



**Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans  
and Colombians:  
A scan of needs of recent Latin American  
immigrants to the Boston area.**

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*The 2003 Public Policy Practicum Research Team*

Cover Art: South Face, Piers Park Pavillion, East Boston, Massachusetts. Photo by William P Reimann, 1999  
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# **Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Colombians A Scan of Issues Affecting Recent Latin American Immigrants to the Boston area**

## **Introduction**

The 2000 U.S. Census brought confirmation of the increase of the Latino<sup>1</sup> population and of the growing diversity of Latino national groups that now make this region their home. Latinos now number 428,729, a 55% increase over their numbers in 1990 (Table 1). In 30 years, the Latino population has increased six-fold, and from its initial concentrations in Springfield, Holyoke, and Boston its presence is now a fact across the Commonwealth.

Massachusetts Latinos are also showing increasing diversity, matching that of the Northeast region and exceeding that of the nation. At the national level, Mexicans have a dominance that dwarfs all other groups: 59% of all Latinos in the US counted by the Census are Mexican.<sup>2</sup> Puerto Ricans and Cubans, the next two largest groups, are many numerical steps behind. In the Northeast region, Puerto Ricans dominate but not in such an overwhelming way. They account for 40% of the region's Latinos; there is also a salient representation of Dominicans, Salvadorans, and Colombians. In Massachusetts, Puerto Ricans compose the largest group, accounting for 46% of the Latino population, followed by Dominicans, Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Colombians (Table 1).

The diversity of the Latino population in Massachusetts began to be visible during the 1980's and took frank hold in the 1990's. Puerto Ricans arrived in the region in large numbers after World War II and settled in Springfield, Boston, Holyoke, and Lawrence. Until 2000, Puerto Ricans made up the majority of the Latino population of the state. In fact, they continue to exhibit a healthy rate of growth: 36.4% in the last 10 years.

But in this period, groups of other Latin American origin have experienced even greater growth. Dominicans, Mexicans, and Central and South Americans have experienced rates of growth in the range of 60 to 70% in the last 10 years. Dominicans are the second largest group in the region, accounting for 11.6% of the Latino population. The growth of the Mexican population has also been significant, making this group the third largest in the region today.

### **A word on the accuracy of figures based on the U.S. Census....**

The history of the U.S. Census in undercounting minorities and, particularly hidden populations, is relevant to the confidence on the data presented in this report. Our study is examining a population that includes people who do not have legal status in the United States. This increases the likelihood of non-response to the Census and therefore of being undercounted. For a discussion of the implications of the undercount for the population in our study please see Appendix 1.

**Table 1. Population and Population Growth. Selected Hispanic or Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 1990–2000**

National Origin	1990		2000		Growth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Hispanic or Latino:</b>	275,859	100.0	428,729	100.0	152,870	55.4
<b>Mexican</b>	12,922	4.7	22,288	5.2	9,366	72.5
<b>Puerto Rican</b>	146,015	52.9	199,207	46.5	53,192	36.4
<b>Cuban</b>	7,621	2.8	8,867	2.1	1,246	16.3
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	30,177	10.9	49,913	11.6	19,736	65.4
<b>Central American</b>	23,884	8.7	38,317	8.9	14,433	60.4
<b>Guatemalan</b>	6953	2.50	12020	2.80	5,067	72.88
<b>Honduran</b>	3446	1.25	5689	1.33	2,243	65.09
<b>Nicaraguan</b>	723	0.26	782	0.18	59	8.16
<b>Panamanian</b>	1515	0.55	1465	0.34	-50	-3.30
<b>Salvadoran</b>	7260	2.63	17235	4.02	9,975	137.40
<b>Other Cen Am</b>	1819	0.66	1759	0.41	-60	-3.30
<b>South American</b>	21,423	7.8	28,036	6.5	6,613	30.9
<b>Argentinean</b>			2496	0.58		
<b>Bolivian</b>			704	0.16		
<b>Chilean</b>			1530	0.36		
<b>Colombian</b>	8864	3.21	14157	3.30	5,293	59.71
<b>Ecuadorian</b>	2349	0.85	3117	0.73	768	32.69
<b>Peruvian</b>	2950	1.07	3218	0.75	268	9.08
<b>Uruguayan</b>			829	0.51		
<b>Venezuelan</b>			2194	0.58		
<b>Other So Am</b>			7753	0.16		
<b>Other Hispanic or Latino</b>	33,817	12.3	73,752	19.1	48,284	142.8

Sources: US Census Bureau: 1990 Census Summary Tape File 1 (STF1) 100% Data; 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3 (STF3) Sample Data; 2000 Census Summary File 1 (SF1) 100% Data; 2000 Census Summary File 3 (SF3) Sample Data; and Census Summary File 4 (SF4) Sample Data.

Notes:

- (1) Figures for Central and South American nationalities in 1990 and 2000 come from sample data and may not match other figures or add to 100%.
- (2) These figures do not include populations from non-Spanish-speaking Latin American countries, whose numbers are numerous in this state as well. For example, the 2000 U.S. Census counted 30,583 Brazilians and 80,784 persons from the West Indies, of which 43,576 are Haitians.
- (3) In 1990, the Census offered figures for only 3 South American national groups: Colombians, Ecuadorians, and Peruvians. All were available in 2000.
- (4) The 2000 US Census counted no persons from Paraguay in Massachusetts and therefore the country is not listed on the table.
- (5) The high numbers listed under Other Hispanic and Latinos in both 1990 and 2000 may include persons who identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino without listing a specific Latin American nationality, Latin Americans and others not included among the listed nationalities (Brazilians, for example), and persons from Spain.
- (6) The Census does not include Brazilians among the Hispanic or Latino groups. However, they are Latin Americans living in Massachusetts. In 2000, there were 30,583 persons of Brazilian ancestry living in the state.

Among Central Americans, the highest rates of population growth have taken place among Salvadorans (137%), Guatemalans (73%), and Hondurans (65%). Salvadorans are the 4th largest Latino national group in the region. Among South Americans, by far the largest group comes from Colombia, the fifth largest Latino group in the region.

As is true of the overall Latino population, the growth in the population of these groups is due primarily to immigration. The 2000 U.S. Census reported that 31.16% of Latinos are immigrants, compared to 12.17% in the general population (Table 2). This rate would likely be much higher once the Census undercount, particularly of hidden populations such as undocumented<sup>3</sup> immigrants, is taken into account. The percentage of each Latino national group that is foreign-born varies widely from, for example, 35% among Mexicans to 67% among Dominicans. The rate of foreign-born for Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and Colombians is 75% (Table 2). The immigrant experience — the dislocation, the concerns over status, the process of integration and acculturation — is of continuing and growing significance to our understanding not only of the experience of these groups but also of the general Latino population in Massachusetts.

**Table 2. Immigrants as Share of Population. Total Population and Population of Latino National Groups with Highest Numbers of Immigrants Living in Massachusetts, 2000**

	<b>Immigrant</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	12.17%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	31.16%
<b>Mexican</b>	34.93%
<b>Dominican</b>	67.57%
<b>Guatemalan</b>	75.66%
<b>Honduran</b>	72.81%
<b>Salvadoran</b>	78.88%
<b>Colombian</b>	78.12%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Table 3. Immigrants as Percentage of all Massachusetts Immigrants and All Latino Immigrants. Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Of MA immigrants</b>	<b>Of Latino immigrants</b>
<b>All MA Immigrants</b>	772983	100%	
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	133161	17.23%	100%
<b>Mexican</b>	7405	0.96%	5.56%
<b>Dominican</b>	36050	4.66%	27.07%
<b>Guatemalan</b>	9094	1.18%	6.83%
<b>Honduran</b>	4142	0.54%	3.11%
<b>Salvadoran</b>	13595	1.76%	10.21%
<b>Colombian</b>	11059	1.43%	8.30%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

Newcomers and their adaptation are not new phenomena in Massachusetts. Immigrants have been part of the growth and development of the state for more than a century, contributing widely to its economic and social development.<sup>4</sup> The 2000 Census reported 772,983 foreign-born persons, up from 573,733 in 1990, for a growth of 35% in the immigrant population of the state.<sup>5</sup> Latin American immigrants from different countries account for 17% of all foreign-born in Massachusetts in 2000 (Table 3), up from 10% in 1990.<sup>6</sup> Among Latinos, the largest number of immigrants come from the Dominican Republic (27%) followed by Salvadorans (10.21%) and Colombians (8.3%) (Table 3).

Research on Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Colombians residing in other areas of the country underscore the violence and trauma particular to their process of migration, the weight of family reunification after war and natural disaster as a factor in the immigration of Central Americans, the over-representation of undocumented immigrants in all the groups, the weight of entrepreneurship among the economic activity of Colombians, and the strong organizational capacity of Salvadorans.<sup>7</sup> This report underscores most of these findings and adds new information about the characteristics of these groups in Massachusetts.

**Methodology and structure of this report.** The study was undertaken as part of a Practicum in Applied Research by students and faculty in the PhD Program in Public Policy in collaboration with Centro Presente, a service and advocacy organization serving new Latino immigrants in the Boston area. The project sought to (1) identify the characteristics of these populations and (2) conduct of scan of their needs, specifically in the areas of immigration, work and employment, housing, education, and social support.<sup>8</sup>

The study relied on several sources of data: (1) the 2000 U.S. Census Summary Files 1, 3, and 4, other research studies and reports about this population, and administrative records from Centro Presente; (2) interviews with 13 Salvadoran, Honduran, Guatemalan, and Colombian community leaders and 16 professionals providing services to these groups in Chelsea, Cambridge, Boston, and Somerville; and (3) three group interviews with constituents of Centro Presente that included persons from each of the national groups as well as persons with a variety of immigration statuses. A total of 25 persons participated in the groups. The processes used to select and conduct the individual and group interviews are fully described in Appendix 2.

This report is divided into three sections. The first presents the issues related to the migration of these groups and their settlement in the Boston area. It includes background to their migration, the methods of entry and the subsequent immigration status, and the places of settlement in the Boston area. A second section focuses on the comparison of the basic socio-demographic characteristics of these immigrant groups with those of the overall Latino population. Both of these sections rely on data from the 2000 U.S. Census as well as interview and focus group data. A final section addresses the specifics of the scan conducted in this project and reports on needs in the areas of immigration, work, education, housing, and social support including a summary of recommendations made by community leaders and providers.

## I. Migration to and Settlement in Boston

The presence of Central American and Colombian immigrants in the Boston area responds to the violence and economic upheavals in their countries of origin, according to interviews conducted with community leaders and group interviews with the immigrants themselves. This perspective echoes the findings from other areas of the country that have pointed to the war in Central America in the 1980, the process of restructuring of Latin American economies, and the violence of the last decade in Colombia as important factors in the migration from these regions.

In this section we explore the background for the migration of these groups, the specific ways in which they enter the United States, and the implications of these entrances to their immigration status. The immigration status immigrants have upon entry — be it as permanent residents, refugees, or as undocumented workers — has a profound effect on their opportunities for employment and access to public services. We also explore here the places where these groups have settled in Massachusetts.

### **The Central Americans: The Guatemalans, the Hondurans, and the Salvadorans**

Economic factors have historically affected the migration patterns of the population of Central American countries. Often, during economic crisis in one country, workers would move temporarily to another to work in agriculture. Emigration was seen as an answer to economic hardship, and in some cases, as a way for a country to rid itself of unwanted and possibly threatening workers. Migrations that started out to be seasonal became semi-permanent and later permanent. Men usually migrated alone through the plantations in Central America, leaving their families at home.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1960's and 1970's, the economic situation in Central America deteriorated profoundly. The landed oligarchies controlled the politics and economics of the countries, placing violent military governments in control as opposition from the population grew stronger.<sup>10</sup> With the success of the Cuban revolution in 1959, the United States was quick to support dictatorial rule in all Central American countries to stop the perceived spread of communism. By the 1970's human rights abuses in these countries, perpetrated by military governments backed by Central American oligarchies and the U.S. government, led to insurgent movements in several Central American countries. In 1979 the tension reached a boiling point in both Central America and the United States when the Sandinista rebels took control of Nicaragua. Full-scale civil war erupted in El Salvador, causing turmoil in the country, and the government attempted to quell the insurgency with strong military intervention, especially directed to stop guerilla activity in rural areas.<sup>11</sup> In Guatemala stability came with the cost of continuous military action against indigenous populations that had been demanding an investigation of human rights abuses. The military massacred leaders of the indigenous people and forced others out of their villages and destroyed them. The United States' policy under the Reagan administration was to provide support to authoritarian military governments in the region and defeat the Sandinista government at all costs. By the mid 1980's, considerable opposition had developed in the United States for this position, some of it in response to the

assassination of religious figures in the region. One notable opponent was Massachusetts Congressman Joseph Moakley, who openly questioned the United States' support of these military-controlled governments and the human rights violations they perpetrated.

The wars in Central America led to a flood of refugees who fled for their lives or had to leave their country because of economic instability.<sup>12</sup> An estimated 300,000 persons died in the wars in Central America between 1978 and the 1990's.<sup>13</sup> Close to 600,000 were displaced in El Salvador alone, becoming refugees internally or in Mexico or other countries in Central America.<sup>14</sup> The political turmoil that swept the region for much of the 1980's led to a sharp increase in migration to the United States.

Prior to the 1980's, Central American migration to the United States showed a marked bi-polarity. The majority were upper- and middle-class persons who could afford to travel and relocate. A minority were single women hired to do personal services in the U.S. as domestics. Before the 1980's the profile of Salvadorans in the U.S., for example, differed significantly from that of the population in El Salvador: they were more educated and more representative of urban dwellers.<sup>15</sup>

In the 1980's a dramatic shift emerged in the migration pattern. The social turmoil caused by civil war changed the reason for migration, as political not economic reasons became the cause for the movement of people from the region. *"When I think of the Salvadorans who came during the war, expressed a Salvadoran activist, "many ...were coming from rural areas that had gone through very significant problems. I can think of specific places where people witnessed mass killings. I can think of people who were threatened by both sides"* (25pgll). This also changed the demographics of the immigrant population. Whole families fled their homelands. Sometimes only children came. Other times one or both parents came and left their children to live with other relatives back home. No clear pattern can be demonstrated. Some members stayed in Central America or Mexico and many, many more came to the United States. But what was clear was that this new migration involved much broader class and occupational sectors of these countries: peasants and workers had now joined professionals and domestics in the United States.<sup>16</sup>

By the 1990's the fierce aggression of the war had subsided in Central America leaving behind tremendous economic upheaval. Central American nations came under pressure to address the economic crisis through broad structural transformations that promoted privatization of resources and redefined the role of governments.<sup>17</sup> The results have been decreased opportunities and lessened possibilities for the reduction of poverty, for increased equity, and for social and economic development.<sup>18</sup> There was no longer a war, but the living conditions had severely deteriorated. *"Unemployment was one of the biggest problems,"* said the activist from El Salvador, *"people were displaced and needed to find a place to live, a job, ways to have a decent living"* (25pgll). With a significant community already in the U.S., coming north had been established as a solution to these hardships. The search for work and the need to reunify families separated during the war fueled a new immigration, solidifying both the path north of the migration stream and the class diversity of its makeup.<sup>19</sup> Many came to join their families already here from their exodus during the war; many others came to find work in order to help the family they were leaving behind.

## The Colombians

Experts on the Colombian migration to the United States point to three waves of migration.<sup>20</sup> The first, which corresponds to the period between 1950 and 1970, resulted from

### **In their own words....**

*In the town where I lived, only those with an adventurous spirit had the curiosity or courage to migrate to the U.S.... they would say "I am going to migrate to the north — to the 'newyores'" [meaning New York]. This created an environment where people who lived in New York would come to Colombia for the Christmas Holidays. As the other people in town would see them return, it made them want to migrate to have a better life... Many middle class people came for the opportunity to attend college in the U.S., and for the knowledge and new experiences they would gain by coming. They could say "I got my education in the U.S.": there is something in our culture that considers this valuable.*

*...But the factors that push Colombian people to migrate have changed.... When the violence began to spread to urban areas, to reach people's doors, towns, and cities, there are new reasons to migrate such as, security, socio-economic, kidnapping. Now everyone migrates — from professionals to uneducated people. Young people when they realize that they have no future in Colombia, that they can lose their lives, they leave the country no matter their age or social status.*

*Colombians go wherever they can or wherever the doors are open for them to migrate. Now even those people with resources, no longer have access to U.S. visas beyond a tourist visa, which means that many migrate without visas. [When they get here] they are in the same unauthorized situation as other immigrants with lower socio-economic status. (O3mull, a Colombian leader living in Boston)*

a civil war known as *La Violencia* during which 200,000 persons died. The migration involved all social classes, but lower and lower-middle classes prevailed in a migration composed largely of young men escaping political turmoil. This changed somewhat at the end of this period, when a more normal situation prevailed in Colombia, and those who sought to migrate to the U.S. were primarily middle-and upper-class men seeking education or economic opportunities. This period was short-lived, though, as it yielded in the 1980's to drug-related violence in Colombia and a somewhat different wave of immigrants. Colombians, again mostly middle- and upper-middle-class men and their families, left their country in spite of relative economic prosperity to escape the widespread escalation of violence. Migration during this period came most frequently from those areas of the country affected by the drug violence, such as Barranquilla. The third wave, which is still ongoing, began in the mid-1990's and again responds to violence. This time violence results from the large increases in murder and crimes of all types that resulted from the almost total collapse of social institutions, such as the criminal justice system, as a result of corruption.<sup>21</sup> In a study of this wave of migrants in Miami, Colombians gave three main reasons for coming to the U.S.: fear of the general violence in Colombia; the feeling that they could live more securely in the United States; and a sense that there are no solutions to Colombia's political and economic problems.<sup>22</sup>

Migrants in this current wave come from throughout the country, as the insecurity spreads through Colombian society. At first it was largely a middle- and upper-middle-class phenomenon, although an increasing number of workers and peasants are also arriving now in the U.S. Now most Colombians come with their whole families, including children and the elderly.

In sum, war, violence, and the resulting trauma and economic upheaval provide the fuel that starts the migration north for Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Colombians. Family reunification sustains the flow that has built these groups' settlements in the Boston region.

## Method of Entry and Immigration Status

It has been well documented in the literature that the way immigrants enter the U.S. is a fundamental linchpin in their subsequent process of economic and social incorporation.<sup>23</sup> For example, compare the social and economic experience of professional immigrants from Chile, who enter the U.S. under sponsorship of corporations because of their specific skills, with that of a professional from Colombia who leaves his country because of the violence and arrives in the U.S. undocumented. Or compare the experience of a refugee arriving from Cuba and receiving immediate refugee status upon arrival with that of a Salvadoran seeking asylum while undocumented in the U.S. For most immigrants, the immediate purposes of the migration are to improve their economic situation and to reunify with family; these goals are met under almost all circumstances. It is the long-range outcome in the U.S. for the immigrants and their children that is closely tied to the policies under which a person enters.

Among Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Colombians, there is great diversity in the method of entry, both among the groups and within the groups themselves. Therefore, there is also diversity in the types of status immigrants in these groups possess. We begin this discussion reviewing the ways members of our four groups commonly enter the U.S. and the status that derives from these types of entry (Table 4). Immigrants who arrive in the U.S. with **a permanent legal residency** arrive legally by qualifying for one of the preferences available in immigration law. These preferences include family reunification (with several categories of relationships), employment, investment, international adoptions, beneficiaries of the diversity lottery, and those designated refugees or asylees who have been in the US for at least a year, among others. These persons usually arrive with residency status and full capacity to work. Sponsors of immigrants applying for residency under this rubric must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents themselves and, after 1996, prove that they can support their relative at 125% above the federal poverty line. U.S. citizens can sponsor their husband or wife, their unmarried and married children, their siblings, and their parents. Persons who are not yet

**Table 4. Immigration Statuses Common among new Colombian, Guatemalan, Honduran, and Salvadoran Immigrants**

Status	To which group does this status apply?
<b>Permanent legal residency</b>	ALL
<i>Permission to permanently live and work in the United States.</i>	
<b>Undocumented immigrant</b>	ALL
<i>In the U.S. without the permission or authorization of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.</i>	
<b>Temporary Protected Status (TPS)</b>	Salvadorans and Hondurans
<i>Temporary immigration status granted to eligible nationals of designated countries. -</i>	
<b>Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA)</b>	Salvadorans and Guatemalans
<i>Persons benefited by the NACARA law and waiting determination of asylum application.</i>	

### **In their own words....**

*I walked from Honduras to LA. I didn't use a coyote; I did it alone. (#2.4)*

*Smuggling immigrants into the US is one of the most profitable businesses there are. ... People from Guatemala pay three thousand dollars just to be brought through all of those channels into the US. ... people over there don't have the money. Sometimes they mortgage their homes with this kind of predatory lender and they give the title of any kind of property over there in order to get the money. ... By the time they get here, they are already in debt. (07rkll, a Guatemalan leader from Boston)*

citizens (permanent residents) can only sponsor their spouse and their unmarried children. Persons in this category, after 5 years, can become U.S. citizens.

Most immigrants arrive in the U.S. in this category, including many members from all four groups studied here. Many have become U.S. residents through the different categories of family reunification visas, through work employment visas, or as a result of successful applications for refugee or asylum status. Many of these persons cross the U.S. border after traveling in an airplane or a car, without great undue hardships.

A second set of immigrants live in the U.S. **without legal authorization (often referred to as "undocumented" immigrants)**. These immigrants may have overstayed a tourist, student, or work visa or may have crossed or been smuggled through the U.S. border. The Office of Immigration Statistics of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (formerly the Office of Policy and Planning of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the U.S. Department of Justice) estimated that there were 7 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. in January 2000.<sup>24</sup> Mexico is by far the largest source of undocumented immigration; but it is followed by El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Honduras, and China,<sup>25</sup> in that order, which places our four groups among the most likely to have high numbers of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. California is far and away the state with the largest undocumented population: the INS estimates that about one third of all the undocumented immigrants live in that state. The INS estimates that in January 2000, there were 87,000 undocumented persons in Massachusetts, up from an estimate of 53,000 1990.<sup>26</sup> But most persons knowledgeable about immigration issues interviewed for this report consider that this greatly underestimates the undocumented immigrant population presently residing in Massachusetts.

Family reunification and economic hardship were frequently mentioned by interviewees and focus group members as reasons for entering the country without authorization. Although U.S. citizens can make a claim to have family members admitted to the U.S., there are often very long waits for visas, especially for extended family members. The situation for families of U.S. residents who are not yet U.S. citizens, the most common category among legal immigrants in our four groups, is even more restricted. Family reunification, according to leaders and immigration experts interviewed for this study, is a significant factor in the numbers of undocumented persons among immigrants from these four groups living in the Boston area.

In the case of the Central Americans, advocacy efforts and the support of their countries of origin have led to special immigration programs which provide avenues for legalization or for obtaining permits to work in the U.S. legally for undocumented persons from these groups. These programs tend to diminish the number of undocumented migrants. But in the case of the Colombians, there are currently no options for immigrating to the U.S. aside from the limited number of permanent residency visas awarded to that country every year. Therefore, a

large percentage of the new immigrants from Colombia who are currently in Massachusetts are here undocumented.

Some persons who arrived in the U.S. undocumented may qualify for **Temporary Protected Status (TPS)**. Persons in this situation are not considered immigrants by the U.S. Government, and are authorized to be in the U.S. because the U.S. Congress has granted them temporary protection. This status is awarded to groups when the Attorney General finds that conditions in a particular country pose a danger to personal safety due to armed struggle or an environmental disaster.<sup>27</sup> This was made possible under provisions of the Immigration Act of 1990. Grants of TPS are initially made for periods of 6 to 18 months and may be extended depending on the situation in the country of origin. Deportation proceedings are suspended against persons from these countries while they are in TPS. Persons from groups granted TSP are allowed to stay and work legally in the US until the designated period expires. From our four groups, persons from El Salvador and Honduras are eligible for TPS<sup>28</sup> if they arrived before February 12, 2001 and December 20, 1998, respectively; those who have arrived after these dates are not eligible.

Obtaining a designation of temporary protection does not lead to the award of permanent residency; it only provides protection from deportation and a work permit, both valid only as long as the program exists. Most persons interviewed were thankful to have TPS but understood clearly its limitations. When the Attorney General terminates a country's TPS designation, beneficiaries return to the same immigration status they had prior to TPS or to any status that they may have acquired while registered for TPS. Therefore immigrants with this type of status live in a sort of limbo, fraught with uncertainty and constant legal and bureaucratic maneuvers that expose them to abuse and exploitation.

Other persons who arrive in the U.S. undocumented may qualify for country-specific adjustments. Two Central American groups — Guatemalans and Salvadorans — qualify for the **Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act 1997 (NACARA)**. This program suspends the deportation of certain Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and nationals of the former Soviet bloc countries who were part of an asylum program and are in the U.S. undocumented. The program allows them to apply for asylum under more lenient rules, making it a route to legal residency for these groups. Members of these groups must have applied for asylum before April 1990 or have applied for TPS, and must have arrived in the U.S. before the end of 1990. Qualifying to apply for NACARA means that a person can go about his/her life with the expectation of eventually becoming a legal resident of the United States, with all the implications this status has for the immigrant and his/her family. But the process is long, often 5 to 7 years, more likely longer if one takes into account the time the applicants usually spend under TPS. In the U.S., about 200,000 Salvadorans and 50,000 Guatemalans are eligible for NACARA.<sup>29</sup>

A great concern of the undocumented immigrant in applying for the TPS and NACARA is that they must provide personal information about themselves — such as addresses and places of employment — to the immigration authorities, before they are assured that they will be covered by these programs. Non-renewal or denial of an application means immediate return to undocumented status and/or deportation, so some do not apply, even when eligible, because they feel that it places them at great risk, in the event that their application is denied. The uncertainty in the case of the TPS is even higher because it depends on yearly agreements between the U.S. government and the government of the country of origin. A Honduran activist working on immigration issues explained:

*The government of [the country of origin of the immigrant group] has to submit a proposal to the U.S. government every year indicating that the economic*

*situation in that country does not have the capacity to absorb those that would arrive from the U.S. after being deported. We cannot assure the agreements will continue to happen indefinitely, because we don't know what will be the attitude of the U.S. government.*<sup>30</sup> (02mull)

#### **In their own words....**

*Imagine, for example someone with no documentation, that has to accept any type of work, that is constantly afraid of being found out.... The TPS changes everything for this person. Now this same person can get a Workers permit, a Social Security Card, a driver's license. This allows them to find better jobs also the assurance that they can stand up for their rights, to provide more freedom to their families; to feel like they can walk freely on the streets, also the assurance that now they can be among the public [general population] and also attend public events. The TPS is an tool or key that opens doors for immigrants, although it is something temporary it is a break and the freedom to breathe for 18 months at least.*

*But the TPS is also a vulnerable process for immigrants. For example there are many "Lawyers" and "Notary Publics" that have immigrants applying for the TPS, paying them high fees to "prepare" them for the TPS, without any assurance that their TPS application was filed or that this planning or so called preparation will guarantee them a TPS. This type of non-legitimate business has abused the Salvadoran community. (04mull, a Colombian activist working on immigration and labor issues in Boston).*

A variety of immigration statuses coexist within these groups and even within families. For persons other than U.S. permanent residents, immigration is a reality that must be managed on a daily basis. The immigrant with TPS, for example, must be vigilant when it comes to the bewildering paperwork that is involved, as one small error can mean the difference between staying in the United States and being deported. In other cases, undocumented parents may not demand services to which their U.S.-born children are entitled because of fear that their undocumented status will be discovered. In all cases, immigration status — with its consequences for immigrants' daily lives — is an ever-present issue in the lives of members of these groups.

For many Latinos, the method of entry — the specific immigration policy that receives them and the ultimate status with which he or she has to live in the U.S. — in many ways sets the boundaries for the opportunities and the choices available for these groups. Work, access to public services, and education are affected by the status of the immigrant. By far the most precarious of all statuses is that of the **undocumented immigrant**. Being undocumented affects:

- where immigrants work and the working conditions to which they are exposed;
- the level of exploitation both in housing and in employment to which they are exposed when unscrupulous employers and landlords take advantage of the immigrants' fear of discovery
- their ability to obtain a drivers' license
- their ability to qualify for all social benefits. In Massachusetts, undocumented immigrants can send their children to public school and will receive emergency health care from hospitals with free care pools, but that is all.
- their participation in public services even when eligible. Although the American-born children of the undocumented are eligible for all benefits, including food stamps and TANF, participation in these services on the part of the undocumented is very low. Fear of discovery is a barrier to the use of services by these families.<sup>31</sup>

- their ability to apply for federal college financial aid which is the basis for most financial aid in higher education. This makes public higher education inaccessible to most and private higher education accessible only with financial aid packages that do not include federal funding, something that happens very rarely.

## Settlement of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Colombians in Greater Boston

Large numbers of Central Americans began arriving in the Boston area in the 1980's, in the midst of the war in their countries of origin. Massachusetts was not a port of entry for these groups; much larger settlements are present in other states (Table 5).<sup>32</sup> A key factor for Massachusetts becoming a destination for Central American immigrants was that in 1984 Cambridge became a sanctuary for Salvadoran refugees. The Old Cambridge Baptist Church and the American Friends Service Committee assumed the lead in sponsoring refugees to the Boston Area. In 1985 the Cambridge Peace Commission proposed and the Cambridge City Council passed a resolution that no city employee would ask questions about the citizenship or immigration status of any city resident. In 1987 Cambridge became involved in a Sister City Program and agreed to be a sister city with San Jose Las Flores in El Salvador. The sanctuary status in Cambridge influenced other cities to become more aware of the refugees in the area. Then Governor Michael Dukakis, responding to flows from Central America and Southeast Asia, established first a refugee advisory council in 1983 and later a refugee policy for Massachusetts.<sup>33</sup> By 1990, there were 7,260 Salvadorans living in Massachusetts, most in the Cambridge/Boston area (Table 1).<sup>34</sup>

With an established Salvadoran community already in the region, other Central American groups began to settle here. Prior to the 1980's, most Guatemalans and Hondurans in the region came here to serve as domestics in upper-class homes.<sup>35</sup> But in the 1980's, 250,000 Guatemalans left their country, as a violent civil war racked the countryside. They came to this region on their way to Canada, which offered them asylum, and many remained here as the sanctuary movement in the region made their stay more feasible.<sup>36</sup> By 1990, close to 7,000 Guatemalans had settled in Boston and in the cities and towns in the Southeast of the state; and 3,446 Hondurans had settled in Massachusetts, most of them living in the Cambridge/Boston area and (Table 1).

**Table 5. States with Largest Populations of Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Colombians, U.S., 2000**

Guatemalans U.S.: 480,665		Hondurans U.S.: 282,852		Salvadorans U.S.: 817,336		Colombians U.S.: 509,872	
State	%	State	%	State	%	State	%
California	44.0	Florida	18.7	California	44.0	Florida	30.9
New York	6.9	California	16.5	Texas	12.4	New York	21.9
Florida	6.7	New York	15.3	New York	9.4	New Jersey	13.7
Texas	5.4	Texas	11.9	Virginia	6.7	California	6.9
New Jersey	4.2	New Jersey	6.6	Maryland	5.1	Texas	4.3
Illinois	4.2	Louisiana	4.0	New Jersey	3.5	<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Georgia	2.7	N. Carolina	3.7	Florida	2.9	Connecticut	2.4
<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>2.7</b>	Virginia	3.4	<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>2.3</b>	Illinois	2.2

Source: Migration Policy Institute, <http://www.migrationinformation.org>

Colombians have lived in the Boston area since the 1970's when, attracted by higher education institutions and hospitals in the area, students and professionals began to come to Boston. Many returned to their country of origin after several years. More permanent residents from Colombia began to arrive in the 1980's. As drug violence struck the country, middle-class Colombians began to settle in Boston. By 1990, about 9,000 Colombians lived in Massachusetts and they were the largest group of South Americans living in the state (Table 1). About a quarter of them lived in the Boston area.

The 2000 Census showed that Salvadorans, Hondurans, Guatemalans, and Colombians continue to settle in their traditional areas, although subtle changes are taking place in the settlement patterns of these groups. The Boston area and, particularly, Boston and Chelsea continue to have the largest concentration of Central Americans and Colombians in the state. In the City of Boston, for example, these groups are more densely concentrated than the

**Table 6. Massachusetts Cities and Towns and Boston neighborhoods with the largest concentrations of Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Colombians. 2000**

Guatemalan		Honduran		Salvadoran		Colombian	
<b>Massachusetts Cities and Towns</b>							
<b>MA Total = 11,437</b>		<b>MA Total = 5125</b>		<b>MA Total = 15,900</b>		<b>MA Total = 12,788</b>	
<b>City/ Town</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>City/ Town</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>City/ Town</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>City/ Town</b>	<b>%</b>
Boston	22.3	Boston	35.6	Boston	33.5	Boston	31.8
Lynn	12.6	Chelsea	30.9	Chelsea	17.1	Lowell	9.1
Chelsea	10.3	Somerville	2.0	Somerville	13.1	Chelsea	5.2
<b>Boston Neighborhoods</b>							
<b>Boston Total = 2,554</b>		<b>Boston Total = 1,822</b>		<b>Boston Total = 5,333</b>		<b>Boston Total = 4,065</b>	
<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>%</b>
Allston/Brighton	27.2	Roxbury	22.5	East Boston	74.5	East Boston	52.0
East Boston	22.2	So Dorchester	19.9	Allston/Brighton	8.6	Roxbury	27.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Summary File 3 Sample Data

**Table 7. Immigrants as Share of the Population of Selected Latino National Groups, Selected Massachusetts Cities, 2000**

	<b>Boston %</b>	<b>Chelsea %</b>	<b>Somerville %</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	25.8	36.12	29.3
<b>All Hispanic or Latino</b>	42.9	48.0	61.9
<b>Guatemalan</b>	73.0	75.6	NA
<b>Honduran</b>	71.0	79.0	NA
<b>Salvadoran<sup>1</sup></b>	80.0	78.9	78.8
<b>Colombian</b>	81.0	75.6	NA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

Note 1: Salvadorans in Cambridge have the largest proportion of immigrants of all Salvadoran communities. The proportion of immigrants is 88.6%.

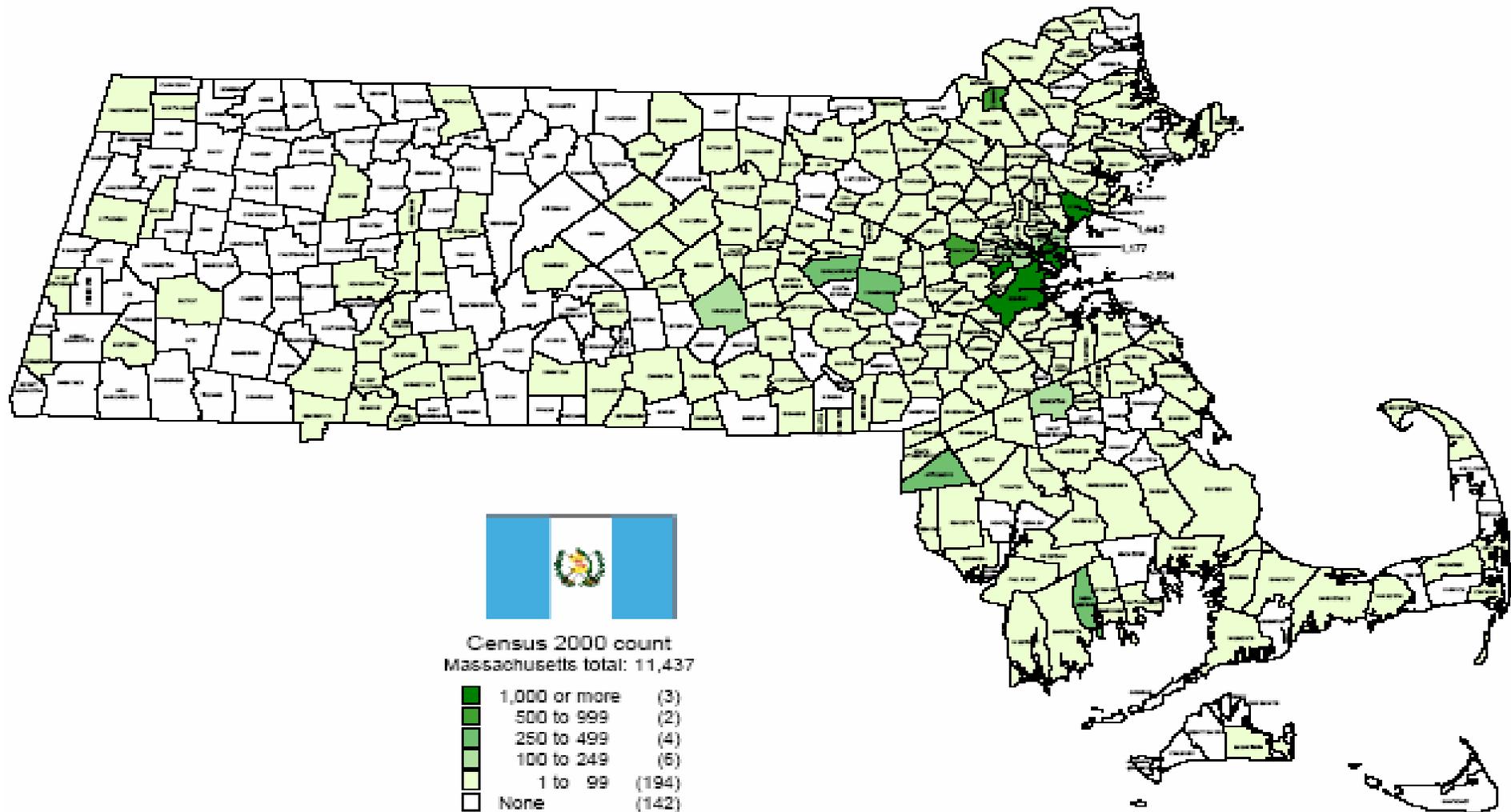
overall Latino population: 18% of all Latinos live in Boston while a full 30% of Central Americans live in the city. Boston and Chelsea are among the top three areas of concentration for each the four groups (Table 6).

About one third of Massachusetts Colombians, Salvadorans, and Hondurans and one fifth of the Guatemalans live in the city. East Boston is by far the neighborhood with the largest settlement of these groups, particularly Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Colombians. Allston / Brighton is also an area of concentration for Guatemalans and Salvadorans, but particularly the latter. Roxbury houses about one quarter of the Colombians and Hondurans living in Boston. (Table 6).

In contrast, Cambridge appears to be losing primacy as an area of high concentration for Central American groups. Between 1990 and 2000, the Salvadoran population in Cambridge declined by 23% (from 699 to 567), while the state's Salvadoran population increased by 68.7%. Respondents pointed to the abolition of rent control and the subsequent increase in the cost of housing in Cambridge as a factor in this change. Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 show the geographic distribution of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Colombians across the Commonwealth, as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census. The 2000 Census also gives indication that these populations have moved from areas contiguous to Boston. Lynn and Lowell have become relatively strong areas of concentration for Guatemalans and Colombians, appearing among the top three areas for these groups.

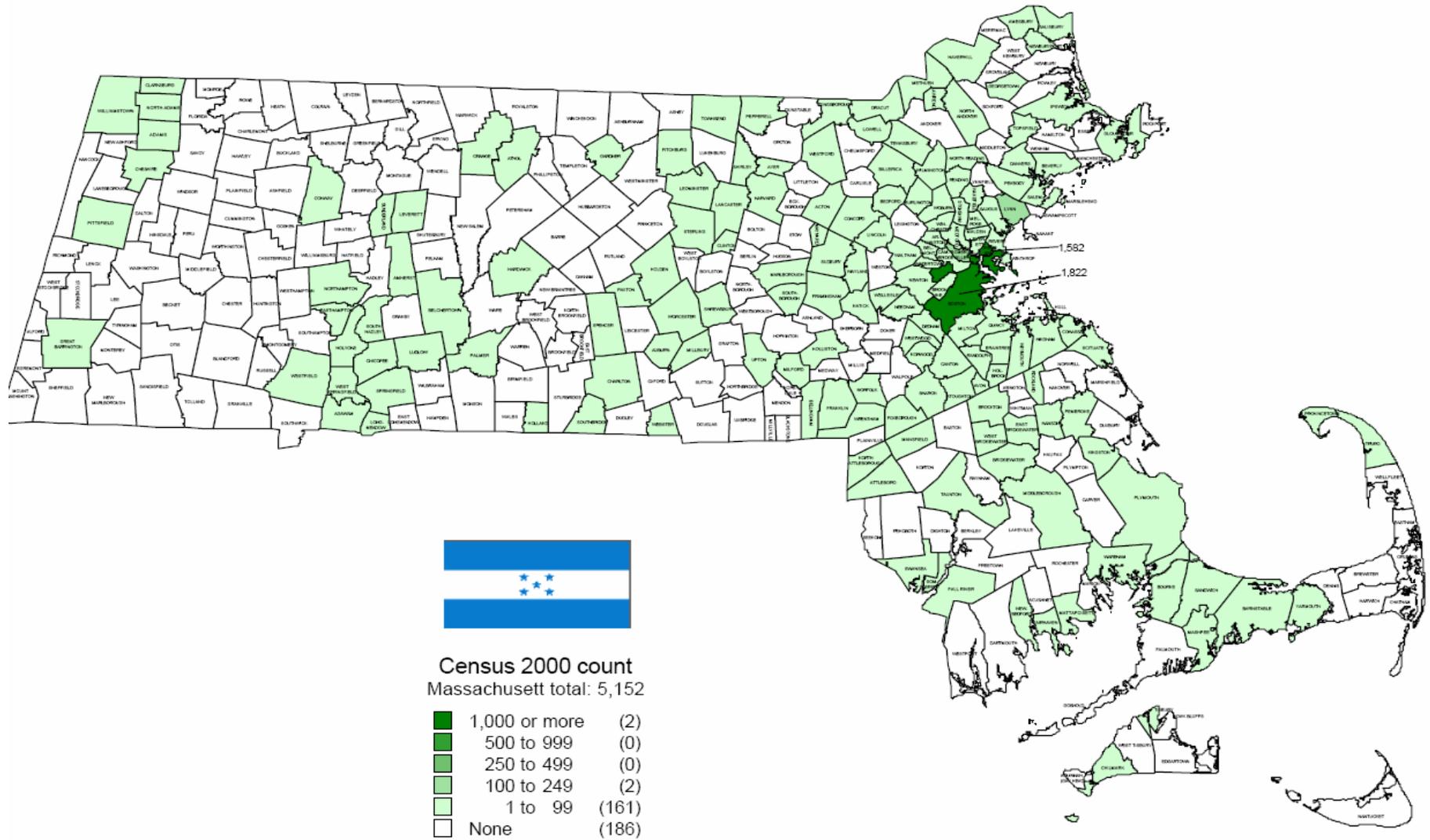
But in spite of this, Boston, Chelsea, and Somerville are the cities with the largest percentages of immigrants in these groups (Table 7). In the case of Salvadorans, in spite of the decline in population, the Cambridge Salvadoran community continues to be the one with the largest proportion of immigrants, signaling that this city is still an important place of initial settlement for this group.

Figure 1. Guatemalan Population in Massachusetts Cities and Towns, 2000



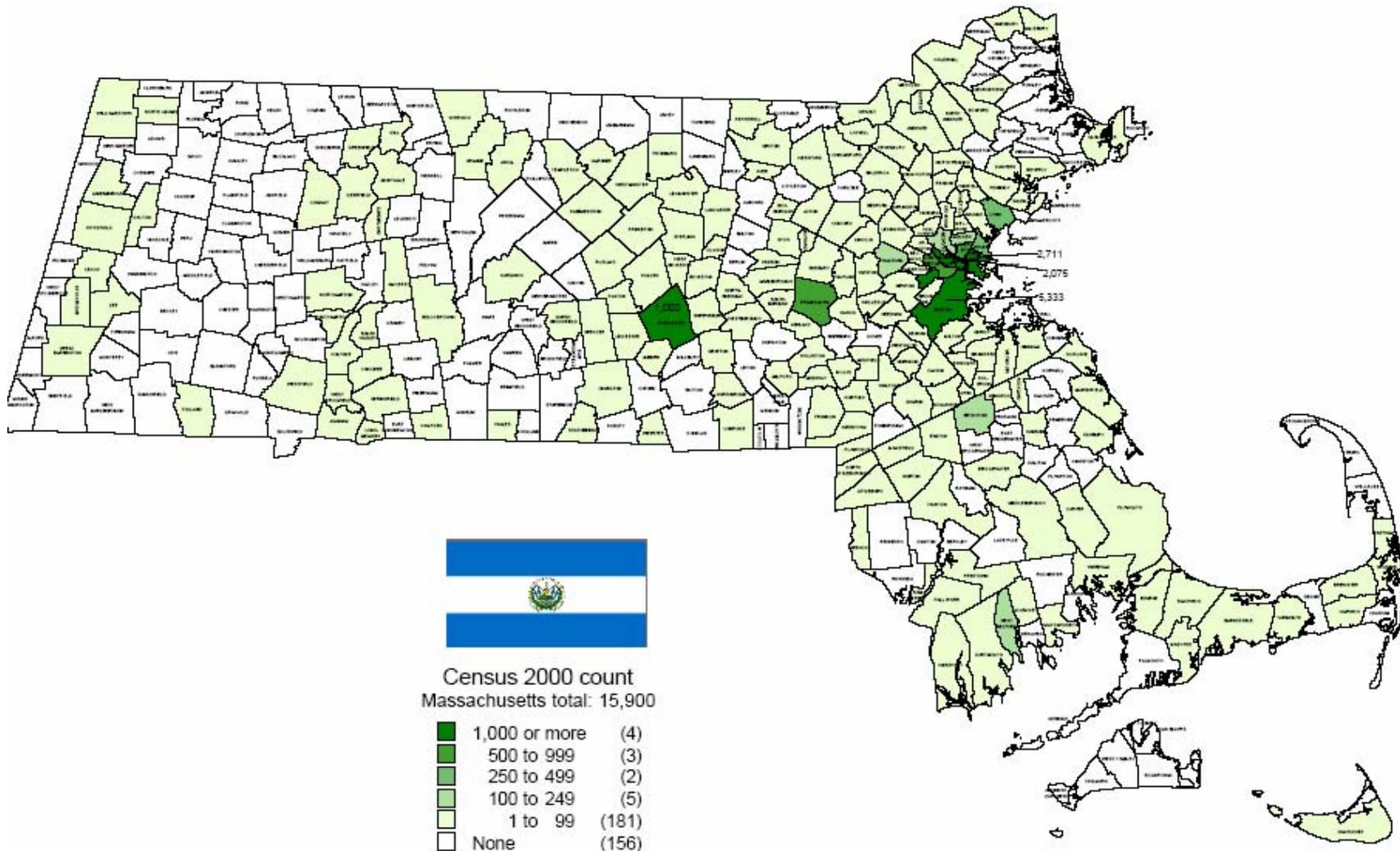
Source: Census 2000 Summary File 1, table PCT 11: Hispanic or Latino by Specific Origin

**Table 2. Honduran population in Massachusetts cities and towns, 2000**



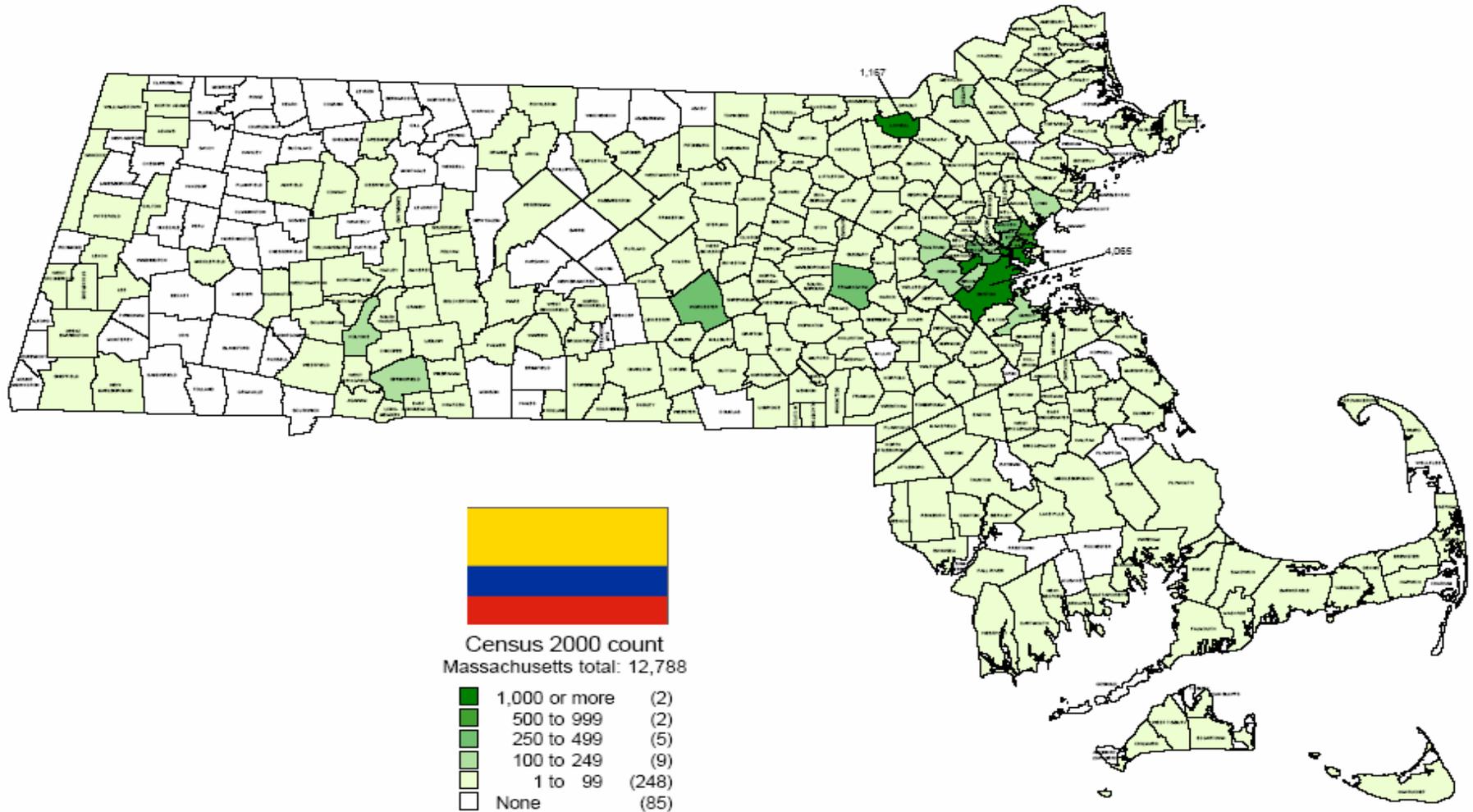
Source: Census 2000 Summary File 1, table PCT 11: Hispanic or Latino by Specific Origin

Figure 3. Salvadoran population in Massachusetts cities and towns, 2000



Source: Census 2000 Summary File 1, table PCT 11: Hispanic or Latino by Specific Origin

Figure 4. Colombian population in Massachusetts cities and towns, 2000



Source: Census 2000 Summary File 1, table PCT 11: Hispanic or Latino by Specific Origin

## II. Diversity among Latino Groups: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Guatemalan, Honduran, Salvadoran, and Colombian Populations

Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Colombians share many characteristics: they tend to be young, they tend to be poor, and they tend to work in service occupations. They share some of these characteristics also with other Latinos in Massachusetts, but even with many traits in common, there are important differences. There has been a tendency to group Latinos or Hispanics as if they were one group, but the growing national diversity — and with it the differences in the characteristics of the migration streams, immigration statuses, modes of incorporation, and economic and social outcomes — belies such an aggregation. Our analysis of socio-demographic characteristics of the Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Honduran, and Colombian populations of Massachusetts, in comparison to those of the overall Latino population, shows that indeed there are important differences among the Latino groups in the state, differences that need to be considered in policy development and service delivery to these populations.

In this section, we present selected demographic characteristics of these groups and compare them with those of the overall Latino population and, when pertinent, the general population of Massachusetts.

<b>Age</b>
------------

Ranging between 26 and 29 years, the median age of members of these four groups is significantly below that of the general population (36.6 years). Guatemalans have the lowest median age, at 26.3 years, and the Colombians the highest, at 29.6. The median age for these groups is slightly higher than that of the overall Latino population, which stands at 24.7 years (Table 8).<sup>37</sup>

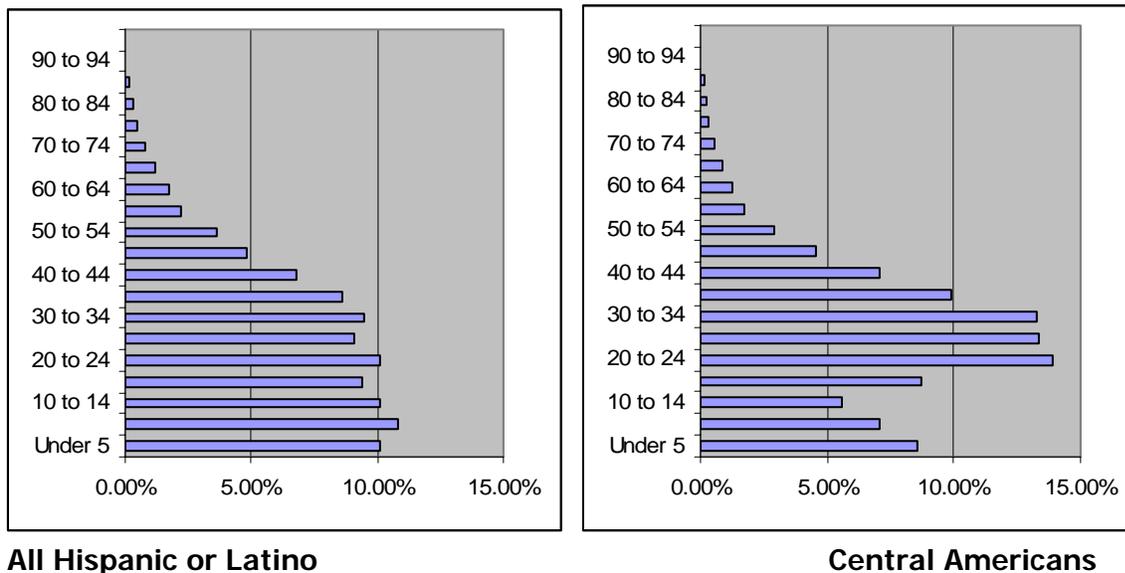
The common explanation for the relative youth of the Latino population is the large presence of children: children under 18 years of age account for 36% of the Latino population, compared to 23.5% among the general population. Among Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, for example, the shares of the population accounted for by children under 18 are 40.1% and 33.8% respectively.<sup>38</sup> But among the four groups under study, the share of children is closer to

**Table 8. Median Age. Total Population, and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**

	Median Age
<b>Total Population</b>	36.6
<b>All Hispanic or Latino</b>	24.7
<b>Guatemalan</b>	26.3
<b>Honduran</b>	27.3
<b>Salvadoran</b>	27.1
<b>Colombian</b>	29.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Figure 5. Age Structure of the Latino and Central America Populations. Massachusetts, 2000**



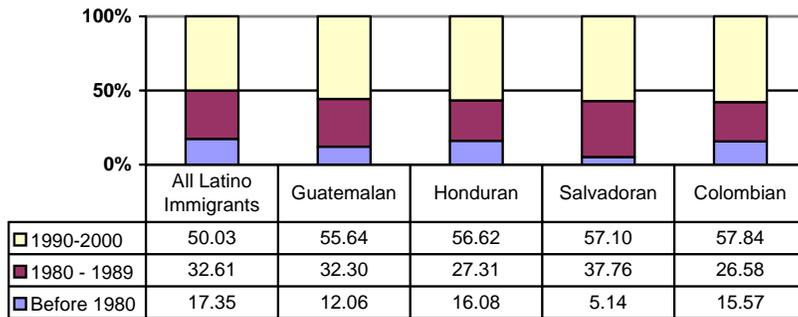
that of the general population. The youth of the population appears to be related to the large proportion of persons between 20 and 34, most likely immigrants (Figure 5). A comparison of the age structures of the overall Latino population and the Central American groups (Figure 5) shows that the largest Central American cohorts are those between 20 and 34.

**Nativity**

The majority of persons, over 70%, among Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Colombians in Massachusetts are immigrants, as we saw in Table 2. These are communities where immigration and the tearing and rebuilding it entails are part of the everyday experience of very large sectors of the population. This is particularly the case in those communities where there are large numbers of recent immigrants seeking jobs, becoming adjusted to a new land, and learning the language. This is the case for our four groups, where a large share of the immigrants are quite recent. More than 50% of the immigrants in these communities have only been in the U.S. since 1990 (Figure 6). Colombians and Salvadorans have the largest share of the most recent arrivals. Of all the Latino groups in Massachusetts, only Mexicans have a similar rate of recent arrivals among their immigrant population.<sup>39</sup>

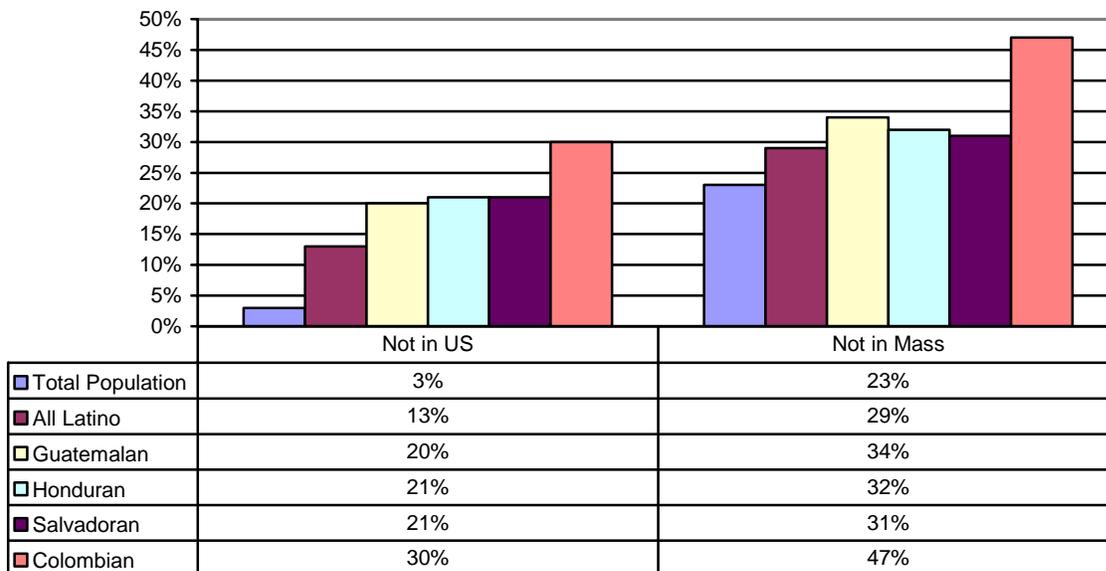
Another perspective on the recency of this population is provided by the numbers of persons within these groups, both immigrant and non-immigrant, who have even shorter tenure in the US. Figure 7 presents the percentage of persons 5 years old and over who were not living in the U.S. in 1995. Among Colombians, for example, 30% did not live in the U.S. in 1995; the figures for the other three groups were about 20%. This compares with 4% in the general population and 13% among all Latinos. Significant sectors of these four groups are in the throes of the early stages of arrival to the U.S.

**Figure 6. Year of Entry to the US. Immigrants from Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Figure 7. Percent of Persons 5 Years Old and Over Not Living in the US and Not Living in Mass. in 1995. Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

The Census also shows that among these groups there are persons who are recent arrivals to Massachusetts (Figure 7). Almost half of the Colombians over 5 years old (47%) did not live in Massachusetts in 1995, showing the relative recency of this migration to the state. Percentages for the Central American groups clustered in the low 30s. By comparison, 23% of the general population and 29% of all Latinos did not live in Massachusetts in 1995.

The recency of the immigrant experience of the four groups has deep implications for their economic situation, for the social and psychological pressures that the individuals are undergoing, and for the community's capacity to advocate for its own needs. Recently arrived immigrants are often engaged deeply in their process of adjustment, working in the worst jobs

they will probably have in the United States, learning English, and undergoing the most stress and disruption.

Key resources in these communities are the “experienced immigrants,” immigrants who have been in the U.S. for a much longer period of time. These older cohorts already have undergone the period of initial adjustment and, as is common among immigrant groups, can serve as a resource for the newcomers. For Hondurans, Guatemalans, and Colombians, about 15% of the immigrant population has been in the U.S. since before 1980. This layer of immigrants is particularly thin among Salvadorans in the Boston area, underscoring the fact that the migration from El Salvador was minimal before the great flood of refugees that followed the war in that country in the early 1980’s.

**Gender**

Immigrant flows often show disparities in the gender proportion in the population. The overall Latino population shows a very slight difference with the general population. A similar set of values can be found among Hondurans and Colombians, populations that retain a gender balance, reflecting a migratory flow composed of families, where both men and women migrate. Interview accounts underscored the fact that both Hondurans and Colombians immigrate with their families. In the case of Colombians, often whole families enter the U.S. with tourist visas and later remain in the U.S. undocumented.

In the case of Guatemalans and Salvadorans, the Census data point to a slight over-representation of men: 57% of the population is of this gender. Interviewees pointed out that the Salvadoran and Guatemalan immigration of the 1980’s was primarily a refugee flow made up of men, who later brought their families. This appears to continue to be the pattern in the migration of these groups.

**Table 9. Gender of the Population. Total population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**

	% Male
<b>Total Population</b>	48.2
<b>All Hispanic or Latino</b>	49.2
<b>Guatemalan</b>	57.0
<b>Honduran</b>	49.6
<b>Salvadoran</b>	57.7
<b>Colombian</b>	49.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Families**

The U.S. Census defines a family as “a group of two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption.”<sup>40</sup> Among Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans, families tend to be larger than in the general population. Families in these groups average about 4 members compared to 3 members for the general population and 3.5

members for the overall Latino population. Colombians mirror the size of families common among Latinos, both slightly larger than the general population (Table 10).

Most families in the general population and among these four groups are married-couple families, although the rates are higher among the general population. The rate of married-couple families is highest among Colombians, again reflecting the type of migration — whole families — currently arriving from that country. Among Salvadorans and Guatemalans a slightly lower rate prevails.

Among the four groups, the percentage of female-headed families with children is relatively low, almost comparable to the general population. Hondurans, at 51%, have the lowest rates of married-couple families and the highest rates of families with children under 18 headed by a woman. Hondurans show a similar pattern as that of the aggregate Latino population, but not as extreme.

In contrast to families, households include “all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence.”<sup>41</sup> The Census counts only one family per household, but a household can contain additional members or persons not related as families at all. Among the

**Table 10. Selected Characteristics of Families. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**

	<b>Average family size</b>	<b>% married couple families</b>	<b>% female headed families with children &lt; 18</b>
Total Population	3.11	76.92	10.05
All Hispanic or Latino	3.56	48.77	32.75
Guatemalan	4.02	62.57	13.53
Honduran	3.91	51.0	25.80
Salvadoran	4.01	63.40	12.72
Colombian	3.52	67.52	13.56

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Table 11. Selected Characteristics of Households. Total Population and Selected Latino National groups, Massachusetts, 2000**

	<b>Average Household Size</b>	<b>% of Households with Non-Relatives</b>
Total Population	2.51	10.83
All Hispanic or Latino	3.18	19.45
Guatemalan	4.01	31.42
Honduran	3.63	23.78
Salvadoran	4.21	32.85
Colombian	3.1	27.75

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

### **In their own words....**

*If many of us live together is only until the moment we get established or organize at this moment everyone begins to find ways to live better, so we don't have to live in these types of situations. (03mull, a Colombian leader living in Boston)*

*When we came here in 1989, we came to a friend's house. You can imagine; we were five ... so we were overcrowded. Our goal was to get out quickly of this situation. We didn't have our documents at that time, so we accommodated ourselves. Then working a part-time and with some money we had save when we were living in our country, we rented an apartment. At the beginning we paid \$600.00 and we had to share it with other family as well. And on top of it we had to give them a discount because they were single and we had children, we were more. (Focus Group member # 3.2)*

general population, for example, the average household size is only 2.5 persons, which reflects the large number of one-person households among this group (Table 11). Only 10% of households include persons who are not part of the family (non-relative is a household member not related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption). The pattern for the four groups under study is for households to have more members, including the more frequent presence of non-relatives. Interview and focus group data show that households are composed primarily of families, including a large representation of extended members (brothers and sisters, and parents of heads of households, for example) in addition to the non-relatives. "Doubling up," that is, having more than one family live in a household and providing a place to stay for friends who have just arrived in the U.S., is a common way in which older immigrants support the entry of newer ones. Interview and focus group data also point out that the presence of non-relatives is a strategy to cope with the high cost of housing in the Boston area. Having another family or a single person move into an extra room — be it to help the newcomer or to make housing in Boston affordable — may account for the high percentage of households with non-relatives among these four groups.

### **Economic Insertion**

The 2000 Census, in measuring participation in the labor force, asked respondents to report their labor status in 1999: whether they were employed or looking for a job or if they were unemployed. The year of 1999 was the height of the economic boom, where the country was closer to the goal of full employment than it had been in many decades. The economic downturn, the economic effect of September 11, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the "jobless economic recovery," mean that conditions today are much different than at the time the Census was conducted. In this population, we can expect that the effects are to suppress employment and, therefore, earnings and incomes for these groups. The Census data reflect "the best of times" in terms of level of employment and of employment outcomes for these immigrant populations.

In measuring labor force participation, the Census includes all persons over 16 years of age who are either working or looking for a job. This means that persons can be in the labor force and unemployed, but looking for a job. Persons are out of the labor force when they have stopped looking for employment. High rates of labor force participation indicate a strong attachment to work.

**Table 12. Labor Force Participation for Persons 16 and Over. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000.**

	Total Population	All Latino	Guatemalan	Honduran	Salvadoran	Colombian
<b>Total</b>	66.21%	58.47%	70.39%	68.07%	71.74%	64.49%
<b>Male</b>	72.64%	62.34	76.38	74.41	76.66	70.04
<b>Female</b>	60.45%	54.91	62.08	61.84	64.26	59.38

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Table 13. Occupational Distribution. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**

	Tot Pop	Hispanic	Guatemalan	Honduran	Salvadoran	Colombian
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,161,087</b>	<b>150,303</b>	<b>6,039</b>	<b>2,732</b>	<b>9,038</b>	<b>6,561</b>
<b>Management, Professional</b>	41.08%	23.27%	11.53%	19.84%	6.95%	24.16%
<b>Service</b>	14.06%	24.61%	32.39%	31.66%	40.54%	31.37%
<b>Healthcare support</b>	2.18%	3.52%	2.10%	6.26%	1.93%	1.34%
<b>Protective Service</b>	2.07%	2.04%	0.76%	2.42%	0.44%	1.66%
<b>Food preparation and serving</b>	4.51%	7.77%	10.03%	10.47%	16.96%	15.97%
<b>Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance</b>	2.71%	8.19%	16.81%	9.04%	19.76%	8.67%
<b>Personal care and service</b>	2.58%	3.10%	2.68%	3.48%	1.45%	3.72%
<b>Sales and office</b>	25.90%	22.19%	14.72%	15.89%	14.59%	17.41%
<b>Farm, Fish, and Forest</b>	0.21%	0.59%	1.36%	2.31%	1.00%	0.46%
<b>Construction/Extraction</b>	7.46%	6.11%	8.68%	6.08%	5.73%	5.09%
<b>Production and Transport</b>	11.28%	23.24%	31.33%	24.23%	31.19%	21.52%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

In 1999, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans showed a higher rate of participation in the labor force than the general population (Table 12). This was true of both males and females. The difference in labor force participation between these groups and the overall Latino population was even wider, for both men and women. Seventy-one percent of Salvadorans and 70% of Guatemalans over 16 years of age were in the labor force, compared to 66% of all Massachusetts residents and 58% of Latinos of a similar cohort. Colombians had just a slightly lower rate, at 64%. This shows a strong engagement in the labor force for these groups.

The media has long ago reported the overwhelming presence of new Latino immigrants in Boston's service occupations. And this is borne out by the 2000 US Census report of the occupations of Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Colombians (Table 13). The largest percentage (about a third) of persons from these groups work in service occupations, particularly in restaurants and in building maintenance. But a similar share work in occupations related to production in the manufacturing sector. These two areas, both low-paying and largely unstable, have long been the strongest niches of Latino employment.

Among the general population, the largest share (41%) are managers and professionals, followed by those involved in retail trade (26%); many work in the leading industries in the state, education/health, manufacturing, and retail trade.<sup>42</sup> By contrast, the Latino population, after decades of being concentrated in occupations related to production and services, is today almost evenly distributed between sales (22.2%), service (24.6%), production (23.2%), and management/professional occupations (23.27%). Most Latinos are employed in education/health, manufacturing, and recreational/food services industries.<sup>43</sup>

Among our four groups service occupations are the strongest. Between 30% and 40% of these groups work in this area, Salvadorans having the largest representation at 40.5%. Within the service sector, the pattern is for Guatemalans and Salvadorans to have the largest share of workers employed in occupations related to building and grounds maintenance, while Colombians and Hondurans have their highest representations among restaurant-related occupations. Production-related occupations, such as in manufacturing, claim the second highest share among the Central American groups. Among Colombians, managers and professionals account for the second largest group (24.1%), a higher percentage than that found in the overall Latino population. The Central American groups are under-represented among managers and professionals in comparison to the overall Latino population.

## Earnings and Income

Although Latinos from these groups show a strong attachment to work, the benefits of this work is low. This is the case whether one considers earnings<sup>44</sup> or income across all measures — individual, family, and household. For the four groups, wages and salaries are by far the most common source of income. Between 85% and 90% of households have this type of income, with other sources accounting for a very small representation in the income of households.<sup>45</sup>

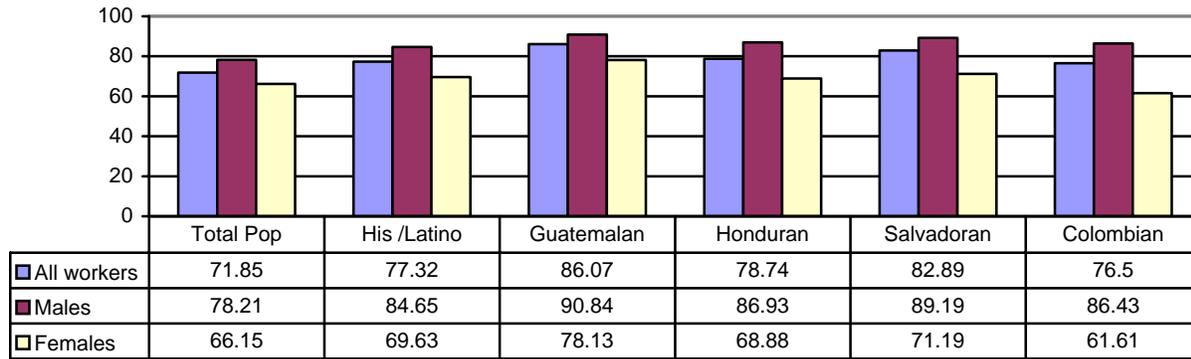
But wages tend to be low in the low service occupations, the most prevalent employment among these groups. Median earnings for all workers from these four groups are about 40% lower than those of the general population. In the case of Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Colombians, earnings are even lower than the already low earnings experienced by the overall Latino population (Table 14). In the case of full-time workers, the difference is even more pronounced. Guatemalans exhibit the strongest earnings in all categories of workers.

**Table 14. Earnings of Workers 16 Yrs and Over and the Income of Families And Households. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 1999 (\$)**

	Median Earnings (All workers)	Median Earnings Full Time workers	Median Family Income	Median Household Income
<b>Total Population</b>	28,420	38,478	61,664	50,502
<b>All Hispanic or Latino</b>	18,125	25,171	27,885	27,300
<b>Guatemalan</b>	19,258	29,023	38,901	42,674
<b>Honduran</b>	18,115	24,820	37,549	38,180
<b>Salvadoran</b>	17,734	21,049	36,927	40,493
<b>Colombian</b>	17,839	24,700	37,290	35,372

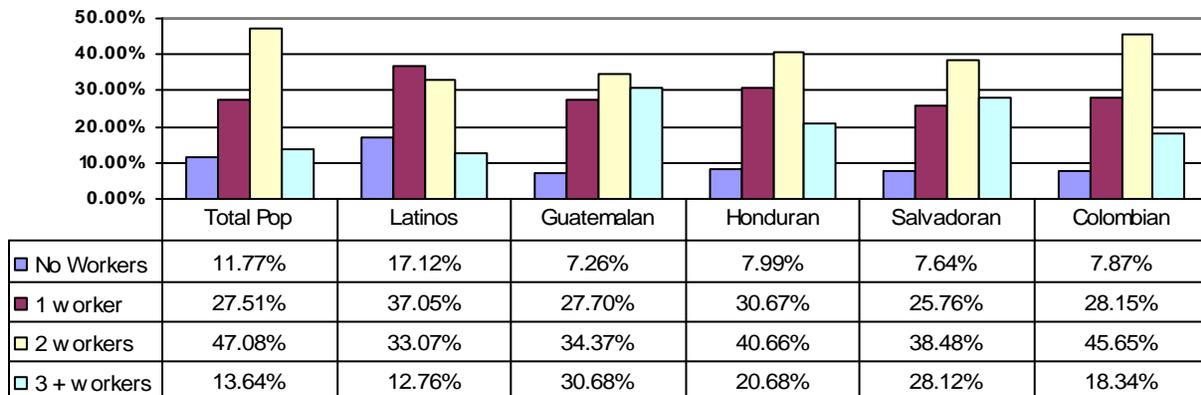
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Figure 8. Workers Working More Than 35 Hours Per Week in 1999. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Figure 9. Number of Workers in a Family. Total Population and Selected Latino National groups, Massachusetts, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

Lower earnings take place even as higher percentages of persons from these groups work full-time and even more than one job. The percentage of workers working more than 35 hours a week was higher among these groups among both the general population and among all Latinos (Figure 8). Among Salvadorans and Guatemalans the percentage of persons working more than 35 hours was 82% and 86% respectively; this compares to 71% among the total population and 77% among the aggregate of Latinos. About 90% of men and 70% of women in these groups worked these hours, compared to much lower proportions among both the general and the aggregate Latino populations.

Although individual earnings are generally lower than those among Latinos as a whole, family and household incomes are substantially higher for these groups than for the aggregate of Latinos (but never approaching those of the general population). The higher family and household incomes are the effect of households and families with more workers. Families and households among these groups have a higher number of workers: more than 60% of the families have two or three workers compared to 46% among Latinos (Figure 9).<sup>46</sup> The presence of a larger number of workers in the family is particularly salient among Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Colombians.

**Table 15. Families with Incomes Below Poverty with One or More Fulltime Workers Working Year-Round. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**

	<b>% families in poverty</b>	<b>% poor families w/ 1 or more FT workers</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	6.65%	10.48%
<b>All Latino</b>	28.49%	8.80%
<b>Guatemalan</b>	16.52%	14.96%
<b>Honduran</b>	25.72%	18.24%
<b>Salvadoran</b>	15.81%	19.58%
<b>Colombian</b>	17.57%	13.21%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

In spite of the long hours worked and the fact that families count on more workers, the low wages earned by workers in their jobs result in a higher percentage of poor families having full-time workers. Table 15 shows the percentage of families in these circumstances. Among Hondurans and Salvadorans, about 1 in every 5 poor families has a member of the family working full-time.

**Remittances.** The discussion so far assumes that the income of immigrants from these groups is fully available to meet the needs of these families. But the fact is that immigrants from these groups remit money to their families in their countries of origin, leaving them with even fewer available resources. According to a 2001 report of the Pew Hispanic Center and the Multilateral Investment Fund, most individual remittances amount to about \$200 to \$500 a month,<sup>47</sup> a considerable sum for persons of low income. The pervasiveness and consistency in these transfers is most evident when one considers the amount that arrives in these countries, the overwhelming majority of it from immigrants in the United States (Table 16). For example, according to the World Bank in 2002, Salvadorans living abroad remitted

**Table 16. Remittances to Selected Latin American Countries, 2002**

	Remittances in 2002	% growth since 2000	% of GNI of the country
Colombia (496,748)	\$2,374,000,000	45.3%	2.99%
El Salvador (708,741)	\$1,996,475,648	14.6%	14.28%
Guatemala (407, 127)	\$1,319,779,968	126.4%	5.74%
Honduras (237,431)	\$585,148,672	39.9%	9.12%

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2003

Note: (1) Number in parenthesis is the total number of persons from that nation in the U.S. in 2000, as reported in the U.S. Census; (2) GNI (formerly GNP) is the "sum of value added by all resident producers plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output plus net receipts of primary income (compensation of employees and property income) from abroad."

\$1.9 billion dollars to their families in El Salvador. This amount was 14.3% of El Salvador's total national income. This was the equivalent of having every Salvadoran in the United States send \$2,817 to their families in El Salvador in that year.

The nature of the immigration from these countries is such that often one or two members migrate — often one of the parents — leaving others behind, hoping to be able to support them with wages garnered in the U.S. Immigrants feel a great responsibility to do so: "*The Salvadoran economy is bad,*" a Salvadoran legal worker told us. "*If we who are here living in the United States stop sending money down it would be economic chaos for people there*" (06rkpl). In order to support a household here and a household in their country of origin, immigrants often hold more than one job and minimize their expenditures here. "*I'll speak about the Salvadorans and Colombians,*" said a social service provider:

*They often will hold as many jobs as they can. Both are willing to work hard in order to send money back to family members. It's not like they are working hard so they can have a great lifestyle here. They make a lot of sacrifices for their family back home, and that's especially true of Salvadoran women who still have children in El Salvador. (19swpl)*

## Poverty

The low earnings of workers from these groups are reflected in their rates of poverty, which are high in comparison to that of the general population, regardless of whether one considers poverty among individuals, families, or children (Table 17). The rate of individual poverty (at 100% level) is more than 100% higher among these groups than among the general population. Family poverty is even more disparate. The difference in the rates of poverty among families with children is also still substantial: between 80 and 200 percent higher than that found among the general population, depending on the group. Poverty among children shows similar differences. It is important to note that these calculations are based on the assumption that, although low, all income is available for use by the families. Among these groups, this may not be the case because of the draw that remittances represent on the available income.

**Table 17. Individual, Family, and Children’s Poverty. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000 (%)**

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>All Latino</b>	<b>Guatemalan</b>	<b>Honduran</b>	<b>Salvadoran</b>	<b>Colombian</b>
Individuals below 150% poverty level	15.37%	43.79%	28.96%	31.44%	33.49%	30.83%
Individuals below 100% poverty level	9.34%	29.83%	18.62%	22.50%	18.99%	20.70%
Families with income below 100% poverty level	6.5%	28.49%	16.52%	25.72%	15.81%	17.57%
Families w/ children under 18 below 100% poverty level	10.13%	33.09%	17.88%	31.17%	18.41%	23.71%
Children under 18 below the 100% poverty level	12.03%	37.19%	19.28%	35.63%	23.85%	23.26%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

The examination of the incidence and patterns of poverty in the populations of these four groups underscores some important facts about the characteristics of Latino poverty. The first is that poverty differs sharply among national groups. Poverty among these four groups, which ranges between 18.62% to 22.5%, is substantially lower than that observed among Latinos as a whole (29.8%) and among Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, for whom individual poverty rates reach 38% and 30% respectively.<sup>48</sup> Rates of individual poverty are highest among Salvadorans and lowest among Guatemalans, but none reach the high rates present in the overall Latino population. Across all dimensions — individual, family, and child poverty — rates among Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and Colombians are consistently lower than those of the overall Latino population. Only Hondurans approximate the high poverty rates found among Latinos as a whole.

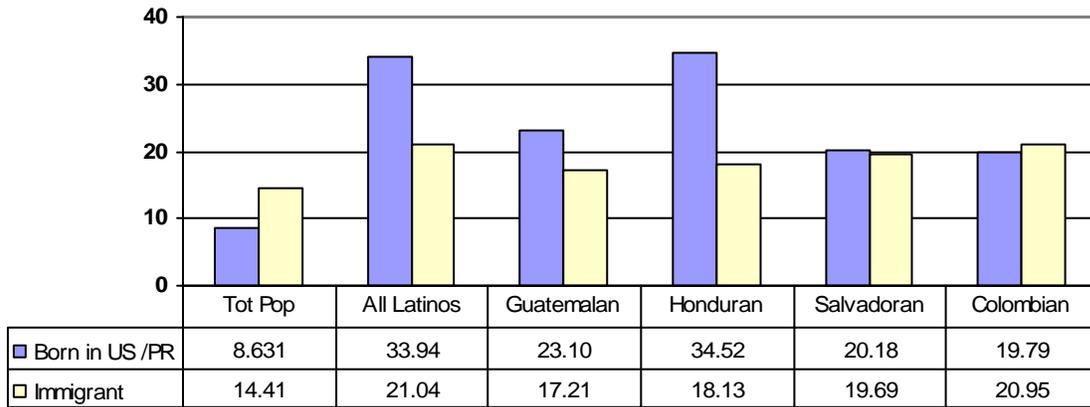
A common assumption about Latino poverty is that its high rates are related to the large number of immigrants. This is in fact the case in the general population, where poverty (individual poverty) is highest among immigrants compared to native-born (Figure 10). But among Latinos overall, and for three of the four groups studied here, poverty is highest among the native-born. The difference in poverty rates between native-born and immigrants is sharpest among Hondurans, where 18.1% of the immigrants are poor, compared to 35% of the native-born. Among Colombians, immigrants and native-born persons have similar rates of individual poverty.

Another assumption of the manifestation of poverty among Latino groups is that poverty rates will decrease with time in the U.S. as the immigrant learns English and gains experience in the labor market. The 2000 Census data, in fact, shows that this is the case among the total population of Massachusetts as well as the overall Latino population of the state. One can in fact observe lower levels of poverty among immigrants who have been here since before 1980 than among those who have been here since 1990 (Figure 11).

But as far as our four groups are concerned, the pattern varies greatly. Guatemalans, for example, show a similar pattern as that of the overall population: lower levels of poverty among the older cohorts. By contrast, Hondurans show the opposite pattern: poverty is higher

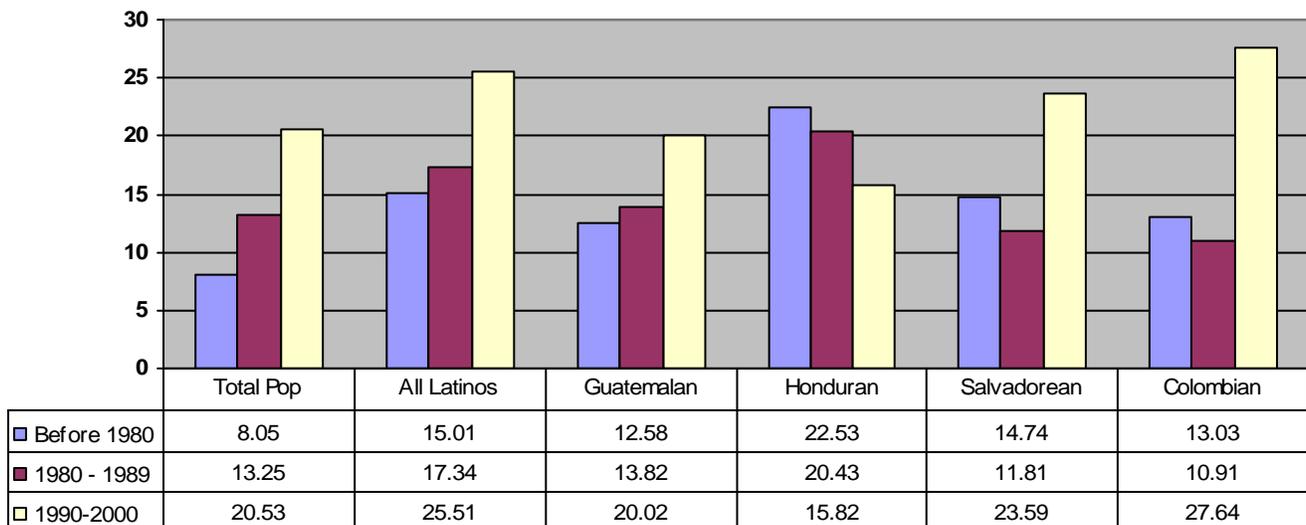
among the earlier cohorts, decreasing gradually through younger cohorts. Salvadorans and Colombians, on the other hand, show a similar pattern to that of the general population in the extremes, but with a difference in the outcomes of the middle cohort (those who came between 1980 and 1990). In their case, poverty is lower in this cohort than in the earlier one (before 1980).

**Figure 10. Poverty Among Native-Born and Immigrants. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Figure 11. Poverty and Immigrants' Time in the U.S. Total Immigrant Population and Immigrants from Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Table 18. Poverty Among Individuals, Families, and Children. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts and Selected Cities, 2000**

	Mass.	Boston	Cambridge	Chelsea	Somerville
<b>Total Population</b>					
Individuals below 100% poverty level	9.34%	19.53%	12.93%	23.30%	12.49%
Families with income below 100% poverty	6.65%	15.34%	8.71%	20.58%	8.39%
Families w/ children <18 below 100% poverty	10.13%	22.24%	12.57%	24.94%	12.95%
Children under 18 below the 100% poverty	12.03%	25.91%	15.60%	29.06%	15.16%
Poor Families w/ 1 or more FT workers	10.48%	8.72%	8.64%	9.81	5.62%
<b>All Hispanic or Latino</b>					
Individuals below 100% poverty level	29.83%	30.54%	22.56%	26.88%	14.70%
Families with income below 100% poverty	28.49%	29.54%	18.94%	25.53%	28.49%
Families w/ children <18 below 100% poverty	33.09%	35.04%	23.45%	27.56%	15.72%
Children under 18 below the 100% poverty	37.19%	38.07%	24.74%	31.90%	19.26%
Poor Families w/ 1 or more FT workers	8.80%	9.01%	10.88%	11.72%	6.29%
<b>Guatemalan</b>					
Individuals below 100% poverty level	18.62%	23.33%	NA	23.46%	NA
Families with income below 100% poverty	16.52%	20.65%	NA	15.17%	NA
Families w/ children <18 below 100% poverty	17.88%	25.43%	12.90%	NA	NA
Children under 18 below the 100% poverty	19.28%	33.44%	NA	14.76%	NA
Poor Families w/ 1 or more FT workers	14.96%	12.23%	NA	NA	NA
<b>Honduran</b>					
Individuals below 100% poverty level	22.50%	28.10%	NA	20.66%	NA
Families with income below 100% poverty	25.72%	30.96%	NA	28.30%	NA
Families w/ children <18 below 100% poverty	31.17%	38.41%	33.98%	NA	NA
Children under 18 below the 100% poverty	35.63%	47.68%	NA	29.08%	NA
Poor Families w/ 1 or more FT workers	18.24%	32.73%	NA	NA	NA
<b>Salvadoran</b>					
Individuals below 100% poverty level	18.99%	15.46%	32.09%	26.43%	20.70%
Families with income below 100% poverty	15.81%	11.74%	31.97%	20.60%	16.78%
Families w/ children <18 below 100% poverty	18.41%	14.02%	38.61%	24.86%	19.38%
Children under 18 below the 100% poverty	23.85%	13.79%	61.25%	35.89%	28.98%
Poor Families w/ 1 or more FT workers	19.58%	16.13%	12.82%	19.31%	10.96%
<b>Colombian</b>					
Individuals below 100% poverty level	20.70%	25.96%	20.98%	28.70%	NA
Families with income below 100% poverty	17.57%	19.69%	13.73%	30.27%	NA
Families w/ children <18 below 100% poverty	23.71%	32.90%	NA	28.05%	NA
Children under 18 below the 100% poverty	23.26%	38.42%	NA	25.55%	NA
Poor Families w/ 1 or more FT workers	13.21%	18.09%	5.12%	19.64%	NA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

Among these groups, poverty rates today may respond to the characteristics of the migration flows and the specifics of the reception to the local economy. The class background of the immigrants — the middle-class background of the migrations of Colombians and Salvadorans in the 1980's, for example — may have been enabled by the local economic boom of the mid-1980's, resulting today in lower rates of poverty for that cohort. An opposite set of circumstances could explain the current high rates of poverty among Hondurans, but more information about the makeup and characteristics of the immigrant flows and the particulars of the receiving economy is necessary to arrive at more precise explanations. The point, though, is that immigrant characteristics interact with local conditions to benefit some groups (and even cohorts within groups) and not others.

Finally, Table 18 shows the geographic concentration of poverty among these groups. It focuses on those cities with the largest concentrations of Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Colombians: Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, and Somerville. For the general population, the rates of poverty — individual, family, and child poverty — are highest in Chelsea. In contrast, among all Latinos, Boston is the city where the highest rates for all dimensions of poverty are found.<sup>49</sup> For our four groups, the pattern of concentration differs by nationality. Among Hondurans, who have the greatest rates of poverty overall, poverty rates among individuals, families, and children are highest in Boston. Among Salvadorans, poverty of all types is highest in Cambridge, where we find an exceptionally high rate of poverty among Salvadoran children, 61%, higher than the rate of poverty among Latinos statewide and in Boston. Among Colombians, family and child poverty is highest in Boston, as is the case for Guatemalans. Individual poverty for Colombians is most prevalent in Boston.

## **Educational Attainment**

In a “knowledge-based” economy like that of the Boston region, education is a currency of great value.<sup>50</sup> Differences in educational attainment between groups can play a role in differential economic outcomes. This is particularly true for wage and earnings differentials between Latinos and whites, according to recent studies,<sup>51</sup> and is likely to affect the high rates of poverty.

Among Latinos in this region, the concentration of the population over 18 in the lower levels of attainment has been a continuous fact. In 2000, as shown in Table 19, 41.7% of the Latino population has less than a high school education, compared to 15.44% of the general population; at the other end of the attainment scale, only 12.1% of Latinos have completed 4 years of college while 31.6% of the general population has done so.

Within the Latino population, the four groups in this study represent polar opposites in the educational attainment scale. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that, among Latino groups in Massachusetts, Mexicans have the highest level of educational attainment, followed by Colombians. Only 16% of Colombians have an education below 9th grade and 20% have a college degree or above. Among Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans there is a marked concentration of persons in the lowest levels of the attainment scale, particularly among those with less than a 9th grade education. These three groups showed the highest concentrations at this level of any Latino group.<sup>52</sup>

**Table 19. Educational Attainment by Population 18 Years Old and Over. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000.**

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>All Latino</b>	<b>Guatemalan</b>	<b>Honduran</b>	<b>Salvadoran</b>	<b>Colombian</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	4,853,130	272,359	8,857	4,161	12,962	10,691
Less than 9th grade	5.36%	19.73%	35.61%	28.96%	45.14%	16.08%
9-12 <sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma	10.18%	21.99%	17.99%	17.81%	21.32%	14.52%
High school graduate (inc equivalency)	27.18%	25.84%	24.33%	23.84%	20.15%	25.53%
Some college	19.48%	16.35%	11.31%	15.24%	8.05%	19.22%
Associate Degree	6.79%	3.97%	3.86%	4.18%	1.81%	4.57%
Bachelor's degree	18.86%	7.26%	4.27%	7.52%	2.86%	12.49%
Graduate or professional degree	12.15%	4.87%	2.63%	2.45%	0.68%	7.60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

## In Sum....

There is tendency to group Latinos as if they were one homogeneous population, but this analysis reveals that there are important differences among the groups that have implications for policy priorities and for program development. These four groups, for example, exhibit a much **higher prevalence of immigrants**, particularly recent immigrants, compared to the overall Latino population, making program initiatives addressing the problems of immigration status and immigrant adaptation a high priority.

**Families** among the Central Americans groups tend to be larger than those of the overall Latino population. The majority of the families in all four groups are married couple families, a slightly higher representation than is found among the aggregate Latino population. The presence of families with children headed by women among Colombians, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans is closer to the patterns found in the general population than to those found among Latinos. These are families with more adults, but also more adults who are working, often more than one job, and requiring support for school-age children.

The differences observed in the economic insertion of these groups in comparison to Latinos in general also deserve attention. For example, among Central Americans there is a **stronger attachment to the labor force** than that found among Latinos in general, but there is a much higher concentration in these groups in manufacturing and service compared to Latinos in general. Moreover, their presence in management professions, a growing reality among Latinos in general, is negligible among these groups. Educational barriers seem to be particularly salient among new Central American immigrants; as we will see in the next section, immigration status presents an almost impossible barrier to overcome for many undocumented persons in all four groups.

The higher attachment to the labor force among these groups also means that more members of families work and that more individuals work long hours. This has led to higher household and family incomes and **lower levels of poverty** among Colombians, Guatemalans, and Salvadorans when compared to other Latinos. This intense participation in the labor force is necessitated, in part, by the demand for support for families left behind. But this also means

intense pressures on families here, as parents have to work and are often unavailable to their children.

This analysis of the socioeconomic characteristics of Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Colombians has also highlighted important differences among the four groups. **Hondurans**, for example, are in some ways the least advantaged of the four groups studied here. They have the longest tenure in the U.S. but also show the highest rates of poverty among individuals and families, particularly working families; the highest rates of unemployment; and the lowest percentage of intact families. Among Hondurans, poverty is particularly salient among those living the longest in the U.S. and among the U.S.-born. In many ways they mirror most closely the experience of the mass of the Latino population, showing a process of integration into the lowest economic strata, a process that appears to be resistant to upward mobility for this group.

The experience of **Guatemalans and Salvadorans** is more comparable, not only to each other but to that of a typical first-generation immigrant group made up mostly of labor migrants. Both are young populations, with a sizeable number of recent immigrants. Special immigration remedies for these groups provide relief, albeit temporary and ephemeral, from indocumentation and its consequences. Salvadorans and Guatemalans have lower levels of poverty, particularly family poverty, because of their strong labor market attachment and because of the number of workers in these families. A critical issue for these populations is the extremely low levels of educational attainment, something that undermines their strong efforts in the labor market.

Addressing the educational disadvantage is a critical step in improving the outcomes of these two groups. Strong Adult Basic Education, ESL, and workforce development programs for adults are key. But perhaps even more critical is the presence of the strongest possible set of educational opportunities for Salvadoran and Guatemalan children, including aggressive interventions directed at families in order to support their effective collaboration with the process of education of their children.

In contrast to the other three groups, **Colombians** have a bifurcated experience depending most likely on their immigration status. Colombians are the most highly educated group in the region, second only to Mexicans. They have the highest percentage of persons in managerial occupations, second only to Mexicans and Cubans,<sup>53</sup> and the lowest rates of poverty among older immigrant cohorts of the four groups, indicating a more economically productive process of integration. But among the new immigrants, those arriving in the last 10 years, many undocumented, the rates of poverty are very high. Among the Colombians, both logic and the opinions of most persons interviewed indicate that the key factor in improving the situation of Colombians is to bring some solution to the problem of indocumentation through legalization.

The following section expands our understanding of the specific issues affecting new immigrants from Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras now living in the Boston area.

### **III. Scan of Issues Affecting Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Colombians in the Areas of Immigration, Employment, Housing, Education, and Social Support**

The scan reported here was conducted in the spring of 2003. It sought to collect information about the documented issues and needs in relationship to immigration, employment, housing, education, and social support among Colombians, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Hondurans in the Greater Boston area. These areas were selected in discussions with community leaders and providers. The scan was conducted through analyses of the Census, review of literature, and interviews with providers familiar with the situation of these groups. It also sought to tap into the needs felt by these populations through interviews with community leaders and focus groups with community members, the latter organized in collaboration with Centro Presente. In identifying these issues, we sought to highlight specific problems faced by persons from the different nationalities, as well as persons with different immigration statuses, and to identify initiatives that can be taken to address these problems.

#### **Immigration**

*The issue of immigration is the root of every problem. (04mull)*

We begin our scan focusing on the specific problems immigrants face in dealing with immigration issues. As was pointed out earlier, U.S. immigration policy and its consequences are part and parcel of immigrants' lives in the United States. The immigration status of immigrants has grave consequences over their life chances and their everyday lives. Employment and eligibility for public benefits are greatly affected by status. Undocumented status — or a legal status that is ephemeral, such as TPS — relegates immigrants to a very vulnerable experience in every area of life.

#### **Pressing Issues**

The situation of persons who are not legal U.S. residents or citizens was the center of the discussion of the most pressing issues in immigration. Issues reflected two main concerns: (1) the large presence of undocumented immigrants among the populations of the four groups and the few avenues available for legalization and (2) the difficulties and the lengthy process faced by those eligible for programs leading to legalization.

All four groups in this study include large contingents of persons who are in the United States undocumented, that is, without legal authorization from American immigration authorities. However, two special immigration programs have provided some protection to Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Hondurans who qualify. The first is Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which protects from deportation Hondurans who arrived in the U.S. before Dec 20, 1998 and Salvadorans who arrived before February 13, 2001. TPS only grants protection from deportation and authorization to work for as long as the program exists. This permit is renewed periodically and depends on agreements between the U.S. and the immigrants' country of origin. The second is the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act

### **A provider reports....**

*One of the barriers that immigrants face with TPS is with the lack of organization in the immigration service. For example, this morning a client came to us with a letter from the immigration department stating that they have not received the \$120 fee to renew her TPS, along with the letter that the INS had sent verifying that they received the fee for the TPS. The INS has a very high workload in its Vermont Center; they handle 17 states. In November last year I had the opportunity to talk to someone in this center and was told that they still had about 100,000 cases that had not been processed or entered into their database. This means that many people are stuck because they have not yet received their work permits. (O2mull, a Honduran activist working on immigration issues)*

(NACARA) of 1997, which offers the opportunity to adjust their status to legal permanent residency to Salvadoran and Guatemalan undocumented immigrants residing in the U.S. since before the end of 1990.

Of the four groups addressed in this report, only Colombians do not have some avenue towards legalization. *"Colombians are at the beginning of their journey for legal status in the U.S."* expressed a Honduran community leader (O2mull). They are actively working to obtain Temporary Protected Status in the U.S.

Barriers to legalization for those who are eligible are a second large area of concern. One important barrier is the requirements of the process itself. Immigrants applying for (or already on) TPS are required to keep themselves informed about changes in the dates of renewal, and they often need support in the application and in the renewals. Similar requirements apply when applying for NACARA, a process that often takes many years. Throughout that time, applicants often require support to move from one step to the next, since the bureaucratic process is complex and burdensome. The process is also fraught with anxiety since wrong steps, missed deadlines, or lack of information may result in denial and deportation.

Immigration lawyers interviewed report that many delays are caused by lack of resources directed to the processing of immigration applications of all types. *"At this time the [backlog] is huge because the amount of applications is huge and the time to process is long,"* explained a Salvadoran leader, *so there is not opportunity for [immigrants] to complete the legalizations"* (23pg11). These delays often lead to lost jobs as dates on TPS papers become obsolete. Always a slow process, since September 11, it seems to have ground to almost a halt due to policy changes that have brought even stricter restrictions.

Providers and community leaders focused on the potential for exploitation that the length and complexity of the process entails. Without clear information about immigration laws, facing a complex bureaucratic process, and under fear of discovery and deportation, undocumented immigrants often seek the assistance of lawyers and immigration services. In most cases these are helpful, but respondents often mentioned the abuse that unscrupulous lawyers and immigration services perpetrate upon these persons. As a Honduran community leader explained, *"they take advantage of the disadvantage"* of these persons (O2mull).

### **Recommendations from Community Leaders and Providers**

The context for the discussion of remedies for the situation of immigrants without full legal status is much broader than what this study seeks to address but it must be mentioned

**Table 20. Issues and Recommendations in the Area of Immigration**

Group	Statuses	Issues Identified in the Area of Immigration
Guatemalans	Permanent legal Residency Undocumented Immigrant NACARA / Asylum Applicant	Many persons with undocumented status Lack of accurate information about immigration laws Abuse in the hands of unscrupulous immigration lawyers and services Long waits for results of NACARA applications keep applicants with uncertain status.
Hondurans	Permanent legal Residency Undocumented Immigrant Temporary Protected Status (TPS)	Many persons with undocumented status Lack of accurate information about immigration laws Abuse in the hands of unscrupulous immigration lawyers and services Persons with TPS must renew their work permit periodically and must wait for many years for the resolution of their immigration status
Salvadorans	Permanent legal Residency Undocumented Immigrant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) NACARA / Asylum Applicant	Many persons with undocumented status Lack of accurate information about immigration laws Abuse in the hands of unscrupulous immigration lawyers and services Long waits for results of NACARA applications keep applicants with uncertain status. Persons with TPS must renew their work permit periodically and must wait for many years for the resolution of their immigration status
Colombians	Permanent legal Residency Undocumented Immigrant	Many persons with undocumented status Lack of accurate information about immigration laws Abuse in the hands of unscrupulous immigration lawyers and services
<p><b>Recommendations from Leaders and Providers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the information available to immigrants regarding immigration law, the process of legalization and their rights</li> <li>• Advocate to expedite processing all types of immigration requests by increasing resources dedicated for this purpose.</li> <li>• Work towards legalization of undocumented immigrants currently in the U.S. by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educating the American public about the causes of immigration from Latin America to the U.S.</li> <li>• Educating the American public about the contributions of all immigrants, including the undocumented.</li> <li>• Organizing and registering to vote those immigrants who are citizens for the benefit of the entire Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Honduran, and Colombian communities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

### **Assets and Resources**

- The leadership of persons and organizations in the Central American community working to obtain and maintain immigration relief measures such as TPS and NACARA. There is also incipient organization in this regard within the Colombian community.
- Organizations in the Boston area providing information and legal support to immigrants in the process of legalization.
- The leadership of local persons and organizations in building coalitions with other immigrant groups in the Boston area.

briefly here. This context involves the debate on immigration policy, the causes of undocumented immigration, and the responsibility that U.S. society has towards both authorized and undocumented immigrants. There are few policy issues that are more hotly debated or where the positions are as polarized than these.

The basic outlines as they relate to the groups under study are easily portrayed. On the one hand are those that conceive immigration as a rational choice on the part of individual immigrants, who respond to the push of negative conditions in the country of origin and the pull of a better life in the United States by emigrating. These individual decisions are managed — in theory — by border controls that respond to an immigration policy that follows U.S. economic interests, opening the spigot when workers are desired and closing it during economic downturns. Lax border controls are then primarily responsible for the entry of large numbers of immigrants, something that can be remedied by sharper border measures that range from increasing immigration restrictions to solidifying the border through walls or armor.<sup>54</sup> Immigrants come to the U.S. responding to a cost-benefit assessment, and this same assessment leads immigrants to choose regions and places of settlement.<sup>55</sup>

Nativist interpretations of this paradigm usually propose restrictions on the flow of immigrants based on economic and cultural concerns. The use of immigrant labor by industry, the potential for immigrant labor to displace native workers, and the downward push on wages by immigrants (particularly undocumented immigrants) are common arguments, in spite of the very mixed evidence in support of these positions.<sup>56</sup> The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 and the immigrant provisions of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) are examples of policies that emerge from this perspective. Also common is the fear that large numbers of immigrants will change the nature and character of U.S. society. The changes in racial and demographic

### **In their own words....**

*How does TPS affect someone's everyday life? The fact that they actually have a job and that they are legally here is a huge relief for them. I think it affects them more during the period when they are trying to decide whether or not it should be renewed, and it creates a lot of stress... (19swpl, a social service provider in East Boston)*

*Not having papers or having an expired TPS limits them in their everyday life activities. Like for example if you lose your drivers' license and you cannot get to work. I know a man whose permit expired and he could not renew his license. It took him two hours to get to work and it was very expensive.... (paraphrased from statement by 02mull)*

composition of the population and the growth of bilingualism are often targets. Initiatives such as Proposition 187 in California and the several laws against bilingual education are policy exemplars.

On the other side are those who argue that the interaction of centuries between Latin America and the U.S. has made those borders permeable. Some wield history to make the case, citing the U.S. takeover of Mexican territory, interventions in the politics and economics of Latin American nations, and direct military intervention in the Caribbean and Central America.<sup>57</sup> Others point to the more subtle effects of capital penetration in restructuring local economies: the resulting economic and cultural imbalances promote migration as a solution. The inability of persons to support themselves and their families due to transformation of the economies of their countries of origin, together with an exalted vision of the United States, the direct recruitment by U.S. industries, and the pressures from networks of relatives already here, results in immigrant flows toward the source of the intervention, the United States.<sup>58</sup> In the Greater Boston area there is evidence that Latinos were recruited, first, to fill jobs in the dying industries of the region and, later, to work in the lower rungs of the service sector.<sup>59</sup> As we will see in a few pages, it is here where most Colombians, Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans work in Boston. The specific histories of the migrant streams that brought Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Colombians to the Boston area, presented in Section 1 of this report, provide support for this explanation.<sup>60</sup>

From this second, non-nativist, perspective, there is some, albeit limited, social responsibility for the situation of immigrants, even undocumented immigrants, in the U.S. This perspective presents immigrants as a necessary element of the economy of different regions — be it because they are the backbone of the agricultural sector, take the jobs that are left behind in declining or dying industries, or have a place in the emerging service sector. It is recognized that immigrants contribute to the tax rolls, and that they under-use benefits when compared to non-immigrants,<sup>61</sup> but that if they need benefits they should be eligible to receive them.

In making recommendations regarding the specific problems immigrants face in dealing with immigration issues, respondents were very conscious that current policy is more reflective of the first perspective than the second. Many recognized that the pendulum had swung away from their interests; said one Salvadoran activists: "*In the current political environment, people feel there is no hope. No hope*" (25pgll).

But, this was not the only conclusion. Some respondents pointed to concrete, short-term remedies that are critically important, such as the improvement of information available to immigrants about immigration laws and their rights in the process of legalization. This was seen as an important factor in countering the exploitation of immigrants by unscrupulous lawyers and immigration services.

Most of the recommendations in this area revolved around the political process that many feel will be necessary to change the conditions of new immigrants from these groups. Educating the American public about the causes of immigration from Latin America to the U.S. and about the contributions that all immigrants, including the undocumented, make to American society were important initial steps meant to harness support for changes in immigration policy. Others focused on the need to mobilize: to register immigrants who are already citizens to vote in order to support issues that benefit the Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Honduran, and Colombian communities as a whole.

Most political activity was seen as focused on legalization. "*The solution to the TPS [and other immigration problems of the undocumented] is an agreement on legalization,*" said a Honduran leader echoing the feeling of many. "*I think there is no other solution*" (02mull). Some felt that from the perspective of immigration policy makers, there are no easy fixes. "*An*

*open border policy brings a great number of problems with it for the country as a whole,"* said a legal aid worker who provides assistance to TPS and NACARA applicants. *"An amnesty that would resolve the situation of many immigrants who are already here, would do nothing to stem the flow of immigrants who will come after"* (14skpnl). But from the perspective of immigrants, the solution cannot ignore a political organizing and lobbying effort. *"Immigration laws are made through the political process and those with a greater political voice are more likely to benefit from legislation,"* this provider underscored.

## **Assets and Resources**

Leadership and organization were often mentioned as key assets which members of these groups brought to the solution of the problems faced by Central American and Colombian immigrants in the area of immigration. Many respondents, for example, pointed to the accomplishments of the Central American groups in obtaining remedies such as TPS and NACARA, to alleviate the problem of undocumented immigration for their groups. This has entailed the development of a national network of organizations and leaders that have worked to build collaboration between the governments of their countries of origin and the U.S. government and to build the capacity to lobby Congress to consistently pass these relief measures. Though there has been activity emanating from all three groups, many respondents focused on the particular role of Salvadoran leaders and organizations, both locally and nationally, in obtaining relief to the situation facing their group in the area of immigration. Others pointed out that within the Colombian community there is a growing effort to obtain a TPS designation for new immigrants. Colombian leaders pointed to this effort, *Voices in Action*, as one in which there is collaboration from all sectors of the region's Colombian community.

There are several community-based organizations that provide legal services and advocacy for new immigrants. Centro Presente and CORES in Cambridge, East Boston Ecumenical Community Center (EBECC), La Comunidad in Everett, Proyecto Hondureño, the Chelsea Latino Immigrants Committee, and Centro Latino in Chelsea are all examples of the network of services being developed to support immigrants in addressing problems related to immigration and legalization. Other organizations mentioned as providers of immigration services to these groups included the International Institute of Boston and Greater Boston Legal Services.

Through these organizations, immigrants from Central America and Colombia are becoming part of a broader network of organizations and activities directed to alleviate the situation immigrants face at this time in the U.S. Organizations such as Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), the Center To Support Immigrant Organizing (CSIO), Mass Law Reform Institute, and the Massachusetts Legalization Coalition provide a context in which immigrants from all backgrounds can address their issues together. Similarly, the leaders of community-based organizations interact with state and city agencies mandated to address the problems of immigrants, such as the City of Boston's Office of New Bostonians and the Massachusetts Office of Immigrants and Refugees.

## Employment

*There are two barriers for Central Americans and Colombians: the documents and the language. (#2.6)*

Improving their economic conditions is one of the goals of immigration to the United States for many immigrants. Even among immigrants from groups like the four highlighted in this study, who initially came to the United States to escape war and violence in their countries of origin, economic goals have not only become important for their own survival in their new setting, but often are also critical to those left behind.

Information from the 2000 Census indicates that, as is common with immigrants, these groups are well engaged in the labor market. High percentages of persons from these groups are either working or looking for a job, a percentage higher than that of the general population (see 12 on p. 30). In 2000, these groups also showed high unemployment rates, meaning that, even in the positive economic climate at the end of the 1990's, their success in obtaining jobs was much less than that of the general population.<sup>62</sup> Analyses of industrial and occupational distribution in these populations show that the largest percentage work in the service sector (see Table 13 on p. 31) and, as is true for many other groups that concentrate in the lower occupational levels of this sector, earnings were low. As a result, in a population reliant almost exclusively on wages, family and household incomes (Table 14 on p. 33) were also low. Although family and household incomes were higher among these groups than among the overall Latino population, the rate of poverty among working families from these groups was substantial (Table 15 on p. 34).

### Most Pressing Issues

All Central Americans and Colombians in the Boston area face many difficulties related to employment as a result of their status as immigrant newcomers in the labor market. But some groups find their opportunities even more limited due to their immigration status, their low levels of education and work skills, and barriers due to the inability to speak English. This is the case among new immigrants from these four groups.

**Immigration Status and Workers' Rights.** Both legal and illegal immigrants to the United States find difficulties in attaining employment in good jobs. Immigrants encounter the least employment barriers if they have been granted citizenship or permanent residency; even then, respondents reported that they were at times exposed to discrimination and negative attitudes. But these situations, difficult as they are, bear no resemblance to the situation faced by undocumented immigrants and those in Temporary Protection, according to those interviewed for this study. For these, exploitation rather than discrimination is more common: respondents reported that employers are happy to employ workers in these situations because they can employ them for very low wages.

In the case of those with TPS, many explained, this status is beneficial for workers since it provides the possibility to work legally. However, for many, the temporary status is a source of anxiety nonetheless — especially around expiration and renewal time, when workers on TPS are highly vulnerable. *"The fact that they actually have a job and that they are legally here is a huge relief for them, explained a social service provider in East Boston, I think it affects them more during the period when they are trying to decide whether or not it should be renewed. It creates a lot of stress"* (19swpl).

### **In their own words....**

*I have had temporary jobs that didn't require having papers; basically cleaning jobs, work in restaurants. I have a little difficulty finding a job because I don't know too many people. So at this time I only have a four hours job in the afternoon. (#2.3)*

*It helped to talk to other people, in the streets, in the restaurants, in the library. This is how I met a person who helped me to find the job I have now. I began working with a family that wanted their children to learn Spanish, because the mother is Latino and doesn't want the children to forget the language. So it fit right with me because I am dedicating to them and talk to them in Spanish. When I go to the park with them I meet other people who invite me to teach other children in a school, on Saturdays, so they haven't asked me for documents or anything like that. (#2.1)*

*In some cases, people may pay their first month's wages to the guy who made the contact. For example, if I am looking for a job, they say- okay you don't have papers. All right, I can get you a job here, but the first month is mine. And sometimes they work a month for this guy just to get the right to work for him. (07rkll, a Guatemalan leader from Boston)*

*The temporary employment agencies that pick them up in a corner and bring them to a different place every day to work, pay them minimum wage and then take out a fee for shoes, food, etc. So the person ends up with almost nothing in their pay checks. These agencies are created in a way that companies can call and say "I need so many people for this date." (04mull, a Colombian activist working on immigration and labor issues in Boston)*

*... As we spoke I noticed that he was missing a finger. You could tell the injury was recent and I asked him what happened. He was working at a meat slicing machine and was injured. I asked if the company had paid for the hospital. He responded that they did not pay for anything. And then he said that he had lost his job after the accident because he could no longer work because he was missing a finger. I said you need to go see a lawyer. He responded no because he was undocumented. (04mull, a Colombian activist working on immigration and labor issues in Boston)*

*People are fired on the spot without a reason, and they know because they don't have good papers there's not much they can do. (19swpl, a social service provider in East Boston)*

*I work for (local university). We had a meeting a week ago and they decided to review all the applications from present employees, including people working for them for 10 or 12 years. Some of them are working with expired permits, or with documents saying they are Puerto Ricans. Many of them were frightened they would lose their jobs. People with illegal or expired documents had three days to bring their legal documents and if they didn't have it, they were granted 14 days more to solve these problems. If by the end of the 14 days they didn't come up with the proper documentation they would be without a job. When the time came, people with Puerto Ricans documents were able to stay. Even though they didn't own those documents they were using somebody else's documents, they had to lie in order to keep their job. (#1.4)*

*Being undocumented affects everything. It affects the kind of job you have. If they have a job how secure is it? People are fired on the spot without a reason, and they know because they don't have good papers there's not much they can do. It definitely affects their work life. (19swpl, a social service provider in East Boston)*

*When things happen to you in the workplace, whether sexual harassment or pay withheld or other demands made of you in terms of overtime or whatever, you have no or little defense (18swpnl, a provider in East Boston)*

As far as the undocumented are concerned, obtaining employment and maintaining it are critical challenges. In some cases, workers have false Social Security numbers; in others employers do not require them.<sup>63</sup> Finding work usually takes place through networks, where acquaintances can guarantee that there will not be requests for Social Security numbers or undue harassment. *"The pattern seems to be that undocumented people look for jobs in areas where other undocumented people are working or have worked in the past"* (04mull), explained a Colombian activist. And she continued:

*The majority of jobs are in cleaning and manufacturing, jobs that don't require many skills. This is because we live in an urban area, but in a rural area it would be agriculture, but in the city is cleaning, carpentry, manufacturing, packaging of meat, fish. And this is because these are jobs that documented people are not willing to do, so this creates a space for [the undocumented] to work. (04mull)*

In other cases, workers work for temporary employment agencies, which pick anonymous workers up every morning in designated places to fill the needs of the employers for which these "temp agencies" work.

Fear of discovery and the advantage it provides for employers are at the center of a relationship that can often become exploitative. Employers often hire illegal immigrants "under the table" with questionable documentation or no documentation at all, knowing that they will be able to pay low wages and provide poor working conditions. Interviewees related instances of workers not being paid for work performed, of being denied vacations for years on end, of having to tolerate sexual harassment or risk being turned into authorities and of being exposed to hazardous working conditions. Workers may also be denied fair pay. For example, employers often avoid having to pay immigrants overtime by having them work at several places of business owned by the same company or person, never working more than 8 hours at one place but working far more hours than that when all the shifts are added up.

This happens, explained a Colombian community activist working on immigration and labor issues, because undocumented workers are not aware that they have rights as workers:

*Undocumented immigrants that worked and then did not get paid think that they cannot do anything to get paid because of their status, when this is not the case. They still have the right to file a complaint and get paid. Many don't even know they can do something about it unless they have a person who informs them of their rights. So they will continue to be exploited. (04mull)*

This remains the case even though, according to advocates, recent policies and court cases have made it much more difficult for undocumented workers to press for their rights through federal agencies. *"Since 9/11 and the Supreme Court's 2002 Hoffman Plastics decision, the situation has gotten much worse,"* explains Tess Ewing of the Labor Resource Center at UMass Boston.

*Labor law does not distinguish between documented and undocumented workers in terms of the right to organize, but ... undocumented workers' protection against being fired for union activity has been taken away. Also, we can not be sure that people in federal agencies such as OSHA will not report undocumented workers. For that reason, people working with immigrant workers today in Massachusetts usually counsel them to take their complaints to state agencies or community groups only, and not federal agencies.*

All four groups in this study include a sizeable number of undocumented immigrants. Among Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Hondurans, they are the persons not covered by either NACARA or Temporary Protected Status, those who have felt too intimidated to apply for it, or those who have recently arrived. For Colombian immigrants there is no program providing any route to legal work, aside from obtaining the permanent residency status prior to arrival in the U.S.

**Table 21. Ability to Speak English by Population 18–64 Years of Age. Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**

	Speaks English not well or not at all
<b>All Hispanic or Latino</b>	23.24%
<b>Guatemalan</b>	39.16%
<b>Honduran</b>	27.96%
<b>Salvadoran</b>	45.61%
<b>Colombian</b>	33.69%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Language Barriers.** The inability to speak English well or at all was the second most frequently mentioned barrier to employment. And this is a correct perception of the situation confronting Central Americans and Colombians in Massachusetts, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. When persons 18–64 were asked their level of English fluency, 46% of Salvadorans and 39% of Guatemalans said that they did not speak English well or did not speak it at all. Figures for Colombians and Hondurans were slightly lower, but still well above the percentage of Latinos (23%) who reported this level of English fluency. For immigrants, with or without documents, lack of English proficiency is a tremendous barrier to employment. The inability to speak English leaves many immigrants in the position in which the only employment opportunities available to them are in menial jobs and other work that does not require English ability. Many expressed that this barrier also works to employers' advantage since employers are aware of the fact that the options for non-speakers of English are limited.

**Low Education and Employment Skills.** Many immigrants find it difficult to find employment in anything but the lowest skilled jobs because of their low levels of education. Low levels of educational attainment are the economic Achilles heel of the Latino population as a whole, but especially among Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans (see Table 19 on p. 41). Educational attainment is *"a dividing line in terms of job opportunities and economic tracks,"* according to a service provider. Some persons, regardless of their immigrant status, only qualify for low-level service occupations such as housekeeping or restaurant work. The possibility of advancement within the service sector or in manufacturing usually require more education. A Honduran leader put it this way:

*Sometimes they do not have the education required to qualify for courses, for example for a carpentry course, in which you have to read diagrams. Training to either be a carpenter or a painter is designed for people with at least a high school diploma. (02mull)*

The challenge is that only about 33% of Salvadorans, 48% of Guatemalans, and 65% of Hondurans over the age of 18 have completed high school (see Table 19).

**Underemployment.** Downward mobility is common among immigrants who arrive in the U.S. with a high level of education. Among the four groups in this study, this situation is most common among Colombians. One cause for underemployment is, of course, lack of legal status. Among Colombians, the group in which this status was most prevalent, many come to the United States with an education and with high levels of skills, but are relegated to menial jobs. *“Most Colombians arrive with a good package or sense of knowledge and education. They are self-starters and because of their legal status their opportunities are limited or stop them from advancing. So you are going to find many Colombians working in building and facility maintenance or in other areas that don’t require any specific skill or ability,”* explained a Colombian activist working on labor issues (04mull).

But language and institutional barriers also contribute to underemployment. Lack of English proficiency makes it impossible for immigrants to work in professions in which they have experience and expertise. A union organizer put it this way: *“We represent people that in their own countries could be doctors, accountants, mathematicians, lawyers, whatever... but there’s a language barrier when they come to this country and they [are forced to] take the [low paying] jobs that new immigrants often do”* (05rkpnl).

Institutional barriers related to credentialing and licensing for many professions are also a cause of underemployment. Some professions require English proficiency for licensure; others do not offer licenses to persons trained abroad without significant re-training in the U.S.. Many professionals with many years of experience are not allowed to practice their professions. A Latino professional working at a local university explains :

*Some of the immigrants, come as professionals and cannot work in their professions because their licenses don’t transfer there. For example, we have dentists, who can’t even clean teeth now, never mind treat people, so they end up being nannies, or they end up being other things that underutilize the talents. Meanwhile the community could really use the dentist. So, not only is underemployment a waste of resources in many communities, but it is also a major source of frustration among immigrants leading to depression.* (29mhpl)

In sum, Census data indicates that the economic stories of Central Americans groups and Colombians have, at this point, similar outcomes. But the discussion, both in this section and in the preceding chapter, indicates that there may be different reasons for those outcomes and therefore different strategies to improve the employment conditions of these workers

For Colombians, here again, the most salient barrier that emerges is the immigration status of large numbers of the new immigrants. Many newly arrived Colombian immigrants work in very low paying jobs primarily because those are the only jobs they can obtain without work permits. Although language barriers and low level of education characterize some of the Colombian experience, these factors are overwhelmed at this time by the salience of their undocumented status as a barrier to obtaining and maintaining employment and improving employment outcomes.

TPS and NACARA have blunted the impact on employment of undocumented entry for some Central Americans without legal permanent residence. The protection does not cover everyone, is precarious, and has to be constantly attended to; still, TPS and, especially, NACARA make obtaining a legal work permit possible, providing some relief from the fundamental barrier that undocumented status represents in relationship to employment. This does not mean that immigration status is no longer a major concern in terms of employment for

these groups. Not only are many persons still ineligible for these programs, but any mistake in making renewals makes an immigrant on TPS deportable.

For Central Americans, though, education seems a more formidable barrier in relationship to employment and employment outcomes. Low levels of educational attainment will keep Central Americans in marginal jobs, even if their immigration status is adjusted. The low levels of educational attainment and English proficiency are clear barriers to advancement of Central Americans in the labor market.

Working in favor of all these groups is their willingness and ability to work hard, an asset that providers and community leaders attribute to Central American and Colombian immigrants. These immigrants take on any job they can, often several, many of which are society's least attractive and lowest-paying jobs, so that they can survive here and support their families who are often back in their home countries.

### **Recommendations from Community Leaders and Providers**

Protection for workers from the abuse of employers that take advantage of their immigrant status — be it because they are undocumented or because their level of education and English proficiency limit their options — was the prime recommendation made by providers, community leaders, and focus groups members. Education regarding a range of workers' rights — such as being paid for work done, reasonably safe working conditions, protection from sexual harassment — is critical because many immigrant workers, especially undocumented workers, are often not aware of their rights in an American workplace. *"There should be more and up to date information. It is essential,"* said a Colombian focus group member. Information about the rights of workers is sorely needed.

Improving the possibilities of advancement of workers, be it through Adult Basic Education, ESL, or workforce development programs, was a close second in the recommendations coming from providers, community leaders, and focus group members. Improving access to existing programs and expanding the number of current slots were top priorities. There was a strong impression that ABE and ESL programs were over-subscribed and that there were long waiting lists to get into ESL classes and adult literacy classes for non-English speakers (ESOL). And this impression appears to be correct.

The Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education reports that more than 20,000 adults are currently on waiting lists for services because there aren't adequate resources to fund needed programs across the state. The waiting time for literacy classes is from two to eight months and for ESOL is six months to two years.<sup>64</sup> ESL classes appear to be more plentiful only because Boston is a center for ESL instruction for students and corporations and has myriad private programs for this purpose. But these programs charge high tuitions for English language instruction. Access to free or subsidized ESL classes is dependent on government-funded ESL slots in community-based agencies and other non-profit ESL providers. Long waiting lists are common in these sites, according to providers and community leaders.

Aside from the wait for services, interviewees and focus group members reported that in some sites undocumented immigrants are turned away when centers receive state and/or federal funding for adult education and ESL programs. Although the practice of many programs is not to require any documentation, the uncertainty about this has a chilling effect among many needing this service.

**Table 22. Issues and Recommendations in the Area of Employment**

Group	Issues Identified in the Area of Immigration
Guatemalans	Low levels of educational attainment High numbers of persons who do not speak English Lack of information about workers' rights
Hondurans	Low levels of educational attainment High numbers of persons who do not speak English Many persons with only a temporary legal status (TPS) or undocumented. Lack of information about workers' rights
Salvadorans	Low levels of educational attainment High numbers of persons who do not speak English Many persons with only a temporary legal status (TPS) or undocumented. Lack of information about workers' rights
Colombians	Many persons with undocumented status Lack of information about workers' rights High numbers of persons who do not speak English
<p><b>Recommendations from Leaders and Providers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the information available to all immigrants regarding workers' rights. Information and education about workers' rights is particularly critical among undocumented workers.</li> <li>• Improve access to Adult Basic Education and ESL programs for adult workers;</li> <li>• Increase the number of slots available in Adult Basic Education and ESL programs for adult workers.</li> <li>• Improve access to workforce development programs</li> <li>• Work to provide avenues for legalization for all groups. This is especially critical at this point for Colombian workers.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Assets and Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong attachment to work on the part of these immigrant groups</li> <li>• Organizations that offer adult basic education and workforce development programs</li> <li>• Organizations that advocate for immigrant rights in the workplace and working with immigrants to address these problems</li> </ul>	

For undocumented workers, legalization is the most critical remedy, as was expressed by providers, leaders, and focus group respondents. In relationship to employment, no factor is more critical than being authorized to work legally in this country. As is evident in the case of the Colombians, the barriers of undocumented status and poor English skills do not yield easily, even to the high levels of education present in this population. Finding solutions to the immigration status of undocumented Colombian, Salvadoran, Honduran, and Guatemalan workers is critical to creating access to better jobs and ladders to improving employment outcomes.

## **Assets and Resources**

Perhaps the most often mentioned asset of these groups in relationship to work was their reputation as hard workers, a reputation that appears to be well deserved. High levels of engagement in the labor force often mean working in more than one job and having more persons in the family work. Many respondents offered stories of persons who support their families both here and in their countries of origin and of persons who have been able to develop their own businesses or establish themselves as professionals.

These stories of success notwithstanding, there is also evidence of violations of basic rights of workers as well as significant educational and language barriers to employment. For this reason, organizations that provide both direct educational and workforce development programs for immigrants, and those that advocate for the rights of immigrants in the workplace, are key resources to Colombian, Salvadoran, Honduran, and Guatemalan workers.

In regards to the first, respondents pointed to community-based programs offering ESL, Adult Basic Education, and job training. Centro Presente, EBEC, Concilio Hispano, the Immigrant Workers' Resource Center, the International Institute, Oficina Hispana, La Alianza Hispana, the YMCA, the Welcome Project in Somerville, and various ABCD programs were among those mentioned. Organizations that advocate for immigrants' rights in the workplace and that work with immigrants to develop their skills to defend and protect their rights as workers were mentioned often as an important resource in the community. They include several unions, particularly service workers' unions and locals, and organizations such as Immigrant Workers Resource Center, United for a Fair Economy, and the Center to Support Immigrant Organizing (CSIO), among others.

## **Education (K-12 and Higher Education)**

*The Mister that passed the new law that took away bilingual education didn't think about this: he didn't think about the children. (#3.2)*

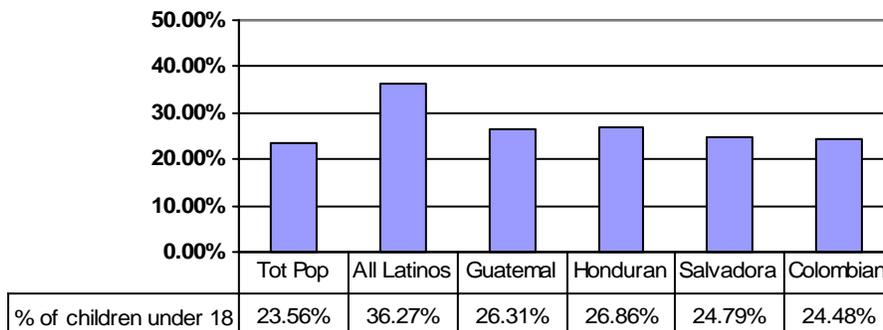
Children under 18 make up about one fourth of the populations of Colombians, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans. Hondurans and Guatemalans have the largest share of children, at about 26%, while the percentage of children was lowest among Colombians, at 24.48% (Figure 12). These values are well below the percentage of children in the overall Latino population, where 36% are children. Nevertheless, children from these groups represent sizeable percentages of the children of Somerville and Chelsea, although the largest number of children from these groups lives in Boston.<sup>65</sup>

A high percentage of children from these groups are immigrants. Among the overall Latino population, immigrant children account for about 10% of all children under 18. The percentage of immigrants among Colombian, Guatemalan, Salvadoran, and Honduran children is three times that, and among Colombian children it ascends to 48% (Table 23). This indicates that many in these groups are immigrating with their families, including their children. But the share of immigrants within this age bracket — much lower relative to the share of immigrants among the whole population— also points to a strong presence of U.S.-born children among these immigrants. As one would expect, the share of children who are not fluent in English is higher among these groups: about 8% of children of school age in the overall Latino population spoke English “not well” or “not at all,” compared to 19.7% of Salvadoran, 13% of Guatemalan, and 12% of Colombian school-age children. Only Hondurans, at 8.3%, mirrored the overall Latino population in this regard.

### Pressing Issues

In discussing issues related to education, focus group participants and interviewees were asked first about any problems of access to public education for children in these groups. Public schools in Massachusetts accept children with all types of immigration statuses, and this was something that was underscored by the overwhelming majority of respondents. *“The*

**Figure 12. Population Under 18 Years of Age. Total Population and Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000.**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

**Table 23. Selected Characteristics of Children. Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts, 2000**

	% of immigrant among children under 18	5-17 year old speaks English not well or not at all
<b>All Hispanic or Latino</b>	10.35	7.97%
<b>Guatemalan</b>	33.29	13.05%
<b>Honduran</b>	30.82	8.32%
<b>Salvadoran</b>	29.72	19.71%
<b>Colombian</b>	48.47	12.10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

*immigration status does not matter for primary education," explained a Salvadoran educator, "because every one can go to public school. We do not ask for social security numbers" (21pgpl). Although there were reports that some overzealous schools after September 11 had pressured immigrants for some type of documentation, it does not seem to be a common practice. Far more common, and more worrisome, are the problems facing children in the schools and the barriers to the participation of parents in the schooling of their children.*

**Children and Schools.** Respondents focused on the cultural barriers affecting the interface of children and schools. Some highlighted the difficulties children face in adjusting to an American school; cultural dissonance was often mentioned as a factor affecting, primarily, new immigrant children. It was evident that for new immigrants, in addition to learning a new language, the cultural differences between school in Central America or Colombia and what they found in the United States create challenges for individuals.

Others mentioned ongoing cultural barriers related to curriculum and the environment of the school. Concerns about the quality of the education and the lack of preparation of teachers to deal with children from other cultures were also mentioned. Discriminatory or demeaning practices immigrant school children faced in schools were also identified as a problem. Some referred to the misconceptions and expectations of the performance or behavior of Latino children. One librarian, for example, did not allow Latino children in the library due to her belief that *"Latino kids are too wild, and they run around, and they don't know how to treat my books; they just bend them out so,"* reported an educator (27mhpl). Others described behavior of school staff that was demeaning to the children: for example, the reluctance or the inability of school staff to recall the names of students. *"If your name is Maria they call you Mary" (20pgll).*

#### **In their own words....**

*For the older children, it's more difficult [to learn English quickly]. I have seen high school students who have a real difficult time even after several years in the bilingual department. (09rkpl, a Puerto Rican ESL and adult education teacher)*

*We have a population who didn't go to school in their own country. In this country they have to go to school so we have, for example, 14-year olds, who are at third grade level. If you are 14, you cannot go to third grade, so they place them in the lowest level in middle school. Now it becomes a problem: they are in sixth grade, and they don't know how to read or write in their own language. They don't speak English, but also, they don't know how to read or write in their own language. (27mhpl, an educator in a Boston middle school)*

*The teacher will teach but the student will not understand. The teacher will not speak the second language. The child will not participate in the classes and the child will be separated academically and will not do well. They will not do well academically because of their capacity for the language not because of their intelligence. (21pgpl, a Salvadoran school staff member)*

*We have children [at the school] that come from Colombia, from the war, very smart children but they will not make it, and they will succumb due to the language and I am not talking only about the Hispanic children but about children from all over the world. (#3.2)*

But perhaps the most often mentioned issue in regard to education among focus group members, community leaders, and providers was concern about the changes that would come about as a result of the elimination of the bilingual education program. Census information shows that a high proportion of children from these groups are immigrants themselves and many are not able to speak English well or at all (see Table 23). This is a population with a very high interest in the existence of some form of bilingual education for their children.

Concern was highest about the fate of children who arrived in the U.S. as teenagers. *"The younger the child, the easier it is for them to learn the language; for the older, it's more difficult"* (09rkpl), was a common explanation. They also highlighted the situation of children who arrived from their countries of origin with little or no formal education. The loss of the shelter that the bilingual education program offered children in these circumstances was a source of great concern to parents, community leaders, and providers.

But although there was recognition of the value of the bilingual program, parents and community leaders also expressed concern about the way bilingual education had been implemented in Massachusetts. An educator in a Boston middle school put it this way:

*There's agreement that bilingual education is good if run correctly, if given the resources, and that clearly hasn't been always the case in Massachusetts.... So the educational outcomes in these schools and in the programs are questionable. But the fact is that English immersion does not offer any hope that this will improve.* (27mhpl)

And, added a Salvadoran leader *"if you go to the bilingual science lab and to the regular science lab you will see the difference. Resource allocation [in the bilingual program] is a problem; the kids do not have access to the resources they need"* (25pgll).

The fate of children in view of the requirements of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test was also a concern, particularly about the older children. *"Suppose a child comes from Colombia to the 10th grade and has to do the MCAS, in English. He is not going to pass it, he is not going to graduate. So what does he do?"* (3.2), asked a parent in a focus group, adding that this child's failure would have nothing to do with his intelligence and everything to do with his language ability.

Finally, focus group members and community leaders expressed concerns about the declining investment in education on the part of the state of Massachusetts. The budget cuts that were to take place in education in the 2004 Massachusetts state budget and their implications for the presence of teachers, counselors, and nurses in the schools were mentioned as well.

### **A provider reports....**

*We view the schools as organizations with authority and respect. Immigrant parents think that schools here are offering their children the best education. They believe that teachers know more than they do or have a better perspective and understanding about their children's learning. They also believe that due to their own lack of education and their social-economic and legal status, their input is not valuable. The parents say "How can I question the teacher when he knows more than me?" "How can I go and tell teachers to do something differently?"*

*Here it is different. Parents are supposed to go to meetings to receive their children's grade and to get info on their progress. Parents have to participate. It takes long for people to realize that they need to be aware of their children's progress because in the future this could be a problem.* (04mull, a Colombian activist formerly a parent organizer in a local school)

**Table 24. Issues and Recommendations in the Area of Education**

	<b>Issues Identified</b>
K-12 Education	<p><b>Children and Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems in the adaptation of new immigrant children to schools               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cultural barriers</li> <li>• preparation of teachers and school staff to deal with needs of immigrant children</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Practices and behaviors that are demeaning to students</li> <li>• End of bilingual education programs and its effect on new immigrants and on older immigrant students</li> <li>• High stakes testing (MCAS) required for graduation and its impact on students who arrive to MA schools in high school</li> <li>• Declining investment in education in general and its impact on the number of teachers and staff in schools</li> </ul> <p><b>Parents and Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of information about programs of all types</li> <li>• Absence of a process of orientation for immigrants parents to the expectations of U.S. schools regarding               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their participation in school activities</li> <li>• the educational support for their children</li> <li>• the importance of dialoguing with teachers about the progress of their children's education</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Barriers to the participation of parents in schools               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• language and the lack of translators</li> <li>• immigration status and fear of discovery</li> <li>• perspective about schools and teachers as a barrier to active participation of parents in schools</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Higher Education	<p>Cost of higher education</p> <p>Legal barriers to financial aid for undocumented immigrants and/or their U.S.-born children</p> <p>Effect on access and retention of current guarded environment towards immigrants in institutions of higher education</p>
<p><b>Recommendations from Leaders and Providers (K-12)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop more knowledge about the experience of immigrants in the area to inform the practice of school personnel</li> <li>• Advocate for the improvement of conditions for Latino children in the public schools               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be vigilant about the effect of the end of bilingual education programs in MA public schools, particularly for new immigrant and older children.</li> <li>• Advocate strongly for the needs of children affected by the end of bilingual education programs.</li> <li>• Educate students and parents about the MCAS early in a child's education in MA schools.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Advocate for increased investment of the state in public education</li> <li>• Develop ways to link parents to the schooling of their children               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing appropriate and accurate information about programs</li> <li>• Orienting them to the expectation and demands of U.S. schools</li> <li>• Addressing barriers of language and culture</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations from Leaders and Providers (Higher Education)</b></p>	

- Support the MA Senate No 237 which provides eligibility for in-state tuition to students who graduated from a Massachusetts high school after attending for three or more years
- Support the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (Senate 1291) which provides an opportunity for young undocumented immigrants to legalize if they grew up in the U.S., have graduated from a U.S. high school and have no criminal record.

#### **Assets and Resources**

- Community-based programs and non-profits working with children in after-school and educational support programs.
- Public libraries with after-school programs
- Programs in non-profits and in universities that recruit and support immigrant students in higher education

Overt and covert discrimination, deficient bilingual programs, disinvestment in education, and an environment of high stakes testing are taking place in schools across the nation, with a very negative impact upon the schooling experience of Latino children. The experiences that the focus groups and interview participants shared clearly underscored that the schooling of Latino immigrants today is a challenge in the Boston area as well.

**Parents and Schools.** The relationship between parents and schools — a relationship mediated by differences in language and culture, differences in economic background, and the fear of discovery on the part of undocumented parents — was mentioned as an area of critical concern. Lack of information about possibilities for children and the use of English to communicate with parents who are monolingual in Spanish were among the barriers identified. The lack of information provided to parents results in decisions (or lack thereof) that are uninformed, some pointed out. Others focused on the fact that many opportunities bypass the children because parents do not have accurate information. This includes after-school programs, programs for special needs students, and the like. Urgency was expressed about the need to reach out and engage parents of immigrant students to ensure that their educational needs are being met. However, outreach to immigrant parents is not as effective if it is done in English only.

Both immigration status and the fact that parents are working more than one job were mentioned also as barriers to a working relationship between parents and schools. Parents concerned with their own status are often reluctant to participate in a meeting sponsored by the school or even raise concerns about issues affecting their children. Respondents mentioned that a “lack of comfort” helps foster a distance between parents and schools. This distance is often exacerbated by what parents see as demands on their already harrowing schedules and at times when they are not able to meet them. School meetings during the day, for example, are a problem because most parents who work do not get time off with pay for these activities. Parents who work more than one job to make ends meet often find it difficult to engage with the school at all.

Providers and community leaders also spoke about the problems that parents (who may have little schooling themselves) face in guiding their children through the process of schooling, in understanding the demands and expectations of schools, and in helping their children with homework. Immigrant parents, said most, are firm believers in the schools and feel awkward

questioning educators, thinking that educators in the U.S. know what is best for their children (see box on p. 69). Immigrant parents are often unaware of the schools' expectations that parents participate in discussions about their children and in school activities. And many feel incapable of questioning teachers or school administrators. Lack of information, language, "lack of comfort," and parents' own respect for schools and for teachers interfere with the urgent need for educators to work with parents in the schooling of their children.

**Higher Education.** Although immigration status does not present a barrier to access to K-12 education, it does represent a fundamental barrier to access to higher education. All immigrants, regardless of status, are allowed to attend colleges and universities, both public and private. But undocumented immigrants and immigrants with temporary statuses (such as TPS) must pay out-of-state tuition (as if they were international students) in public institutions of higher education in Massachusetts; at UMass Boston, for example, undergraduate in-state tuition in 2003–2004 is \$6,227, while out-of-state tuition is \$16,887.<sup>66</sup> Undocumented immigrants are also not eligible for federal financial aid grants, which are the basis of most need-based financial aid decisions in both public and private colleges and universities. Since parents must fill out financial aid applications, U.S.-born children of undocumented parents are affected by the financial aid limitations that the status of their parents imposes, although once independent from their parents they may attend the public system as in-state students.

*"For example, the undocumented immigrant's child graduates from high school and is not able to apply for financial aid or college because of his parents' status and because you need the income of your parents or financial information to apply for aid,"* explained a Honduran leader. *"So his or her option of advancing is over and many have to stop there"* (02mull). This leaves many promising young adults who have excelled in high school with no chance of betterment. These are usually students who, after growing up in the United States and being educated in the public school system, face a closed door when it comes to higher education. Although these students can be provided full financial support at private institutions, these institutions are required by law, particularly since September 11, 2001, to require valid student visas for students who are not U.S. residents. In sum, *"a person without a visa and without the money to pay for college directly would never be able to [go to college]"* (04mull).

The complexity of this situation was one of the most often mentioned barriers to both education and economic advancement for immigrants from Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Many respondents referred to its effect on the morale of children and their attachment to high school, explaining that this contributes to students dropping out of high school. *"Why complete high school if there is no chance in the future to attend college?"* was something parents, providers, and community leaders reported hearing often from students. Others focused on the fact that this situation often affected academically gifted students, for example, the valedictorian of their classes. The fact that they are not allowed to move forward has a chilling effect on all students in similar circumstances, as was explained by a Salvadoran leader: *"When you have an older brother or sister who is the brightest in the class...the valedictorian but that because of the papers is do not allowed to go on to college, the younger kids see that and say 'why should I start?'"* (20pgll).

The contradictions posed by policies that allow students to attend school from kindergarten to 12th grade but not to go to college, add to the complexity of retaining students in high school. But the increased scrutiny of immigrant students in colleges and universities also has a chilling effect in the retention of students in these institutions. Since security measures have been tightened in the aftermath of September 11, all colleges are now more closely scrutinized by the Department of Homeland Security and, in general, there is a more

heavily regulated environment in regard to immigrants in colleges and universities. Some fear that this scrutiny will make these institutions less welcoming and impact both access and retention of immigrant students.

## Recommendations from Community Leaders and Providers

The situation of Colombians, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans in regard to education is not very different from that faced by Latinos in general, although there are specific situations that affect these groups more closely. These four groups share with other Latinos the effect of the disinvestment in education — both K-12 and higher education — in the state, and the concerns about the effectiveness of public education in educating Latino children, a population largely dependent in the public schools in Massachusetts. The lack of relevant curriculums and of teachers trained to address the needs of culturally different children, the high stakes environment in k-12 education and its more deleterious effect on Latino children,<sup>67</sup> and the demise of the transitional bilingual education programs have led to dismal outcomes for Latino children in Massachusetts. They share also the distance between home and school, marked by linguistic and cultural barriers that remain apparently insurmountable even after several decades of presence by Latino immigrant and migrant children in Massachusetts schools. Many recommendations expressed by providers and community leaders apply to the situation of these groups as well as that of the overall Latino population. These included

- advocating for the improvement of general conditions affecting the performance of Latino children in the public schools, such as curricula, teacher preparation, and expectations of the potential of Latino children
- advocating strongly for the needs of children affected by the end of bilingual education programs in Massachusetts public schools.
- advocating forcefully for remedies to the impact of high stakes testing on the dropout and graduation rates of Latino students.

Community leaders and providers were particularly vocal about the need for vigilance in monitoring the effect of the end of bilingual programs for new immigrant and older children as well as the effects on MCAS testing and its tie to graduation for immigrant children of high school age arriving in Massachusetts.

One recommendation that seems particularly relevant to these groups was the need to accept the presence of new immigrant groups in the state and increase the information about immigrant families and children currently in Massachusetts schools. *"We need to know more about immigrants. I don't think they're going to stop crossing the border,"* one Puerto Rican provider explained, *"so schools need to be more open about welcoming them"* (09rkpl). Many felt that regardless of the opinion one had about the arrival of immigrants, both legal and undocumented, this should not affect the treatment of immigrant children in the schools. *"Children are not responsible for what their parents do, so they shouldn't be punished"* (09rkpl) was a frequently expressed feeling.

Understanding the diversity within Latino populations and developing knowledge about new immigrant groups and their cultures were seen as important steps in the education of educators and other persons involved in service delivery to these groups. The differences among Latino groups in terms of cultural background, racial mixture, reasons for migration, and immigration status, as well as characteristics such as educational attainment, were seen as important facts for providers to consider in planning and implementing services.

Another area that elicited recommendations was that related to the role of parents in schools. Information about the culture of American schools, the expectations of parents, and the different programs available for children was seen as critical. For this to work, schools will have to find ways to overcome the barriers of language and culture and bridge the wide chasm that exists between families and schools.

In the area of higher education, the most overwhelming recommendation was the support of federal and state efforts to remedy the barrier of status for undocumented students seeking higher education. At the state level, Massachusetts joins 23 other states in seeking a remedy for these barriers.<sup>68</sup> The Massachusetts Senate bill S-237, introduced in January 2003 by Senator Jarrett Barrios, seeks to amend the eligibility of persons to qualify as residents of the state for the purpose of higher education by providing eligibility to students who graduated from a Massachusetts high school after attending for three or more years. This will make these students eligible for in-state tuition. The federal proposal, the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (S-1291, 107th Congress), sponsored in the U.S. Senate by Utah Republican Orrin Hatch and Illinois Democrat Richard Durbin, seeks to allow students who have been in the U.S. for five years, have graduated from high school, and do not have a criminal record to apply for a green card. The DREAM act would allow these students to apply for financial aid and in-state tuition rates, as well as give them all the benefits accorded an authorized immigrant. The combination of the state and federal laws would eliminate the barrier of status for financial aid and in-state tuition for a significant number of undocumented immigrant students.

Opposition to both the federal and state bills has focused on their potential to promote further undocumented immigration and their effect on the public higher education system and the access of citizens and legal residents to the system.<sup>69</sup> Some opponents are concerned that easing the situation of some undocumented immigrants will provide an incentive for others to also come to the U.S. illegally. Others argue that offering these remedies will put a large strain on public institutions of higher education already reeling from large budget cuts.

## **Assets and Resources**

Community-based organizations working with youth in after-school and educational support programs and those supporting the participation of immigrant parents in school-related issues were seen as resources in the area of K-12 education. Among the many providers of services for children that were mentioned were East Boston Ecumenical Community Council (EBECC), Centro Latino, Concilio Hispano, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Big Sisters and Big Brothers Association. Public libraries were also mentioned as resources for children, particularly those with volunteers available to work with children after school. The Boston Parent Organizing Network and the Massachusetts Initiative for Latino Students were mentioned often as resources for parents. These organizations provide information for parents about local schools and school policies and work with parents to develop their capacity to interact effectively with schools.

In the area of higher education respondents focused on organizations that (1) advocate for lifting the barrier that immigration status represents for immigrant students; (2) recruit and support the application process of immigrant students; and (3) work to retain immigrant students within universities.

## Social Support

Most of the literature on the social consequences of immigration focuses on the harshness of the process of immigration and of the adaptation of immigrants to their new surroundings. While the context of how an immigrant leaves and makes his or her way to the United States is significant in the early adaptation of the newcomer, factors related to the way the immigrant is received — and his or her place in the new society — influence his or her subsequent experience and shape the perception of the experience and the psychosocial adjustment of the immigrant.<sup>70</sup> According to interviews and focus groups conducted for this study, it is evident that within Colombian, Guatemalan, Honduran, and Salvadoran communities, there are persons at every stage of the process of adjustment: new arrivals, persons settling, some with already established routines that incorporate them at different levels into U.S. society. Some who immigrated long ago may have stable situations while others who have also been in the U.S. for many years still struggle to attain a certain level of stability.

It is also evident that, in the case of recent immigrants, the stresses due to the process of immigration segue into problems related to the immigrants' status and the difficulties they encounter in the process of adaptation and incorporation to the U.S. due to language and cultural differences. The increased vulnerability of these individuals and families is seldom addressed, due not only to the problems of language but also to the almost complete absence of supports for these groups. On the one hand budget cuts have slashed language-accessible social services in Latino communities, while, on the other, the federal government has eliminated immigrants' eligibility for most social programs. The result is that new immigrants go without at the time when the need it they most.

### Pressing Issues: Factors That Increase Vulnerability

Many community leaders and providers highlighted the **trauma** that immigrants from these groups have undergone in their countries of origin as well as the harrowing experiences many of them undergo in the process of immigration itself. Immigrants from Central America first came escaping war, while Hondurans most recently have come in the aftermath of a great natural disaster; new Colombian immigrants escape the violence in their country. Many have lost family members; others have been tortured or have witnessed massacres. Some continue to suffer knowing that the situation that drove them here may continue in their home country. For others, the trauma is the more common experience of immigrants who leave family and friends behind, hoping to become able to help them financially down the road.

Still others have experienced significant hardships in the process of migrating to the U.S. For the undocumented, the travel to the U.S. is often fraught with danger. For example, in a survey of 150 Salvadoran immigrants in San Francisco, 33% had been assaulted once, and 70% felt their life had been placed in danger at some time during the trip.<sup>71</sup> Media accounts point to the increasing danger inherent in the crossing of the U.S.-Mexican border in recent years, as the security after September 11 leaves fewer options for safe entries. "Coyotes," those who bring undocumented immigrants into the U.S. for a fee, are now about the only option for making it across the border, and these crossings are now taking place more and more frequently across the desert, with the dangers this entails.<sup>72</sup> Most Central Americans have to travel through Mexico and struggle with the immigration laws of that country as well. In the San Francisco survey, 68% of the people had attempted to enter Mexico several times, and the average stay in Mexico was 2.5 months.<sup>73</sup>

Many persons interviewed indicated that there are few resources or specialized supports to help immigrants deal with their traumatic experiences, and thus they are not given the chance to heal that they need.

**Separation and reunification** are another source of stress for immigrant families. Separation from loved ones in the country of origin is a common experience among Salvadoran, Honduran, Guatemalan, and Colombian immigrants. Many talked about mothers who left children behind, fathers who left whole families, or young people who migrated alone while still very young. Many do not see their families for years because they may not have the necessary immigrant status or documents that would allow them to go back for a visit and return to the U.S. to work. Children often have difficulty understanding why parents need to leave them behind in the home country. Being separated from parents for years can be traumatic. The kids are suffering from having been left behind. *"This is a very big issue for people in terms of the sadness, leaving their families, or their families not being all together. That's very difficult emotionally"* (16swpnl).

Parents, children, and spouses have been separated for extended periods of time. This can pose special challenges for the entire family. For example, children may have been cared for in their home country by other relatives. They have to adjust to their parents now being their caretakers and the authority in the home. "There is a lot of stress in just trying to figure out how this family takes form again," said a social service provider working with Colombians and Salvadorans in East Boston (19swpl). The adults don't tend to acculturate as quickly as the teenagers and children do. The youths seem to learn the language more quickly and often find themselves acting in roles such as translator/interpreter for their parents.

Families also find that **roles within the family change** both as a result of absence and as a consequence of the adjustment to a new life. For example, women may find it easier than their partners to find work so they come alone or become the sustenance of the whole immigrant family; adolescents left behind may not acquiesce so easily to adult authority once they are reunited in the U.S.; English-speaking children may wield a lot of power within the family; acculturated adolescents and young adults may begin to earn higher salaries than their parents. Fathers, mothers, and children take on different responsibilities. The families are faced with the normal intergenerational issues complicated by the clash of values that result from uneven acculturation among family members. As kids become "Americanized," sometimes their values clash with the values of their parents. This causes significant stress for the entire family unit and is a frequent source of depression, according to mental health workers involved with this population, who add that if parents are consumed by depression it negatively impacts the entire family.

Another frequent cause of depression in the immigrant community is *"related to adjustment issues and not understanding how things work here and being treated very differently,"* explained a social worker working with new Salvadoran and Colombian immigrants (19swpl). Disorientation and needing time to learn the ways things work is common, but it can be specially challenging when immigrants find themselves devalued in the U.S. context — be it because of a lack of English proficiency or being undocumented or being the victims of racism. This can be a traumatic situation for those who once held places of respect in his communities of origin, but for whom immigration has meant downward mobility — either social or economic.

While many immigrants need mental health services, few are available to them. This is partially due to immigrants not being able to pay for services and partially due to a major lack of mental health providers who speak the primary languages of the immigrants.

**Immigration status**, as has been reported in previous sections, impacts every part of the daily life of immigrants: their ability to find work, their ability to advance academically and professionally, their eligibility for a variety of services. For the undocumented there is also the problem of being virtually invisible. They experience stressors of *“living in the shadows ... not being seen, not being acknowledged, not being respected, not being there,”* explained a provider in East Boston (18swpnl). People live in fear when they or a family member are undocumented or have an insecure status. Immigrants are often exploited when they have an undocumented or insecure status. This happens at home, at work, at school, and many other places. Immigrants find themselves faced with having to pay large amounts of money for services to help them with paperwork, sometimes status-related, because they do not know how to do the paperwork themselves or cannot read and speak English. Some immigration services take advantage of the disadvantaged position of immigrants based on their status. All this creates pressures on new immigrants and their families — pressures that are common, according to community leaders and providers, among Colombian, Salvadoran, Honduran, and Guatemalan immigrants.

**Lack of proficiency in English** impacts immigrants extensively in their daily lives. Immigrants who do not speak English face more challenges in finding work, knowing their rights, accessing various types of services, and just in dealing in everyday activities. It is very hard for immigrants to learn about how systems work here and what resources they are eligible for if they do not speak and read English.<sup>74</sup>

**Financial issues** are a huge stress for immigrant families. Many immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, are unable to find jobs that pay well. They experience difficulty in paying for food, rent, utilities, and other basic necessities. Sometimes the children have to find work to help meet the basic financial needs of the family. Rents are skyrocketing in places like East Boston, and many immigrant families either have to live in small apartments with many people in them or leave the area to seek cheaper housing if possible. Leaving the area causes problems such as transportation to and from work. Many immigrants do not have driver's licenses and cannot afford the expenses of transportation (car, etc.).

**Domestic violence** is also a significant problem within these communities, according to social workers working with families from these groups. Some interviewees report it is partly a reflection of a male-centered culture, but many report that the issue is exacerbated by tensions emanating from transformations in the roles within the family and the economic pressures of life in the U.S. Many immigrants, whether they are documented or not, are not aware of their rights as victims of domestic violence. Undocumented immigrants fear that reporting domestic abuse may result in deportation of the family or members of the family; in fact being charged with domestic violence is not only a cause for deportation but it is also a bar for obtaining any immigration relief (such as TPS or NACARA). Social workers also report that some children hold the threat of a child abuse report (whether or not it is actually occurring) over their parents. This places the children in a place of power over the parents, especially in families where all or some of the members are undocumented.

### Mixed status families...

Lack of documentation underlines many problems that immigrant families face, and this is also true when some members of the family are authorized immigrants while others have different statuses. A provider in East Boston explained that *"the most common scenario is that the children are citizens and the parents either have TPS or they are undocumented"* (19swpl). Although American-born children are eligible for all benefits, including food stamps and TANF, participation in these services is very low because parents fear that demanding these services for their children will expose their undocumented status. *"The children can apply for different public benefits,"* explained the East Boston provider, *"but parents are still very fearful of going into public agencies, like the welfare office.... There are a lot of myths and rumors [in the undocumented immigrant community] that even if your child is a citizen they are still ineligible or that INS is going to get them to pay everything back later"* (19swpl). For this reason, many agencies are unable to reach eligible immigrants or serve mixed-status families.<sup>75</sup>

National estimates are that three out of every four children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens. Yet, because of the insecure circumstances facing members of their families, many of these children go without needed services and supports. Children in "mixed-status" families, regardless of their citizenship, run the same fate as their undocumented siblings and parents. To some, they are the most vulnerable citizens in the nation, a class of citizen children who live subject to the disadvantages of their undocumented parents.<sup>76</sup>

### Pressing Issues: Barriers to Services

Many of these situations — the trauma of the migration, the separation from family and the problems of reunification, the changing roles within the family, the consequences of undocumented status — increase the vulnerability of families. Facing this vulnerability is a human services system that is increasingly incapable of providing support because of both institutional and cultural barriers. Institutional barriers include policy restrictions on the use of services by immigrants as well as the "chilling effect" of these consequences on the use of services, even those for which immigrants may qualify. Language and cultural differences also represent barriers to immigrants, since not all services they need are offered in a language or a method that can meet their needs.

**Policy restrictions** have resulted in dramatic cutbacks in access to all public services. Cutbacks in access to services to immigrants have resulted from the intertwining of social and immigration policy with the stated goal of curtailing undocumented immigration. This began with California's Proposition 187 in 1994, which aimed to decrease undocumented immigration by curtailing access to public services, including health and education, and it became a nationwide fact with the 1996 passage of both the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), better known as Welfare Reform, and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. At the federal level, legal immigrants lost eligibility for most safety net programs. Non-citizens with permanent residency in the U.S. lost eligibility for food stamps and welfare benefits under the 1996 PRWORA law. All immigrants arriving after August 22, 1996 passage of the bill, were barred from receiving SSI, food stamps, TANF, housing benefits, and Medicaid for five years; sponsors had to assume full responsibility for newcomers for this period of time; and even after five years, the income of the sponsors had to be considered in determining eligibility for benefits such as SSI. In 1998, benefits were restored for disabled non-citizens and those

## Youth: The “1.5” and the Second Generation Immigrants

Although the situation of immigrant children and youth was not a specific focus of this report, many interviewees and focus groups members expressed much concern about their situation. Much of the information they provided has been included in this report, but there are several issues that are so compelling that they should be underscored in this section.

The first is the situation facing youth that are here alone. Some of these are young people in their late teens that have made their way to Boston on their own, leaving their families behind. Others are youngsters of all ages that are left behind after deportations. “Sometimes people get deported and the kids are placed with somebody else and the parent has to leave,” explained a provider. *“I have a girl who’s left with this neighbor ... because their parent thinks the child is better off in the States”* (26mhpnl). Many of these children are taken in by other families, but providers are concerned that the care of these children often uneven.

The second is the situation of the second generation of immigrants (children of immigrants born in the United States) and of what has come to be called the “1.5 generation,” or the group of immigrants that come here as children and are raised and schooled in the United States. The vulnerability of this group deserves attention in regards to its effect on subsequent outcomes. An important issue is the difference in the rate of acculturation between these children and their parents. Portes and Rumbaut, for example, offer the perspective that the best outcomes are the result of generational consonance, that is, when both children and adults acculturate at a similar rate, or when selective acculturation takes place in the second generation and the youngsters maintain parental language and culture and are immersed, with ethnic community support, in the mainstream culture. According to Portes and Rumbaut, generational dissonance, “where children’s acculturation leaps ahead of their parents’, is today more a danger signal than a first step towards successful adaptation.”<sup>77</sup> Here families experience rupture of ties, loss of parental authority; youngsters become vulnerable to a marginal and adversarial socialization.

Another important concern is the situation of the 1.5 generation children who are undocumented themselves and the second generation children of undocumented parents. Leaders and providers point out that although the first are not U.S. citizens and the second are, both live the lives of marginality and fear of the undocumented. For both, immigration status becomes relevant at the community level, when programs require their or their parents’ Social Security number for enrollment in after-school programs, summer jobs programs, and summer camps. In the case of the U.S.-born children of the undocumented, this situation changes when they become independent of their parents and can, on their own, claim the benefits of citizenship and with that, support for post-high school education and better jobs. But this comes after a childhood of economic and social disadvantage. For the 1.5 generation of undocumented, the marginality continues: they will not be able to continue their education, regardless of their academic achievement. The odds may appear insurmountable against their aspirations for better jobs than those their parents now have.

Many providers and community leaders interviewed expressed that there are few supports for the youngsters or their families undergoing these situations. Some children are growing up alone, be it because their family was deported or because the tension between parents and children has become unbearable. Others are growing up without hope because of the limits imposed by immigration status. In the eyes of many providers and community leaders, the emerging gang behavior among young people from these groups is a result of the stresses faced by these young immigrants. Timely attention to the needs of young immigrants — both in school and in the community — was a strong recommendation of providers and community leaders interviewed for this study.

under 18 and over 65 years of age. Eligibility for food stamps for those legal immigrants in the U.S. for more than five years was restored in 2003.

Massachusetts reacted to the federal restrictions by maintaining state eligibility for state-funded Medicaid (MassHealth) and food stamp programs for legal immigrants. But these have been greatly curtailed in the 2004 Massachusetts state budget, which cut all state-funded MassHealth coverage for roughly 10,000 legal immigrant adults.<sup>78</sup> In Massachusetts, undocumented immigrants can send their children to public school and will receive emergency health care from hospitals with free care pools, but that is all. No federal benefits are available for the undocumented, including Head Start, school nutrition programs, WIC, grants, loans for higher education, housing subsidies or public housing, and job training among others. Although the American-born children of the undocumented are eligible for all benefits, including food stamps and TANF, their use of these supports and the participation in services is very low. The reason is that the undocumented **fear discovery** of their situation as they apply for services for their children or other members of the family who may qualify for them. Hayes, in her study on the impact of immigration status on the use of services by the undocumented in the Boston area, found that fear of discovery of their legal status "*dominated the day to day decisions of the undocumented*" in terms of services.<sup>79</sup> The result is a reluctance to seek services of all types, even in the face of increased need due to the economic conditions and the general curtailment of services. Because of fear and lack of knowledge, poor immigrant children entitled to food subsidies and other services go without them. Brown and Leibowitz estimated that in 1999, nationally, three out of four children in immigrant families are citizens.<sup>80</sup>

Even legal immigrants may resist using services due to the regulations inherent in their own immigrant status. Since 1996, in order to obtain legal residency permits, immigrants' sponsors have to commit to pay for all medical needs for at least five years. So it is common for immigrants to abstain from using public services for that period of time. Immigrants with other statuses such as TPS and NACARA, are also reluctant to use services to which they and/or their children are entitled to for fear that they will be perceived as "in danger of becoming a **public charge**," something that would prevent them from obtaining permanent residency in the U.S.. Cutbacks and policies heap hardship on recent immigrants, even if they are here legally, since they are denied assistance at a crucial time in their adjustment to living the U.S.

**Language** also constitutes a strong barrier to access and use of services by immigrants. Recent federal guidelines by the Department of Health and Human Services (August 2000) and the Massachusetts' Emergency Room Interpreter Bill, signed by Governor Paul Celluci in 2000, guarantee linguistic access to hospital services and services in institutions funded by the federal government.<sup>81</sup> Community-based programs geared to the Latino community also offer services that are linguistically accessible, but these do not cover all areas of need. Mental health and family support services in Spanish, for example, are in short supply. And, although there is always an effort to expand the range of services offered, recent cuts in the Massachusetts budget have affected the contracts with these Latino service organizations, leading to less availability of regularly offered services. The fact is that in many cases — whether in day care, after-school programs, and other services for children, or when they encounter the Department of Social Services and the legal system, or in other human services — immigrant families often face services that are not linguistically accessible to them.

A final barrier mentioned was financial. Even authorized immigrants who are working, often are not provided insurance by their jobs, and thus must pay "out of pocket" for most of their "help seeking" — in health care, in mental health, in dental services. Focus group members and interviewees expressed that given the low salaries of workers, this was a major

barrier, making immigrants wait until the last minute to seek these services, usually in an emergency situation.

In sum, increased psychosocial vulnerability and institutional and cultural barriers to services frame the social adaptation of new immigrants from Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Factors related to the process of migration and to the specific reception of the groups depending on their immigrant status shape the immigrants' psychosocial adjustment and their need for social support. These come at a time in which the human services system is particularly unreceptive to the needs of immigrants, because of restrictions emerging from policy changes and budget cuts, along with cultural barriers to services. The findings from this study and the literature on immigrants' use of services are consistent.<sup>82</sup> Many immigrants are afraid to seek services. They experience a multitude of barriers that impact access and availability of health and social services.

### **Recommendations from Community Leaders and Providers**

Leaders in the Guatemalan, Colombian, Honduran, and Salvadoran communities and providers to these groups emphasized the importance of resolving the immigration situation of persons with Temporary Protected Status, persons seeking asylum, and the undocumented as a way to begin to address the needs of these families. Some call for a complete overhaul of the United States immigration system; others have less sweeping recommendations, but all agree that major changes are needed to counter the problems faced by families trying to reunify and individuals trying to legalize their status.

Other recommendations include:

- Develop mental health and family support services that take into account the needs of new immigrant families that may have undergone trauma prior to arrival.
- Reinstate benefits and social services (food stamps, healthcare services, etc.) for people with TPS and for other immigrants, as they do not receive the services they desperately need.<sup>83</sup>
- Increase access to existing programs — and develop new programs — geared to help in the adaptation of new immigrants. These may include language programs as well as informational programs about systems and processes with which the immigrant must interact such as immigration, schools, health care, criminal justice, and taxes.
- Develop programs that support youth as they become integrated to U.S. society.
- Guarantee access to all youngsters regardless of status to community-based after-school and summer programs
- Develop opportunities for immigrant youth to become leaders in the community.

### **Assets and Resources**

Providers of services to persons from these groups focused often on the families themselves and on the networks of friends and acquaintances — both old and new — that provide sustenance to immigrant families. Families are usually large and extended, and households may include friends as well as family members. Many saw these close-knit relationships as the first line of social support. Religious communities and groups made up of co-nationals extended family networks. The interconnections between these elements were

seen as stronger in some communities than in others; for example, they were perceived as strong among Salvadorans but as newer and less developed among newly arrived Colombians.

Public resources for support for immigrant families have been greatly diminished, as was explained earlier, but community-based nonprofits and community mental health centers and hospitals offer support to many. Those seen as most effective are those that offer linguistically accessible services and that are culturally competent to provide effective services for new immigrants. EBECC, Concilio Hispano, La Alianza Hispana, and the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative were among those mentioned as resources in this regard.

**Table 25. Issues and Recommendations in Relationship to Social Support**

<b>Issues Identified</b>	
<b>Increased Psychosocial Vulnerability and Need</b>	<p><b>Social support for families</b> due to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma traumatic situations experienced in countries of origin trauma of the process of migration</li> <li>• Separation and reunification of families</li> <li>• Changes in roles within the families roles of men and women roles of parents and children</li> <li>• Individual and family stresses due to immigration status and economic hardships</li> <li>• Perceived high incidence of family violence</li> </ul> <p><b>Attention to the problems of youth</b> due to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separation and reunification of families</li> <li>• Changes in roles of parents and children that erode parental authority</li> <li>• Uneven process of acculturation within the family</li> <li>• Limitations due to immigration status and economic hardships</li> <li>• Increasing gang-related activities</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers to Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional barriers due to policy restrictions on the use of services by both authorized and undocumented immigrants</li> <li>• Barriers to services due to fear of discovery of the undocumented</li> <li>• Barriers of language and culture</li> <li>• Financial barriers: lack of health insurance</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations from Leaders and Providers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to provide avenues for legalization for all groups, as a way to begin to address the needs of families</li> <li>• Advocate to expedite the processing all types of immigration requests, including legalizations and family reunifications</li> <li>• Develop mental health and family support services that take into account the needs of new immigrant families</li> <li>• Reinstate benefits and social services for authorized immigrants</li> <li>• Increase access to existing and develop new programs geared to help in the adaptation of new immigrants, including language programs, programs that orient immigrants to American systems and processes, such as immigration, schools, health care, criminal justice, taxes, etc.</li> </ul>	

- Develop programs that support youth as they become integrated to U.S. society.
- Advocate for the inclusion of all children, regardless of their own or their parents' status, in services for children at the community level
- Develop opportunities for immigrant youth to become leaders in the community.

**Assets and Resources**

- Families and the strength of familiar relationships
- Organizations that provide social and mental health services that are linguistically accessible and culturally competent

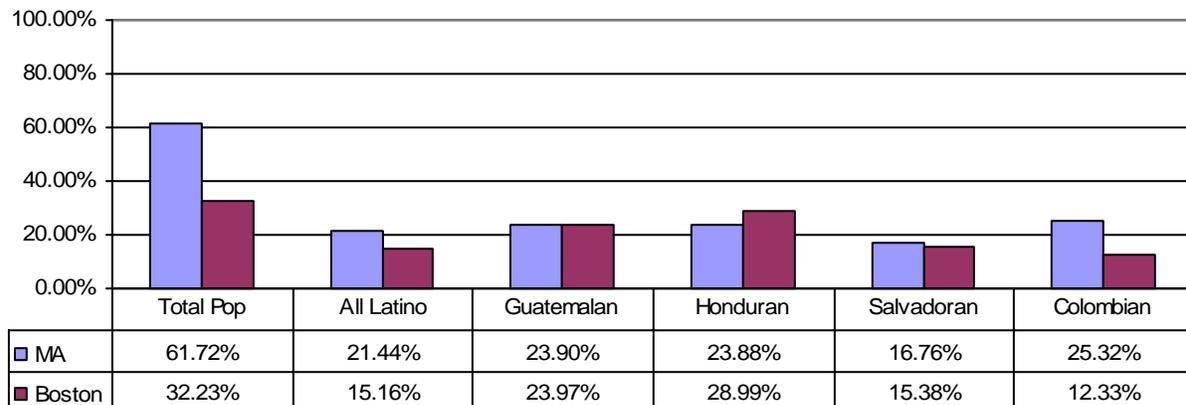
## Housing

*At the moment we received our social security number, a lot of doors opened for us. So thank God we have acquired a home. (#3.3)*

“Most of the people that come here,” explained a Salvadoran provider, “have problems with housing” (21pgpl). Housing problems among new immigrants from Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala include the violation of their rights as tenants, along with barriers to subsidized housing and homeownership that result from their immigration status. They also include problems such as overcrowding, poor housing conditions, and the lack of affordable housing that they share with other working people in the Boston area.

Latinos, as a whole, are a population of renters. In Massachusetts, the homeownership rate for Latino households was 21.44% compared to 61.72% among the general population (Figure 13). The percentage of Latino homeowners in Boston is even lower, at 15.16%, denoting the difficulties Latinos have faced in attaining homeownership in Boston. Latino homeownership rates are low due to low incomes in a housing market that is exploding and a low representation among those receiving mortgages in the state.<sup>84</sup>

**Figure 13. Homeownership Rate. Households of Selected Latino National Groups, Massachusetts and Boston, 2000**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

Although the homeownership rates among Colombians, Hondurans, and Guatemalans are slightly higher than those of the overall Latino population they are still substantially below those of the general population. The overwhelming majority of households from these groups are renters. Salvadoran homeownership rates are among the lowest among Latinos groups: Dominicans, at 15.61%,<sup>85</sup> have the lowest homeownership rate among Latino groups in Massachusetts, followed by Salvadorans at 16.76%.

## Pressing Issues

Immigration status of members of the community and the lack of information about the process of purchasing real estate were identified as difficulties that persons from these groups faced in becoming homeowners. Focus group members, particularly, mentioned the fact that there are few places to obtain information about the process of purchasing a home, how to approach and deal with the banks (and how to avoid predatory lenders!), and the legal requirements for becoming a homeowner.

But immigrant status proves to be a more formidable barrier. In the case of the undocumented, they can purchase housing only if they can pay for it outright: according to interviews and focus group reports, it has proven difficult for the undocumented to qualify for mortgage loans without a valid Social Security number or a valid visa. Focus group members reported that often even those with working permits (a TPS) were not considered for mortgages, although this was not a uniform practice among banks and some do lend to persons with legal work permits. In the case of those with TPS or those applying for asylum through NACARA, the possibility of deportation chills any efforts to purchase property. Says a legal services provider:

*What would happen if a NACARA applicant buys a house, invests a lot of money and six months later the immigration service tells them that they don't approve your NACARA application? [If they are deported] they have to leave their house, their wife, their children, their assets over here and go back with nothing.*  
(06rkpl)

And so, most Colombians, Salvadorans Hondurans, and Guatemalans rent their housing and in this way become immersed in the vagaries and abuses of the rental housing market. For renters, the first concern is the cost of housing. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Massachusetts is the most expensive state in the nation in which to rent an apartment.<sup>86</sup> Housing prices in Boston, where the median rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,419, require that two working adults, each earning the minimum wage, work nearly 70 hours apiece per week to afford the rent, according to the report sponsored by the Annie E Casey Foundation, the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the Housing Assistance Council.<sup>87</sup>

To deal with the situation, many families double up. *"If you can't afford housing, you put several families in one apartment,"* explained a union organizer working with these immigrants (05rkpl). *"Many people live with another family in the apartment,"* said a Guatemalan leader who works in housing in Boston (07rkll), pointing to a common situation. Others are moving out of the city. *"It's like a pushing force for the immigrant community to move out,"* the Guatemalan leader (07rkll) explained, adding that every year families move from the neighborhood because they cannot afford the rent increases. Some are moving out of the city to other areas both south and north of Boston, and others are moving out of state and commuting to a job in Boston. A Guatemalan focus group member who works in downtown

**Table 26. Issues and Recommendations in Relationship to Housing**

<b>Issues Identified</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low rates of homeownership due to low incomes, high cost of housing, lack of information about the process of purchasing real estate and barriers due to the immigrant status of immigrants.</li> <li>• High cost of rental housing force families to live together or to move away from the city to find less expensive housing</li> <li>• Fear of discovery by undocumented makes them vulnerable to the practices of unscrupulous landlords</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations from Leaders and Providers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve availability of information, advocacy, and legal support for tenants' rights for immigrants, regardless of status</li> <li>• Develop advocacy strategies to protect access to housing in the city, particularly for those who cannot commute</li> <li>• Support the eligibility of undocumented immigrants and immigrants' with TPS to obtain drivers' licenses that will permit them to commute to jobs in Boston from cities and towns where housing is less expensive</li> <li>• Improve access to information about the process of purchasing a home.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assets and Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families and friends</li> <li>• Organizations that work to protect the rights of tenants</li> <li>• Organizations that advocate for affordable housing</li> </ul>

Boston explained that *"I have been trying to get a house in Dorchester, but they cost [too much]. So we are moving to Providence to a three family house."*

But for the most vulnerable among these populations, commuting is not an option. The inability to get a drivers' license prevents the undocumented who have jobs in Boston from moving out of the city in search of cheaper housing. Forced to stay close to the city, and ineligible for public or subsidized (Section 8) housing, they become vulnerable to abuse by unscrupulous private landlords. Sometimes this happens when in lieu of a credit report (which is not available for persons without a Social Security number) they are required pay 3 or 4 months rent in advance, or when rents are increased several times a year. A Colombian immigrant explains:

*[When] the landlord knows that the people who occupy their property are illegal, this is an even more powerful factor to increase the rent. Illegal immigrants are forced to pay the rent all the time and on time because there have been cases where landlords have called the INS and reported the people that live in the property. As an immigrant, if you have to stay without money to eat, you do. You have to pay the rent no matter what. (03mull)*

In other cases, landlords offer housing conditions that are very substandard — with broken windows, without heat, with pests — knowing that renters are afraid to complain. *"You deal with it or you leave,"* says the same Colombian immigrant. *"There is such a demand for housing and it is so hard to find housing when you are undocumented that you do not have any option but to stay there."*

The limits imposed by status and the fear of discovery combine to place undocumented families in a highly vulnerable position every day of their lives. The relief that comes from obtaining a TPS or asylum is mentioned often by focus group members and community leaders.

### **Recommendations from Community Leaders and Providers**

The primary concern for providers and community leaders focused on the protection of the rights of immigrant tenants regardless of their status. Improving access to legal support for tenants as well as access to information in linguistically accessible forms about their rights was seen as important. But improving available options for housing was the best way to address the abuse and improve the conditions under which immigrants were forced to live.

Collaboration with housing advocacy movements aiming to protect the availability of affordable housing in the Boston area — such as the Eviction Free Zone in Cambridge — were underscored, as was the need for advocacy for housing availability for those who cannot commute and — at the same time — efforts to make immigrants eligible to obtain a drivers' license.

### **Assets and Resources**

In regard to housing the first asset often mentioned was the willingness of families and friends to house persons when they first arrive in the Boston area and, later, as a way to alleviate the cost of housing in the city. Organizations working to support affordable housing in the city and/or the involvement of immigrants in these efforts, such as City Life/Vida Urbana in Jamaica Plain, the Eviction Free Zone in Cambridge, and organizations working to address the abuses by landlords were seen as resources to Central American and Colombian tenants.

## IV. Conclusions

The movement of people — and their adaptation and integration to a new society — remains a topic as timely and as fascinating as the first time that historians and sociologists began to document it. Boston, a city of immigrants, has long valued the contributions of newcomers, although most groups have significant stories of hardship to tell, (many not unlike those we have reported here). The story of the ways Salvadorans, Colombians, Hondurans, and Guatemalans leave their countries of origin, make their way arduously to the U.S., and begin a life in a new place has a long and rich precedent in Boston.

Among Latinos in Massachusetts and in Boston, these too are the “newcomers.” With them, the Latino community’s diversity takes a long leap forward, never to turn back. If at any time Latinos were perceived or perceived themselves as monolithic, those days are long gone. Although the differences in characteristics, cultural backgrounds, racial composition, reasons for migration, and immigration status may be largely unnoticeable, the fact is that all of these factors interact to create a very different experience for each group. As we have found here, differences among Latino subgroups in Massachusetts are salient in terms of immigration status, age, family composition, labor force attachment, earnings and income, poverty, and educational attainment. These differences have profound effects on concrete issues such as the opportunities for employment and access to public services, as well as public policy priorities.

Within the Latino community, the growing diversity requires attention, as Latinos learn of each others’ experiences, the issues they share in common, and those that affect one sector of the population or another. Most Latinos in Massachusetts are not immigrants; they were born in the U.S. or in Puerto Rico. So, in many ways, Latinos, no matter where they have been born, need to own this immigration, and with it, the responsibility for making immigrant rights a policy priority and the situation of recent immigrants a top concern. These internal shifts are made more laborious for Latinos since they take place in an environment that demands that Latinos act as one, with little understanding of these subtle differences, their meanings, and the tremendous feat of consensus and coalition building that some of these arrangements require.

A close look at the experience of specific groups, no matter how small these may be, highlights the complexity that boils right under the surface and that makes so much difference to the lives of people. Most salient among these are those issues related to immigration status and the limitations and opportunities it imposes in regards to work, housing, public services, and education as well as the cauldron of stresses it brings in relationship to family stability and psychosocial well being. We have tried to present this complexity as we have learned it from focus group members and community leaders who live it and providers who stand ready to help. It is an area that requires policy remedies and immediate supports. It requires, as one Puerto Rican provider put it, that we acknowledge that there are forces beyond those we can control here in Boston that make immigrants from these countries arrive in our city and that there are sectors of our city that benefit exceptionally from their presence and their work. *“We need,” she said, “to be more open about welcoming them.”*

According to community leaders and providers, to welcome means, first of all, to respect and defend their rights as workers, as tenants, as people living in the United States. In the process of this study we were told many stories of abuse and exploitation that, as one student wrote and we edited from the body of the report, *“have no place in the United States.”* It belongs here, underscored, as we report the lessons from our work.

Welcoming means providing opportunities and hope for children and adolescents, regardless of their status. It means giving young people options to “be good,” possibilities to grow and be educated, the ability to make the contribution that many want to make. It means providing support to families that have left one trauma behind and are facing a major adjustment as they make their way in U.S. society: it means providing services when people need them the most.

To make a difference in welcoming them means to provide many kinds of information — about immigration and the process of legalization, about workers’ and tenants’ rights, about schools and the expectations of teachers, about how to become homeowners — in linguistically accessible ways. It means opening up access to our resources by making them culturally competent.

Finally, according to community leaders and providers, it also means knowing more about these new immigrants: their background, their culture, their contribution to our economy and to our lives in the Boston area. This will help teachers and service providers do their work better and help the rest of us to make better, more informed decisions about immigration and immigrants’ contributions to our society.

Changing the hearts and minds of the American people and our policy makers about immigration and immigrants, unfortunately never an easy task in the U.S., is perhaps harder when issues of security, boundaries, and economic opportunities top our concerns. But we must make it possible to bring rationality to this discussion. Clearly the United States is not in a position to offer an unlimited welcome to all those who want to come here, and therefore immigration policies and restrictions are necessary. But most current knowledge points to the need for policies that take into account the forces that propel and maintain undocumented immigrant flows from Latin America (and other places). These should be policies that go beyond the militarization of the border and the punishment and abuse of those who have made their way here and in many instances provide labor power for the lower niches of our economy.

Since September 11, 2001, the situation for most immigrants has worsened as national security measures have taken precedence over the individual rights of non-citizens. Respondents often mentioned the backlash from the terrorist attacks, which presents itself both as a more negative environment and attitude towards immigrants and as a more aggressive enforcement of immigration laws, including raids and deportations. At this point, said one, *“every immigrant is a risk or a concern”* (03mull). Respondents understand the need for measures to insure safety: *“People are working and reacting to what is going on since 9/11,”* as a Salvadoran community leader put it, adding: *“This is a domestic policy and yes we are a community that is concerned about security but also we are a community concerned about immigrants”* (25pg11).

In spite of the hard times, both those related to increased security and those that derive from the situation of being new immigrants, the fact is that like immigrants before them, Salvadorans, Colombians, Hondurans, and Guatemalans have made Boston their home. Like immigrants from the past, we know that in the end they will contribute more than they will receive from our society. They and their children will do the hardest jobs and at the same time enrich our lives with experiences and cultures that we would otherwise not have known.

Boston is a city of immigrants, a city whose very form and structure — from the narrow streets of the North End or South Boston to the three deckers of Dorchester and Mattapan and to the Zakim-Bunker Hill Bridge — remind us of those who have come before. These are the latest entrants, poised to make their contribution to the economic growth and cultural richness of Massachusetts in the 21st Century.

## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 1: Census Undercount of Hidden Populations Phil Granberry**

The basis for the decennial Census is that the U.S. House of Representative was created to be a representative body. Thus Article I, Section 2 of the United States Constitution calls for the Census. This was to be done by a head count. Even though the Census is considered the best data for demographic information, it is not a perfect instrument. By 1943 Census demographers discovered that 453,000 more men had registered for the draft than were counted in the 1940 Census.<sup>88</sup> The problem of the undercount became a major issue by 1980 when many groups wanted to address issues caused by cutbacks in allocations of federal revenues to state and local governments. This opposition did not significantly change the Census. The Supreme Court upheld the Census Bureau's decision not to implement an adjustment to the Census in both 1980 and 1990.<sup>89</sup> In October of 2002, a federal appeals court ruled that the Census Bureau must release its statistically adjusted count for every state, county, and neighborhood in the United States.

The 2000 Census appears again not to address the undercount. An area in which the Census routinely creates an undercount is with the question of race and ethnicity. Because the Census is self-reported and the question of race and ethnicity is categorical, it is difficult to test the validity of the respondent's answers. In the last twenty years identity has become a major issue, and Americans have conflicting opinions about race and ethnicity.<sup>90</sup> Answers to question about race may not be reliable. For example, the Census numbers for American Indians over the last several Censuses has increased at a rate higher than births could allow for. It appears that more people are now identifying themselves as American Indian who, in previous Censuses, had identified themselves as another race.

One of the ways the Census Bureau has attempted to address the undercount is to improve coverage of the Census. As good as this method is, it cannot adequately address the problem-of-hard to count people or self-reporting errors. With an immigrant population, many of whom are undocumented, many believe the undercount to be significant. Many argue for statistical methods to be implemented by the Census Bureau. However, the head count continues to be the basis of the Census.<sup>91</sup>

There are two alternative methods to estimate the undercount. One is the demographic analysis. This method combines all types of aggregate data, like birth and death certificates, immigration records, and administrative records like enrollment in Medicare or Medicaid. It uses this information to compare data from one Census to the next. Overall population size is derived from this information. This method is useful to obtain undercount or overcount information for age, race, and sex on a national level.<sup>92</sup>

The other technique is the dual system method. Both the Census and a post-enumeration sample (PES) are used. Environmentalists to project the fish population in a lake use this method. By taking two counts, projection can be made based on the proportion of one group to the other. The people counted in the first group are counted and recorded. The second count monitors how many of the people in the first count are counted the second time. If these two counts are random samples a projection can be made for the total population. Three classes of individuals are created. The first category is individuals counted both times, the second category is individuals counted the first time but not the second time, and the third category is individuals counted the second time but not the first. To help clarify this I give an

example of the method using two counts. The first count totaled 150. The second count totals 200 with 125 of those people counted the first time. This is done by taking the proportion of the individuals counted both times, and dividing it by the individuals counted the second time. This proportion times the total population is equal to the individuals counted the first time. The mathematical equation for this is as follows:

$$\text{First count} = \frac{\text{individuals counted both times}}{\text{individuals counted the second time}} \times \text{the total population}$$

$$150 = 125/200 \times \text{total population}$$

This can be solved algebraically by reducing 125/200 to 5/8 and moving it to the other side of the equation, which inverts it so that the total population equals 8/5 X 150, which equals 240. Even though both counts did not account for all individuals, the total of 240 people is statistically estimated.<sup>93</sup>

Not everyone believes that the Census methodology needs significantly to change to address errors. Darga holds the belief that any statistical evaluation to address the undercount will be equally flawed. The universe of the total population of the United States is difficult to identify as the Census demonstrates. For this reason the adjustments will lead to new errors in Census results. He is critical of current Census Bureau's methodology to correct the Census data because in dealing with small populations the trend is for estimates to have an upward bias.<sup>94</sup>

Darga's critique of the PES method is that some of its assumptions are faulty. First, the population is mobile and some people will move between the Census and the survey. Second, all people do not have the same probability of being counted. Some populations never want to be counted and will always avoid being counted. Third, in the example of catching fish the probability of being caught is not the same. The catchability of marked and unmarked fish is not the same. Fourth, fish will lose their mark in the intervening time between catches. For the Census, this means that all people in the sample are counted by the Census and correctly matched with their Census records. It is difficult to perfectly match people in the survey with their Census records. This method is built upon assumptions about the quality of its data and these assumptions can lead to questioning the reliability of the data.<sup>95</sup>

The Hispanic-origin undercount for the 2000 Census as reported by the Census Bureau is 4.99 with a standard error of .82 for the PES, and between 2.22 and 3.48 for the administrative method.<sup>96</sup> Our study is examining a population comprising many people who do not have legal immigration status in the United States. The undocumented immigrant is another subgroup that needs examining. Yet according to Census documentation, all Hispanic immigrants are the same for determining the undercount.

Several demographers have examined the 2000 Census, but no one has specifically examined our population for Massachusetts. Frank Bean estimates that total Non-Mexican Central American unauthorized population in the United States to be 1.2 to 1.9 million, which represent 15% to 25% of the population.<sup>97</sup> John Logan of the Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban Regional Research notes that the 2000 Census questionnaire did not serve well in answering the Hispanic designation and led to an increase in the number of respondents choosing "Other Hispanic" designation. No examples of other categories of Hispanic like Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban were given to assist the respondent to answer this question. As a result, Logan has estimated a large undercount for the Hispanic-origin question on the national level.<sup>98</sup>

	2000 Census Report	Mumford Estimates
Guatemalan	372,487	627,329
Honduran	217,56	362,171
Salvadoran	655,165	1,117,959
Columbian	470,68	742,406

Even though Bean's research into the unauthorized Mexican undercount does not apply directly to Central American immigrants, it demonstrates the complexity of the issue. Bean shows how the unauthorized Mexican population in the United States can be divided into three categories — circular, invisible, ambiguous — that both work in opposite directions to increase and decrease the undercount. The first two categories of immigrants actually decrease the undercount. The INS has a legal status of Special Agriculture Workers (SAWs) who can freely enter the United States. Not all SAWs are in the United States at one time, even though officially they are counted as present. The second category is invisible. Because the INS does not keep records of Mexicans who emigrate, estimates of emigration are based on indirect demographic methods. As a result present research takes into account higher uncounted rates in the Mexican unauthorized population than the overall Mexican foreign-born population. The third category is ambiguous. After the amnesty program of 1986, people gained legal status. Under INS family reunification programs they could petition for a family member to become legal. Their family member could have been residing unauthorized in the United States and not in Mexico. The process to have all family members become authorized can take years. These people are ambiguous in their legal status, and they can be considered authorized or unauthorized during this time. Even though these factors do not apply to this study's population, Bean's framework for examining the undercount in undocumented Mexican populations demonstrates the complexity of the issue.

## **Appendix 2 Individual and Group Interviews**

### **Individual Interviews**

Individual interviews were conducted with 13 community leaders representing the four groups and 16 service providers covering the areas of Boston, Cambridge Somerville, and Chelsea.

The leaders interviewed were drawn from a list developed from the following sources: (1) Central American and Colombian leaders provided by Centro Presente; (2) Central American and Colombian leaders in the Gaston Institute's database; and (3) leaders of Central American and Colombian organizations that appear in the Immigrant Resource Book published by the City of Boston's Office for New Bostonians. The final selection took into consideration gender and national origin. Fourteen persons were selected. Potential interviewees received a letter in both English and Spanish from the research team describing the project. This letter was accompanied by a letter from Elena Letona, Executive Director of Centro Presente, expressing support for the project and requesting participation. Respondents were told they would be contacted by a member of the research team for involvement in the study. Only one of the leaders selected was not interviewed; she was not reached.

The selection of providers interviewed proceeded in similar fashion. A list of service providers to these groups, representing Somerville, Cambridge, Boston, and Chelsea was developed from the following sources: (1) names provided by Centro Presente staff and the staff of other agencies known to serve these groups and (2) service providers listed in the Immigrant Resource Book published by the City of Boston's Office for New Bostonians as providing services to the identified population in the cities of interest. The final selection took into account the areas of need (housing, education, etc.) and geographic dissemination. Nineteen providers were selected for interviews. All providers were sent a letter from the research team describing the project. This letter was accompanied by a letter from Elena Letona, Executive Director of Centro Presente, expressing support for the project and requesting participation. Respondents were told they would be contacted by a member of the research team for involvement in the study. Three providers selected were not reached or did not agree to be interviewed.

Interviews were semi-structured and lasted approximately two hours. Interviews were conducted in English or in Spanish and were recorded. Summary transcriptions that included substantial sections of direct quotes were prepared. All transcriptions were translated into English. These were then coded with a similar coding scheme as that used for the individual interviews. Data was analyzed using conventional qualitative data analysis methodology.

Interviewees were offered full confidentiality and a number was assigned to each interview that identified the interviewer and indicated whether the interviewee was a leader or provider and if they were Latino or non-Latino. A listing of interview numbers and interviewee characteristics was prepared to allow for contextualization of quotes in the report.

### **Group Interviews**

Three group interviews were conducted in collaboration with Centro Presente. Centro Presente staff was trained by the research team on the use of focus groups for the purpose of

social science research. They collaborated in the planning of the groups, conducted the selection of participants, and assisted in recording the results of the groups.

The selection of participants began with the random selection of 300 potential participants from lists contained in the client databases of the legal and the ESL programs in Centro Presente. The legal services database contained persons applying for NACARA and TPS (Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Guatemalans). The ESL programs database included members of all groups. Fifty persons from each nationality were selected from the list of potential participants to receive a letter of invitation to participate in the study. The letter was from Centro Presente. It explained the project and asked interested clients to contact a particular person at the agency who would then assign them to one of the three groups. Assignment depended on the balance of nationalities desired in each group and the time preference of the participants. The objective was to have between 8 and 10 persons per group or 25 to 30 in total. The final attendance was 7, 6, and 12 for each group respectively and 25 in total. All four nationalities were represented. There was also representation of persons who were already permanent residents, persons on TPS or applying for asylum through NACARA, and persons who were undocumented. Focus group participants were paid \$30 for their participation.

Participant confidentiality was fully guaranteed. At the start of the focus group, all participants were provided information about the project and told that their participation was voluntary and confidential, and that they could refuse to answer any and all questions. They were told that there was no link between their participation in the study and any services that they were receiving or might receive. Participants were provided an ID pin with a number, which identified them during the session. No names were exchanged. Persons were asked at the start of the groups to reveal their nationality. Individuals were identified in the transcription in terms of their number and their nationality. The groups contained people with different immigration statuses; although group members often referred to their status, they were not asked to identify themselves in this regard.

A professional bilingual facilitator led the groups, which lasted about 2.5 hours each. Two bilingual Centro Presente staff were note takers. One member of the UMB research team was an observer in each session. A focus group question guide had been prepared ahead of time containing questions in the areas of focus, which served as the basis of the group process. Sessions were conducted in Spanish. Full transcriptions and summaries of each of the groups were prepared. All transcriptions were translated into English. These were then coded with a similar coding scheme as that used for the individual interviews. Data were analyzed using conventional qualitative data analysis methodology.

Copies of the interview instruments are available upon request from  
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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The term “Latino” is used here to identify the aggregate of persons of Latin American descent (including Puerto Ricans). It is a term akin to “Hispanic”, which aggregates persons from Latin American nationalities and from Spain.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 (SF4)

<sup>3</sup> In this report we will use the term “undocumented” for those immigrants that are in the U.S. without the authorization of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Other terms commonly used are “unauthorized” immigrants and “illegal” immigrants or aliens.

<sup>4</sup> Sum and Fogg, 1999

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 (SF4) and 1990 (STF3).

<sup>6</sup> MIRA, 2000 p. 5, quoting Sum and Fogg, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> See for example, Cadaval, 1998; Hamilton and Chinchilla, 2001; Hart, 1997; Menjivar, 2000; Redden, 1980.

<sup>8</sup> These focus areas and the specific areas on which to conduct the scan were selected in discussion with staff of Centro Presente as well as with members of the East Boston Latino Coalition, the staff of East Boston Ecumenical Community Council and the City of Boston’s Office of New Bostonians.

<sup>9</sup> Menjivar, 2000 p 40-42.

<sup>10</sup> Woodward, 1985 p 249-269

<sup>11</sup> Perez-Brignoli, 1989 p153-178

<sup>12</sup> Black, 1984 p106-116

<sup>13</sup> Coatsworth, 2003 p3

<sup>14</sup> U.N.H.C.R. quoted in Menjivar, 2000 p54

<sup>15</sup> Menjivar, 2000. p54

<sup>16</sup> Menjivar, 2000. p55

<sup>17</sup> Huber, 1996; Golbert and Kessler, 1996; Yergin and Stanislaw, 2002

<sup>18</sup> Ferranti, et al, 2003; Task Force on Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness in Latin America, 2001

<sup>19</sup> Hamilton and Chinchilla, 1996 p209

<sup>20</sup> Collier and Gamarra, 2001

<sup>21</sup> Coatsworth, 2003. p6

<sup>22</sup> Collier and Gamarra, 2001

<sup>23</sup> See for example, Pedraza-Bailey, 1979; Portes and Bach, 1985; Portes and Stepick, 1985, Chavez, 1998; Redden, 1980 among many others.

<sup>24</sup> Office of Immigration Statistics, 2003, p. 213

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 214

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 214

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 228

<sup>28</sup> Other countries include Angola, Burundi, Montserrat, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan.

<sup>29</sup> Office of Immigration Statistics, 2003, p. 224

<sup>30</sup> According to observers this is a situation that is fraught with politics as governments that request TPS for their citizens in the United States are vulnerable to foreign policy pressures. For example, explained a respondent, “*There are also many political issues in this matter. A U.S. official last year offered Colombia TPS in return for their support against Cuba for violating human rights. The official said that if Honduras offered their support everything was going to be okay with TPS. So Honduras gave in on the vote.*” (02mull)

<sup>31</sup> Hayes, 1993 p 262

<sup>32</sup> Migration Policy Institute,

<sup>33</sup> The Refugee Advisory Council was established under Executive Order #229 on April 26 1983; The Refugee Policy for the Commonwealth was established under Executive Order 257 on October 4 1985, establishing the Executive Office of Refugee Resettlement. This order was revoked by Governor William

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Weld on October 18, 1993. These initiatives responded to the flow of refugees from both Central America and South East Asia. <http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/ExecOrders/eo257.txt>

<sup>34</sup> US Census Bureau: 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3 Sample Data

<sup>35</sup> Martinez, 2002 p. 44

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pg 44

<sup>37</sup> The low values among Latinos are due to the high representation of Puerto Ricans, who, at 22.9 years, have a very low median age, according to the U.S Census Bureau, 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Glossary. <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> U.S Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> The Census includes wage, salary and self-employment income as earnings.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, Pct 95-102

<sup>46</sup> In the state, Mexicans had a comparable percentage of families with more than two workers (60%) whereas the percentages for Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, at 35% and 47% respectively, were much lower, according to the 2000 U.S. Census (2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data).

<sup>47</sup> Suro, Bendixen, Lowell and Benavides, *Billions in Motion*, 2001 p. 2

<sup>48</sup> 2000 U.S Census (Census Summary File 4 Sample Data)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. This reflects the higher rates of poverty among Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, who tend to concentrate in the city

<sup>50</sup> Farrant, Moss and Tilly, 2001

<sup>51</sup> Bluestone and Stevenson, *The Boston Renaissance* pp. 212-272

<sup>52</sup> The percentage of persons with less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education is 14.02 among Mexicans, 18.59 among Puerto Ricans and 21.59 among Dominicans according to the 2000 U.S Census (Census Summary File 4 Sample Data)

<sup>53</sup> 2000 U.S Census (Census Summary File 4 Sample Data)

<sup>54</sup> For an example of this argument see Colorado's Gov Richard Lamm and Gary Imhoff's *The Immigration Time Bomb*, 1985, referenced in Portes and Rumbaut, 1996.

<sup>55</sup> For examples see the work of George Borjas, (*Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigrants in the U.S. Economy*, 1990 and *Heaven's Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy*, 1999).

<sup>56</sup> For a discussion of this see Portes and Rumbaut, *Immigrant America*, 1996, pp. 284-290

<sup>57</sup> See for example, History Task Force (*Labor Migration under Capitalism: The Puerto Rican Experience*, 1978); Marifeli Perez Stable and Miren Uriarte (*Cubans in the Changing Economy of Miami*, 1993) and Juan Gonzalez (*Harvest of the Empire*, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> See for example Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut (*Immigrant America*, 1996);

<sup>59</sup> See Uriarte, 1993; Borges Mendez, 1994; Martinez, 2002, Borges Mendez and Uriarte, 2003.

<sup>60</sup> See particularly Martinez, 2002

<sup>61</sup> Fix and Passel, *Immigration and Immigrants: Setting the Record Straight*, 1994, p. 58 and Fix, Passel, and Zimmerman, *Summary of Facts About Immigrants' Use of Welfare*, 1996. Wang and Holahan, *The Decline in Medicaid Use by Non-citizens since Welfare Reform*, 2003. For a different perspective see, George J. Borjas, "The Welfare Magnet," *National Review*, March 11, 1996: 48-50. For a discussion of the different positions in regards to welfare use see Michelle Kahan, *Legal immigrants' Use of Public Assistance Programs*, July 2003 (UMass Boston, Center for Social Policy).

<sup>62</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

<sup>63</sup> Employers should require employees to file a Form I-90 and present two valid forms of identification.

<sup>64</sup> Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education, 2003

<sup>65</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data

<sup>66</sup> See [http://www.umb.edu/students/bursar/tuition\\_fees.shtml](http://www.umb.edu/students/bursar/tuition_fees.shtml)

<sup>67</sup> Uriarte, et al. 2002

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- <sup>68</sup> National Immigration Law Center, 2003
- <sup>69</sup> Ordonez, 2003; American Immigration Lawyers Association, 2003
- <sup>70</sup> Portes and Rumbaut, 1996, Ch 5
- <sup>71</sup> Menjivar, 2000 p.
- <sup>72</sup> Hadden, 2003.
- <sup>73</sup> Menjivar, 2000 p.
- <sup>74</sup> Capps, Ku, Fix, Furgieuele, Passel, Ramchand, McNiven, Perez-Lopez, Fielder, Greenwell, & Hays, 2002
- <sup>75</sup> Holcomb, Tumlin, Koralek, Capps, and Zuberi, 2003
- <sup>76</sup> Fix and Zimmerman, 1999.
- <sup>77</sup> Portes and Rumbaut, *Immigrant America*, pg 268
- <sup>78</sup> [http://www.miracoalition.org/masshealth\\_alert\\_7-24-03.htm](http://www.miracoalition.org/masshealth_alert_7-24-03.htm)
- <sup>79</sup> Hayes, 1993 p 262
- <sup>80</sup> Brown and Leibovitz, 1999. p. 1.
- <sup>81</sup> See Lau, Cook and Moran, n.d. <http://www.hcfama.org/acrobat/ERIL.pdf>
- <sup>82</sup> Holcomb, Tumlin, Koralek, Capps, and Zuberi, 2003; Capps, Ku, Fix, Furgieuele, Passel, Ramchand, McNiven, Perez-Lopez, Fielder, Greenwell, & Hays, 2002
- <sup>83</sup> Capps, Ku, Fix, Furgieuele, Passel, Ramchand, McNiven, Perez-Lopez, Fielder, Greenwell, & Hays, 2002
- <sup>84</sup> Campen, 1998
- <sup>85</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census Summary File 4 Sample Data
- <sup>86</sup> Grillo, 2003.
- <sup>87</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>88</sup> Choldin, 1997
- <sup>89</sup> Freedman and Wachter, 1996
- <sup>90</sup> Skerry, 2000, pp 43-72
- <sup>91</sup> Sutton, 1997
- <sup>92</sup> Anderson Feinberg, 2000
- <sup>93</sup> Anderson and Fienberg, 2000 pp 59-76
- <sup>94</sup> Darga, 2000, pp 9-24
- <sup>95</sup> Darga, 2000 pp 212-218
- <sup>96</sup> [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
- <sup>97</sup> Bean, 2001
- <sup>98</sup> Logan, nd, 1-7

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