# Immigrant Integration in Boston

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## Nature of the Immigrant Population in Boston

**Immigrant Population in 2011**

| | Boston | Massachusetts | United States |
|---|---|---|---|
| Native-born | 73.2% | 85.1% | 86.6% |
| Foreign-born | 26.7% | 14.9% | 13.0% |

- There were 166,738 foreign-born immigrants in Boston in 2011, 26.7% of the population. [1]
- This is up slightly from 149,317 immigrants in 2000 – 26.0% of the population.
- Boston has a higher percentage of immigrants than Massachusetts or the U.S.

**Top Five Countries of Origin for Foreign-born in Boston 2011**

| | Number of Immigrants | % of Immigrants |
|---|---|---|
| Dominican Republic | 17,208 | 10.3% |
| Haiti | 15,482 | 9.3% |
| China | 14,852 | 8.9% |
| Vietnam | 12,874 | 7.7% |
| El Salvador | 8,110 | 4.9% |

- In 2011, Boston also had 13,464 residents who had been born in Puerto Rico. People born in Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, are U.S. citizens and so Puerto Ricans are included among the native-born. However the experience of Puerto Ricans in Boston may be similar to that of foreign-born immigrants.
- Boston has a different immigrant composition than the U.S. - nationally, 26.6% of immigrants to the U.S. come from Mexico.

- Median age of immigrants: 42
- Gender split: 47.7% male and 52.3% female.
- Citizenship: 45.5% of foreign-born in Boston are naturalized citizens.

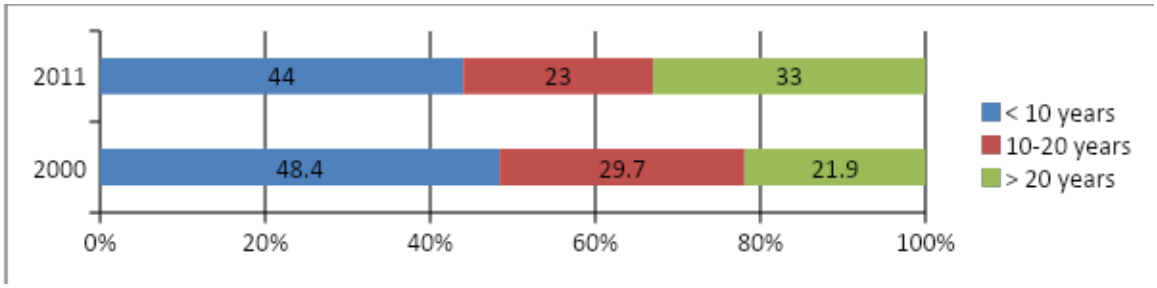
[1] This report uses data from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

### Decade of Arrival in US for Foreign-born 2011

| | Boston | Massachusetts | United States |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2000-2011 | 44.0% | 39.0% | 35.7% |
| 1990-1999 | 23.0% | 24.6% | 26.6% |
| prior to 1990 | 33.0% | 36.4% | 37.7% |

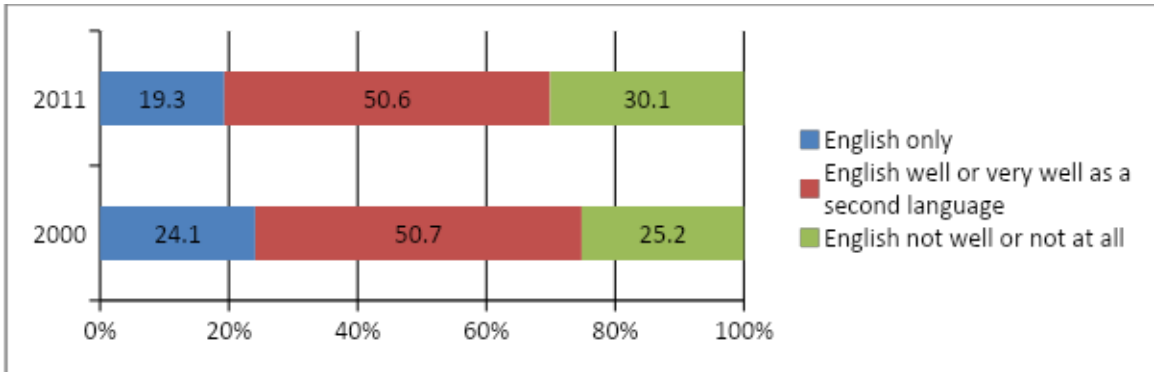
- Boston has a higher proportion of recent immigrants than Massachusetts or the U.S. – 44% of Boston immigrants arrived after 2000.

**Length of Time in U.S. for Boston's Immigrant Population, 2000 and 2011**




- However, the proportion of Boston immigrants who have been in the U.S. less than ten years is lower in 2011 than in 2000.

**English Ability of Boston Immigrants, 2000 and 2011**

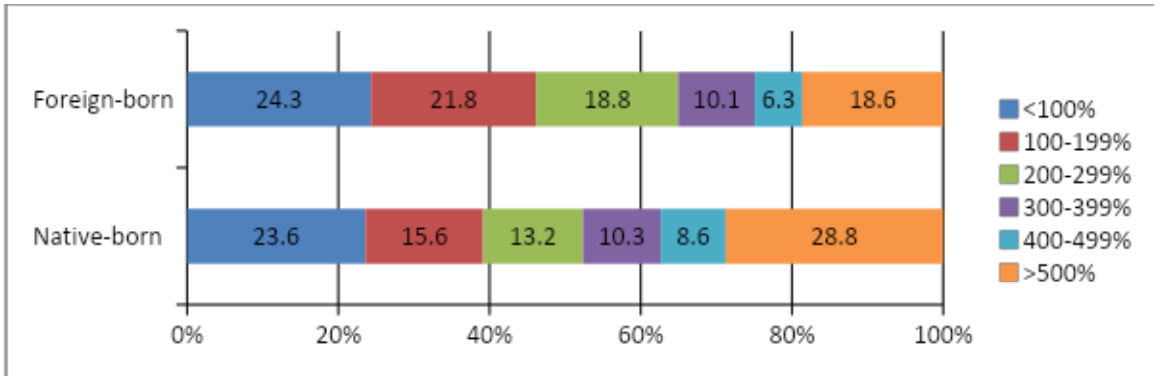



- Boston's immigrants in 2011 are less likely to speak English only and more likely to have poor English skills than in 2000.

| Other Languages spoken in Boston | |
|---|---|
| | % of those who Speak a Language other than English |
| Spanish | 44.1% |
| French-Creole | 10.4% |
| Vietnamese | 7.6% |
| Chinese | 6.0% |
| Portuguese | 3.3% |

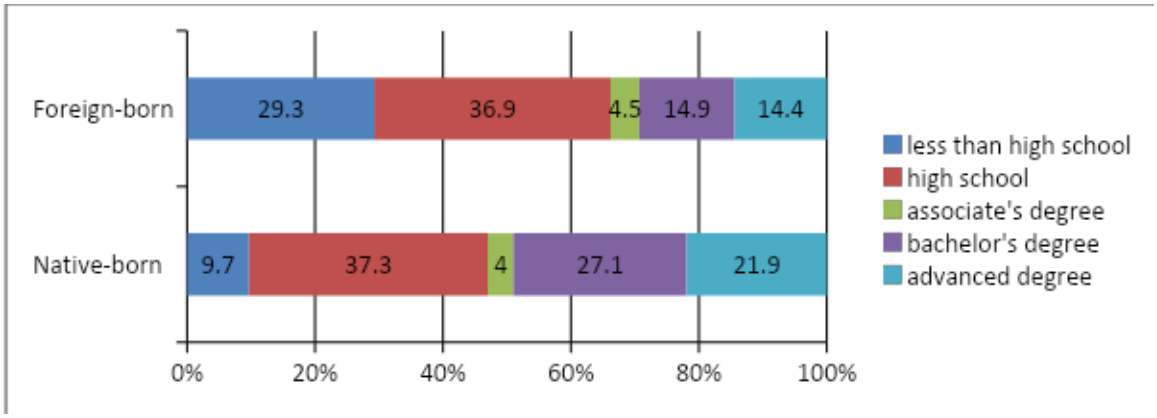
- Spanish is by far the most common language other than English.

**Boston's Income Distribution 2011 - % of Poverty Line**




- The foreign-born are more likely to be poor and less likely to be rich than the native-born.

**Boston's Educational Attainment – age 25 and older**




- Foreign-born educational attainment lags behind that of the native-born.
- A much higher percentage of foreign-born residents have less than a high school education.

**Boston compared to Massachusetts and the U.S. - 2011**

| Measures of Immigrant Integration | Boston | Boston:MA | Boston:U.S. |
|---|---|---|---|
| High School Graduate | 70.7% | 0.93 | 1.03 |
| Bachelor's Degree or higher | 29.3% | 0.82 | 1.07 |
| High English Ability | 69.9% | 0.91 | 0.99 |
| Naturalized Citizenship | 45.5% | 0.89 | 1.01 |
| Above poverty line | 75.5% | 0.89 | 0.94 |
| High Income (>500% poverty) | 28.8% | 0.76 | 1.48 |

- Boston does not do as well as Massachusetts as a whole in these measures of immigrant integration.
- Boston may serve as a "gateway" for new immigrants and the immigrants may move to other parts of Massachusetts as they gain skills and economic resources.

**Changes in Immigrant Integration 2000-2011**

| | Boston | | Massachusetts | | United States | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2011 | 2011:2000 | 2011 | 2011:2000 | 2011 | 2011:2000 |
| High School Graduate | 70.7% | 1.07 | 75.8% | 1.11 | 68.6% | 1.07 |
| Bachelor's Degree or higher | 29.3% | 1.10 | 35.7% | 1.17 | 27.5% | 1.05 |
| High English Ability | 69.9% | 0.93 | 76.4% | 0.97 | 70.4% | 0.99 |
| Naturalized Citizenship | 45.5% | 1.21 | 51.2% | 1.17 | 45.0% | 1.12 |
| Above poverty line | 75.5% | 0.98 | 84.8% | 0.99 | 80.2% | 0.97 |
| High Income (>500% poverty) | 28.8% | 1.05 | 37.9% | 1.01 | 19.5% | 0.91 |

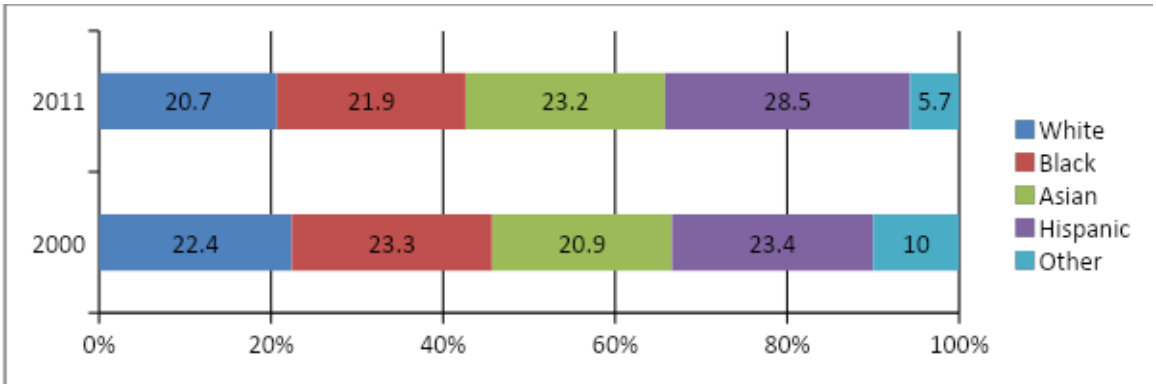
- Boston does better than the United States overall in four out of the six measures. In particular, Boston has a much higher percentage of high income immigrants than the U.S.

- In Boston, in Massachusetts, and in the United States, the educational attainment of immigrants has improved 2000-2011, while the level of English ability has declined.
- A higher percentage of immigrants are naturalized citizens in 2011 in all three geographies.

- More immigrants are living below the poverty line, while, at least in Boston and Massachusetts, more immigrants are earning >500% of the poverty line. This may reflect the recession and other economic trends.

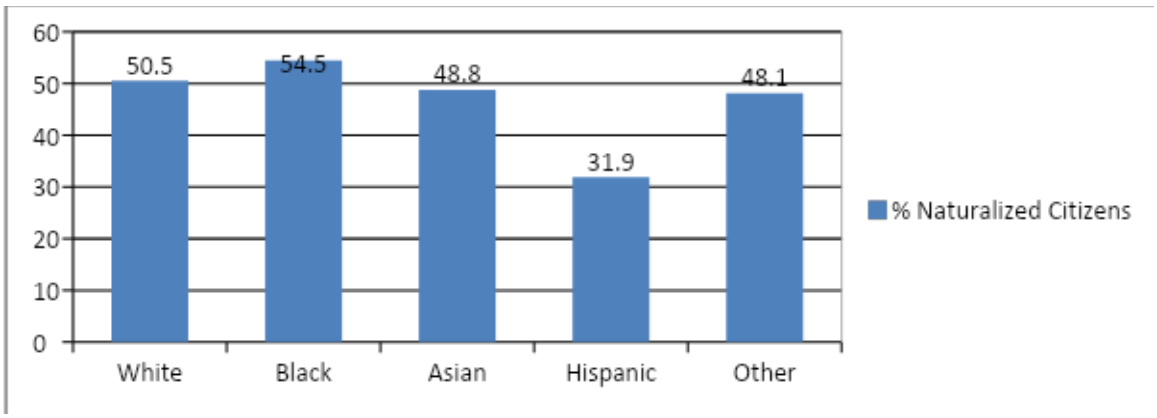
## Boston's Immigrants by Race

**Race of Boston's Immigrant Population, 2000 and 2001[2]**




- In 2011, Boston's immigrant population had a higher proportion of Asians and Hispanics and a lower proportion of Whites and Blacks than in 2000.

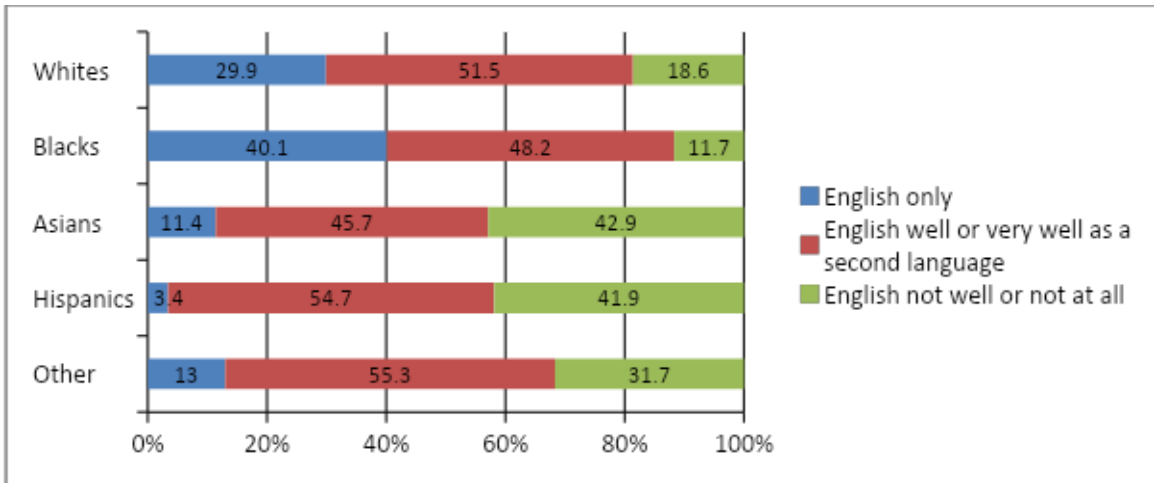
**Naturalization Rate of Boston's Immigrants by Race - 2011**




- Hispanics have the lowest naturalization rate.

[2] This analysis includes non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks, and Asians as well as Hispanics of any race. The "other" category includes other races and individuals of more than one race.

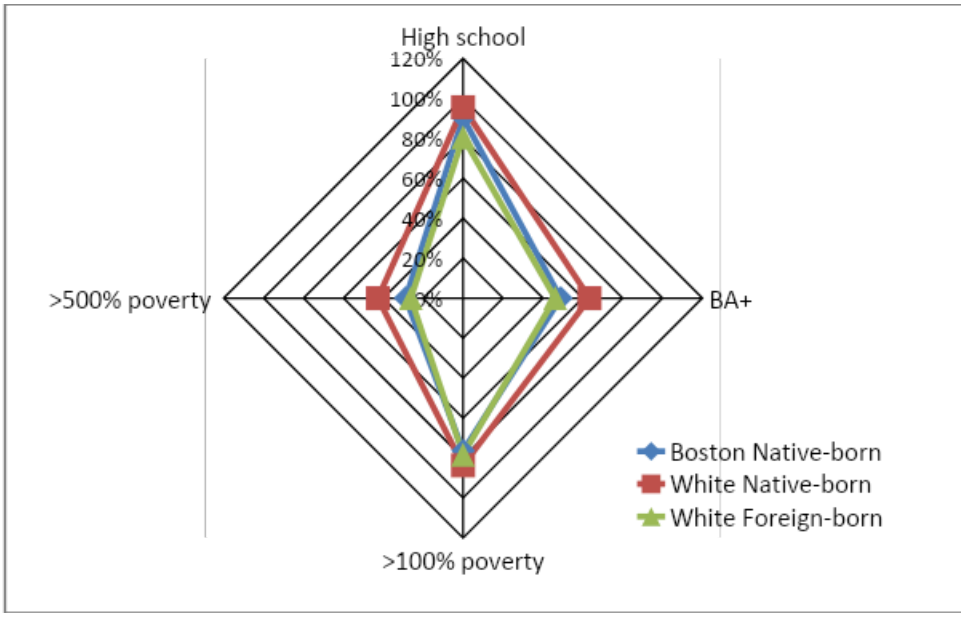
**English Ability by Race of Boston's Immigrants**




- White and Black immigrants in Boston have significantly stronger English skills than Asian and Hispanic immigrants.
- 24.3% of White immigrants were born in the predominately English-speaking countries of Ireland, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia
- 44.6% of Black immigrants come from countries where English is an official language: English-speaking islands of the Caribbean, especially Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, and Barbados; as well as Guyana and Nigeria.

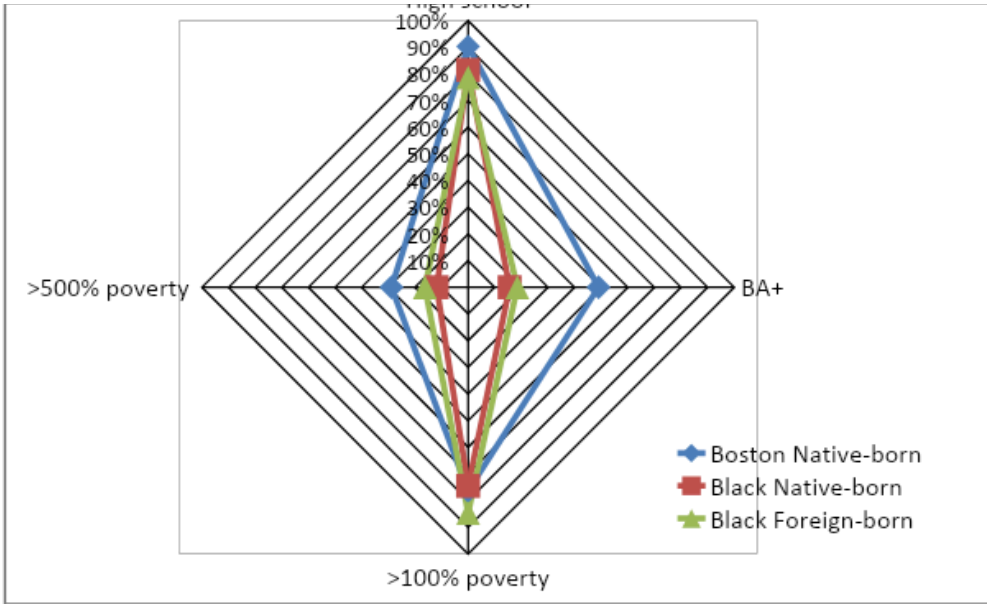
- We can compare immigrants of each racial and ethnic group with their native-born counterparts and with the Boston native-born population. The following charts look at high school graduation, achievement of a BA degree, and percentages of the population above 100% and 500% of the poverty line.

**White Immigrants compared to Native-born Whites**



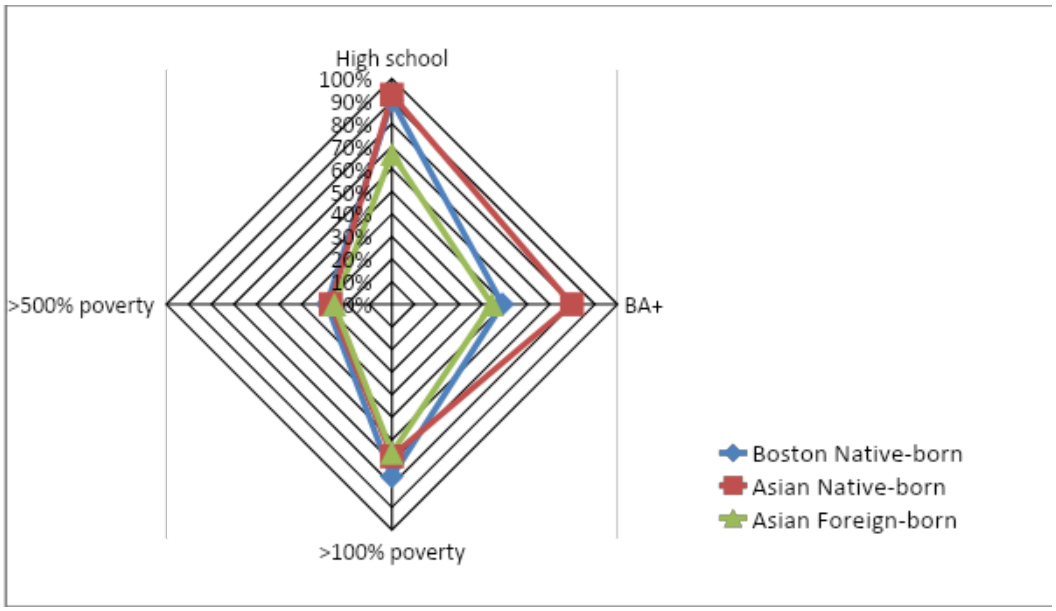

- White immigrants lag behind the White native-born population on these measures.

**Black immigrants compared to Black/African-American native-born population**



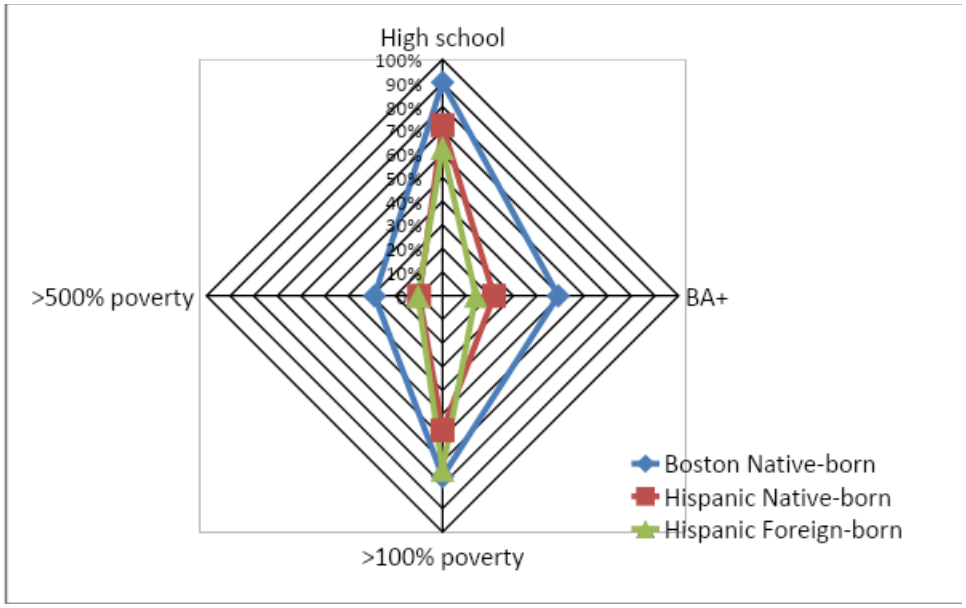

- The Black foreign-born population has lower rates of poverty than the native-born population.

**Asian Immigrants compared to Asian native-born Population**



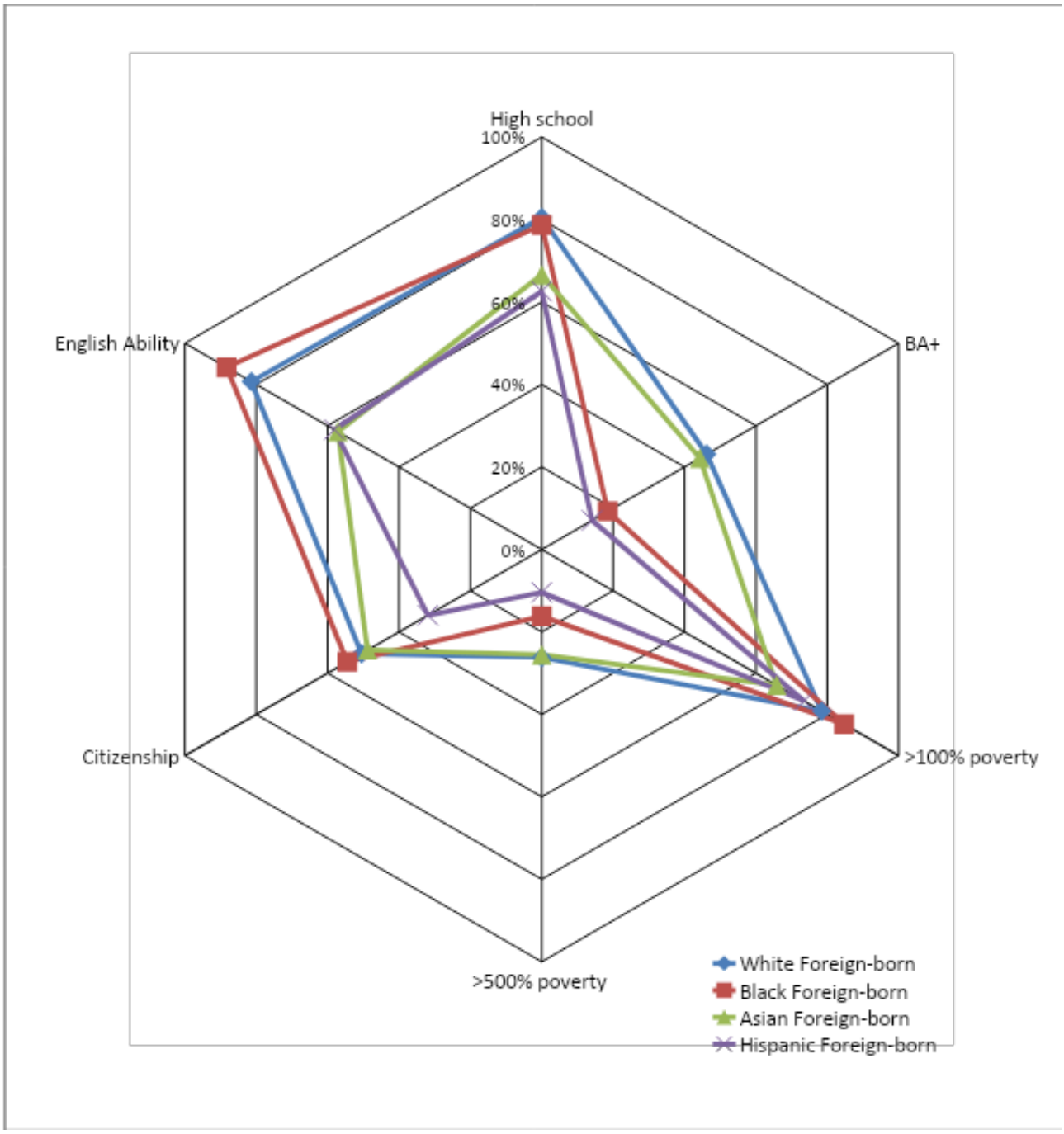

- The Asian native-born population has significantly higher educational achievement than the foreign-born population.

**Hispanic Immigrants compared to the Native-born Hispanic Population**



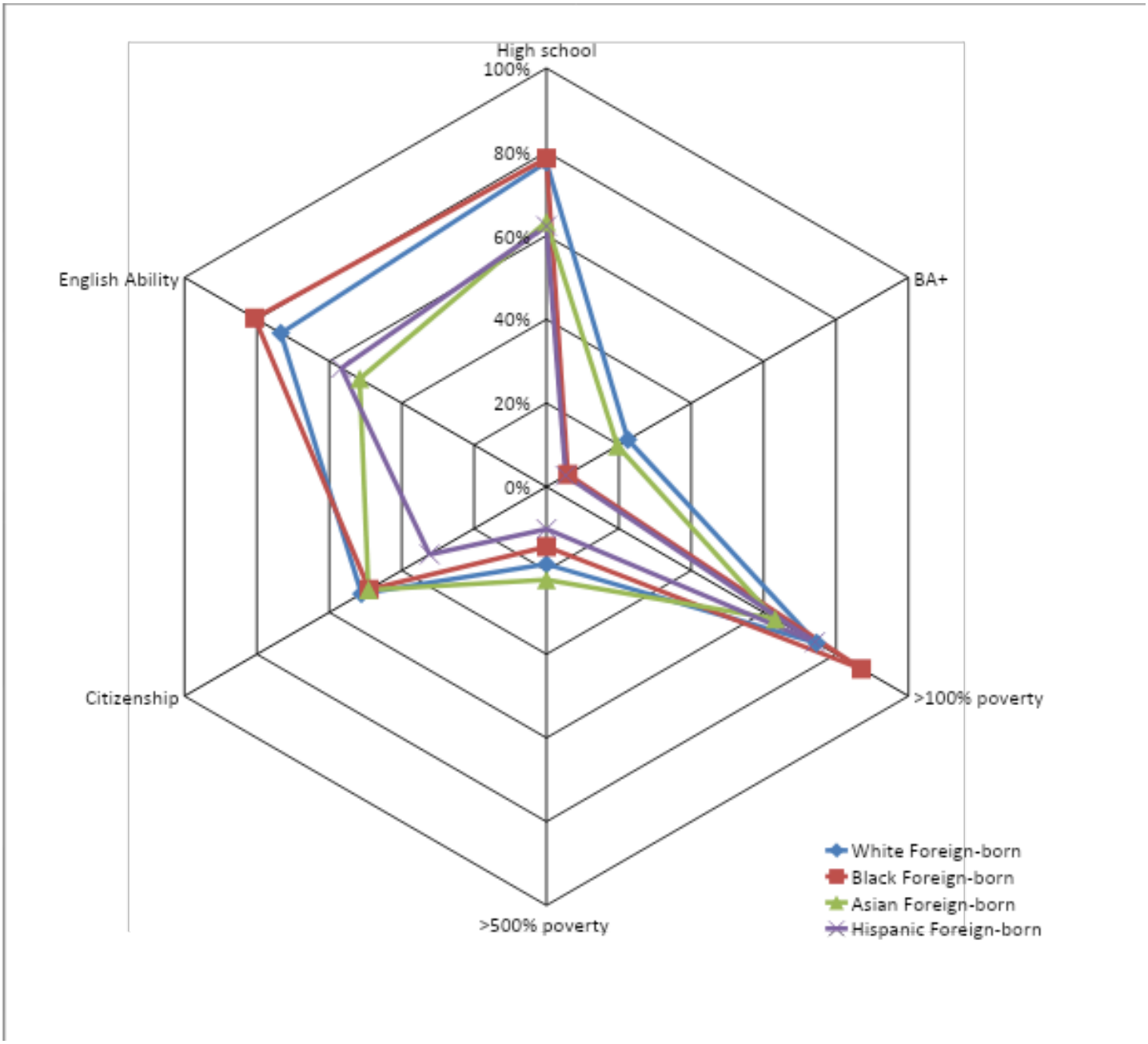
- Interestingly, the Hispanic foreign-born population has lower levels of education, but is less likely to live in poverty than the native-born population.

**Boston Immigrant Population by Race**




- White and Black immigrants are most likely to be high school graduates, but White and Asian immigrants have the highest rates of having a Bachelor's degree.
- The Black foreign-born are the least likely to live in poverty, but the White and Asian immigrants are the most likely to live above 500% of the poverty line.
- Hispanic immigrants are the least likely to be U.S. citizens.
- Black and White immigrants have stronger English skills than Asian and Hispanic immigrants.

**Boston Immigrants by Race, Excluding those who speak English only**




- Immigrants who speak English only might be thought to have an advantage integrating into the United States.
- If we exclude those who speak English only from the previous analysis, most measures of immigrant integration do decline somewhat.
- However, the relative positions of the different racial groups remain essentially the same.

## Boston's Immigrants by Decade of Arrival in the United States

- This report compares immigrants living in Boston in 2000 and 2011 by their decade of arrival in the United States. The report examines the changes in each cohort from 2000 and 2011 and considers whether immigrants who remained in Boston were qualitatively different from those who left.

**Immigrant Cohorts in Boston by Decade of Arrival**

| | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s | 2000s |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1990 | 27845 | 70435 | NA | NA |
| 2000 | 18194 | 45726 | 71695 | 2678 |
| 2011 | 12560 | 30795 | 38415 | 73330 |

- There is a steep drop off in the number of immigrants from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s who lived in Boston at each decade data point.
- The numbers are different for the 2000s because the 2000 number only reflects those who arrived in the first part of the year 2000, while the 2011 number includes all those who arrived in the US in 2000 or later. Because of the data constraints for the 2000s cohort, this report will focus on immigrants who arrived in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

**Boston's Immigrants as a Percentage of Immigrants in Massachusetts**

| Decade Cohort | 2000% | 2011% |
|---|---|---|
| 1970s | 16.7% | 14.6% |
| 1980s | 23.2% | 18.6% |
| 1990s | 24.0% | 15.8% |
| Total | 19.9% | 16.9% |

- In more recent immigrant cohorts, Boston immigrants make up a higher percentage of immigrants in Massachusetts as a whole.
- In 2011, for each cohort, Boston is home to a smaller percentage of Massachusetts immigrants.

**Change in Immigrant Population, 2000-2011**

| | Boston | MA, excluding Boston | U.S.[3] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1970s | -31.0% | -19.0% | -10.5% |
| 1980s | -32.7% | -10.6% | -12.3% |
| 1990s | -46.4% | -10.2% | -18.4% |

[3] Based on 2000 Census data.

- The immigrant population in the U.S. for each of these cohorts declined 2000 to 2011 (while to total immigrant population increased). Some immigrants choose to leave the U.S. to go back to their country of origin or elsewhere in the world.
- The immigrant population in Boston for each of these cohorts decreased significantly 2000 to 2011. Boston immigrants may move elsewhere in Massachusetts or the U.S., or leave the country.

## Race of Immigrant Cohorts in Boston

| | 1970s | | 1980s | | 1990s | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2011 | 2000 | 2011 | 2000 | 2011 |
| White | 17.5% | 20.4% | 12.9% | 12.6% | 22.7% | 19.7% |
| Black | 37.6% | 42.4% | 27.3% | 29.5% | 18.9% | 17.7% |
| Asian | 15.2% | 9.1% | 22.7% | 20.8% | 23.6% | 23.8% |
| Hispanic | 19.0% | 20.3% | 24.8% | 33.0% | 25.6% | 33.9% |
| Other | 10.7% | 7.9% | 12.3% | 4.1% | 9.3% | 5.0% |

- Hispanics became a larger proportion of the decade cohorts between 2000 and 2011.
- There was a drop-off in the proportion of Asian immigrants in the 1970s and 1980s cohorts between 2000 and 2011.

## Change in Immigrant Population, 2000-2011

| | White | | Black | | Asian | | Hispanic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Boston | non-Boston MA | Boston | non-Boston MA | Boston | non-Boston MA | Boston | non-Boston MA |
| 1970s | -19.6% | -14.2% | -22.2% | 31.5% | -58.8% | -32.8% | -26.2% | -18.4% |
| 1980s | -34.2% | -8.2% | -27.2% | 15.0% | -38.4% | -8.7% | -10.3% | -6.4% |
| 1990s | -53.4% | -14.6% | -49.8% | 44.1% | -46.0% | -5.9% | -29.2% | -4.5% |

- For White, Asian, and Black immigrants in each decade cohort, the immigrant population in Massachusetts outside of Boston shrank 2000-2011, but not by as much as the Boston immigrant population shrank.
- The Black immigrant population shrank significantly in Boston, but increased significantly in Massachusetts outside of Boston.
- This suggests that Boston immigrants, especially Black immigrants, are leaving the city for other parts of Massachusetts.

**Countries of Origin by Immigrant Cohort**

| Top Countries of Origin | 1970s | | 1980s | | 1990s | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2011 | 2000 | 2011 | 2000 | 2011 |
| Dominican Republic | 6.9% | 9.9% | 10.0% | 12.4% | 8.4% | 13.8% |
| Haiti | 13.2% | 9.5% | 14.3% | 17.4% | 8.7% | 6.9% |
| China | 6.8% | 2.5% | 7.6% | 6.8% | 6.9% | 8.0% |
| Vietnam | 1.6% | 0.7% | 7.0% | 9.0% | 7.5% | 10.7% |
| El Salvador | 1.7% | 0.8% | 4.9% | 5.0% | 6.0% | 7.8% |
| Guatemala | 1.1% | 4.8% | 2.2% | 8.0% | 1.2% | 5.4% |
| Jamaica | 7.2% | 9.1% | 4.8% | 3.5% | 2.6% | 2.6% |
| Cape Verde | 5.5% | 7.0% | 6.3% | 2.7% | 2.6% | 2.6% |
| Colombia | 1.7% | 0.7% | 1.9% | 2.4% | 4.2% | 3.2% |
| Ireland | 1.4% | 1.2% | 2.3% | 1.7% | 2.6% | 2.7% |

- The above chart looks at the top ten countries of origin for the foreign-born in Boston in 2011.
- Dominicans make up a higher proportion of immigrants in 2011 than 2000 in all decade cohorts. Immigrants from the Dominican Republic may be more likely to stay in Boston.

| Top Countries of Origin | 1970s | | | 1980s | | | 1990s | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2011 | % Change | 2000 | 2011 | % Change | 2000 | 2011 | % Change |
| Dominican Republic | 1248 | 1244 | -0.3% | 4585 | 3808 | -16.9% | 6008 | 5318 | -11.5% |
| Haiti | 2401 | 1189 | -50.5% | 6560 | 5371 | -18.1% | 6246 | 2645 | -57.7% |
| China | 1243 | 313 | -74.8% | 3483 | 2098 | -39.8% | 4970 | 3076 | -38.1% |
| Vietnam | 297 | 89 | -70.0% | 3218 | 2785 | -13.5% | 5364 | 4094 | -23.7% |
| El Salvador | 305 | 106 | -65.2% | 2219 | 1543 | -30.5% | 4295 | 2991 | -30.4% |
| Guatemala | 199 | 600 | 201.5% | 988 | 2464 | 149.4% | 891 | 2087 | 134.2% |
| Jamaica | 1306 | 1148 | -12.1% | 2186 | 1064 | -51.3% | 1859 | 1008 | -45.8% |
| Cape Verde | 994 | 878 | -11.7% | 2860 | 821 | -71.3% | 1850 | 1015 | -45.1% |
| Colombia | 309 | 91 | -70.6% | 877 | 752 | -14.3% | 2978 | 1238 | -58.4% |
| Ireland | 246 | 153 | -37.8% | 1031 | 526 | -49.0% | 1899 | 1053 | -44.5% |

- The number of immigrants in Boston declined from 2000 to 2011 for each group, except for Guatemalans.
- There was an influx of immigrants from Guatemala into Boston during the 2000s. These immigrants arrived in the U.S. much earlier, but came to Boston in the 2000s.

**% of immigrants speaking English well or very well**

| | 2000 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|
| 1970s | 82.9% | 79.8% |
| 1980s | 75.5% | 65.8% |
| 1990s | 70.2% | 67.6% |

- Surprisingly, each cohort's English skills get worse from 2000 to 2011.
- This suggests that immigrants with stronger English skills may be more likely to have left Boston between 2000 and 2011.
- Not surprisingly, the immigrants who arrived in the U.S. in the 1970s have better English skills than those who arrived more recently.

**Languages Spoken by Immigrant Cohorts in Boston**

| | 1970s | | 1980s | | 1990s | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2011 | 2000 | 2011 | 2000 | 2011 |
| English only | 36.4% | 38.6% | 22.5% | 22.2% | 17.9% | 15.0% |
| Spanish | 18.3% | 18.8% | 23.6% | 31.0% | 23.9% | 36.3% |
| French Creole | 10.6% | 11.1% | 14.0% | 17.1% | 8.3% | 6.5% |
| Vietnamese | 7.0% | 7.0% | 6.4% | 6.4% | 7.0% | 10.1% |
| Chinese | 7.7% | 3.4% | 7.3% | 4.0% | 7.4% | 5.0% |
| Portuguese | 6.3% | 6.0% | 6.1% | 1.0% | 6.6% | 2.8% |

- Immigrants who arrived in the U.S. in the 1970s are more likely to speak English only than those who arrived more recently. They may have immigrated from English-speaking countries, or have lost their first language skills after coming to the United States.

- Spanish speakers make up a higher proportion of immigrants in 2011 than in 2000 for all arrival cohorts. This suggests that Spanish speakers may be more likely to stay in Boston.
- Chinese speakers make up a lower proportion of immigrant in 2011 than in 2000 for all arrival cohorts. This suggests that Chinese speakers may be less likely to stay in Boston.

**Economic Security of Immigrants in Boston**

| | <100% Poverty | | >500% Poverty | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2011 | 2000 | 2011 |
| 1970s | 14.0% | 20.5% | 23.0% | 28.6% |
| 1980s | 21.1% | 22.6% | 15.1% | 20.9% |
| 1990s | 29.0% | 22.8% | 12.4% | 18.8% |

- All decade cohorts have a higher proportion of high wage earners in 2011 than in 2000.
- The 1970s and 1980s cohorts also have a higher proportion of people in poverty in 2011. This could be related to broader economic trends, or it could be related to which immigrants are staying in Boston.
- The 1990s and 2000s cohorts have a lower proportion of people in poverty in 2011 than in 2000. It is not surprising that the young, recent immigrants are able to get out of poverty as they gain more experience.

**Naturalization Rates**

| | 2000 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|
| 1970s | 70.0% | 76.1% |
| 1980s | 45.8% | 68.5% |
| 1990s | 16.0% | 56.0% |

- Naturalization rates show a clear correlation with time in the US. Each cohort has a higher proportion of naturalized citizens in 2000 than 2011.

**Educational Attainment, 25 years and older**

| | 1970s | | 1980s | | 1990s | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2011 | 2000 | 2011 | 2000 | 2011 |
| Less than high school | 31.2 % | 33.5 % | 36.4 % | 32.5 % | 31.8 % | 27.5 % |
| High school diploma | 35.1 % | 40.9 % | 38.3 % | 37.9 % | 30.4 % | 39.1 % |
| Associate's degree | 7.8% | 3.1% | 5.3% | 6.9% | 3.8% | 3.9% |
| Bachelor's degree | 16.1 % | 14.0 % | 11.3 % | 11.7 % | 17.5 % | 16.0 % |
| Advanced degree | 9.8% | 8.6% | 8.8% | 10.9 % | 16.4 % | 13.4 % |
| High School Diploma+ | 68.8 % | 66.5 % | 63.7 % | 67.4 % | 68.1 % | 72.4 % |
| Bachelor's+ | 25.9 % | 22.6 % | 20.1 % | 22.6 % | 33.9 % | 29.4 % |

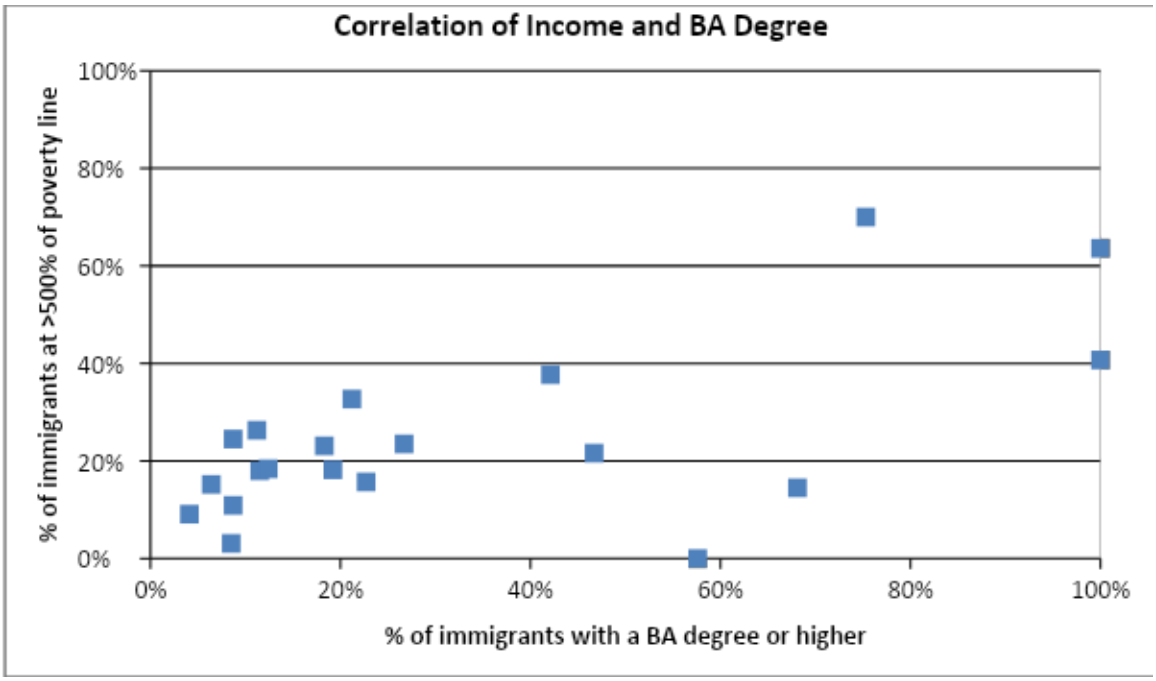
- The 1970s cohort somewhat less well educated in 2011 than in 2000, suggesting that the better educated immigrants may have moved out of Boston.
- The 1980s and 1990s cohorts are better educated in 2011 than in 2000.

**Median Age**

| | 2000 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|
| 1970s | 46 | 58 |
| 1980s | 38 | 50 |
| 1990s | 28 | 42 |

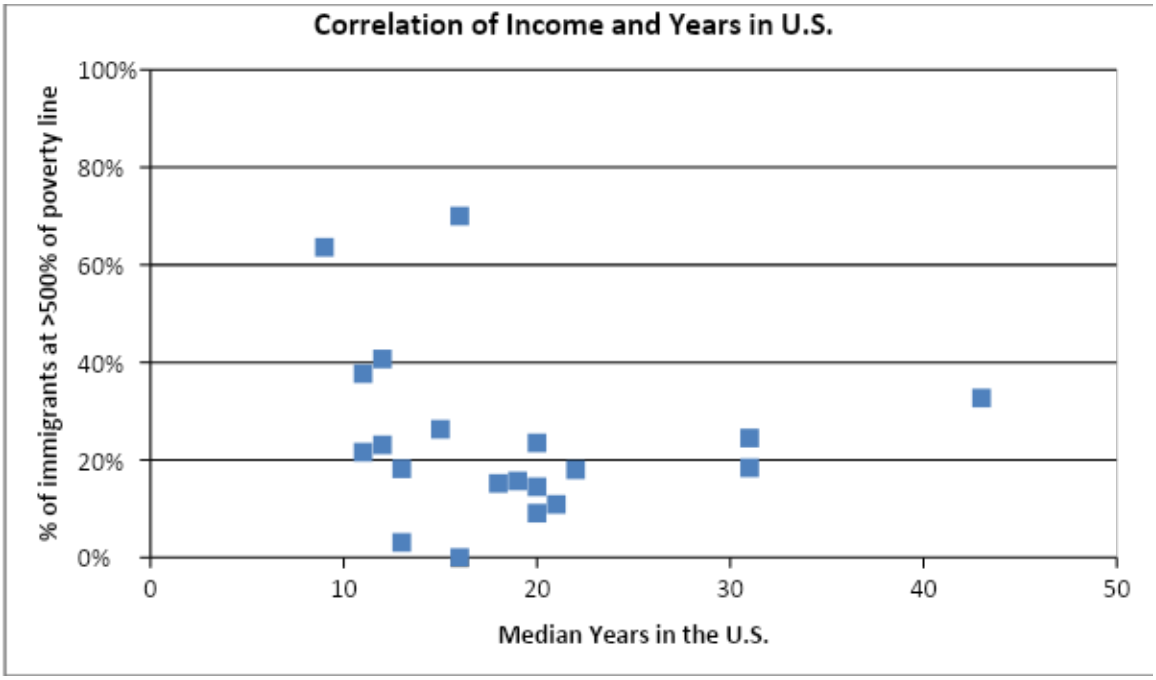
- The median age in 2000 is 12-14 years younger than the median age in 2011 for each cohort. We would expect an 11 year difference if the populations remained static and aged in place. This suggests that the younger immigrants within each cohort were more likely to leave Boston than the older immigrants.

Factors Correlating with High Income among Immigrant Groups



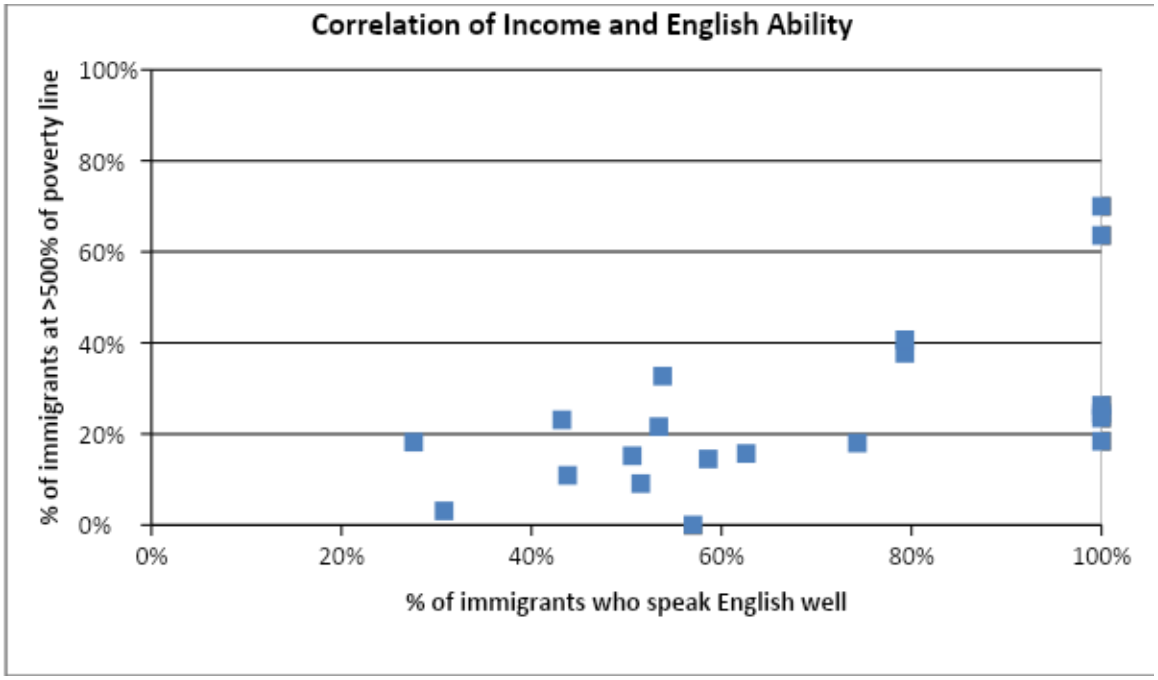

- The squares represent the top twenty countries of origin for immigrants in Boston in 2011.
- The percentage of immigrants age 25 or older with a BA degree or higher is plotted against the percentage of immigrants at more than 500% of the poverty line.
- There appears to be a correlation between a better educated immigrant population and higher income.
- Ukrainian (pink) and Russian (purple) immigrants in Boston have high levels of education, but relatively low percentages of high earners.
- Canadian immigrants (light blue) have the highest percentage of high earners.
- Korean (light orange) and Indian (dark orange) immigrants in Boston in 2011 all had at least a Bachelor's degree.

- For all immigrants in Boston in 2011, 42.1% of those with at least a BA degree earned more than 500% of the poverty line. Only 11.8% of those with less than a BA degree earned that much.




- This chart plots the median years in the U.S. for immigrants age 25 and older against the percentage of immigrants at more than 500% of the poverty line for each of the 20 countries.
- Here the correlation between time in the U.S. and income is unclear.
- Indian (dark orange) and Canadian (light blue) immigrants have on average been in the U.S. a shorter time and yet they have the highest percentages of high earners.
- Immigrants from Trinidad & Tobago (blue-green) and Barbados (light green) and Italy (lilac) have been in the U.S. on average more than 30 years. However, the percentage of high earners in these communities is not markedly higher than in other immigrant groups.

- For all immigrants in Boston in 2011, 16.2% of those who had been in the U.S. less than 20 years earned more than 500% of the poverty line. 22.8% of those who had been in the U.S. more than 20 years earned that much.




- This chart plots the percentage of immigrants age 25 or older who speak English well against the percentage of immigrants from each country who earn more than 500% of the poverty line.
- There appears to be some correlation between English ability and high income.
- Canadian (light blue) and Indian (dark orange) immigrants have high English ability and high income. These immigrant groups also have a high percentage of immigrants with a Bachelor's degree.
- Immigrants from Jamaica, Ireland, Trinidad & Tobago, and Barbados (clustered at far right of chart) also have high English skills, but their percentage of high earners is lower, probably due to the lower percentage of Bachelor's degrees.

- For all immigrants in Boston in 2011, 24.3% of those who spoke English well or very well earned more than 500% of the poverty line. Only 6.0% of immigrants who spoke English not well or not at all earned that much.