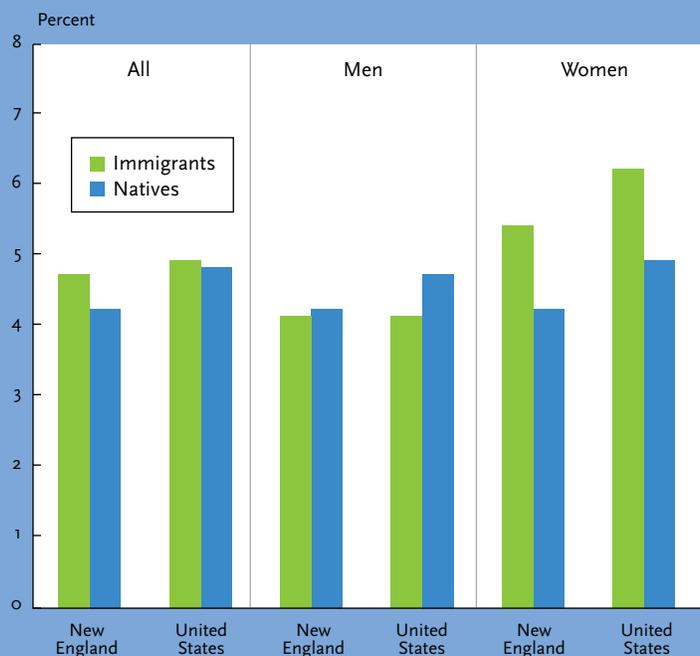
Labor force participation rates, 2006 (population aged 25 and over)



Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.  
 Notes: The labor force participation rate is defined as the percent of the population aged 25 and over that is in the civilian labor force.  
 More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 5.

**Figure 11. The higher unemployment rate among immigrants is entirely driven by the labor market performance of immigrant women.**

Unemployment rates, 2006 (population aged 25 and over)



Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.  
 Note: More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 6.

**Table 7. Immigrants' labor force participation rates, by educational attainment and English proficiency**

Percent of population aged 25 and over that is in the civilian labor force

	New England	United States
<b>Educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	53.6	59.1
High school degree	69.6	68.3
Some college	75.9	72.2
College degree	74.7	74.5
Advanced degree	77.9	78.9
<b>English proficiency</b>		
Speaks English only or speaks it very well	71.5	72.3
Speaks English less than very well or not at all	66.0	64.6

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

immigrant men are also significantly higher than those of native men, whereas immigrant women are less likely than native women to be either employed or seeking work (see Figure 10). These discrepancies likely result from both cultural and demographic conditions. Foreign-born men who migrate in search of employment are likely to actively seek work once they are in the country. The women who may accompany them, however, often are not. Labor economists have advanced several explanations for the lower labor force participation of women from developing or highly religious countries, such as low educational attainment, high fertility, and religious and cultural views that emphasize women's primary roles as wives and mothers.<sup>7</sup>

Immigrants' attachment to the labor force is strongly correlated with their education and English proficiency, regardless of gender. In New England, 78 percent of immigrants with graduate degrees participate in the labor force, compared with only 54 percent of immigrants without a high school diploma (see Table 7). For the nation as a whole, the gap is slightly narrower, at 20 percentage points. The differences by English proficiency are smaller, with 72 percent of immigrants proficient in English participating in the labor force in New England, compared with 66 percent of those with limited English skills.

When immigrants do participate in the

labor force, they appear to be somewhat less successful at finding employment than native workers in the region. The higher unemployment rate among immigrants, however, is entirely driven by the labor market performance of immigrant women (see Figure 11, previous page). Female immigrants' unemployment rates exceed those of native female workers by more than one percentage point in both New England and the United States, and by as much as two percentage points in certain parts of the Southwest (see Appendix Table 6). Thus, even when immigrant women do participate in the labor market, their lower education levels and English skills seem to impede their ability to compete for employment.

## Types of jobs

Knowing the importance of immigrants to the region's labor force growth is by itself insufficient for obtaining a complete assessment of their effects on the labor market. To evaluate these effects more fully, we need to know more about the specific kinds of employment that immigrants obtain. Do their industry and occupation breakdowns differ from those of the native population? Are they disproportionately represented in certain industries and occupations? Do they fill primarily low-wage and low-skilled labor market niches, or does their employment range more evenly across low-, medium-, and highly skilled occupations? Comparing immigrants and natives across several employment variables provides answers to some of these questions.

Both in New England and across the nation, immigrants are more likely than natives to be employed as private wage and salary workers and significantly less likely to work in the public sector. In fact, the share of immigrants employed as government workers is half that of natives in both New England and the United States (see Table 8). In part, this may result from the citizenship requirements for many government positions. However, it may also reflect the fact that all available datasets count both legal and undocumented immigrants. Illegal immigrants, most often employed in the private sector, are highly unlikely to seek and obtain government jobs. Legal immigrants,

while authorized for employment in certain public-sector positions, are also a government-wary group that by and large may prefer employment in the private sector.

Interestingly, while natives in northern and southern New England have equal rates of employment as government workers, immigrants who live in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont are significantly more likely to work for the government than immigrants in southern New England. This may be due to the northern states' larger presence of older and more established European and Canadian immigrants, who are more likely to be legal residents and naturalized citizens and thus more likely to seek government employment.

Immigrants are more likely to be self-employed than natives at the national level, but the reverse is true in New England. Only 6.3 percent of immigrants in the region are self-employed, compared with 7.5 percent of natives (see Table 8). The region's immigrants are also less likely to be self-employed than immigrants nationwide, trailing them by a full percentage point. Within New England, immigrants and natives alike are substantially more likely to be self-employed in the three northern states than their counterparts in the southern part of the region.

## Industries and occupations

The largest shares of both native-born and foreign-born workers in New England are employed in manufacturing, health services, and professional and business services. Close to 44 percent of New England's immigrants and 38 percent of its natives work in one of these three sectors (see Table 9). At the same time, however, immigrants in the region are more likely than natives to work in manufacturing, accommodation and food services, construction, and other services, including personal services. In fact, while immigrants compose 14 percent of all civilian employees, they account for 19 percent of manufacturing employment and 31 percent of employment in accommodation and food services.

In contrast, native workers are more likely than immigrants to be employed in industries such as educational services, financial activities,

**Table 8. Employment of immigrants and natives by class of worker.**

Percent of civilian employed population aged 16 years and over

	New England	United States	Southern New England	Northern New England
<b>Private wage and salary workers</b>				
Immigrants	86.5	84.1	87.0	80.8
Natives	78.3	77.5	79.0	76.2
<b>Government workers</b>				
Immigrants	7.0	8.3	6.7	11.1
Natives	14.1	15.5	14.1	14.2
<b>Self-employed workers</b>				
Immigrants	6.3	7.3	6.1	7.8
Natives	7.5	6.7	6.8	9.4
<b>Unpaid family workers</b>				
Immigrants	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
Natives	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3

Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

Notes: Self-employed workers are those who worked for profit or fees in their own unincorporated business, profession, or trade, or who operated a farm. Unpaid family workers are those who worked 15 hours or more a week without pay in a business or on a farm operated by a relative.

**Table 9. Employment of immigrants and natives by industry, New England.**

Percent of civilian employed population aged 16 years and over

	Immigrants	Natives
Manufacturing	16.6	11.9
Health care and social assistance	15.2	14.7
Professional and business services	12.0	11.0
Accommodation and food services	9.8	3.5
Retail trade	8.3	10.0
Construction	7.8	7.4
Financial activities	7.1	8.9
Educational services	6.8	10.7
Other services	6.0	4.1
Transportation and utilities	3.1	4.2
Wholesale trade	2.1	3.4
Government	2.0	4.8
Information	1.8	2.9
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1.2	1.8
Agriculture, natural resources, & mining	0.3	0.8

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

retail trade, and information. For example, natives are almost 60 percent more likely to work in educational services, as most teaching jobs, especially in elementary and secondary schools, require English proficiency and familiarity with cultural and social customs, which immigrant workers often lack.

Differences between immigrants' and natives' employment choices are especially apparent at the occupation level, often within the same industry. The occupational breakdown of New England's employed immigrants largely reflects their bimodal pattern of educational attainment (see Table 10). Immigrants are much more likely than natives to hold highly skilled professional occupations that require graduate training. At the same time, they are also more likely to be employed in low-skilled and low-paid positions. For example, within the health care and social assistance industry, immigrants are twice as likely as native workers to be employed as physicians and surgeons and, at the same time, twice as likely to work as home health aides.

A closer examination of the most popular occupations among immigrants and natives highlights this point. The ten occupations that immigrants are most likely to hold are primarily a collection of very low-skilled jobs—housekeepers, janitors, health aides—and very highly skilled positions—software engineers, college professors—with hardly any medium-skilled occupations in between. In contrast, natives are much more likely to hold jobs that span more skill and education levels and provide a more certain path to the middle class: administrative professionals, registered nurses, elementary school teachers, accountants.

Within the same level of educational attainment, immigrants and natives tend to pursue positions that capitalize on different sets of skills. For example, among college graduates, immigrants—a higher share of whom have advanced degrees—gravitate toward positions that require graduate quantitative, scientific, or medical training. Six of the ten most popular occupations in this group are highly skilled positions in computing, science, medicine, and postsecondary teaching (see Table 10). Foreign-born college graduates are three

times more likely than native ones to work in computer-related professions, and almost nine times more likely to be medical scientists.

Native college graduates, in contrast, are most often employed in professions that emphasize English proficiency and familiarity with local customs and culture, such as teaching and legal professions and various management positions.<sup>8</sup> For instance, native college graduates are three times more likely than immigrant graduates to teach in elementary through secondary education, and four times more likely to be legal professionals.

Comparing the occupational choices of workers without a college degree reveals even larger discrepancies between immigrants and natives (see Table 10). With lower English proficiency and higher likelihood of lacking a high school degree, immigrants are much more likely than natives to work in low-skilled and low-paid positions as housekeepers and janitors, health aides, cashiers, kitchen workers, and production and construction workers. In contrast, natives without a college degree are more often employed in secretarial and administrative positions, managerial occupations, retail sales, and even nursing. Such positions generally require stronger English skills and at least a high school degree; they are also better paid and more likely to be unionized and to offer non-pecuniary benefits such as health insurance.

## Median earnings

The larger concentration of immigrants in relatively low-skilled industries and occupations is in turn reflected in their lower earnings relative to native workers. In New England, the median annual earnings of both male and female immigrant workers are only 80 percent as high as those of their native counterparts (see Figures 12 and 13, page 28).

However, the relative earnings of immigrants and natives display intra-regional variations. In southern New England, immigrant male workers are substantially less well paid than native males. In Connecticut and Massachusetts, immigrant men earn only three quarters of natives' median pay; in Rhode Island, this ratio is even lower, at two thirds. This is

**Table 10. Employment of immigrants and natives by occupation and educational attainment, New England.**

Percent employed in the 10 most popular occupations for each nativity and educational attainment level

IMMIGRANTS			NATIVES		
<b>Civilian employed population aged 25 and over, with positive earnings</b>					
1	Maids and housekeeping cleaners	3.9	1	Secretaries and admin. assistants	3.4
2	Health aides	3.2	2	Miscellaneous managers	2.7
3	Janitors and building cleaners	3.0	3	Elementary & middle school teachers	2.7
4	Cooks	2.6	4	Registered nurses	2.6
5	Computer software engineers	2.2	5	Retail sales managers	2.4
6	Cashiers	2.1	6	Truck and other drivers	2.0
7	Carpenters	1.9	7	Retail salespersons	1.9
8	Miscellaneous managers	1.9	8	Accountants and auditors	1.7
9	Postsecondary teachers	1.9	9	Carpenters	1.5
10	Retail sales managers	1.6	10	Janitors and building cleaners	1.4
<b>Civilian employed population aged 25 and over, with a bachelor's degree or higher, with positive earnings</b>					
1	Computer software engineers	5.8	1	Elementary & middle school teachers	6.5
2	Postsecondary teachers	5.1	2	Miscellaneous managers	4.1
3	Miscellaneous managers	3.8	3	Registered nurses	3.9
4	Physicians and surgeons	3.7	4	Accountants and auditors	3.4
5	Accountants and auditors	3.3	5	Lawyers and judges	2.6
6	Medical scientists	3.0	6	Postsecondary teachers	2.3
7	Registered nurses	2.6	7	Chief executives & legislators	2.2
8	Computer programmers	2.4	8	Physicians and surgeons	1.9
9	Elementary & middle school teachers	2.1	9	Secondary school teachers	1.9
10	Computer scientists	2.1	10	Financial managers	1.8
<b>Civilian employed population aged 25 and over, without a bachelor's degree, with positive earnings</b>					
1	Maids and housekeeping cleaners	5.6	1	Secretaries and admin. assistants	4.6
2	Health aides	4.5	2	Truck and other drivers	3.1
3	Janitors and building cleaners	4.0	3	Retail sales managers	2.8
4	Cooks	3.8	4	Janitors and building cleaners	2.2
5	Cashiers	2.7	5	Carpenters	2.2
6	Carpenters	2.7	6	Retail salespersons	2.1
7	Other production workers	2.4	7	Health aides	2.0
8	Construction laborers	2.3	8	Bookkeeping and accounting clerks	1.9
9	Misc. metal and plastic workers	2.0	9	Miscellaneous managers	1.8
10	Truck and other drivers	1.9	10	Registered nurses	1.7

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

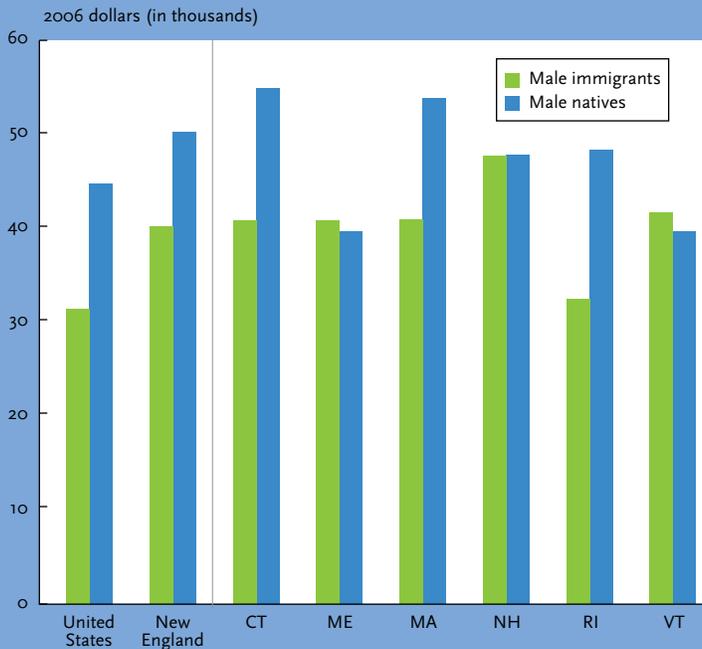
consistent with the nation as a whole, where immigrant men earn 70 cents for every dollar earned by a native male worker. In the three northern New England states, in contrast, the earnings of immigrant male workers are on par with or slightly higher than those of native men, likely because of their stronger educa-

tional background and English skills, and longer tenure in the United States.

The intra-regional patterns in the earnings of immigrant versus native female workers are similar to those of male workers, albeit less pronounced (see Figure 13, next page). In southern New England, female immigrants are paid sub-

**Figure 12. The larger concentration of immigrants in low-skilled industries and occupations is reflected in lower earnings compared with native workers...**

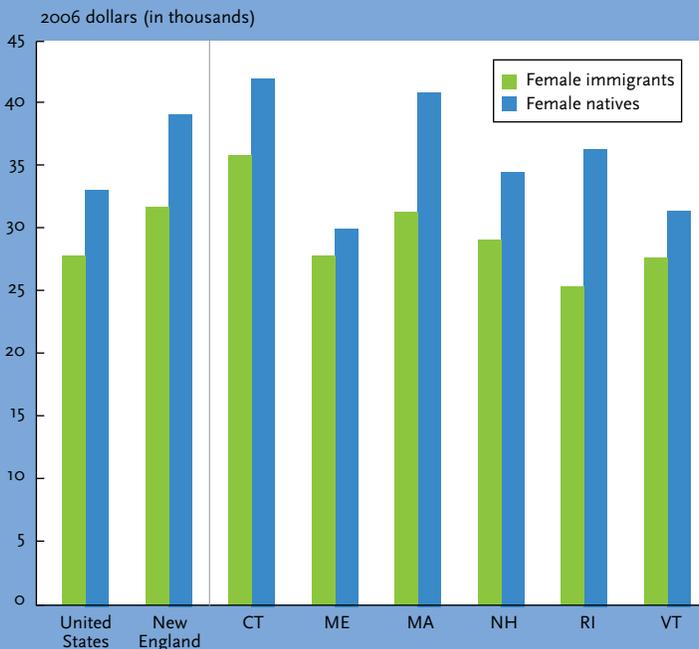
Median annual earnings, 2006  
(males aged 16 years and over, with earnings, employed full-time and year-round)



Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

**Figure 13. ... and this holds for female as well as male workers.**

Median annual earnings, 2006  
(females aged 16 years and over, with earnings, employed full-time and year-round)



Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

stantially less than female native workers. In the northern states, they still earn less than female natives, but the gap is much smaller.

## Socioeconomic and civic characteristics

A complete profile of New England's immigrant population should explore their socioeconomic costs alongside their civic contributions. On the one hand, immigrants are more likely to be poor, to live in crowded housing conditions, and to face economic, housing, and health-related hardships than the native population, thereby increasing the cost of certain government programs, such as welfare, public health insurance, and education. On the other hand, immigrants' contributions to the region's—and the nation's—economy and society provide value that may well offset their public costs: they naturalize, vote, own homes, volunteer in their communities, and pay taxes. A careful consideration of both sides of this equation is important in sketching an accurate profile of the region's foreign born.

However, estimating an exact net value of immigrants' economic, social, and cultural impacts is an infinitely complex, if not an impossible, task. Doing so requires an agreement on whether this value should be measured in dollar terms, for example. This then raises the question of what dollar values should be assigned to non-monetary characteristics such as voting, volunteer work, and community involvement. Availability of data further complicates the exercise. No single data source, or even a compilation of sources, can describe all aspects of immigrants' public costs and benefits, precisely because of the difficulty of measuring most of them.

Thus this section attempts to simply illuminate different ways in which immigrants affect the society and economy of their newly adopted country, rather than provide a comprehensive, "bottom-line" estimate of immigrants' net value. It begins with a discussion of immigrants' poverty and public dependency status, using indicators such as poverty rates and use of various welfare benefits. This is followed by a description of immigrants' social

and civic contributions, such as voter turnout, volunteer work, homeownership, and lawfulness. The section ends with a brief overview of various estimates of immigrants' net fiscal impact: that is, the value of taxes they pay, less the cost of services they receive.

## Poverty and public assistance

### Median household incomes and poverty.

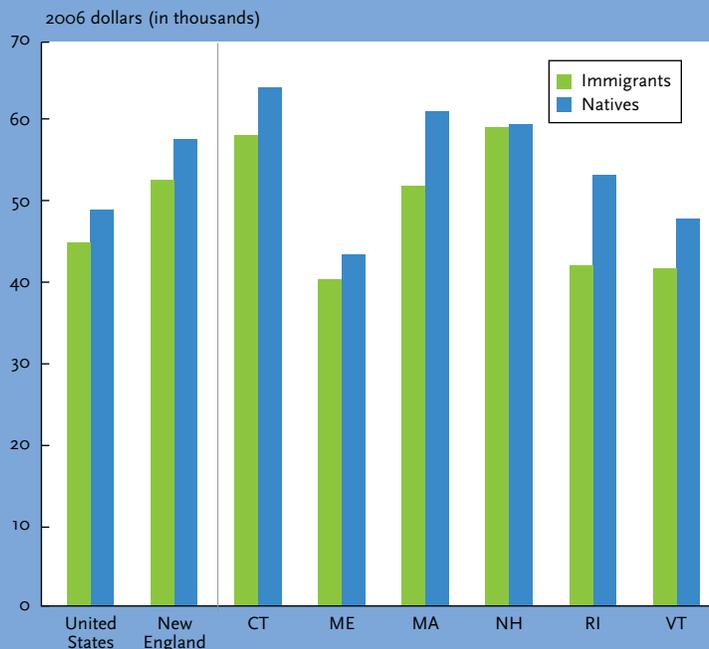
Household incomes of the foreign-born population lag behind those of New England's natives in every state in the region. Mirroring the trends in median earnings for both male and female workers, the gaps between the household incomes of immigrant- and native-headed households are slightly smaller in the northern New England states relative to the southern states (see Figure 14). However, even in the north, the median incomes of immigrant-headed households are lower than those of native households. This is partly due to the lower likelihood of immigrant women to participate in the labor force and to their lower earnings relative to their native female counterparts, both of which result in more limited contributions towards the total income of a household.

Controlling for educational attainment reveals interesting trends. Among the least-educated groups, immigrant households actually fare better than the native born, outearning them in median household income (see Figure 15). This may be largely attributable to the higher average number of workers per immigrant-headed household. Indeed, less than a third of immigrant householders without a high school degree are aged 65 and over and thus more likely to be retired, compared with nearly half of native householders with the same educational attainment.

Among populations with higher educational attainment, native households earn higher median incomes than immigrant-headed ones. Well-educated immigrants are less likely than natives to hold management positions, which typically pay better. And despite their high levels of education, some immigrants may face restrictions on certain kinds of well-paying employment, such as citizenship requirements or difficulties with recogni-

**Figure 14. Household incomes of the foreign born lag behind those of natives in every state in the region.**

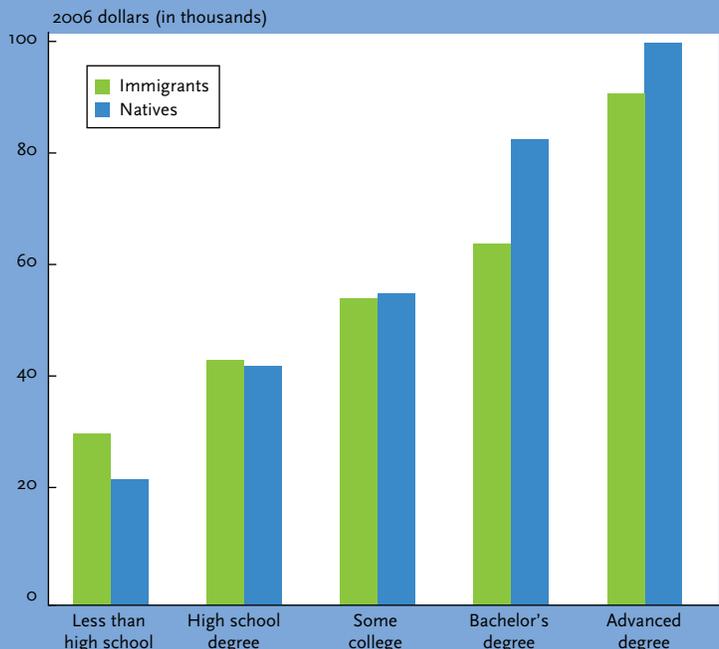
Median household incomes, 2006



Sources: 2006 American Community Survey (for United States and individual states); Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey (for New England).  
Notes: Immigrant and native households are those headed by an immigrant or a native householder, respectively.  
More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 7.

**Figure 15. Among the least-educated groups in New England, immigrant households actually fare better than the native born in median household income.**

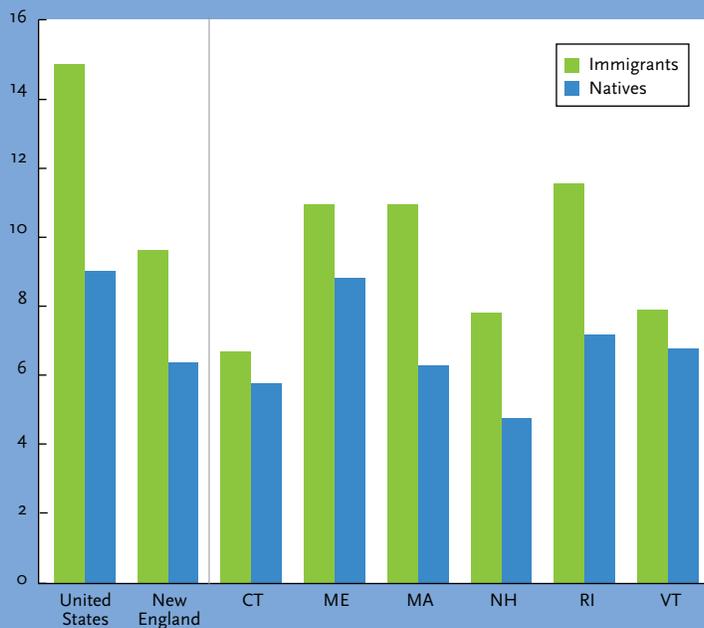
Median household incomes by educational attainment of householder, 2006



Sources: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.  
Note: Immigrant and native households are those headed by an immigrant or a native householder, respectively.

**Figure 16. With weaker educational backgrounds and lower earnings, immigrant families in New England and the nation are far more likely to live in poverty than families headed by the native born.**

Percent of families with incomes below the poverty level, 2006



Sources: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.  
 Note: Immigrant and native households are those headed by an immigrant or a native householder, respectively.  
 Detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix table 8.

tion of professional qualifications and licenses obtained abroad.

Higher incomes among both immigrants and natives in New England translate into lower poverty rates relative to the nation. For both groups in the region, the shares of families with incomes below the poverty line are significantly lower than the national shares (see Figure 16). Nevertheless, with weaker educational backgrounds and lower earnings, immigrant families in New England as well as across the country display far higher rates of poverty than families headed by the native born.

In New England, immigrant families are more than 50 percent more likely to live in poverty compared with native-born families; in the nation as a whole, they are two thirds more likely. Furthermore, the average immigrant family in New England has 3.27 persons, compared with 2.98 for natives, reflecting the fact that, both in New England and nationwide, immigrants are more likely to be married and more likely to have children under 18 (see Table 11). Thus, even at equal incomes,

the larger average size of immigrant families relative to native ones increases the likelihood that they will be considered poor, as their family income falls below the family-size-adjusted poverty threshold.

**Housing.** The lower incomes and larger family sizes of immigrants translate into significantly greater hardship in terms of housing opportunities. Immigrants are much more likely than natives to live in crowded housing conditions in both the region and the nation as a whole (see Table 12). In New England, close to 5 percent of all occupied units headed by immigrants are crowded, compared with less than 1 percent of native-headed housing units.<sup>9</sup> In the United States, this difference is much more pronounced: immigrant-headed housing units are over seven times more likely to be crowded compared with those headed by natives.

Among both owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units, higher shares of immigrant-headed units are burdened by housing costs than native ones. In New England, 44 percent of immigrant homeowners and 34 percent of native homeowners face moderate housing burdens (that is, their housings costs equal or exceed 30 percent of total household income). In the nation as a whole, this difference is even starker: close to half of all immigrant homeowners have moderate housing burdens, compared with 28 percent of native homeowners.

The shares of renters facing moderate housing burdens are even higher than those of homeowners—and significantly more so for natives. Thus the gaps between the burdened shares of immigrant and native renters are much smaller. In New England, 49 percent of immigrant renters and 47 percent of native renters are moderately burdened by housing costs; in northern New England, the two shares are virtually equal.

**Use of public assistance.** Despite lower household incomes and higher poverty rates, welfare use among immigrants is not necessarily higher than among natives, but rather it varies by type of benefit. The 1996

Welfare Reform Act severely restricted the eligibility of most non-citizen immigrants for many public benefits, such as food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Despite the fact that the 2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act restored eligibility for public assistance to certain non-citizens, immigrants’ use of all major public benefits declined significantly in the late 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>10</sup>

Using pooled data from the March Supplements of the 2005, 2006, and 2007 Current Population Surveys (CPS), we evaluate the relative use of four types of public assistance—food, housing, cash, and health benefits—among immigrant non-citizens, immigrant citizens, and natives from 2004 to 2006. We analyze naturalized immigrants separately from non-citizens because eligibility for many public benefits is based on citizenship status, and naturalized immigrants have the same eligibility as native-born citizens. Furthermore, to enable a more accurate comparison between eligible immigrants and natives, we limit the analysis to low-income households and individuals.<sup>11</sup> Because CPS data on food and housing benefits are available only for households, we consider those two benefits at the household level, and evaluate cash and health benefits at the individual level.

Analysis of food assistance reveals wide variations by type of food benefit in the relative use of non-citizens and citizens. In both New England and the nation, receipt of food stamps is roughly comparable across households headed by non-citizen immigrants, naturalized immigrants, and native citizens (see Table 13).<sup>12</sup> In New England, households headed by non-citizens are slightly

less likely than those headed by naturalized immigrants to receive food stamps, which are available only to citizens and certain qualified immigrant non-citizens; across the country, they are slightly more likely.<sup>13</sup>

Unlike the food stamp program, the two other types of food assistance—nutrition assistance through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, and free or

**Table 11. Family structure of immigrants and natives.**

	New England	United States
<b>Average family size</b>		
Immigrants	3.27	3.77
Natives	2.98	3.10
<b>Percent who are married</b>		
Immigrants	58.5	59.8
Natives	48.6	48.7
<b>Percent of households with children</b>		
Immigrants	38.0	43.8
Natives	29.2	29.4

Source: 2006 American Community Survey (for share who are married and for the national average family size); Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey (for share of households with children and for the regional average family size).  
Notes: The statistics on marriage refer to the population aged 15 and over. More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 8.

**Table 12. Housing indicators of immigrants and natives.**

Percent

	New England	United States	Southern New England	Northern New England
<b>Housing units that are crowded</b>				
Immigrants	4.9	11.8	5.0	3.8
Natives	0.9	1.6	0.9	1.0
<b>Homeowners with moderate housing burden</b>				
Immigrants	44.2	46.0	45.1	35.7
Natives	33.8	28.4	35.0	30.8
<b>Renters with moderate housing burden</b>				
Immigrants	48.7	49.7	49.0	44.2
Natives	47.0	45.1	47.7	44.9

Source: 2006 American Community Survey.  
Notes: Crowded housing refers to the share of occupied housing units that house 1.01 or more occupants per room. Moderate housing burden refers to the share of owner- or renter-occupied housing units where monthly housing costs equal or exceed 30 percent of household income. More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 9.

**Table 13. Use of public assistance and health insurance status among low-income immigrant non-citizens, immigrant citizens, and native citizens, 2004-2006**

	New England	United States
	percent of low-income households	
<b>Food stamps</b>		
Immigrant non-citizens	21.3	20.2
Immigrant citizens	22.3	18.2
Native citizens	20.9	22.7
<b>WIC</b>		
Immigrant non-citizens	5.8	13.9
Immigrant citizens	3.1	3.1
Native citizens	4.0	5.6
<b>Free or reduced lunch (all low-income households)</b>		
Immigrant non-citizens	18.5	28.0
Immigrant citizens	11.5	13.3
Native citizens	9.6	12.0
<b>Free or reduced lunch (low-income households with children)</b>		
Immigrant non-citizens	72.0	72.9
Immigrant citizens	65.5	67.6
Native citizens	68.2	69.0
<b>Housing</b>		
Immigrant non-citizens	24.2	11.4
Immigrant citizens	25.9	16.7
Native citizens	30.2	15.8
	percent of low-income individuals	
<b>Cash assistance</b>		
Immigrant non-citizens	4.1	3.4
Immigrant citizens	12.0	9.2
Native citizens	9.0	5.9
<b>Medicaid/SCHIP</b>		
Immigrant non-citizens	29.3	18.3
Immigrant citizens	27.4	24.3
Native citizens	39.7	33.0
	percent of total population	
<b>Share uninsured (2006)</b>		
Immigrant non-citizens	25.4	45.0
Immigrant citizens	10.2	16.4
Native citizens	8.9	13.2

Sources: Welfare benefits from pooled 2005, 2006, and 2007 Current Population Survey March Supplements; Health insurance from the 2007 Current Population Survey March Supplement.

Notes: For analysis of food and housing benefits, sample was restricted to households with incomes in the 20th percentile.

For analysis of health and cash benefits, sample was restricted to individuals with family incomes below 200 percent of poverty level.

WIC = Women, Infants, and Children nutrition assistance program

SCHIP = State Children's Health Insurance Program

More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 10.

reduced-price lunches through the National School Lunch Program—do not impose citizenship or residency requirements for eligibility. Not surprisingly, households headed by non-naturalized immigrants, who tend to be poorer, have higher use rates for both programs than households headed by both native and foreign-born citizens. For example, in New England, 18 percent of low-income households headed by a non-citizen use the school lunch benefit, compared with just under 10 percent of native households.

This discrepancy is also due to the fact that non-citizen households are simply more likely to include school-aged children than citizen households. Indeed, if the sample is restricted to low-income households with children aged 5 to 18, the magnitude of the differences in use rates declines significantly. In New England, 72 percent of low-income non-citizen households with children participate in the National School Lunch Program, compared with 68 percent of native households and 65 percent of immigrant citizen households.

Both in the region and across the United States, non-citizen households are less likely than native households to receive housing benefits in the form of residence in public housing projects or rent subsidies from a federal, state, or local government. In New England, 24 percent of low-income non-citizen households receive housing assistance, compared with 30 percent of native households (see Table 13). Overall, rates of housing assistance use in New England are twice as high as in the country as a whole for both non-citizen and citizen-headed households.

Use of cash assistance—TANF, general assistance payments, and SSI—is highest among immigrant citizens and lowest among immigrant non-citizens.<sup>14</sup> These programs have strict citizenship and residency requirements. Legal resident immigrants are ineligible for TANF within their first five years in the United States, and, in most cases, SSI is available only to citizens.

As a result, non-citizen immigrants are much less likely to receive cash benefits than naturalized immigrants and native citizens in both New England and across the United States. In New England, 4 percent of low-income non-citizen immigrants receive any of these benefits, compared with 12 percent of naturalized immigrants and 9 percent of citizens (see Table 13).

Native citizens are more likely to enroll in Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) than immigrants in both New England and the nation. Medicaid and SCHIP are mostly restricted to citizens and legal immigrants who have been in the country for at least five years. As a result, less than one fifth of low-income non-citizens in the United States have public health insurance coverage, compared with a third of natives and a quarter of naturalized immigrants (see Table 13). In New England, where states have more generous income eligibility requirements for public health coverage, higher shares of both citizens and non-citizens receive such coverage. While native citizens in New England are still the most likely to participate in Medicaid and SCHIP, coverage of low-income non-citizens is slightly higher than that of immigrant citizens: 29 percent of non-citizens and 27 percent of immigrant citizens were insured through either program.

Nonetheless, immigrant non-citizens in New England are still much more likely to lack health insurance than both naturalized immigrants and natives. In New England, which generally boasts low uninsurance rates, one in four immigrant non-citizens was uninsured in 2006—a share almost three times as high as that of immigrant citizens and native citizens (see Table 13). In the United States as a whole, the differences in uninsurance rates by citizenship status were even larger: only 13 percent of natives and 16 percent of naturalized immigrants lacked health insurance, compared with 45 percent of non-citizen immigrants. Because illegal immigrants are far more likely to lack health insurance, regions with large undocumented populations have much higher rates of uninsurance among immigrants (see Appendix Table 11).

## Civic contributions

Immigrants make important contributions that shape the face and character of the communities in which they choose to settle. They support the local economy as consumers and homebuyers; they start businesses, join places of worship, and send their children to local schools. Thus immigrants often provide the diversity and new energy needed to transform a neighborhood, city, or state from decline into prosperity and vibrancy.

**Naturalization and voting behavior.** Nearly half of New England's immigrants are naturalized U.S. citizens, which in turn makes them eligible to vote as well as to receive a larger array of public benefits and services (see Table 14, next page). Immigrants in New England have one of the highest naturalization rates among all census divisions, second only to the Middle Atlantic (where more than half of all immigrants are naturalized) and significantly higher than the national average of 42 percent (see Appendix Table 12).

The greater propensity of New England's immigrants to naturalize is likely due to their higher rates of English proficiency and educational attainment. Over half of all immigrants who speak English only or speak it very well are naturalized, compared with just over a third of those with limited English skills (see Table 14). The lower naturalization rates among the latter group may reflect a language barrier that impedes access to the information and resources needed to complete the naturalization process. In some cases, these rates may also reflect a reverse causal relationship: immigrants who do not intend to naturalize and stay for the long term may not have an incentive to learn English well.

Naturalization rates are higher among those with greater educational attainment, except for those with advanced degrees. Just over 46 percent of both immigrant high school dropouts and immigrant advanced-degree holders are naturalized, compared with more than half of immigrants with some educational attainment level in between.

The lower naturalization rates among immigrants without a high school degree are

**Table 14. Naturalization rates among the immigrant population, by English proficiency and educational attainment.**

Naturalized immigrants, as percent of all immigrants

	New England	United States
<b>Total naturalization rate</b>	47.0	42.0
<b>Naturalization rates by English proficiency</b>		
Speaks English only or speaks it very well	54.8	54.2
Speaks English less than very well or not at all	36.7	31.4
<b>Naturalization rates by educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	46.3	33.0
High school degree	51.4	46.1
Some college	57.5	58.6
College degree	51.2	56.4
Advanced degrees	46.1	53.9

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

Notes: Naturalization by English proficiency is evaluated for individuals aged 5 and over. Naturalization by educational attainment is evaluated for individuals aged 25 and over.

Naturalization rate indicates the percentage of all immigrants who are U.S. citizens.

More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 12.

**Table 15. Voter registration and voter turnout.**

Percent of citizens aged 18 and over

	New England	United States
<b>Voter registration</b>		
Immigrants	63.4	54.3
Natives	72.2	68.6
<b>Voter turnout</b>		
Immigrants	44.3	36.6
Natives	54.7	48.6

Source: Current Population Survey 2006 Voter and Registration Supplement.

Notes: Voter registration indicates the share of all citizens eligible to vote who were registered to vote in the November 2006 elections. Voter turnout indicates the share of all citizens eligible to vote who actually voted in the November 2006 elections.

More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 12.

largely driven by the fact that more than 70 percent are not proficient in English. Immigrants with lower educational attainment are also disproportionately more likely to be in the United States illegally or to have immigrated here relatively recently, making them either ineligible to naturalize or not yet eligible.

The lower propensity of the most educated immigrants to naturalize likely reflects entirely different dynamics. These immigrants possess valuable professional and language skills that

are transferable across locations. As such, these immigrants are more likely to be here temporarily to take advantage of particular employment or educational opportunities. They often do not develop a lasting attachment to the region, resulting in a lower tendency to naturalize. These findings are consistent with a 2006 study that found that immigrants with high levels of education and earnings are least likely to intend to naturalize. The authors attribute these intentions to the fact that, in today's global market for human capital, those with skills, education, and abilities often focus on maximizing their earnings in the short run while refraining from a long-term commitment to a particular society or national labor market.<sup>15</sup>

Higher naturalization rates among immigrants are typically associated with higher levels of civic participation and voter turnout. Indeed, while foreign-born citizens still trail natives in voter registration and turnout across the country, immigrants in New England have the highest voter registration and turnout among all census divisions (see Appendix Table 12). In the November 2006 elections, 63 percent of naturalized immigrants in New England were registered to vote, compared with 72 percent of natives in the region and 54 percent of eligible immigrants nationwide (see Table 15). Further, 44 percent of the region's naturalized immigrants actually voted, compared with 55 percent of native New Englanders and only 37 percent of naturalized immigrants nationwide.

### **Volunteer work and community involvement.**

Across New England, immigrants are less likely than natives to do volunteer work or to be formally involved in their communities (by attending public meetings, for example). Between September 2006 and September 2007, 16 percent of New England's immigrants engaged in volunteer work, compared with 30 percent of the region's natives (see Figure 17). Additionally, 7 percent of all immigrants in the region participated in community meetings or activities, compared with 15 percent of the native born. However, immigrants in New England are more likely to do volunteer work or participate in community activities than

immigrants in most other census divisions (see Appendix Table 13).

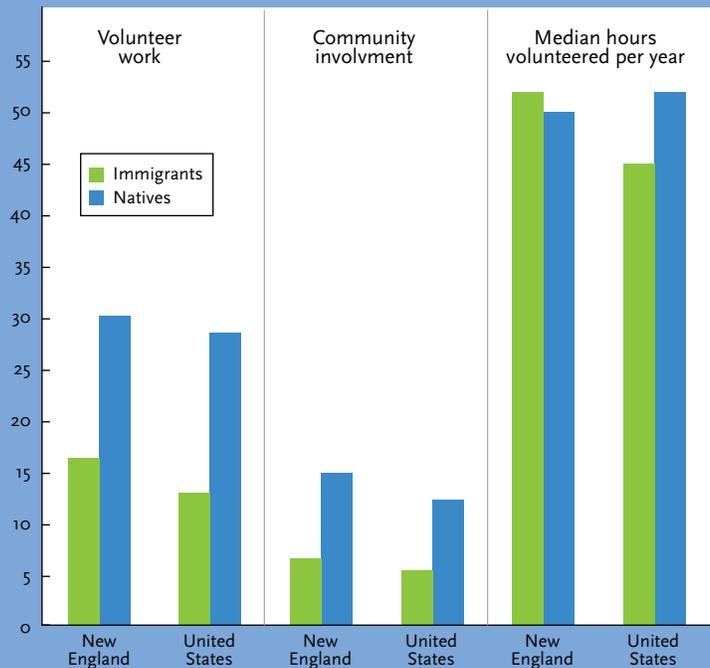
Despite lower rates of volunteer work relative to natives, immigrants who did volunteer were as devoted to their activities as native volunteers. The median number of annual hours volunteered by New England's immigrants is 52, compared with 50 for the region's native volunteers (see Figure 17). Furthermore, the types of organizations for which immigrants and natives volunteer tend to be similar. A large majority of both groups—two thirds of native and three quarters of immigrant volunteers—devotes time to service-based work with religious organizations, children's educational or recreational groups, or other social and community service organizations. On average, immigrants are less likely than natives to volunteer for "issue-based" organizations, such as political organizations, electoral campaigns, or environmental and other advocacy groups.

It is not clear, however, how fully these statistics describe immigrants' involvement in their communities. On the one hand, immigrants may indeed volunteer less if they work at more than one job and formal paid work places more demands on their time. On the other hand, measures of formal volunteer work probably do not capture many forms of community involvement common among immigrants. Many live in tightly knit communities, often composed of other immigrants from the same country. In these communities, it is not uncommon, for example, to provide occasional child care or elder care for one's neighbors, or to share advice about financial or immigration-related matters and other aspects of life in the new country. While such activities might not be characterized as formal volunteer work, they are an expression of the strong informal support networks present in many immigrant enclaves.

**Homeownership.** For immigrants and natives alike, homeownership has traditionally been an important milestone in achieving the American dream—one that symbolizes their economic success better than any other indicator. Both in New England and across the nation, 54 percent of immigrants own their homes—a share almost 16 percentage points lower than

**Figure 17. Immigrants are less likely than natives to do volunteer work, both in New England and across the nation.**

Percent of individuals who engaged in volunteer or community work between September 2006 and September 2007



Source: Current Population Survey 2007 Volunteer Supplement, covering September 2006 to September 2007.

Notes: Community involvement includes activities such as attending public meetings and working with neighbors to fix problems or improve conditions in the community. More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 13.

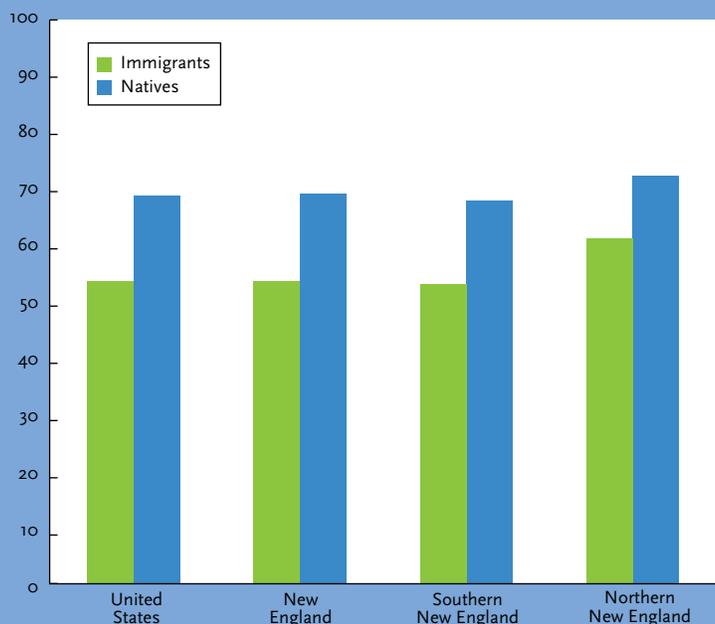
among natives (see Figure 18, next page).

Analyzing data for 1980 to 2000, Borjas (2002) attributes only a small portion of the homeownership gap between immigrants and natives to socioeconomic characteristics such as age, education, household composition, and income.<sup>16</sup> Rather, he finds that location decisions made by immigrants and natives matter much more. Disproportionately high numbers of immigrants live in areas where even natives own homes at low rates—because of high housing costs, for example—resulting in lower immigrant homeownership rates overall. Indeed, in the northern New England states, where home prices tend to be lower than in the south, both immigrants and natives are more likely to own their homes compared with their counterparts in the southern part of the region.

The higher homeownership rates among northern New England's immigrants may also reflect the large shares of older and more established Canadian and European immi-

## Figure 18. While immigrants own homes at lower rates than natives, more than half are homeowners.

Share of all occupied housing units that are owner-occupied, by nativity of householder, 2006



Sources: 2006 American Community Survey.

Note: More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 10.

grants in these states. As Borjas (2002) also shows, homeownership among immigrants is correlated with their length of tenure in the United States and their national origins.<sup>17</sup> Homeownership rates tend to rise significantly and consistently as immigrants' time in the United States increases. Further, immigrants from Canada and Western Europe own homes at much higher rates than immigrants from Latin America.

### Crime and institutionalization rates.

Across the nation, cities and towns with restrictive immigration ordinances have cited as motivation the threat of higher crime rates associated with higher immigration levels. Such concerns are mostly due to the fact that immigrants tend to be younger and less educated and to face worse labor market opportunities—characteristics typically associated with higher levels of criminal activity and incarceration among natives. However, empirical studies of immigration and crime, both historical and contemporary, have consistently found that, on average, immigrants are less criminally active than the native population.<sup>18</sup>

Using data from the 2000 Census, we evaluate whether that is the case in New England as well, using institutionalization status as a proxy for incarceration stemming from criminal activity. Because more than 91 percent of the incarcerated population nationwide is male, we focus our analysis on immigrant and native men.

Unfortunately, while the individual-level Census dataset provides rich demographic information, it does not differentiate between institutionalization and incarceration, leaving researchers unable to determine whether a person is housed in a correctional facility for a crime or in a mental institution because of health issues. However, aggregate statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau allow us to determine that the shares of the institutionalized population housed in correctional facilities are the highest for men aged 18 to 64—85 percent for New England and 91 percent nationwide. Thus we restrict the analysis to this group, as well as to men aged 18 to 40, who are disproportionately likely to engage in criminal activity and thus to be institutionalized in a correctional setting.

Consistent with findings from other parts of the country, we find that, in New England, immigrants have much lower rates of institutionalization than natives.<sup>19</sup> Male immigrants aged 18 to 64 are two and a half times less likely than native males to be institutionalized. In 2000, only 0.6 percent of immigrant men aged 18 to 64 were in institutions, compared with 1.5 percent of native men. Interestingly, among the more crime-prone younger group, immigrants were even less likely than natives to be institutionalized. At 0.7 percent, the institutionalization rate among immigrant men aged 18 to 40 was almost three times lower than the native men's rate of 2 percent.

Overall, while immigrants constitute 12 percent of men aged 18 to 64, they account for just over 5 percent of institutionalized men in the same age group. These shares are similar for men aged 18 to 40 (see Table 16).

Several potential explanations exist for immigrants' lower propensity for criminal activity. U.S. immigration policy requires legal immigrants to undergo criminal background checks and imposes strict penalties for criminal behav-

ior. For example, all legal immigrants who are not naturalized are subject to deportation upon receiving a prison sentence of a year or more. (Before their deportation, immigrants must serve their sentences in U.S. correctional institutions.) And all undocumented immigrants are deportable if their status is revealed, even if they have not committed a crime. Thus, for legal and illegal immigrants alike, the threat of deportation may have a deterrent effect on criminal activity and contact with law enforcement.

Furthermore, the opportunity cost of committing a crime may just be higher for immigrants than for natives. Many foreigners immigrate to the United States in search of better economic prospects, and they may be unlikely to risk losing the more favorable economic opportunities available to them here compared with their home country. Indeed, a 2007 analysis by Butcher and Piehl finds that the low level of immigrant criminality is due to the fact that immigrants are self-selected among “individuals who either have lower criminal propensities or are more responsive to deterrent effects than the average native.”<sup>20</sup>

### Net fiscal contributions

Over the years, researchers have attempted to tackle the task of estimating immigrants’ net fiscal impact—that is, the net value of their tax contributions and the services they consume—only to arrive at often contrasting results. Several studies have found positive net fiscal benefits. For example, a 1994 report by the Urban Institute concludes that the taxes immigrants pay to all levels of government offset the cost of services they use, resulting in a net surplus of \$25 billion to \$30 billion annually.<sup>21</sup>

In another report, the National Research Council (1997) estimates that the average immigrant contributes \$1,800 more in taxes annually than he or she uses in benefits.<sup>22</sup> However, the report also finds that the net contribution of immigrants varies by level of government. At the state and local level, immigrants are, on average, net users, consuming more in services such as education, public safety, and fire protection than they contribute in taxes. At the federal level, in contrast, they are net contributors, as the average value of their

**Table 16. Institutionalization of immigrants and natives in New England, 2000.**

	Men aged 18 to 64	Men aged 18 to 40
<b>Number institutionalized</b>		
Immigrants	3,112	2,002
Natives	55,408	38,179
<b>Immigrants’ share of</b>		
Institutionalized men in age group	5.3%	5.0%
All men in age group	12.2%	13.3%
<b>Institutionalization rates</b>		
Immigrants	0.6%	0.7%
Natives	1.5%	2.0%
Ratio of native to immigrant rates	2.5	2.9

Source: Public Use Microdata 5% sample, 2000 Census of Population and Housing.  
 Notes: The institutionalized population includes persons in correctional and mental institutions as well as institutions for the elderly, handicapped, and poor. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 85 percent of institutionalized men aged 18 to 64 in New England and 91 percent in the United States are in correctional facilities.  
 Institutionalization rates are defined as the number of institutionalized persons divided by the total number of persons in each population.  
 More detailed breakdowns by census division can be found in Appendix Table 13.

federal taxes exceeds the value of benefits they consume. Overall, the report finds that the lifetime net contribution of immigrants and their children is positive and averages \$80,000.

Other economists, however, estimate solidly negative net fiscal benefits from immigration. In an update of a widely cited study, Huddle (1996) estimates the net annual cost of immigrants between \$67 and \$87 billion.<sup>23</sup> In a 1994 paper, Borjas calculates a lower, though still negative, net fiscal burden of \$16.2 billion a year.<sup>24</sup> However, as Borjas has written in *The Atlantic Monthly*, “It is doubtful that any of these statistics accurately reflects the gap between the taxes paid [by immigrants] and the costs of services provided [to immigrants].”<sup>25</sup> Studies that calculate net positive fiscal impacts tend to underestimate the cost increases in government services brought about by higher levels of immigration. On the other hand, estimates that place immigrants’ fiscal impacts squarely in the negative often overestimate these costs while understating taxes paid by the foreign born.<sup>26</sup> Thus, while these studies contribute to a fuller understanding of the fiscal impact of immigration, their results should be viewed with caution.

In any case, estimating the net value of immigrants' wider economic, social, and cultural impacts goes far beyond the scope of this report. While certain indicators like tax contributions and public costs theoretically lend themselves to measurement, doing so is difficult and requires a series of assumptions on which researchers still disagree. Other aspects of immigrants' impact on society—including their social and cultural contributions, such as civic participation, volunteer work, strong work ethic, entrepreneurial spirit, and lawfulness—are not easily measured even in theory. As a result, a study that claims to measure the net value of immigrants' social and economic impacts may produce a bottom line that unduly emphasizes their public costs over their contributions.

## Conclusion and policy recommendations

While these days New England is no longer considered a major immigrant gateway, the foreign born—who now comprise over 11 percent of the region's population—continue to contribute significantly to the region's demographic and economic growth, and play an important role in shaping its society and culture.

The region's immigrants today differ from their national counterparts along a variety of dimensions. They are more diverse, both racially and in national origin; they are better educated and have stronger English skills; they face more favorable economic outcomes and become more involved in their communities. Yet the foreign born are still worse off economically—facing more poverty and more hardship—than native New Englanders.

Targeted human capital initiatives can reverse this situation while expanding the immigrant talent pool that has become so vital to replenishing the regional labor force. For example, efforts to lower high school dropout rates, encourage adult basic education, and provide various forms of job training could help improve the employment prospects of the foreign born. Programs that improve their English-speaking skills—from English-as-a-second-language classes to employer-sponsored instruction—could also build immigrants' eco-

nomic potential. Initiatives that strengthen the educational attainment and English proficiency of immigrants benefit the region further by decreasing their need for public assistance, enhancing their civic contributions, and promoting their successful integration into American society.

New England states can also do more to retain their highly educated immigrants and attract new talent from abroad. Targeting foreign professionals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, for example, could expand the region's high-skill labor supply for industries vital to economic growth, such as life sciences, high technology, and financial services. While a major hurdle—the federal work visa policy—is out of the states' domain, regional stakeholders should look for other creative ways to accomplish these objectives. One approach is to foster partnerships between the region's colleges and universities—which educated close to 45,000 international students during the 2006–07 academic year—and local employers in key industries looking for highly skilled talent.

Larger numbers of well-trained immigrants could fill the increasingly specialized positions offered by many local employers, including those vacated by ever-larger numbers of retiring baby boomers. In so doing, immigrant workers would expand the tax base needed to support the region's growing elderly population. The deep connections—cultural, linguistic, and economic—that many immigrants maintain with their homelands would also give the region a strong competitive edge in the global economy.

Thus New England has a distinct interest in fostering immigrants' long-term commitment to the region. Indeed, investing in immigrants' economic potential would generate benefits beyond economic prosperity: it would help sustain the diverse, vibrant, and dynamic society that immigrants have long helped shape.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> For other publications from the New England Public Policy Center that discuss domestic demographic and migration issues, see Alicia Sasser. “The Future of the Skilled Labor Force in New England: The Supply of Recent College Graduates.” NEPPC Research Report No. 08-1. August 2008; Heather Brome. “Is New England Experiencing a ‘Brain Drain’? Facts about Demographic Change and Young Professionals.” NEPPC Discussion Paper No. 07-3. November 2007; and David Agrawal. “New England Migration Trends.” NEPPC Discussion Paper No. 06-1. October 2006.

<sup>2</sup> This report adheres to the U.S. Census Bureau’s definitions of immigrants and natives. The bureau defines immigrants as U.S. residents who are not U.S. citizens by birth. Natives are persons born in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the Northern Mariana Islands, or persons born abroad to American parents. Further, while the datasets used in this report specify citizenship status, they do not provide other details on the immigration status of the foreign born, and include naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers, non-resident aliens, and undocumented immigrants. This report uses the terms “immigrant” and “foreign born” interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> Betsy Cooper and Kevin O’Neill. “Lessons from the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.” Migration Policy Institute Policy Brief No. 3. August 2005.

<sup>4</sup> A 2006 fact sheet by the Pew Hispanic Center estimates the number of undocumented immigrants in New England as between 260,000 and 440,000. For details and estimates for individual states, see Pew Hispanic Center, “Estimates of the Unauthorized Migrant Population for States based on the March 2005 CPS.” April 26, 2006. <http://pewhispanic.org/factsheets/factsheet.php?FactsheetID=17>. Accessed July 14, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Marcuss and Borgos (2004) describe a similar bimodal pattern of educational attainment among New England’s immigrants in 2000. See Mamie Marcuss with Ricardo Borgos. “Who Are New England’s Immigrants?” *Communities & Banking*. Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. Fall 2004.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion of immigrants’ contributions to labor force growth in Massachusetts over the past several decades, see Andrew M. Sum and W. Neal Fogg. “The Changing Workforce: Immigrants and the New Economy in Massachusetts.” MassINC. November 1999; and Andrew M. Sum, Jonah Uvin, Ishwar Khatiwada, and Dana Ansel. “The Changing Face of Massachusetts.” MassINC. June 2005.

<sup>7</sup> See Francine D. Blau, Marianne A. Ferber, and Anne E. Winkler. “Gender Differences in Other Countries.” *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*, 4th ed. Prentice Hall. 2001.

<sup>8</sup> In a 2007 brief, James Orr, et al. find similar complementarities between the occupations of native and immigrant workers in upstate New York, especially among those with a bachelor’s degree or higher. See James Orr, Susan Wieler, and Joseph Pereira. “The Foreign-Born Population in Upstate New York.” Federal Reserve Bank of New York. *Current Issues in Economics and Finance*. Vol. 13, No. 9. October 2007.

<sup>9</sup> This report uses the U.S. Census Bureau’s definition of crowded housing. A housing unit is considered crowded if it houses 1.01 or more occupants per room.

<sup>10</sup> For more details, see Michael Fix and Jeff Passel. “The Scope and Impact of Welfare Reform’s Immigrant Provisions.” The Urban Institute. January 2002; Leighton Ku and Sheetal Matani. “Left Out: Immigrants’ Access to Health Care and Insurance.” *Health Affairs* 20(1): 247-56. January/February 2001; Kari Wolkwitz. “Trends in Food Stamp Program Participation Rates: 1999-2005.” Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. June 2007; and George J. Borjas. “Food Insecurity and Public Assistance.” *Journal of Public Economics* 88: 1421-1443. 2004.

<sup>11</sup> For benefits for which individual-level data are available, this report defines low-income individuals as those with family incomes below 200 percent of the poverty level. For household-level benefits, this report defines low-income households as those with incomes in the 20th percentile nationally, as there are no variables indicating the ratio of household income to a poverty level adjusted for household size.

<sup>12</sup> However, efforts to analyze the receipt of food stamps (or any other public benefit) at the household level are somewhat imprecise, because they consider the citizenship status of only the household head, and do not distinguish between use by citizen and non-citizen household members of mixed households. Thus, household-level analysis is likely to inflate the receipt of food stamps for immigrant-headed households that include citizens, and to underestimate it for native-headed households that include ineligible immigrant members. Previous research using individual-level analysis of food stamp receipts has revealed much lower use rates among both non-citizens and immigrant citizens than among native-born citizens. For example, see Kari Wolkwitz. “Characteristics of Food Stamp Households: Fiscal Year 2006.” Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. September 2007.

<sup>13</sup> In most cases, to be eligible for food stamps, an immigrant must be a legal permanent resident, refugee, or asylum seeker. The immigrant must also have entered the country before 1996, be credited with 40 qualifying quarters of work under 18 years of age, or be disabled. Beginning in 2003, immigrants who have lived in the United States as qualified aliens for five years are also eligible for food stamps.

<sup>14</sup> To evaluate the relative use of cash assistance, we construct a joint variable indicating whether an individual receives any of these benefits: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), general assistance payments, or Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

<sup>15</sup> Douglas S. Massey and Ilana Redstone Akresh. “Immigrant Intentions and Mobility in a Global Economy: The Attitudes and Behavior of Recently Arrived U.S. Immigrants.” *Social Science Quarterly*. Vol. 87, No. 5. December 2006.

<sup>16</sup> George J. Borjas. “Homeownership in the Immigrant Population.” *Journal of Urban Economics*. Vol. 51, No. 3. November 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> For example, see Kristin F. Butcher and Anne Morrison Piehl. “Recent Immigrants: Unexpected Implications for Crime and Incarceration.” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*. Vol. 51, No. 4. July 1998; John Hagan and Alberto Palloni. “Sociological Criminology and the Mythology of Hispanic Immigration and Crime.” *Social Problems*, Vol. 46, No. 4. 1999; Daniel P. Mears. “Immigration and Crime: What’s the Connection?” *Federal Sentencing Reporter*. Vol. 14, No. 5. 2002; and Ruben G. Rumbaut and Walter A. Ewing. “The Myth of Immigrant Criminality.” Immigration Policy Center. Spring 2007.

<sup>19</sup> For example, see Kristin F. Butcher and Anne Morrison Piehl. “Crime, Corrections, and California: What Does Immigration Have to Do with It?” Public Policy Institute of California. *California Counts*. Vol. 9, No. 3. February 2008; Matthew T. Lee, Ramiro Martínez Jr., and Richard B. Rosenfeld. “Does Immigration Increase Homicide? Negative Evidence from Three Border Cities.” *Sociological Quarterly*. Vol. 42, No. 4. September 2001; and Robert J. Sampson, Jeffrey D. Morenoff, and Stephen Raudenbush. “Social Anatomy of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Violence.” *American Journal of Public Health*. Vol. 95, No. 2. February 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Kristin F. Butcher and Anne Morrison Piehl. “Why Are Immigrants’ Incarceration Rates So Low? Evidence on Selective Immigration, Deterrence, and Deportation.” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 13229. July 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Fix and Jeffrey S. Passel, et al. “Immigration and

Immigrants: Setting the Record Straight.” The Urban Institute. May 1994.

<sup>22</sup> James P. Smith and Barry Edmonston, eds. *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration*. Washington, DC: National Research Council. National Academy of Sciences Press. 1997.

<sup>23</sup> Donald Huddle. “The Net Costs of Immigration.” Carrying Capacity Network. October 1996.

<sup>24</sup> George J. Borjas. “The Economics of Immigration.” *Journal of Economic Literature*. Vol. XXXII, pp. 1667-1717. December 1994.

<sup>25</sup> George J. Borjas. “The New Economics of Immigration.” *The Atlantic Monthly*. November 1996.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



# Appendix

**Appendix Table 1. Immigrant population by region of origin, 2006**

Percent of immigrants from each region

	Latin America	Europe	Asia	Africa	Canada	Other
New England	34.1	29.3	24.4	6.3	5.5	0.4
Middle Atlantic	46.1	20.4	28.0	3.8	1.3	0.4
East North Central	38.4	24.6	29.9	3.9	2.8	0.4
West North Central	38.5	14.3	32.0	11.0	3.4	0.8
South Atlantic	60.5	12.0	19.0	5.3	2.8	0.4
East South Central	44.3	15.1	30.1	6.7	3.1	0.7
West South Central	73.0	5.0	17.5	2.9	1.3	0.2
Mountain	66.7	10.7	16.1	2.5	3.3	0.8
Pacific	52.5	8.6	34.4	1.7	1.8	0.9
United States	53.5	13.5	26.6	3.6	2.3	0.6

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

**Appendix Table 2. Age distribution of immigrants and natives, by U.S. census division, 2006**

	Immigrants				Natives			
	Median age	Under 18	18 to 64	65 and over	Median age	Under 18	18 to 64	65 and over
	(years)	(percent)			(years)	(percent)		
New England	41	7.4	78.5	14.2	38	24.5	62.2	13.3
Middle Atlantic	42	6.5	79.5	13.9	36	26.5	59.9	13.6
East North Central	38	8.9	79.2	11.9	36	25.8	61.7	12.6
West North Central	35	12.3	80.0	7.8	37	25.1	61.4	13.5
South Atlantic	39	8.5	79.1	12.4	36	25.7	60.9	13.3
East South Central	34	11.8	80.7	7.5	37	24.7	62.3	13.0
West South Central	37	9.6	82.7	7.8	33	29.2	59.4	11.3
Mountain	36	10.6	80.9	8.5	33	28.3	60.0	11.7
Pacific	40	7.1	81.2	11.7	31	31.2	57.9	10.9
United States	40	8.1	80.5	11.5	36	27.0	60.5	12.5

Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

### Appendix Table 3. Immigrants and natives by race/ethnicity, by U.S. census division, 2006

Percent of each population belonging to each race

	White (non-Hispanic)	Black (non-Hispanic)	Asian (non-Hispanic)	Other/multi-race (non-Hispanic)	Hispanic
<b>Immigrants</b>					
New England	42.3	11.8	21.4	3.7	20.8
Middle Atlantic	26.8	15.0	25.3	2.1	30.8
East North Central	33.5	4.2	24.4	1.2	36.7
West North Central	21.9	10.8	29.3	1.5	36.6
South Atlantic	19.4	14.1	16.6	1.7	48.2
East South Central	25.0	6.8	25.1	1.9	41.3
West South Central	9.1	3.1	15.5	0.9	71.4
Mountain	16.9	2.3	13.7	1.5	65.7
Pacific	15.0	1.4	30.6	1.5	51.4
United States	20.5	7.3	23.4	1.7	47.2
<b>Natives</b>					
New England	86.7	4.5	1.2	1.8	5.7
Middle Atlantic	75.2	12.6	1.8	1.5	8.8
East North Central	80.6	12.4	0.8	1.7	4.4
West North Central	88.0	5.8	0.7	2.7	2.8
South Atlantic	69.4	22.4	0.8	1.9	5.5
East South Central	76.3	20.8	0.3	1.4	1.2
West South Central	61.0	15.3	0.9	3.0	19.8
Mountain	73.9	3.1	0.9	5.2	16.9
Pacific	60.5	6.4	5.5	5.1	22.5
United States	72.7	12.9	1.6	2.7	10.2

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

## Appendix Table 4. English proficiency and educational attainment of immigrants and natives, by U.S. census division, 2006

Percent

	Proficient in English	Educational attainment				
		Less than high school	High school degree	Some college	Bachelor's degree	Advanced degree
<b>Immigrants</b>						
New England	57.2	23.8	26.5	17.4	16.7	15.8
Middle Atlantic	54.1	24.5	27.6	17.2	18.0	12.6
East North Central	50.5	28.1	24.1	17.0	16.6	14.1
West North Central	52.8	30.4	22.2	17.0	16.1	14.4
South Atlantic	52.7	25.8	25.4	19.6	17.1	12.1
East South Central	53.7	27.6	24.8	15.9	17.0	14.8
West South Central	38.7	45.9	20.9	13.8	11.7	7.6
Mountain	42.9	39.5	24.6	17.1	11.1	7.6
Pacific	42.1	36.2	21.2	17.9	16.0	8.7
United States	47.6	32.0	23.8	17.5	15.9	10.8
<b>Natives</b>						
New England	—	10.2	30.4	25.2	20.7	13.5
Middle Atlantic	—	12.3	34.1	23.9	17.9	11.8
East North Central	—	12.4	34.4	28.7	15.8	8.7
West North Central	—	10.8	32.4	30.3	18.1	8.4
South Atlantic	—	14.6	31.1	27.6	17.0	9.8
East South Central	—	19.8	34.0	26.0	13.0	7.3
West South Central	—	15.9	31.4	28.7	16.4	7.6
Mountain	—	9.8	27.9	33.8	18.6	10.0
Pacific	—	9.6	25.3	34.1	19.9	11.1
United States	—	12.9	31.4	28.6	17.3	9.7

Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

Notes: Immigrants proficient in English are defined as those aged 5 and over who speak English only or speak it very well. Educational attainment is restricted to the population aged 25 and over.

### Appendix Table 5. Labor force participation rates of immigrants and natives, by U.S. census division, 2006

Percent of population aged 25 and over that is in the civilian labor force

	All immigrants	All natives	Immigrant men	Native men	Immigrant women	Native women
New England	69	68	79	74	60	62
Middle Atlantic	67	64	78	71	57	58
East North Central	68	66	81	73	55	60
West North Central	73	68	85	75	61	62
South Atlantic	70	64	81	70	58	58
East South Central	72	61	86	68	56	55
West South Central	69	64	84	72	52	58
Mountain	69	66	84	73	54	59
Pacific	67	66	80	72	54	59
United States	68	65	81	72	56	59

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

### Appendix Table 6. Unemployment rates of immigrants and natives, by U.S. census division, 2006

Percent of civilian labor force members aged 25 and over who are unemployed

	All immigrants	All natives	Immigrant men	Native men	Immigrant women	Native women
New England	4.8	4.3	4.2	4.3	5.5	4.3
Middle Atlantic	5.3	4.9	4.8	5.0	5.8	4.7
East North Central	5.3	5.8	4.3	5.9	6.9	5.6
West North Central	5.2	3.9	5.0	4.0	5.5	3.9
South Atlantic	4.4	4.5	3.3	4.2	5.8	4.7
East South Central	4.9	5.5	3.7	5.0	7.0	6.0
West South Central	5.0	5.3	3.8	4.9	7.0	5.7
Mountain	4.5	3.8	3.5	3.6	6.0	4.1
Pacific	5.4	5.1	4.5	5.1	6.6	5.0
United States	5.0	4.9	4.2	4.8	6.3	5.0

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

### Appendix Table 7. Median household incomes of immigrant- and native-headed households, by U.S. census division, 2006

2006 inflation-adjusted dollars

	Immigrant households	Native households
New England	52,825	57,905
Middle Atlantic	48,770	52,419
East North Central	46,730	47,746
West North Central	42,667	46,730
South Atlantic	45,308	47,848
East South Central	40,127	38,603
West South Central	34,540	43,886
Mountain	37,994	50,286
Pacific	47,949	57,600
United States	45,035	49,077

Source: Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey.

Note: Immigrant and native households are those headed by an immigrant or a native householder, respectively.

### Appendix Table 8. Poverty rates of immigrant- and native-headed families, by U.S. census division, 2006

Percent of families with incomes below the poverty level

	Immigrant families	Native families
New England	9.5	6.3
Middle Atlantic	12.9	8.2
East North Central	12.5	8.9
West North Central	15.8	7.7
South Atlantic	12.1	8.9
East South Central	16.2	13.2
West South Central	23.1	11.6
Mountain	18.5	7.7
Pacific	15.0	6.9
United States	14.8	8.9

Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

Note: Poverty rates are defined as the percentage of families with incomes below the poverty thresholds set by the U.S. Census Bureau. These thresholds vary by family size and composition.

**Appendix Table 9. Family structure of immigrants and natives, by U.S. census division, 2006**

	Average family size		Percent who are married		Percent of households with children	
	Immigrants	Natives	Immigrants	Natives	Immigrants	Natives
New England	3.27	2.98	58.5	48.6	38.0	29.2
Middle Atlantic	3.41	3.03	57.2	46.3	37.6	28.7
East North Central	3.56	3.01	62.9	49.6	42.7	30.1
West North Central	3.76	2.96	60.7	53.3	47.9	29.7
South Atlantic	3.35	2.93	57.8	49.0	39.0	28.4
East South Central	3.35	2.95	58.9	50.5	42.9	29.9
West South Central	3.80	3.03	62.5	49.1	51.3	31.0
Mountain	3.73	3.02	60.4	51.1	49.3	29.6
Pacific	3.80	3.02	60.6	44.7	47.5	28.8
United States	3.77	3.10	59.8	48.7	43.8	29.4

Source: 2006 American Community Survey (for share who are married and for the national average family size); Public Use Microdata, 2006 American Community Survey (for share of households with children and for regional average family sizes).

Note: The statistics on marriage refer to the population aged 15 and over.

**Appendix Table 10. Housing indicators of immigrants and natives, by U.S. census division, 2006**

	Percent of housing units that are crowded		Percent of homeowners with moderate housing burden		Percent of renters with moderate housing burden		Homeownership rates	
	Immigrants	Natives	Immigrants	Natives	Immigrants	Natives	Immigrants	Natives
New England	4.9	0.9	44.2	33.8	48.7	47.0	54.0	69.6
Middle Atlantic	9.5	1.4	47.5	31.0	50.6	45.2	45.9	67.0
East North Central	8.1	1.1	44.1	27.5	42.8	45.8	62.2	72.2
West North Central	10.5	1.1	34.4	23.3	39.8	41.5	56.7	72.8
South Atlantic	6.9	1.3	46.3	27.9	50.1	45.1	59.8	70.7
East South Central	9.0	1.6	30.6	23.7	36.2	41.8	46.9	71.4
West South Central	14.2	2.6	37.9	23.5	46.9	43.0	56.9	67.8
Mountain	12.9	2.1	44.4	28.5	46.9	43.9	57.2	70.1
Pacific	17.6	2.7	51.4	36.8	53.7	48.6	51.5	63.2
United States	11.8	1.6	46.0	28.4	49.7	45.1	54.0	69.3

Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

Notes: Crowded housing refers to the share of occupied housing units that house 1.01 or more occupants per room.

Moderate housing burden refers to the share of owner- or renter-occupied housing units where monthly housing costs equal or exceed 30 percent of household income.

Homeownership rates are defined as the percentage of all occupied housing units that are owner-occupied.

**Appendix Table 11. Use of public assistance among low-income immigrant non-citizens, immigrant citizens, and native citizens, by U.S. census division, 2004-2006**

	Percent of low-income households					
	Food stamps			WIC		
	Immigrant non-citizens	Immigrant citizens	Native citizens	Immigrant non-citizens	Immigrant citizens	Native citizens
New England	21.3	22.3	20.9	5.8	3.1	4.0
Middle Atlantic	22.7	25.6	24.2	10.4	1.4	4.9
East North Central	21.4	15.7	25.0	12.2	2.3	6.0
West North Central	13.7	12.7	22.7	16.3	6.3	5.5
South Atlantic	15.6	18.7	20.3	10.0	2.0	4.8
East South Central	19.6	12.2	27.6	17.0	2.5	6.0
West South Central	24.1	22.7	24.7	18.2	8.5	7.1
Mountain	25.4	19.4	19.5	13.3	0.2	3.9
Pacific	18.0	10.0	17.7	16.9	4.1	6.7
United States	20.2	18.2	22.7	13.9	3.1	5.6

	Free or reduced lunch					
	All low-income households			Low-income households with children		
	Immigrant non-citizens	Immigrant citizens	Native citizens	Immigrant non-citizens	Immigrant citizens	Native citizens
New England	18.5	11.5	9.6	72.0	65.5	68.2
Middle Atlantic	25.6	14.4	11.8	67.1	75.2	67.4
East North Central	25.9	9.4	11.6	76.2	63.1	65.7
West North Central	15.2	22.8	9.7	57.2	89.5	69.9
South Atlantic	16.9	10.9	11.9	62.2	61.0	69.5
East South Central	19.1	9.3	15.3	76.2	48.7	75.7
West South Central	37.3	26.2	15.1	81.8	81.3	74.3
Mountain	32.1	10.6	9.9	67.9	56.4	63.7
Pacific	33.4	11.0	10.6	76.4	58.6	63.7
United States	28.0	13.3	12.0	72.9	67.6	69.0

Housing						
	Immigrant non-citizens	Immigrant citizens	Native citizens	Immigrant non-citizens	Immigrant citizens	Native citizens
	24.2	25.9	30.2	14.6	19.6	21.5
	13.7	9.2	15.8	18.3	18.1	18.7
	10.5	11.6	12.3	8.2	11.6	15.1
	3.5	7.0	11.4	11.5	15.8	12.4
	12.1	21.0	15.3	11.4	16.7	15.8

Percent of low-income individuals

	Cash assistance			Medicaid/SCHIP		
	Immigrant non-citizens	Immigrant citizens	Native citizens	Immigrant non-citizens	Immigrant citizens	Native citizens
New England	4.1	12.0	9.0	29.3	27.4	39.7
Middle Atlantic	4.2	12.5	7.7	28.5	33.3	36.3
East North Central	3.0	5.0	6.1	16.1	16.9	32.9
West North Central	3.9	8.9	5.9	13.7	26.0	31.0
South Atlantic	2.7	5.4	5.0	10.1	15.9	29.5
East South Central	2.8	3.4	7.0	12.3	15.6	33.8
West South Central	2.3	6.0	4.5	9.3	13.7	29.6
Mountain	2.5	3.9	4.2	12.5	15.2	29.5
Pacific	4.3	11.6	6.5	24.5	28.9	38.7
United States	3.4	9.2	5.9	18.3	24.3	33.0

Percent of total population

	Share uninsured (2006)		
	Immigrant non-citizens	Immigrant citizens	Native citizens
New England	25.4	10.2	8.9
Middle Atlantic	36.8	13.2	10.6
East North Central	34.7	13.3	10.3
West North Central	37.5	12.7	10.6
South Atlantic	49.4	17.7	14.6
East South Central	50.1	32.8	14.5
West South Central	60.1	32.7	19.5
Mountain	55.3	17.4	15.8
Pacific	43.4	15.7	13.0
United States	45.0	16.4	13.2

Sources: Welfare benefits from pooled 2005, 2006, and 2007 Current Population Survey March Supplements; Health insurance from the 2007 Current Population Survey March Supplement. Notes: For analysis of food and housing benefits, sample was restricted to households with incomes in the 20th percentile. For analysis of health and cash benefits, sample was restricted to individuals with family incomes below 200 percent of poverty level. WIC = Women, Infants, and Children nutrition assistance program SCHIP = State Children's Health Insurance Program

## Appendix Table 12. Naturalization, voter registration, and voter turnout among the immigrant population, by U.S. census division, 2006

Percent

	Naturalization rates	Voter registration		Voter turnout	
	Immigrants	Immigrants	Natives	Immigrants	Natives
New England	47.0	63.4	72.2	44.3	54.7
Middle Atlantic	50.5	53.0	65.5	35.7	45.5
East North Central	44.3	55.7	71.0	38.4	52.6
West North Central	39.9	52.5	75.2	34.1	56.6
South Atlantic	40.9	54.1	67.3	34.2	45.7
East South Central	33.5	54.0	69.9	33.0	47.2
West South Central	31.1	52.0	68.8	27.5	40.7
Mountain	31.4	53.6	65.2	35.8	49.4
Pacific	43.1	54.1	66.1	39.3	51.3
United States	42.0	54.3	68.6	36.6	48.6

Sources: 2006 American Community Survey (for naturalization); Current Population Survey 2006 Voter and Registration Supplement (for voter registration and turnout).

Notes: Naturalization rate indicates the percentage of all immigrants who are U.S. citizens.

Voter registration indicates the percentage of all citizens eligible to vote who were registered to vote in the November 2006 elections.

Voter turnout indicates the percentage of all citizens eligible to vote who actually voted in the November 2006 elections.

## Appendix Table 13. Volunteer work among immigrants and natives, by U.S. census division, 2006

Percent of individuals who engaged in volunteer or community work between September 2006 and September 2007

	Volunteer work	Community involvement
New England	16.3	6.5
Middle Atlantic	8.2	4.8
East North Central	16.8	6.1
West North Central	18.7	10.1
South Atlantic	13.1	5.4
East South Central	9.4	5.4
West South Central	14.3	5.5
Mountain	12.0	3.6
Pacific	13.7	5.0
United States	12.9	5.3

Source: Current Population Survey 2007 Volunteer Supplement.

Note: Community involvement includes activities such as attending public meetings and working with neighbors to fix problems or improve conditions in the community.

**Appendix Table 14. Institutionalization of immigrants and natives, by U.S. census division, 2000**

Men aged 18 to 64 years							
	Number institutionalized		Immigrants' share of:		Institutionalization rates		
	Immigrants	Natives	Institutionalized men in age group	All men in age group	Immigrants	Natives	Ratio of native to immigrant rates
New England	3,112	55,408	5.3%	12.2%	0.6%	1.5%	2.5
Middle Atlantic	15,634	231,599	6.3%	18.8%	0.7%	2.4%	3.4
East North Central	5,572	270,886	2.0%	8.2%	0.5%	2.1%	4.3
West North Central	2,206	94,562	2.3%	5.0%	0.8%	1.7%	2.3
South Atlantic	11,403	399,368	2.8%	12.5%	0.6%	2.9%	5.0
East South Central	2,652	126,829	2.0%	3.1%	1.6%	2.5%	1.5
West South Central	10,039	320,731	3.0%	14.3%	0.7%	3.9%	5.3
Mountain	6,656	116,534	5.4%	12.6%	0.9%	2.4%	2.5
Pacific	15,311	285,003	5.1%	28.6%	0.4%	2.8%	7.5
United States	72,585	1,900,920	3.7%	14.4%	0.6%	1.5%	2.5

Men aged 18 to 40 years							
	Number institutionalized		Immigrants' share of:		Institutionalization rates		
	Immigrants	Natives	Institutionalized men in age group	All men in age group	Immigrants	Natives	Ratio of native to immigrant rates
New England	2,022	38,179	5.0%	13.3%	0.7%	2.0%	2.9
Middle Atlantic	10,910	164,273	6.2%	19.8%	0.9%	3.2%	3.7
East North Central	3,872	195,852	1.9%	9.3%	0.6%	2.9%	5.2
West North Central	1,815	65,784	2.7%	6.4%	0.9%	2.2%	2.5
South Atlantic	7,709	291,245	2.6%	14.2%	0.6%	3.9%	6.2
East South Central	1,944	93,001	2.0%	4.0%	1.7%	3.4%	2.0
West South Central	7,622	234,038	3.2%	16.7%	0.8%	5.1%	6.2
Mountain	5,107	86,313	5.6%	15.3%	1.0%	3.2%	3.0
Pacific	11,679	208,567	5.3%	31.7%	0.5%	3.8%	8.3
United States	52,680	1,377,252	3.7%	16.3%	0.7%	3.5%	5.1

Source: Public Use Microdata 5% sample, 2000 Census of Population and Housing.

Notes: The institutionalized population includes persons in correctional and mental institutions as well as institutions for the elderly, handicapped, and poor. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 85 percent of institutionalized men aged 18 to 64 in New England and 91 percent in the United States are in correctional facilities.

Institutionalization rates are defined as the number of institutionalized persons divided by the total number of persons in each population.



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