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## Philadelphia's Immigrant Communities in Historical Perspective

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Philadelphia has remained an understudied site of immigration to the United States, yet, immigration has, in fact, played a significant role in shaping the life of the city. Once a center of industrialization and a haven of religious freedom, Philadelphia served as a major port of entry and destination for immigrants throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the 1850s, three out of ten Philadelphians were foreign-born (Miller 2006), and during the peak period of immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe between 1910 and 1914, the city was the third most important immigrant port in the country (Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians 2004a).

Recently, however, Philadelphia has lagged behind other major cities in attracting immigrants. Across the country, the volume of immigration dwindled between the two World Wars and picked up again thereafter, especially after the 1965 Hart-Cellar Immigration Act. Mostly from Latin America and Asia, post-1965 immigrants have brought about major changes to the racial and ethnic dynamics of many urban centers. The foreign-born in Philadelphia, by contrast, remained relatively small during the 1970s and 1980s. Unlike other major cities in the country, Philadelphia largely remained Black and White.

The 1990s began to see changes. During the decade, Philadelphia's foreign-born population grew by 30 percent, from 104,816 to 136,000, while the city's overall population decreased by 4 percent (Patusky and Ceffalio 2004).

According to the 2000 U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau 2000), foreign-born residents constituted 9 percent of the city's population (one out of every eleven Philadelphia residents). In 2005, the figure increased further to 11 percent (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). The rate at which the immigrant population grew is, indeed, one of the fastest among major metropolitan areas, according to Singer et al. (2008).<sup>1</sup>

Still relatively few in number, however, immigrants are becoming increasingly visible in the life of the city. The racial and ethnic composition of the city has become more diverse, as has the city's urban and cultural landscape. Between 1990 and 2000, the White population shrank by 180,000, while Hispanic, Black, and Asian residents increased, many of whom were new immigrants from abroad (Brookings Institution 2005). Immigrants have also helped revitalize neighborhoods by investing in homes and businesses and by introducing different cultures and foods (Gupta 2000; Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians 2004b).

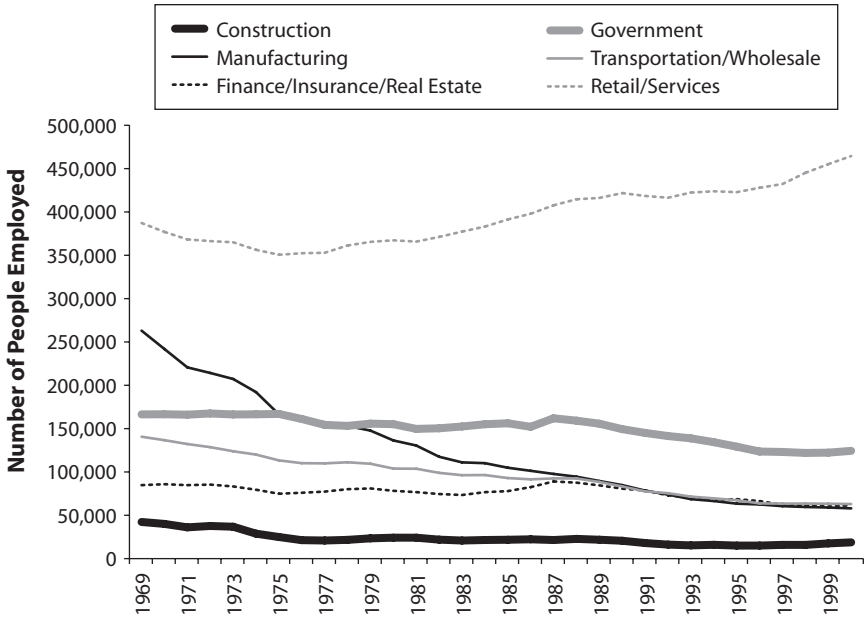
Today, immigration is occurring in the context of significant demographic changes and economic challenges. Demographically, Philadelphia lost 22 percent of its population between 1970 and 2000, well above the rate of other cities, such as New York, Boston, and Chicago (Patusky and Ceffalio 2004), and the population continues to decrease. Failing to add as many newcomers as some other major urban areas, the population is also ageing more rapidly than in many other cities of the country. Economically, the urban core continued to lose its strength in the 1990s. More jobs shifted outward in the metropolitan area, and in 2000, fewer than 30 percent of the region's workers were employed in the central city (Brookings Institution 2000). As a result, the city's median household income dropped (in real terms) and poverty rose, while the size of the middle class shrank (Brookings Institution 2000). The shift to postindustrialism, moreover, has exacerbated the already noticeable divisions among classes, races, and neighborhoods (Adams et al. 1991). In short, Philadelphia, to this day, has continued to struggle as an old industrial city made up of "populations still being educated as industrial immigrants" and "communities still organized around traditional ethnic and racial lines, and still excluded, in the main, from the benefits of the new economic order" (Adams et al. 1991: 26).

Faced with these demographic and economic problems, policy makers have turned to immigration as a means to revitalize the city (e.g., Gupta 2000; Pennsylvania Economy League 2000; Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians 2004a). In 2001, City Councilman James F. Kenney led an initiative to attract more immigrants by proposing a plan of action, including the creation of a city-funded Office of New Philadelphians (Kenney 2001). Although this proposal did not materialize, a nonprofit organization, the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians, was established in 2003 by a group of immigrant advocates (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 11, 2003). Within the city government, the

Managing Director's Office launched the "Global Philadelphia" project to provide more city information and services in multiple languages, and the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs was launched within the city government in order to "improve cultural, social, political, health and other conditions for immigrants" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 1, 2005). Immigration, thus, is increasingly recognized as an important component of Philadelphia's economic growth and revitalization (Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians 2004b). To the extent that immigration will likely play a vital role in shaping the future of the area, it is critical to understand the characteristics of growing foreign-born populations today (Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians 2004a).

In this context, this volume aims to examine the role of immigration<sup>2</sup> in Philadelphia's social and economic dynamics. With each chapter focusing on a specific group and a time period, the volume, as a whole, provides a comprehensive analysis of the processes and consequences of immigration to Philadelphia over time. Today's newcomers are coming to a city that has lost jobs and people and to a city that is largely characterized as Black and White. How have foreign newcomers adapted and fared in the city? Who has come to Philadelphia, and why? And how have they affected the city's economic landscape as well as its racial and ethnic boundaries? Our main questions in the volume are twofold: how has Philadelphia affected immigrants' lives, and how have they, in turn, shaped Philadelphia? We address these questions by comparing the experiences of different immigrant communities over the past few centuries. The similarities and differences we can draw from this historical, comparative approach, we hope, will provide a better understanding of the processes and implications of contemporary immigration to the area.

While a burgeoning volume of works has emerged on immigrant populations in New York City (e.g., Foner 2001; New York City Department of City Planning Population Division 2004), Miami (e.g., Stepick et al. 2003), and Los Angeles (e.g., Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996; Lopez-Garza and Diaz 2002), there is a dearth of literature on immigration to Philadelphia, particularly for the contemporary period. To date, most of the existing studies on immigration to Philadelphia are historical (e.g., Luconi 2001; Peltz 1997). The few that examine contemporary immigration tend to focus on specific groups or topics (e.g., Lee 1998; Kibria 1995), and the most comprehensive volume to date, by Goode and Schneider (1994), was published more than a decade ago. Since then, Philadelphia has undergone major transformations, and the city's foreign-born population has grown rapidly. As the settlement patterns of immigrants to the United States have become more diverse, a growing literature has focused on new destinations of immigrants (e.g., Zuniga and Hernandez-Leon 2005; Massey 2008). Philadelphia is an important, though neglected, destination of immigrants, we argue, and understanding the process of their adaptation will elucidate



**FIGURE 1.1** Change in the industrial structure in Philadelphia. (*Source:* Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Employment Data.)

the patterns of immigrant settlement and mobility in general as well as how cities, their people, and economies cope with foreign-born newcomers.

### Context of Immigration

Today's newcomers are coming to the city in the context of demographic shifts, economic shifts, and increased social inequality and racial segregation. Before looking at the profile of new migrants, we shall examine the context in which they are coming today. Formerly a railroad, shipping, and manufacturing center, Philadelphia once prospered as the industrial center of the region (Adams et al. 1991; Warner 1968). The Great Depression, however, brought an end to the city's industrial expansion, and what happened after World War II has been well documented: deindustrialization, job loss, and suburbanization (Adams et al. 1991; Goode 1994; Summers and Luce 1987).

Like many other old industrial cities, Philadelphia underwent a major transition from manufacturing to services (see Figure 1.1). And like other cities, Philadelphia also lost jobs in the context of growing global economic integration. Faced with intense economic competition, some locally based firms were bought by large multinational corporations. Some moved out in search of cheaper land and labor, while others simply closed down (Goode and Schneider 1994).

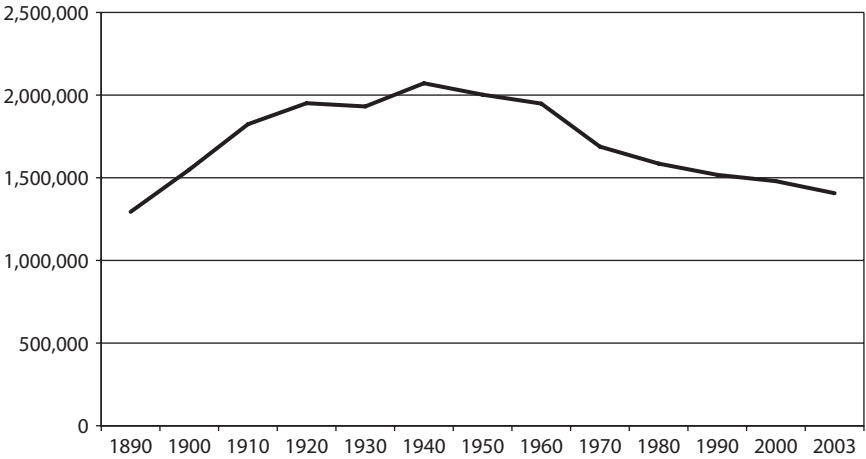
Unlike other cities, however, Philadelphia's industry was hit particularly hard. Its manufacturing base declined more rapidly than the nation's as a whole, and the city lost 75 percent of its manufacturing jobs between 1955 and 1970 (Adams et al. 1991: 37, fig. 2.1). In 2000, manufacturing constituted only 9 percent, in comparison to 14 percent of jobs nationwide.

Philadelphia suffered severe industrial decline due to a number of factors. One was its high dependence on the production of nondurable goods (e.g., apparel and textiles which had long dominated the city's economy) instead of durable goods (e.g., machinery) (Adams et al. 1991). Smaller in scale and less capital-intensive, the production of nondurable goods was more easily removed and replaced at the time of economic contraction. It was also more vulnerable to shifting economic environments. In 1947, about 30 percent of Philadelphia's privately employed labor force was in nondurable manufactures in contrast to the national average of 19 percent (Adams et al. 1991).

Another factor was Philadelphia's disadvantaged geography. Located between Washington and New York, Philadelphia failed to establish itself as a regional economic center, and unlike Pittsburgh, it did not have a clearly defined region to serve (Goode and Schneider 1994). International trade also favored Washington and New York, often bypassing Philadelphia.

Furthermore, Philadelphia particularly suffered from suburbanization due to relatively greater discrepancies between the city and its suburbs. Between 1970 and 1980, Goode and Schneider (1994) found that Philadelphia lost more jobs to its suburbs than other major cities across the nation. According to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (2006), the rates of employment have increased in all the suburbs of Philadelphia (especially in Chester, Gloucester, Bucks, and Montgomery counties) during the last decades, in sharp contrast to the city's "sluggish" performance. The disparity in income between the city and its suburbs is quite significant, and indeed is greater than most other cities in the nation, according to Logan (2002: 6, table 2). The gap in employment generation between the city and its suburbs is even more evident today as noted in a recent article in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (April 6, 2009). Between 1996 and 2006, downtown Philadelphia experienced a decrease in employment, as more jobs relocated to the suburbs. In fact, the Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington metropolitan area "ranked fifth worst of the 98 regions studied, with 63.7 percent of its jobs more than 10 miles from the city centers," as noted by the Brookings Institution (Mastrull 2009).

In addition, some have blamed the city government for failing to cope with the changing economy. The city's relatively high taxes, poor roads, poor security, large bureaucracy, and bureaucratic regulation have all encouraged the private sector to flee the city. Instead of investing resources to create a competitive labor force, according to them, the government has been a barrier, rather than a stimulant, to economic change.<sup>3</sup>

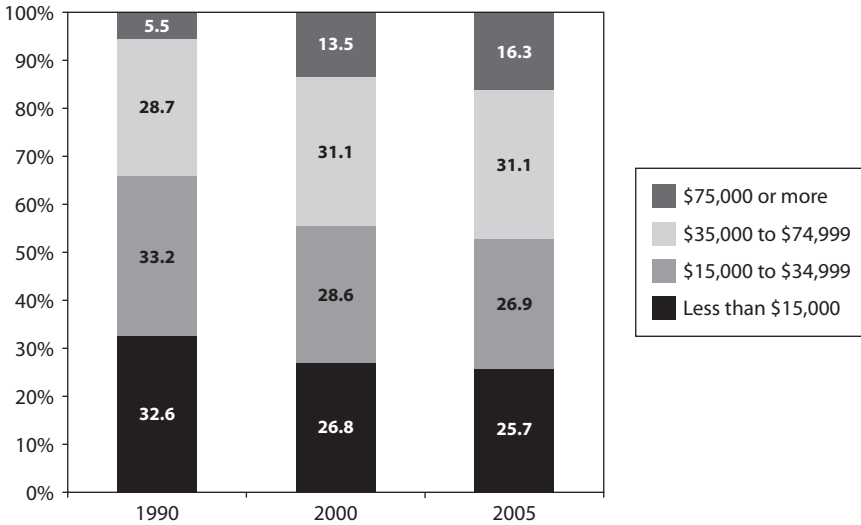


**FIGURE 1.2** Population change in Philadelphia. (Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey. Available at <http://www.census.gov>.)

In tandem with job loss, Philadelphia also began to lose its population. Up until the 1950s, the population kept growing with a significant volume of immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe as well as inflows of African Americans who migrated in search of industrial jobs from the depressed economy of the rural South. In this volume, Birte Pfleger also notes that German immigration to Philadelphia declined during the postwar period and continued on a downward spiral with increased deindustrialization in the city. After reaching a peak of over two million in the 1950s, the population has since continued to decline to the level of 1.4 million in 2005 (Figure 1.2). Particularly noticeable in the most recent decade is a loss of young workers; the state of Pennsylvania lost more young workers than any other state in the years 1990–2000 (Brookings Institution 2005).

The 1980s saw economic growth in the city, yet prosperity was uneven; skewed by the legacy of past patterns of employment, ownership, education, and residence, the economic restructuring exacerbated racial and class divides in the city (Adams et al. 1991). This pattern was also observed in the earlier decades (Warner 1968). Jobs increased in both the low-wage and high-wage sectors, but not in the moderate-wage range, and full-time, stable manufacturing jobs were increasingly replaced by part-time temporary service jobs (Adams et al. 1991).

This trend largely continues until this day. The share of part-time employment has steadily increased (from 6.5 percent in 1970 to 11 percent in 1988). The unemployment rate has increased (from 5.6 percent in 1990 to 6.3 percent in 2006) and has been higher than the national average (4 percent in 1990 and 4.4 percent in 2006). And so has the rate of poverty (20.3 percent in 1990 to 24.5



**FIGURE 1.3** Household income distribution in Philadelphia. (Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey. Available at <http://www.census.gov>.)

percent in 2005, compared to the national figures of 13.1 percent in 1990 and 13.3 percent in 2005). The overall rate of employment has also dropped significantly and more significantly than elsewhere (Fair Data 2006). In addition, there are growing disparities in unemployment rates among communities within Philadelphia; some neighborhoods are essentially at full employment (3.8 percent unemployment rate) while others have unemployment rates as high as 30 percent.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, household incomes dropped in real terms (Brookings Institution 2005: fig. 9), and the growth in household income has not kept up with that of the nation as a whole. (In 2005, the median household income in Philadelphia was just over 70 percent of the national average, according to the U.S. Census Bureau [2005].) At the same time, relatively high-income jobs (e.g., management and education) have grown in number (Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry 2006; Fair Data 2006). As a consequence, what we see today are growing disparities in earnings (see Figure 1.3). As the figures indicate, income inequality has increased in that relative to the growth in income among the bottom 20 percent of earners, the income of the richest families increased much more. The *Philadelphia Business Journal* (January 17, 2006) reports that between the early 1980s and the early 2000s, the income of the poorest fifth of Pennsylvania families increased about \$160 a year, while it went up \$540 a year for the middle fifth and \$2,650 a year for the top fifth.

Today's immigrants, therefore, are coming to the city in the context of population decline, economic deterioration, and growing income disparities. Who has come to the city and why?

## Profile of the Newest Philadelphians

### Overall Trend

Although its foreign-born residents have grown in number and percentage in the most recent decades, overall, as Table 1.1 shows, Philadelphia still lags behind other cities in attracting them (e.g., Brookings Institution 2000; Gupta 2000; Patusky and Ceffalio 2004; Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians 2004a). The fourth largest city in overall population, Philadelphia nonetheless ranked only sixteenth as a destination for immigrants in 1997–2001, and this trend remains until today (Patusky and Ceffalio 2004; also see Singer et al. 2008: table 2). While the foreign-born made up 36 percent of the population in New York City, 30 percent in Los Angeles, and 12.5 percent in Boston in 2000, just 9 percent of Philadelphia residents were foreign-born, slightly below the national average of 11 percent (Patusky and Ceffalio 2004; New York City Department of City Planning Population Division 2004).

A longer-term trend shows, however, that Philadelphia’s “sluggish” performance in attracting immigrants is a recent phenomenon. Prior to 1980, Philadelphia, compared to the nation as a whole, was consistently successful in attracting immigrants (Figure 1.4). Moreover, although Philadelphia experienced a net loss of the foreign-born, as well as of the native-born, until the 1980s, the number of the foreign-born has recently increased, despite a continuous decline in total population.

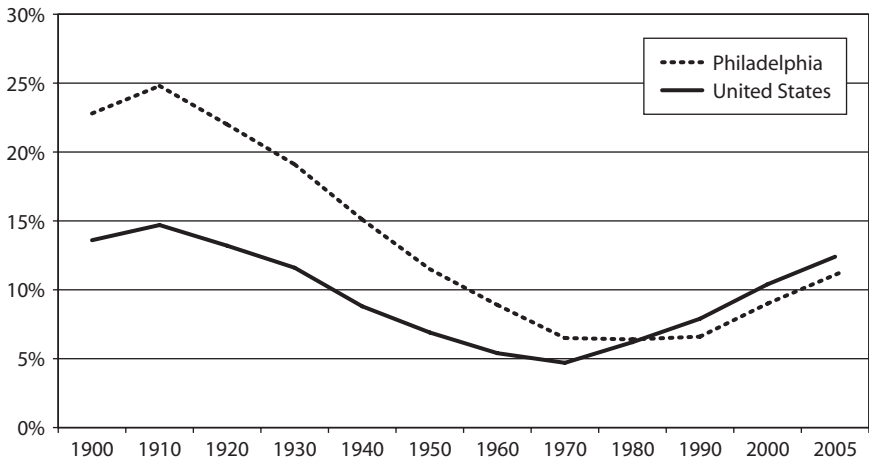
### The Characteristics of Philadelphia’s Foreign-Born Population Today

In comparison to other cities, Philadelphia’s foreign-born residents stand out in a number of ways. While motives of migration are more or less comparable,

TABLE 1.1 MAJOR IMMIGRANT DESTINATIONS (1997–2001)		
Rank	Major MSA	No. of new arrivals
1	New York	490,135
2	LA/Long Beach	360,660
3	Miami	268,074
4	Chicago	190,827
5	Washington, DC	157,548
9	San Francisco	82,669
10	Boston	81,159
11	San Diego	76,541
16	Philadelphia	61,468

\*Metropolitan Statistical Area.  
Source: Patusky and Ceffalio (2004).





**FIGURE 1.4** Percent change in foreign-born population: Philadelphia and the United States. (Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey. Available at <http://www.census.gov>.)

newcomers to Philadelphia, as pointed out by various chapters in the volume, are likely to cite the city's affordable housing and living conditions, its large number and variety of institutions of higher learning, and its geographical proximity to other metropolises, most notably New York, as major reasons for moving here. Important also are family connections and the existence of ethnic communities, both resulting from past immigration streams. The role of religious and secular aid organizations is also frequently cited as a reason for coming to the city, reflecting the city's strong Quaker and Jewish traditions that have long led in initiating civil rights organizations and assisting refugees (Morawska 2004; Goode and Schneider 1994).

Consequently, a higher proportion of Philadelphia's foreign-born population are refugees. Among the major sending countries of immigrants to Philadelphia are Vietnam, Ukraine, Russia, and Cambodia, which are main source countries of refugees elsewhere to the United States; yet these countries typically do not top the list of sending countries of immigrants in other major cities throughout the country. Philadelphia is home to a major Vietnamese community and the second largest Cambodian community (after Los Angeles) in the country. Perhaps because of the relatively high proportion of refugees, the foreign-born in Philadelphia are more likely to be naturalized citizens (47 percent) than the national average (40 percent).

Reflecting the national trend, foreign newcomers to Philadelphia largely come from Latin America and Asia. In 2000, migrants from Vietnam, China, Ukraine, India, and Jamaica made up a third of the city's foreign-born population. More recent years saw rapid increases in the number of people from India, Mexico, Brazil, and Liberia (U.S. Census Bureau 2005) (see Table 1.2),

**TABLE 1.2 MAJOR IMMIGRANT GROUPS IN 2000 AND 2005:  
THE NUMBER OF THE FOREIGN-BORN IN PHILADELPHIA**

Country of birth	2000	2005
Vietnam	11,533	12,187
China	10,354	10,754
Ukraine	8,326	10,242
India	7,610	12,841
Jamaica	6,994	8,223
Italy	6,097	3,014
Russia	5,275	3,283
Korea	5,209	3,014
Cambodia	4,536	2,254
Dominican Republic	4,281	4,614
Poland	3,765	4,446
Haiti	3,335	4,014
Germany	3,078	3,366
Philippines	3,068	2,424
Mexico	2,679	6,385
Brazil		6,385
Liberia		4,014

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey. Available at <http://www.census.gov>.

and particularly noteworthy is the growth of the Indian population. This population, as described by Rasika Chakravarthy and Ajay Nair in Chapter 11 of this volume, has a distinct characteristic; while a majority of recent migrants from India to the United States are high-skilled male workers, a good portion of Indians in Philadelphia, they find, are female nurses from Kerala, recruited initially in the context of a growing shortage of nurses in the area.

In contrast to other major cities, Philadelphia's foreign-born population is more likely to be re-migrants who, after having settled elsewhere in the country, migrated again to Philadelphia. For instance, a large number of Haitians, as Garvey Lundy shows in Chapter 9 of this volume, arrived in Philadelphia from New York City. Like Haitians, many immigrants come to Philadelphia from another city because they often find it more affordable to purchase homes and begin businesses (Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians 2004b). The fact that re-migrants make up a relatively large proportion of the foreign-born determines, in part, the nature of that population in Philadelphia. That is because these migrants, by virtue of migrating more than once, would likely have more skills, as well as motivation or entrepreneurial drive, than their peers who stayed in the original gateway.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, immigrants in Philadelphia today, as shown in the next section, are more educated, on average, than their counterparts in other major cities, such as New York.

Another characteristic of Philadelphia's foreign-born population is the relatively low proportion of the foreign-born among Hispanics/Latinos. This is due

to the large presence of Puerto Ricans (who are native-born) in the area. While 40 percent of Hispanics/Latinos nationwide were foreign-born in 2005, only 17 percent of them in Philadelphia were born abroad. About a quarter (24.7 percent) of Hispanics/Latinos in the area were natives who were born outside the continental United States (mostly Puerto Rico) (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). As Victor Vazquez-Hernandez (Chapter 4) points out, the Latino community in Philadelphia has a long history dating back at least to the 1890s. While the community is being transformed amid the current inflows of migration from elsewhere in Latin America, most notably Mexico (see Chapter 8), the community, still predominantly Puerto Rican today, cannot be adequately understood without assessing its historical development over time.

### *Socioeconomic Characteristics*

Foreign-born residents in Philadelphia are heterogeneous, even more so than the native-born, in terms of their socioeconomic backgrounds. A greater proportion of the foreign-born (25 percent), compared to the native-born (21 percent), had less than a high school education in 2005, but they were also more likely to possess graduate or professional degrees (14 percent compared to 9 percent of natives) (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). Overall, foreign-born residents<sup>6</sup> were relatively well educated in comparison to the native-born in the city; while 28 percent of the former had obtained at least a college diploma, the rate was only 20.7 percent for the latter. Compared to the national average, Philadelphia's foreign-born were better educated, in general, while native-born residents lagged behind their counterparts elsewhere. (In a ranking of major cities nationwide, Philadelphia, overall, ranked ninety-second out of one hundred cities in the percentage of its residents who hold bachelor's degrees.) Gupta (2000) also found that Philadelphia drew a more educated immigrant pool than other metropolitan areas in 1997 and 1998. According to the Pennsylvania Economy League (2000), professional workers with H1-B visas (allocated to high-skilled workers) represented a larger share among the foreign-born in the state of Pennsylvania (22.6 percent) than in other states, including New York (17.7 percent) and California (12 percent). Reflecting their higher educational attainment, foreign-born residents in Philadelphia also earned higher annual incomes (personal income), on average, than the native-born: \$19,542 versus \$17,291 (U.S. Census Bureau 2005).

The socioeconomic backgrounds of foreign-born residents, however, varied significantly by region and country of origin. While 56 percent of South Asians and 49.6 percent of Middle Easterners had at least a college diploma, only 17.6 percent of those from Central American and Caribbean countries did in 2000. Similarly, the median household income of South Asians, \$60,000, was double

that of those from Central America and the Caribbean (\$30,000) in 2000. The difference is reflected in the various patterns of adaptation and community organizing as discussed in the chapters in the volume (for examples, see Chapter 8 on Mexicans, Chapter 11 on Indians, and Chapter 12 on Cambodians).

### *Settlement Patterns*

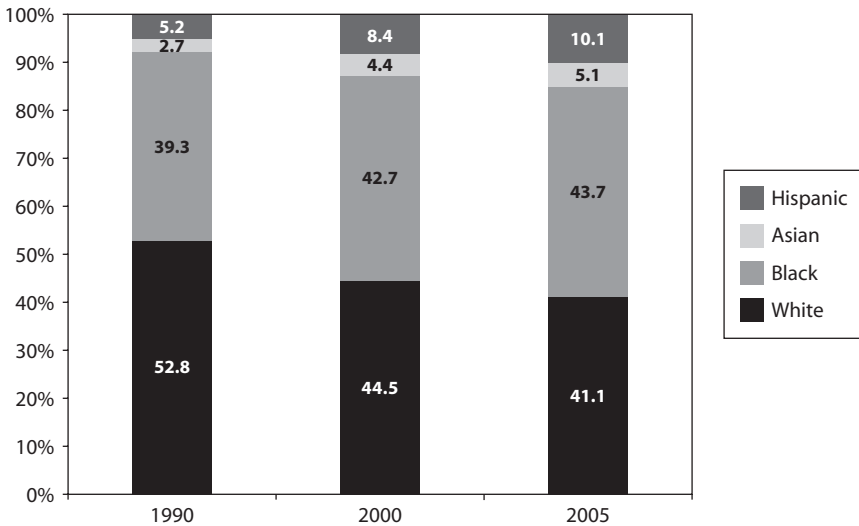
Settlement patterns of the foreign-born are equally diverse. While they have tended to concentrate in neighborhoods that traditionally attracted immigrants—South Philadelphia, Elmwood, the Far Northeast, and Olney—a growing number of them have also settled in higher-income neighborhoods in Center City. Together, these areas were home to 31 percent of Philadelphia’s foreign-born population in 2000, after seeing 83 percent growth in foreign-born population during the 1990s (Patusky and Ceffalio 2004).

Foreign-born newcomers also tended to congregate by nationality. As illustrated by the chapters in this volume, the Vietnamese and Cambodians have largely settled in South Philadelphia and Elmwood, Russians and Ukrainians in the Far Northeast, and Africans in Elmwood and West Philadelphia. Olney has long attracted a diverse group of immigrants, including Indians, Filipinos, Chinese, and those from the Caribbean and Latin America, and Center City has drawn a large number of professionals from diverse countries, including China, India, and the United Kingdom. Amid current inflows of migration to the city, some neighborhoods have undergone significant transformation. Rakhmiel Peltz illustrates in Chapter 2 that South Philadelphia, which traditionally attracted large numbers of Italian and Jewish immigrants to the city, has recently received newcomers from Vietnam, Cambodia, and elsewhere. Consequently, Peltz states, a series of ethnic successions have taken place in South Philadelphia, while Jewish communities have expanded and diversified into the northern areas of the city.

The patterns of residential concentration, however, have varied by country of origin. Generally, newcomers have been most likely to congregate among themselves when there is already a well-established ethnic community. Consequently, the Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Russians (Jews) are more concentrated than others, while the least concentrated are Britons and Germans (Patusky and Ceffalio 2004).

### *Impact of Immigration*

A growing volume of immigration of diverse backgrounds has had, and is likely to have, an impact on Philadelphia. In a report called “A Call to Action,” Gupta (2000) discusses various benefits of immigration, including the demographic, economic, and cultural contributions that immigrants make to the city. Immi-

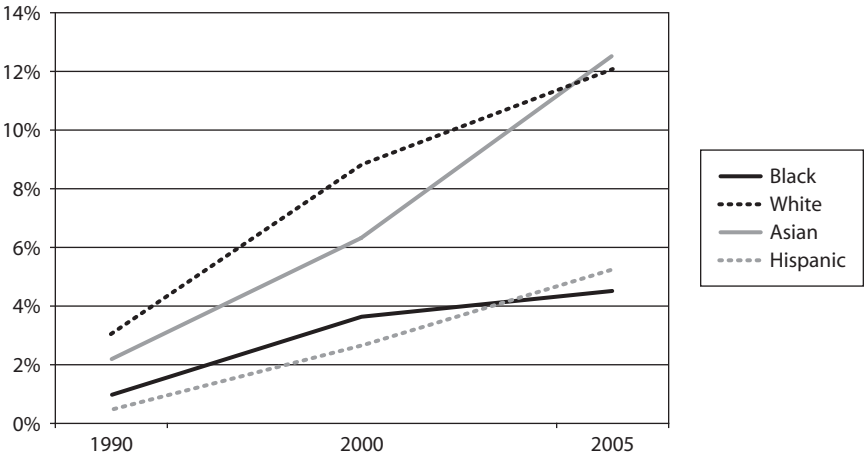


**FIGURE 1.5** Change in the racial/ethnic composition of the population in Philadelphia.  
 (Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey. Available at <http://www.census.gov>.)

grants have helped replenish the population exodus in many other old industrial cities in the nation, and so, he argues, they could also offset Philadelphia's continuous population decline. While Philadelphia's total population declined by 4.3 percent during the 1990s, the neighborhoods that received the most immigrants, as mentioned above, actually saw an increase of 4 percent in population (Patusky and Ceffalio 2004). Yet others (e.g., Goode and Schneider 1994) argue that the demographic impact of immigrants has been small due to their relatively small presence.

Immigrant advocates have also argued that immigration has contributed to the city's economic revitalization (e.g., Gupta 2000; Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians 2004b). In Chapter 10, Mary Johnson Osirim discusses how African immigrants of various nationalities and religious backgrounds have contributed to the economic revitalization of West Philadelphia by establishing businesses, engaging in transnational activities with their native countries in Africa, and by building coalitions with African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans in their neighborhoods.

More direct impact may yet be found on the racial and ethnic composition of the city's population. Today's newcomers, as seen in Figure 1.5, are mostly (66 percent) from Latin America and Asia. The number of Latin Americans and Asians has steadily increased, making up 15.6 percent of the city's population in 2005. Immigrants from Africa, though still relatively small in number, also grew rapidly, by 75 percent (from 9,175 to 16,085) between 2000 and 2005.

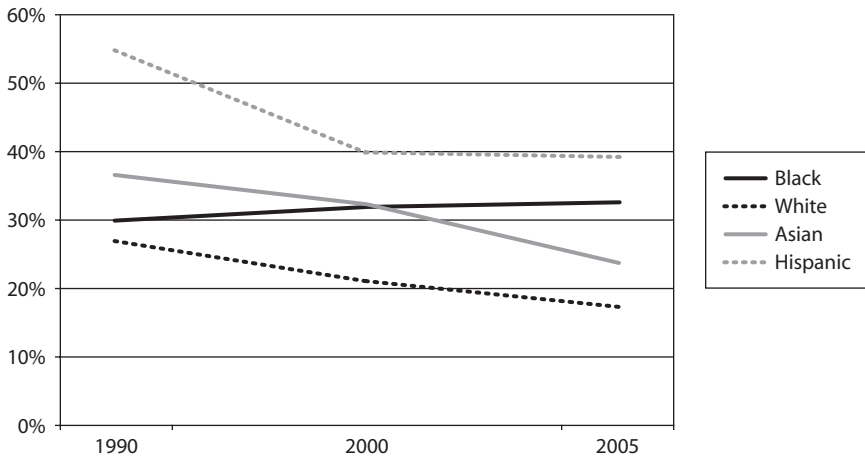


**FIGURE 1.6** Proportion of households making more than \$100,000 within each racial/ethnic group. (Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey. Available at <http://www.census.gov>.)

Meanwhile, Whites have continued to decline in number and percentage, and Blacks have surpassed Whites to become the city’s largest racial group. In short, Philadelphia’s population has become more diverse, and this is largely attributable to growing immigration in recent decades.

At the same time, immigration may also have contributed to the growing income disparity in the city. That is because foreign-born migrants today, as discussed earlier, are more heterogeneous than their native counterparts in their socioeconomic backgrounds. Citing previous research, Clark (2003) argues that immigration does contribute to increasing income inequality in the United States. While the precise impact of immigration on wages continues to be debated, immigrants seem to both reduce the wages of natives with low levels of education and push others upward in the occupational stratification system (Clark 2003).

In Philadelphia, as in the rest of the country, income disparities have grown in recent decades. Within each racial or ethnic group, the income distribution has become more skewed with a noticeable increase in high-income earners. The trend is most noticeable among Blacks where the earnings of the richest 20 percent increased over time (as in other groups) at the same time that the bottom 20 percent remained very poor, earning less than \$10,000 per household. Indeed, while the proportion of Black households making more than \$100,000 annually increased over time, the comparable figure for Black households making less than \$15,000 has also increased, albeit slowly (Figures 1.6 and 1.7). Given that, on average, foreign-born Blacks make more than native-born Blacks—the average household income of African-born immigrants, for



**FIGURE 1.7** Proportion of households making less than \$15,000 within each racial/ethnic group. (Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey. Available at <http://www.census.gov>.)

instance, was \$37,000, compared with \$27,000 among native Blacks—immigration may contribute to diversifying the socioeconomic profile of the Black population in the city.

The growing income disparity, along with increasing racial diversity, may also have contributed to the decreased level of segregation along racial/ethnic lines in the city. Although segregation, particularly between Blacks and Whites, has been consistently high during the past several decades, it has decreased in recent decades (Frey and Myers 2005; Massey and Denton 1993; Logan 2002).<sup>7</sup> In 1990, 78 percent of Blacks had to move in order to reach an even residential pattern between Blacks and Whites, but the rate decreased to 72 percent in 2000. Likewise, the average Black in the Philadelphia metropolitan area lived in a census tract that was 62 percent Black in 2000, a decrease by seven points from 1980. Racial segregation decreased in many other metropolitan areas, but Frey and Myers (2005) show that the rate of decline was greater in Philadelphia than in other major cities in the Northeast. This may, in part, be attributable to immigration as today's immigrants tend to settle in boundary areas between demarcated Black and White communities, and refugees, moreover, often settle in the heart of Black or White neighborhoods (Somekawa 1995). The growth in high-income earners among Blacks may also have contributed to racial desegregation, and Black high-income earners, as we have seen, are increasingly coming from abroad.

Much of the Philadelphia story described here echoes what is happening around the country. Immigrants are increasingly entering a divided society, and immigrants, in turn, shape these divisions. This reflects the fact that today's

immigrants are not only coming in the context of growing economic competition; they are also more diverse in their geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds compared to the turn-of-the-century immigrants who were largely European and uneducated. Manufacturing is no longer available as a major source of stable income, and the gap between rich and poor is growing.

Immigrants themselves cope with these challenges in various ways. As the chapters in this volume show, institution building and community support have always been an important strategy of adaptation. And today, immigrants increasingly resort to transnational connections. As described by several chapters in this volume, newcomers to Philadelphia actively maintain ties with their countries of origin and draw on these ties to establish businesses (see Chapter 10), negotiate their identities (see Chapter 9), and organize themselves (see Chapter 5) as a strategy to adapt in the new environment. The stories of immigrant lives presented in each chapter, we hope, will provide both a historical and comparative framework to understand how immigrant communities have shaped, and have been shaped by, the city over time and across groups.

## Presenting the Stories of Immigrant Philadelphia

The chapters in this volume cover immigrant populations that have had a major presence in Philadelphia over the past century. Among contemporary immigrant populations, we have strived to include those that are both rapidly growing (such as Mexicans, Indians, and Chinese) and representative of different regions and experiences (Cambodians, Haitians, Africans). While its coverage is in no way comprehensive (for instance, Koreans and Brazilians are not included), we nevertheless hope that the book provides a representative overview of immigrants' experiences over time in Philadelphia. Our contributors also represent diverse disciplines—anthropology, economics, education, history, linguistics, public health, psychology and sociology—making the book a truly interdisciplinary endeavor.

The chapters in this volume reveal the rich diversity and dynamics of the city's immigrant populations and communities. Not only was Philadelphia home to European immigrants who migrated from the old world to the new from the colonial period through the twentieth century, but it also witnessed the establishment of early twentieth century enclave communities among populations that are often most associated with post-1965 migration to the northeastern United States, such as Latinos. Despite the diversity of experiences that African, Asian, Caribbean, European, and Latino populations encountered in the Philadelphia region, there are some themes that unite these experiences across time and space, namely institutions and community development, identities, transnational ties, intra-group differences and inter-group interactions, and socioeconomic mobility. The book is organized around these themes.



The next section of this volume focuses on community formation and intra- (and inter-) ethnic relations, drawing on the experiences of Jewish, Italian, Puerto Rican (and other Latin American), and Chinese immigrants. These chapters explore the patterns of migration and community formation over a span of a century, highlighting the importance of historical continuity and change in understanding these processes. In Chapter 2, Rahkmiel Peltz examines the development of community and intra-group differences in the Jewish community from the late nineteenth century to the present. He focuses, in particular, on generational changes and transitions in major fraternal, ethnic, and social service institutions among successive waves of Jewish immigrants to the area—from early migrants in the 1880s, to Holocaust survivors in the 1940s and 1950s, to the Soviet Jews of the 1970s and 1980s, and the Israelis since the establishment of Israel.

Joan Saverino, in Chapter 3, discusses how Italian artisans in Chestnut Hill, a secondary area of settlement for this group, contributed to the built environment and material culture in Philadelphia. In her analysis, she explores the shifting boundaries of inter- and intra-ethnic social relations and the class and power dynamics embodied in relationships with co-ethnics and the elite Anglo population of Chestnut Hill.

Exploring the diversity of the early Latino community, Victor Vazquez-Hernandez, in Chapter 4, discusses the focal role played by religious and social service organizations in the Latino enclaves of Spring Garden, Southwark, and Northern Liberties. Organizations such as La Milagrosa, the Hispanic American Fraternal Association, the First Spanish Baptist Church, and the International Institute, through providing social services and sponsoring social events, helped consolidate the Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Mexicans, and other Latin Americans into a Pan-Latino community. Not only were immigrant organizations vital in the establishment of many ethnic communities, but they also contributed to the expansion of educational opportunities and early industrial development in the city.

In Chapter 5, Lena Sze indicates that despite the greater diversity within the Chinese population of Philadelphia—from the earlier Cantonese- or Toisan-speaking Chinese to the Fujianese of today—major religious and social service groups have united these populations and come together in the “Save Chinatown” movement. This movement, under the leadership of such institutions as the Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church and School and the Chinese Christian Church Center, have preserved Chinatown from the potential “wrecking balls” of developers who planned to expand a highway and create a stadium in their community. In the process, these religious organizations and others have forged a larger ethnic identity for the Chinese.

Chapters in Part II highlight the critical roles of institutions in the process of immigrant adaptation over time. Birte Pflieger, in Chapter 6, demonstrates

how the German Society of Pennsylvania, the oldest German immigrant aid organization in the nation, quickly became an advocate for German-speakers beginning in 1764. Like the Irish social clubs and the Catholic Church discussed by Noel Farley and Philip Kilbride (Chapter 7), the German Society assisted recent German immigrants in obtaining employment, health care, and legal advice, and provided financial assistance for food, housing, and transportation.

Farley and Kilbride, in Chapter 7, illustrate how Irish social clubs provided recent immigrants with assistance in finding jobs, while the Catholic Church provided education, health care, and family counseling. They further explore the establishment of the parochial school system and many noted Catholic colleges and universities by the Irish, whose significant contributions to urban education remain evident today.

Chapter 8, focuses on Mexicans, a group that has rapidly grown in number in the last decade and a half. In this chapter, Jennifer Atlas carefully documents this migration, focusing on critical issues facing many of these migrants today: health conditions and health care. Drawing on interviews with health professionals and some migrants, she examines the inadequate healthcare services that exist in Philadelphia's Mexican community as well as how national legislation affects access to health care for this population.

Part III of this collection explores identities and transnational ties, focusing on the migration of largely post-1965 immigrants from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. In Chapter 9, Garvey Lundy examines transnationalism among Haitian immigrants. Through interviewing and participant-observation among seventy Haitians in Philadelphia, he investigates the challenges to unity for this population given the problems of political development in Haiti and Haitians' ties to their home and host societies.

Transnationalism and the emergence of transnational identities are also critical issues in understanding contemporary immigrant groups. In Chapter 10, Mary Johnson Osirim explores the development of transnational and pan-African identities based on in-depth interviews with African entrepreneurs and leaders of community organizations. This population has succeeded in making important contributions to the revitalization of West Philadelphia due in part to the significant presence of African Americans in the city.

In Chapter 11, Rasika Chakravarthy and Ajay Nair argue that with migration to the Philadelphia area, Keralite Hindu nurses experience an increase in socioeconomic status relative to the declining occupational status of their husbands. At the same time, leadership of Nair community organizations serves as a vehicle through which men can regain some of the status they lost in the household and professional realms.

Finally, Ellen Skilton-Sylvester and Keo Chea-Young focus on the experiences of Cambodian migrants in Philadelphia. In contrast to relatively well educated Indian and African immigrants in the city, Cambodians are largely a dis-

advantaged and “invisible” group, Skilton-Sylvester and Chea-Young argue, and they examine why it is the case and how their “invisibility” shapes their adaptation patterns in the city.

Several chapters in this section also highlight the major role of institutions in the establishment of immigrant communities. Religious and social service organizations played a significant role in the development of many contemporary communities in this volume. Chakravarthy and Nair indicate that the Nair Society of the Delaware Valley, the Kerala Art and Literary Association of Philadelphia, and the Keralite Syrian Christians, among other groups, contributed to unity and community development among the Keralites; Mary Johnson Osirim discusses the major roles that the Coalition of African Communities—Philadelphia (AFRICOM) and the Mayor’s Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs played in the revitalization of West Philadelphia, and Skilton-Sylvester and Chea-Young illustrate that English as a second language (ESL) programs were central elements in the establishment of the Cambodian community. These, as well as many other institutions, not only strengthened ethnic communities, but they contributed to urban renewal and the transformation of Philadelphia from a largely Black-White venue to a more multicultural city.

Altogether, these stories show how immigrants have shaped Philadelphia and how they have adapted and fared in the city in which they have settled. Although immigrants’ experiences are diverse, depending on the kinds of skills they bring with them, the nature of existing communities, and the reception of the host society (Portes and Rumbaut 2005), there are commonalities they have shared throughout the centuries: the importance of community, institutions, and transnational ties, real or imagined. The chapters in this volume also show how central immigration has been to the city of Philadelphia—and that its significance will only increase in the future. Given the extremely heterogeneous nature of immigration today, immigrants will most likely affect, in some fundamental way, the city’s ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as racial segregation and economic disparity. Moreover, in the context of a globalized economy and a shrinking and ageing population, immigration is a key to the city’s survival and competitiveness. In figuring out how to attract immigrants—and particularly the kinds of immigrants the economy demands—it is critical to understand immigrants’ experiences in the city. We hope this volume will contribute to such understanding.

## Notes

1. They report that between 2000 and 2006, metropolitan Philadelphia’s immigrant population increased by 29 percent.

2. *Immigrants* (in the U.S.) legally refers to those who are admitted to the U.S. for lawful permanent residence under the provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Although all immigrants, by definition, are foreign-born, not all the foreign-born are

immigrants. The foreign-born population includes nonimmigrants, such as students, business personnel, and diplomats, who have been admitted to the U.S. for a temporary duration. Neither are all the foreign-born recent entrants. Some have spent many years in the U.S. and are naturalized U.S. citizens. In this chapter, however, we are using the terms *immigrant* and *foreign-born* interchangeably, as immigrants comprise most of the foreign-born population (New York City Department of City Planning Population Division 2004).

3. Comments provided by Noel Farley on an earlier version of this chapter.
4. Discussion of Philadelphia's mayoral race on Marty Moss-Coane's *Radio Times*, WHYY-FM, April 20, 2007.
5. We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer who suggested this and other points.
6. See Chapter 10 for an example of these proportions among African immigrants in Philadelphia.
7. This is reflected in two commonly used measures of racial segregation—the index of segregation (or the percentage of one group that would have to move to achieve an even residential pattern) and the index of isolation (which measures the percentage of the minority in a neighborhood where the average member of the minority group lives).

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