

Boston's Immigrant Labor Force

Socio-Economic Characteristics and Economic Integration

This report compares the labor force integration and standard of living indicators of Boston's immigrant workers to native-born workers and provides descriptive information on the composition of Boston's foreign-born resident workforce and their socio-economic characteristics. It also examines the relationship between labor market outcomes and individual characteristics such as education, gender, length of residence, naturalization and national origin.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Socio-economic Characteristics of Boston's Resident Immigrant Labor Force
 - 2.1 Regions and Countries of Origin
 - 2.2 Period of Arrival and Citizenship Status
 - 2.3 Educational Attainment and English Language Ability
 - 2.4 Employment Distribution by Industrial Sector
 - 2.5 Employment Distribution by Occupation
3. Defining and Measuring Immigrant Labor Force Integration
 - 3.1 Labor Market Outcome Indicators
 - Labor Force Participation Rate
 - Employment Rate
 - Self-employment Rate
 - Occupational Status
 - Earnings
 - 3.2 Standard of Living Indicators
 - Household Income
 - Population Above the Poverty Threshold
 - Childhood Poverty
 - Housing Burden
 - Homeownership Rate
 - 3.3 Conclusions
4. Labor Market Integration Measures by Demographic
 - 4.1 Gender
 - 4.2 Race/Ethnicity
 - 4.3 English Proficiency
 - 4.4 Educational Attainment
 - 4.5 Decade of Arrival in the United States
 - 4.6 Region and Country of Origin
 - 4.7 Citizenship

The Boston Planning & Development Agency

We strive to understand the current environment of the city to produce quality research and targeted information that will inform and benefit the residents and businesses of Boston. Our Division conducts research on Boston's economy, population, and commercial markets for all departments of the BPDA, the City of Boston, and related organizations.

The information provided in this report is the best available at the time of its publication. All or partial use of this report must be cited.

Citation

Please cite this publication as:

Boston Planning & Development Agency Research Division, January 2018

Information

For more information about Boston's demographics or economy, please visit bostonplans.org/research-maps

Requests

Please contact us at research@boston.gov with additional questions.

Research Division

Director

Alvaro Lima

Deputy Director

Jonathan Lee

Senior Research Manager

Christina Kim

Senior Researcher Economist

Matthew Resseger

Senior Researcher/ Demographer

Phillip Granberry

Research Associate

Kevin Kang

Research Assistant

Avanti Krovi

Jing Chen

Kelly McGee

Intern

Cyan O'Garro

Bianca Dixon

Jackie Amarsanaa



Visit our website
BostonPlans.org



Follow us on Twitter
twitter.com/BostonPlans

1. Introduction

The ideology of “assimilation” dominated research on immigrant integration from the 1920s through the mid-1960s. Sociologist Robert Park articulated the classical meaning of assimilation: “a process of interpretation and fusion in which persons and groups acquire memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life”.¹ Park suggested that over their life course, immigrants would gradually assimilate to the mainstream culture of the host society.

During the second wave of immigration to the United States (from the 1960s onwards), sociologist Milton Gordon (1964)² extended the idea of assimilation to include seven stages in which assimilation takes place: cultural, socio-cultural, marital, identificational, attitudinal, behavioral, receptional, and civic. Gordon did not consider economic assimilation and argued that acculturation was a prerequisite for assimilation.³

Until the 1960s, the term “integration” in the United States was used to refer not to immigrants, but to the native black population. Integration was proposed as an alternative to segregation. This term went out of use as anti-racist discourses changed. However, the term has made a comeback as questions about the capacity, particularly of Asians and Latinos, to “assimilate” to the American mainstream gained center stage. More recently, debate has shifted away from ideological positioning towards a more pragmatic focus on elimination of persistent and often considerable socio-economic inequalities between immigrants and the native population.

In this report we follow this pragmatic line of inquiry. Rather than the disappearance of cultural and social differences, we focus only on the labor market integration of immigrants which leads to attain socioeconomic standing comparable to that of native-born workers.

Immigrant integration policies in the United States are skeletal, ad hoc, and under-funded. As Nathan Glazer puts it, “the settlement, adaptation, and progress, or lack of it, of immigrants is largely, in the U.S. context, up to them.”⁴ In the absence of explicit national public policies aimed at integrating newcomers, the workplace has been the most important immigrant-integrating institution.

1 Park, R. E. & Burgess, E. W. (1924). *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

2 Gordon, M. (1964). *Assimilation in American Life: the Role of race, Religion, and National Origins* (6th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

3 Earlier narratives of immigrant “assimilation” were based on three assumptions: (1) that a clean break from the country of origin was needed before the process of “Americanization” could begin; (2) that immigrants would eventually join the main stream dominated by a homogeneous middle-class society of European ancestry; and (3) that this transition was inherently good for the immigrants. See Suárez-Orozco, M. M., Suárez-Orosco, C., and Qin, D. B. . (2000). *The New Immigration: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. New York: Brunner-Routledge.

4 Glazer, N. (1993). “Is Assimilation Dead?”. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 530, 122-136.

Immigrants make contributions to the economy by raising productivity, enlarging the taxpayer base and augmenting the number of consumers.⁵ Immigration drives economic growth.⁶ A host of demographic trends - declining birth rates, aging population, and suburbanization - make the integration of immigrants in the workplace an economic imperative and therefore, an important object of research and policy.

The analyses conducted here, unless otherwise indicated, use descriptive statistics calculated from the 2010-2014 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). Data constraints limit a full understanding of immigrant integration. Integration is a multifaceted phenomenon with multiple determinants requiring longitudinal and multivariate datasets. In the absence of such datasets, Census data are used to approximate immigrant labor market outcomes. Census data, however, are not longitudinal in nature. That is, the Census does not follow the same group of immigrants over a period of time but rather it takes a snap shot of different immigrant groups arriving at different times.

This report compares the economic performance of Boston's immigrant workers to native-born workers. We first provide descriptive information on the composition of Boston's foreign-born resident workforce, their socio-economic characteristics, and their industry and occupational allocations. We then investigate various labor market performance and standard of living indicators, comparing immigrants to the native-born workforce. Finally, we investigate the relationship between labor market outcomes and individual characteristics such as education, gender, length of residence, naturalization and national origin.

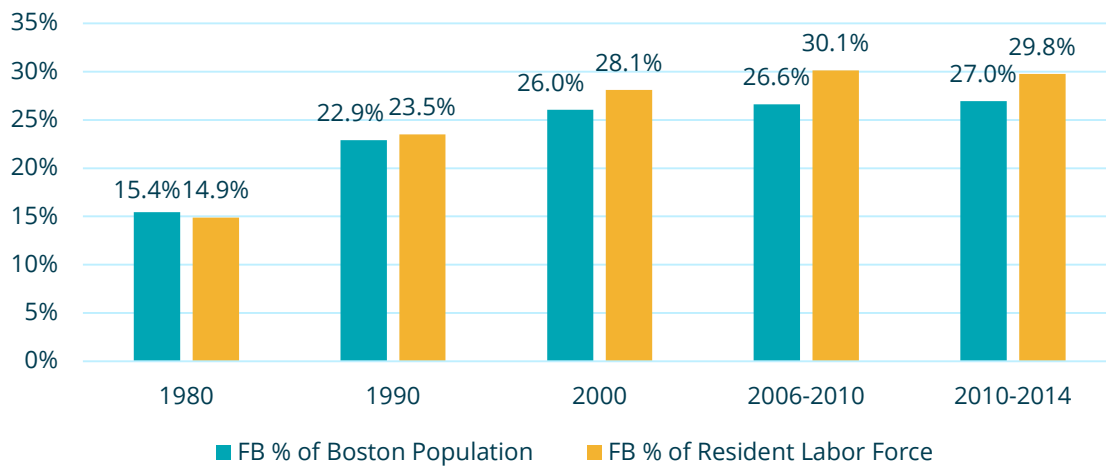
5 Boston's immigrant population has a significant economic impact on the local economy through their spending. They spend from their after-tax earnings, more than \$3.6 billion annually. These annual expenditures generate more than \$1.2 billion in State and Federal tax revenues and contribute almost \$3.6 billion to the regional product. See Foreign-born Immigrants in Boston, Imagine All the People Series. October 2007. Boston Planning and Development Authority.

6 A one percent increase in the population through migration is associated with an increase in GDP of between 1.25 and 1.5 percent. See Glover, S. , Gott, C. , Loizillion, A. , Portes, J. , Price, R. , Spencer, S. , Srinivasan, V. , ... Willis, C. The Research, Development and Statistics Directorate. (2001). Migration: an economic and social analysis. RDS Occasional Paper No 67.

2. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Boston's Immigrant Labor Force

The Boston foreign-born resident labor force includes Boston residents who participate in the labor force and were born outside of the United States of parents who were not U.S. citizens. It includes naturalized U.S. citizens, authorized non-citizen immigrants, and unauthorized immigrants. People born in Puerto Rico are native-born U.S. citizens. As the foreign-born population has grown as a share of the total population (26% in 2000 compared to 27% in 2014),⁷ the foreign born have also grown proportionately as a share of the resident labor force, as Figure 1 illustrates. Over 110,000 of Boston's resident labor force participants are foreign-born, or almost 30% of the city's resident labor force. This is an increase of 1.7 percentage points from 2000.⁸

FIGURE 1 Foreign-born Share of Boston's Population and Resident Labor Force 1980-2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Decennial Censuses, 2006-2010 & 2010-2014 American Community Surveys, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Boston's resident foreign-born labor force is more likely than the resident native-born labor force to be male (52% v. 49%), and older (median age of 39 v. 31). Almost half of the foreign-born resident labor force (46%) are naturalized U.S. citizens and more than half are proficient in English (52%).⁹ The foreign-born resident labor force is less likely than the native born to have a bachelor's degree (30% v. 53%). The foreign-born resident labor force is more likely to be Hispanic or non-White – only 17% are non-Hispanic Whites, compared to 66% for the native-born resident labor force.

⁷ There were 172,495 foreign-born persons in Boston in 2014. Boston has a higher percentage of immigrants than Massachusetts (15.3%) or the country as whole (13.1%).

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census, BPDA Research Division Analysis.

⁹ For this report, English proficiency means speaking only English or speaking it very well.

TABLE 1 Selected Characteristics of Boston's Resident Labor Force
2014

	Total	Native-born	Foreign-born
Labor Force (Count)	371,281	260,770	110,511
Share of Labor Force	-	70.2%	29.8%
% Male	49.9%	49.2%	51.6%
Median Age (years)	34	31	39
% Citizens	83.8%	100%	45.6%
% English Proficient	83.9%	97.5%	51.9%
% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	46.5%	53.4%	30.2%
% Non-Hispanic White	51.6%	66.2%	17.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

2.1 Regions and Countries of Origin

As listed in Table 2, the regions of origin of the foreign-born resident labor force have shifted since 1980. While workers from Europe constituted 34 percent of the foreign-born labor force in 1980, by 2015 they represented only 12%. Over the same period, workers from North and Central America increased from 8% to 15%, with large numbers of immigrants arriving from Guatemala and El Salvador. Workers from the Caribbean increased from 24% to 30% due to an influx of immigrants from Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica. Immigrants from Asia and the Pacific Islands increased from 18% to 22% with immigrants predominantly from China, Vietnam, and India. South Americans, especially from Colombia, increased from 3% to a 9% share and Africans, predominantly from Cape Verde, jumped from 5% to 12% of the foreign-born labor force.

TABLE 2 Boston's Foreign-born Resident Labor Force by Region of Origin
1980 - 2015

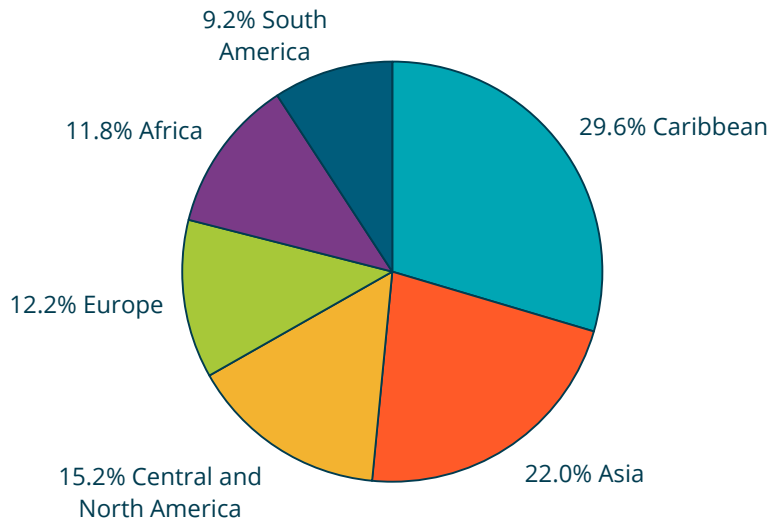
	Labor Force Count 1980	Labor Force Count 2015	Change 1980 -2015
Total Labor Force	274,320	377,772	35.3%
Native Born	233,480	264,720	11.7%
Foreign Born	40,840	113,052	170.6%
Region of Origin			
Caribbean	9,960	33,445	235.8%
Asia and Pacific Islands	7,140	24,821	247.6%
North and Central America	3,200	17,221	438.2%
Europe	13,920	13,783	-1.0%
Africa	2,120	13,377	531.0%
South America	1,300	10,405	700.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS); 1980 Decennial Census; BPDA Research Division Analysis

Note: Regions do not sum to total due a small number of people for whom a region of origin is not specified.

Figure 2 shows that in 2015, 30% of Boston's foreign-born resident labor force was born in the Caribbean, while 22% were born in Asia.

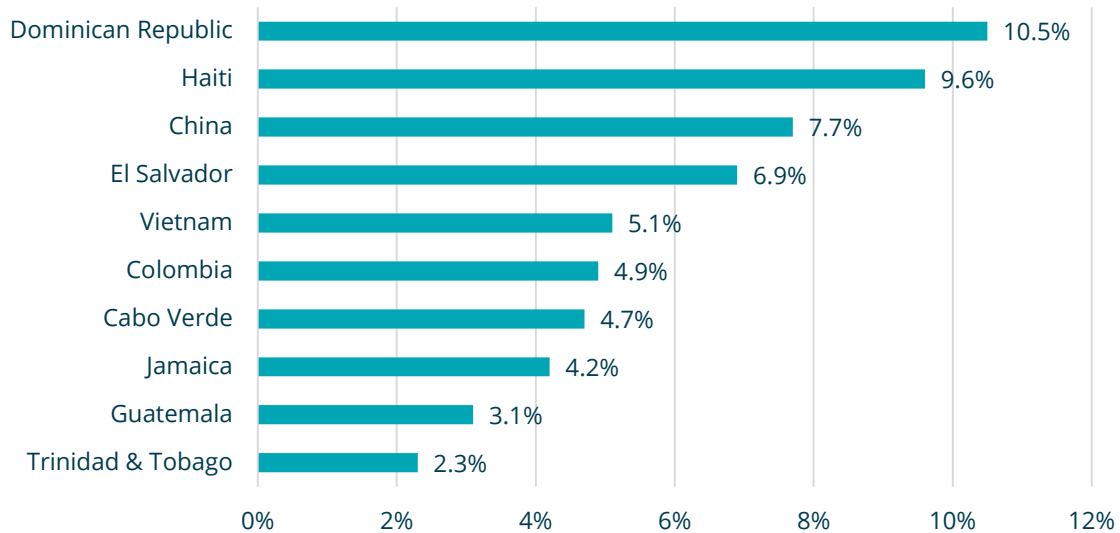
FIGURE 2 Boston's Foreign-born Resident Labor Force by Region of Origin 2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Figure 3 illustrates the top ten countries of origin of Boston's foreign-born resident labor force. These ten countries account for 59% of Boston's foreign-born resident labor force.

FIGURE 3 Top Ten Countries of Origin for Boston's Foreign-born Labor Force 2015

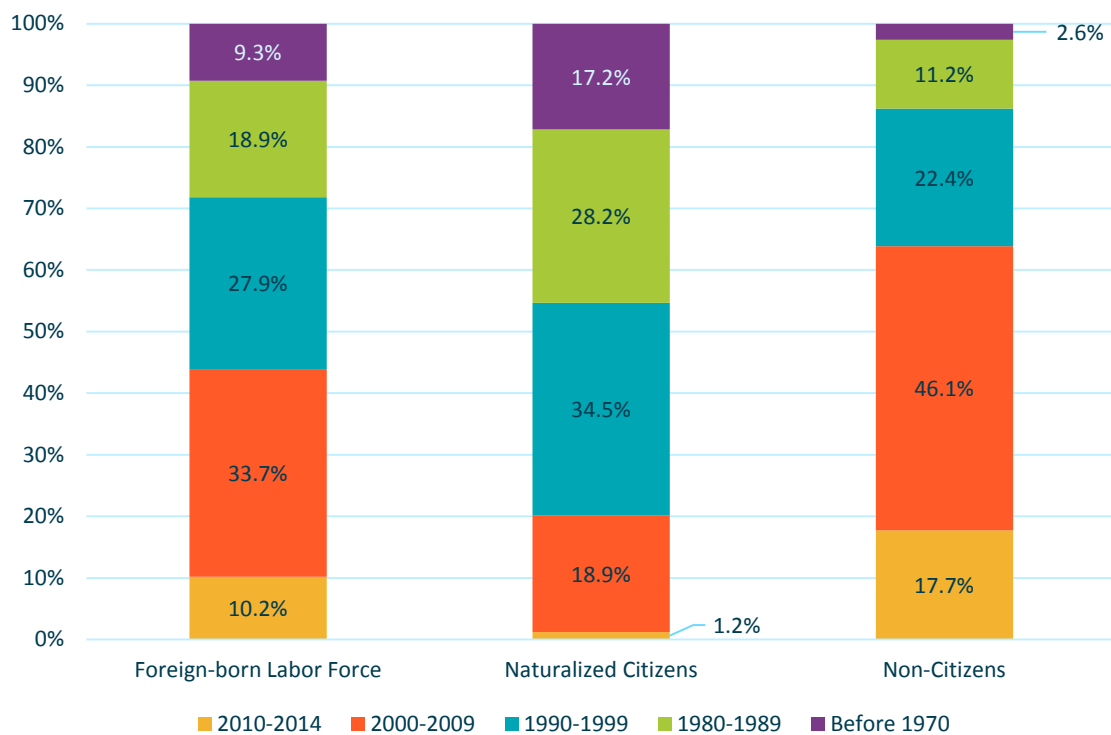


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

2.2 Period of Arrival and Citizenship Status

Period of arrival data (Figure 4) show that almost 44% of all foreign-born labor force participants in Boston arrived in the U.S. since 2000, and more than 71% since 1990. A greater proportion of non-citizens (64%) compared to naturalized citizens (20%) arrived this past decade, reflecting in part the time required to attain citizenship.¹⁰

FIGURE 4 Foreign-born Resident Labor Force by Period of Arrival and Citizenship Status



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

2.3 Educational Attainment and English Proficiency

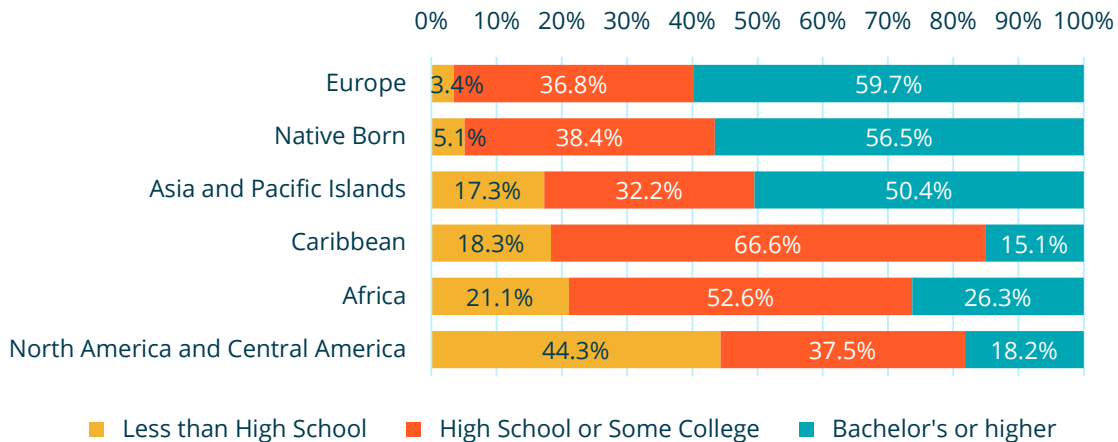
Educational attainment is a determining factor in labor market participation and outcomes. The educational profile of Boston's foreign-born resident labor force is markedly different from that of its native counterpart. Immigrants are overrepresented among workers who lack a high school diploma (21%) compared to native-born workers (5%) and underrepresented among those workers with at least a bachelor's degree (30%) compared to native-born workers (53%).

¹⁰ Typically, five years of U.S. residence is required after receiving legal permanent residence.

Naturalized labor force participants are more likely than non-citizen labor force participants to have at least a high school education – 86% compared to 74%. The foreign-born resident labor force that arrived in the U.S. since 2010 has a high rate of college completion – 46%. By contrast, those who arrived in the U.S. before 2010 have college completion rates below 30%.

As Figure 5 depicts, educational levels are not evenly distributed among immigrants from different regions of the world, likely reflecting differing educational opportunities available in the countries of origin. Nearly 45% of immigrant workers from North and Central America lack a high school education. In contrast, immigrants from Europe (60%) and Asia & the Pacific Islands (50%) have the highest proportions of workers with at least a bachelor's degree – proportions similar to that of the native born (57%).

FIGURE 5 Educational Attainment by Region of Origin



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

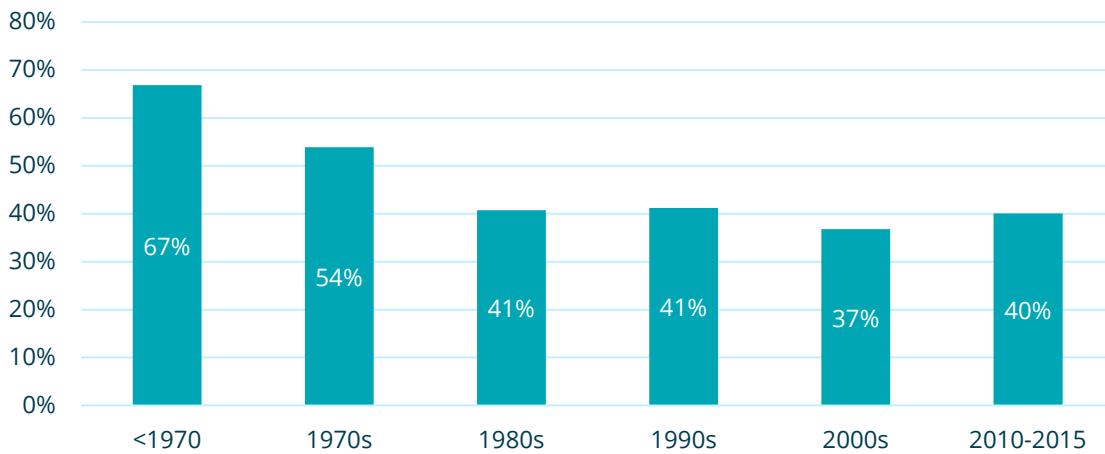
Like educational attainment, English proficiency positively influences labor market outcomes. Indeed, a proficient command of a host country's language is one of the main correlates to labor market outcomes. Educational attainment is also correlated with English proficiency. For example, while 75% of all foreign-born workers with a bachelor's degree or higher are proficient in English only 17% of those with less than a high school degree speak English at the same level.

Approximately 52% of the foreign-born labor force in Boston report being proficient in English. Naturalized citizens have a higher degree of proficiency (61%) than non-citizens (44%). Immigrants from North and Central America reported the lowest levels of English proficiency (31%). Immigrants from Europe have high levels of English proficiency (92%, of whom 36% speak English only).

Earlier immigrants were more likely to speak English only, in some cases because they emigrated from an English-speaking country such as England, Ireland, or Canada. Close to half of the foreign-born resident labor force who arrived in the U.S. prior to 1980 speak English only.¹¹ In contrast, only about 15% of the immigrants who arrived in the U.S. since 2000 speak English only, reflecting in part the increase in immigration from non-English speaking countries.¹²

For immigrants who speak a language other than English at home, the percentage who are English proficient is higher for those who have been in the U.S. longer (Figure 6).¹³ Sixty-seven percent of the immigrants who arrived in the U.S. before 1970 speak English proficiently in addition to their home language.¹⁴ In contrast, among immigrants who arrived in the U.S. since 2010 and speak a language other than English at home, only 40% also speak English proficiently.¹⁵

FIGURE 6 English Proficiency of Foreign-born Resident Labor Force who Speak Another Language at home, by Decade of Arrival in the U.S.



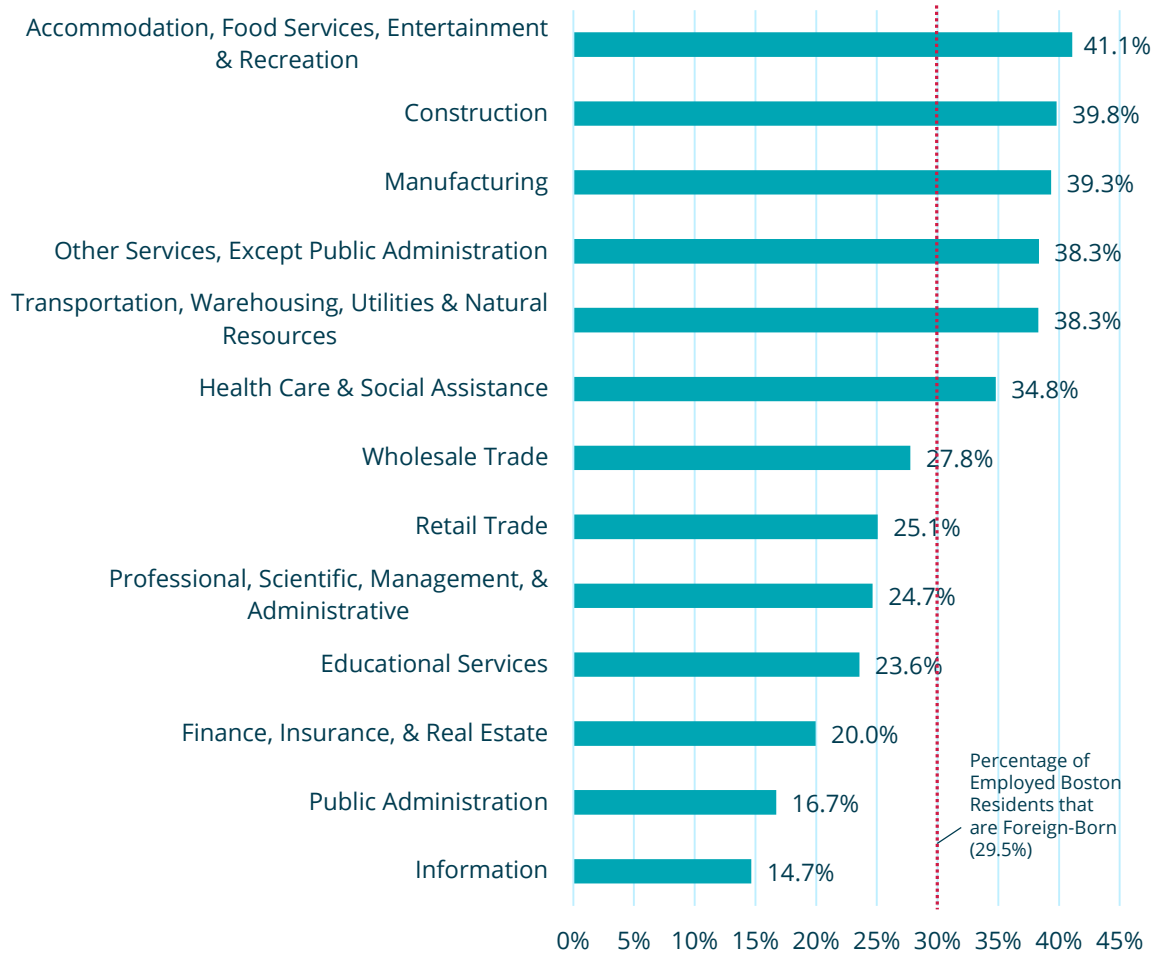
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

2.4 Resident Employment Distribution by Industry

Employment of the foreign born tends to be concentrated in certain industries. Figure 7 highlights the foreign-born percentage of resident employment in each industry, while the dotted red line equals the foreign-born percentage of overall resident employment (29.5%). This line acts as a benchmark to assess if immigrants are overrepresented or underrepresented in each industry. For example, immigrants are particularly overrepresented in Accommodation and Food Services (41%), Construction (40%), and Manufacturing (40%). They are underrepresented in other industries, especially Information (15%); Public Administration (17%); Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (20%).

11-15 U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

FIGURE 7 Foreign-born Percentage of Resident Employment by Industry
2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

The industry employment distribution of naturalized foreign-born workers tends to be closer to that of the native born than the industry distribution of non-citizens. Naturalized citizens are more likely to work in Health Care and Social Assistance (26%) than non-citizens (18%). Non-citizens are more likely to work in Accommodation and Food Services (20%) than naturalized citizens (10%).

For a given educational level, the industry of employment may still differ with nativity. Foreign-born workers with a high school or college education are more likely to work in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry than their native-born counterparts – 23% compared to 17%. Foreign-born workers with lower levels of education are more likely to work in Accommodation and Food Services (27% v. 19%) and less likely to work in Retail Trade (6% v. 17%) or Public Administration (1% v. 5%) than native-born workers with similar education levels.

Industry of employment differs by both gender and nativity. The top industries of employment for native-born men are Professional Services (20%) and Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (13%) while the top industries of employment for foreign-born men are Accommodation and Food Services (16%), and Professional Services (16%). For women, the top industries for the native born are Health Care (24%) and Education (18%) and for the foreign born are Health Care (33%) and Accommodation and Food Services (14%).

English proficiency opens up opportunities for employment. Foreign-born workers who are not proficient in English are concentrated in Accommodation and Food Services (28%). The major difference in industry of employment between native and foreign-born workers who are proficient in English is that the native born are more likely to work in Professional Services (17% v 14%) and the foreign born are more likely to work in Health Care and Social Assistance (24% v. 17%).

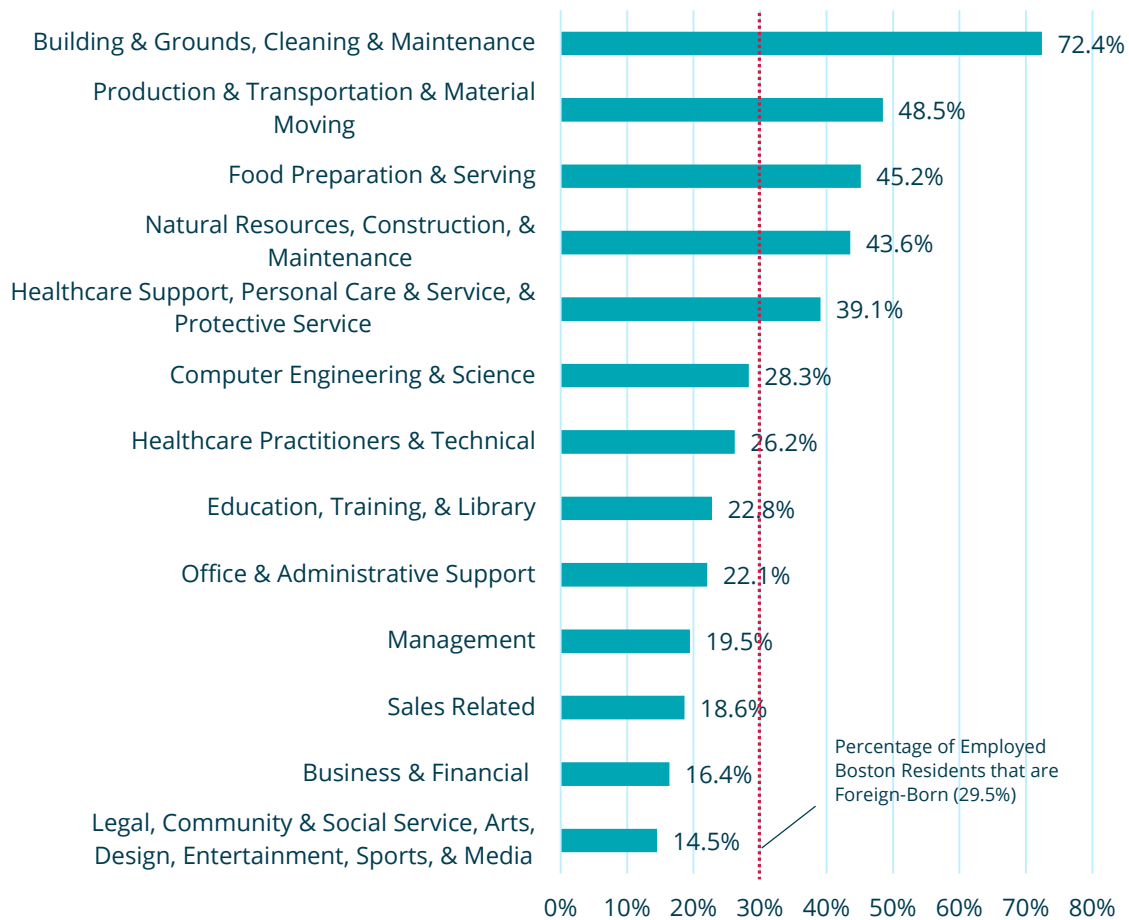
Immigrants from different regions are concentrated in different industries of employment. Immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa are concentrated in Health Care and Social Assistance (31% and 28%, respectively) while Accommodation and Food Services is the top industry of employment for immigrants from Central & North America (25%) and South America (29%).

Foreign born who arrived in the U.S. since 2010 are more likely to work in Educational Services (19% compared to 9% for earlier arrivals). Those workers who arrived in the U.S. between 2000 and 2009 are most likely to work in Accommodation and Food Services (22% compared to 14% for more recent and earlier arrivals).

2.5 Resident Employment Distribution by Occupation

Figure 8 shows the overrepresentation or underrepresentation of foreign born in each occupation, with the red line representing the overall foreign-born share of resident employment (29.5%). Immigrants are significantly overrepresented in building and grounds, cleaning and maintenance (72%), production, transportation, and material moving (48%), and food preparation and serving (45%). They are significantly underrepresented in legal, community service, arts, and media (15%), business and financial operations (16%), and sales (19%).

FIGURE 8 Foreign-born Percentage of Resident Employment by Occupation
2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

* Red line represents the percentage of employed residents who are foreign-born (29.5%).

Native-born resident workers are concentrated in office and administrative support occupations (14%), management (12%), and sales (10%). In contrast, foreign-born resident workers are concentrated in healthcare support, personal care, and protective services (13%), building, grounds cleaning, and maintenance (12%), and food preparation and serving (11%). Occupational opportunities for naturalized citizens seem to be greater than those for non-citizens. While healthcare support, personal care, and protective services (15%) and office and administrative support (12%) are the main occupations for naturalized citizens, non-citizens are concentrated in less-skilled occupations such as food preparation and serving (15%) and cleaning and maintenance (13%).

Differences by gender are also present in the occupational distribution of employment. Regardless of nativity, men are more likely than women to work in traditionally male-dominated occupations such as construction (less than 1% of female employment). However, within each gender there are significant differences by nativity. Native-born women are almost twice as likely as foreign-born women to work in management (12% v. 7%). Foreign-born women are much more likely to work in personal care services (20%) or building cleaning jobs (13%). Foreign-born men are more likely to work in production and transportation (15%), building and grounds maintenance (11%), or food preparation and serving (13%). Native-born men are more likely to work in business and finance (10%), law and social service (8%), or sales (11%).

Regardless of nativity, higher levels of education open up opportunities in a wider range of occupations. However, even within the same educational level, occupational differences persist based on nativity. Among those with less than a high school education, the native born are much more likely to work in sales (13% v. 5%) or administrative support (16% v. 5%) than the foreign born. Foreign-born workers with less than a high school education are much more likely to work in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance (28% v. 11%). Among those with a bachelor's degree or higher, the native born are more likely to work in management (17% v. 13%), business (14% v. 10%), law and social services (12% v. 8%), and sales (9% v. 5%). Foreign-born workers with a bachelor's degree or higher are more likely to work in computers, engineering & science (19% v. 11%).

Without English proficiency, only a small set of occupations are open to a potential worker. The foreign born who lack English proficiency are clustered in building maintenance (26%), food preparation & serving (21%), production & transportation (14%), and personal care services (14%). With English proficiency, the foreign born are able to access a wider range of occupations. However, even among those with English proficiency, occupational differences by nativity remain. The native born are more likely to be employed in sales (10% v. 6%), business (10% v. 7%), or legal occupations (9% v. 6%) than the English proficient foreign born. Even with English proficiency, the foreign born are still more likely than the native born to be employed in building maintenance (4% v. 2%), construction (6% v. 3%), or production and transportation (7% v. 4%).

The occupations with the highest concentrations of foreign-born workers varies by region of origin. Immigrant workers from Europe are most commonly employed in business (18%) and administrative support (26%). Immigrants from Asia are most commonly employed in computer, engineering, and science occupations (16%) and food preparation and serving (10%). Food preparation and serving (25%) is the primary occupation for South Americans. Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance (25%) and Food preparation and serving (20%) are the major occupations for North and Central Americans. Caribbean workers are most commonly employed in healthcare support and personal care services (23%) and building cleaning and maintenance (15%). Africans are most commonly employed in transportation and material moving occupations (19%) and healthcare support and personal care services (16%).

Recent immigrants who arrived in the U.S. since 2010 are much more likely to work in Computer, engineering & sciences (16%) and education (12%) occupations. Immigrants who arrived in the U.S. between 2000 and 2009 are more likely to work in food preparation and serving (16%) or building and grounds cleaning and maintenance (13%). Earlier immigrants who arrived before 2000 are more likely than recent immigrants to work in administrative support. Immigrants who arrived before 1970 are the most likely to work in management occupations.

3. Defining and Measuring Immigrant Integration

Participation in the labor market is one of the most important factors for the successful integration of immigrants. Like other residents, immigrants participate in the labor market as salaried employees or self-employed persons. Their successful labor market integration is measured by their ability to achieve, on average, the same standing in the labor market as native-born workers. Labor market experience and outcomes for immigrant workers differ from that of their native counterparts in the likelihood of being employed, the type of work they do, and their compensation. The smaller the gap between the foreign and native born, the more successful the labor market integration of immigrants.

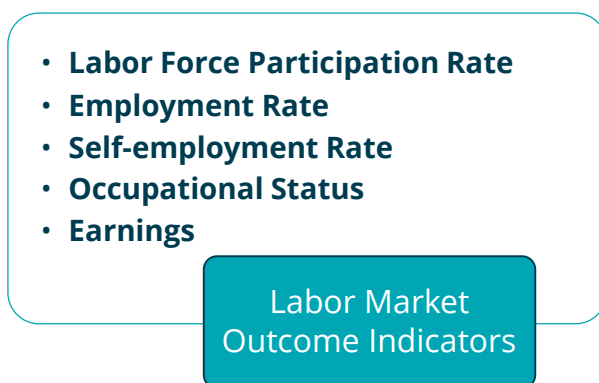
The unit of analysis is not the individual but the population or populations of foreign-born individuals; we measure not individual-level but population-level integration. We compare the foreign born to the native born in each facet of labor market integration by creating a ratio. The native born level of participation or achievement is set at 1.0, and the foreign-born level is presented as a ratio of that to the native born. A ratio of 1.0 indicates that immigrants, on average, are as integrated into the labor market as the native born.

Successful labor market integration is correlated with other factors, such as gender, naturalization, educational attainment, English proficiency, and length of time in the U.S. Section 4 examines these factors. Disaggregated statistics by region and country of origin also provide a more nuanced picture of immigrant integration in Boston.

We first examine labor market outcomes followed by an evaluation of living conditions through several standard of living indicators.

3.1 Labor Market Outcome Indicators:

Five indicators of integration depict how successful immigrants are in accessing and participating in the labor market:



Labor Force Participation Rate

The labor force participation rate refers in this analysis to the proportion of residents aged 16 to 64 who are not enrolled in school and are either working or looking for work (unemployed).¹⁶ This indicator describes the share of the adult population that is economically active. Labor force participation rates for working age residents not enrolled in school are similar for the foreign born (81.6%) and the native born (82.4%).

Employment Rate

The employment rate is the proportion of all labor force participants¹⁷ who are employed and is the inverse of the unemployment rate. Employment is essential for labor market integration. Employment provides a regular income and economic independence, security, status and opportunities for social integration with the majority of the community. A good job determines people's quality of life, affects their self-esteem, and gains them recognition in the wider community.

If there were no labor market barriers such as discrimination, legal constraints, lack of English proficiency, and inadequate education or training, immigrants would have similar employment rates to the native born. Therefore, the employment rate is an indicator of integration: the closer the employment rates of the foreign and native born converge, the further labor market integration progresses. 88.7% of foreign-born labor force participants reported being employed, compared to 90.0% of native-born labor force participants.¹⁸

Self-employment Rate

Self-employment is an important avenue for immigrants' economic mobility. The self-employment rate is the proportion of employed workers who are self-employed in incorporated or unincorporated businesses. This indicator measures levels of entrepreneurship in a given population. The foreign born have somewhat higher levels of self-employment than the native born. Approximately 6.6% of foreign-born workers and 6.0% of native-born workers are self-employed.

¹⁶ Excludes members of the U.S. Armed Forces (people on active duty with the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard).

¹⁷ Both those enrolled and not enrolled in school.

¹⁸ The labor force participants who are not employed report looking for work and thus are considered unemployed. However, because of differences in survey methodology and timeframe the unemployment rate derived from Census American Community Survey data is not comparable to the unemployment rate for the city reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Occupational Status

Participating in the labor market and gaining employment are just the first steps towards labor market integration. While individuals inevitably have differences in talents and interests, in aggregate the immigrant population has talents and interests similar to those of the native born. Thus, full labor market integration would mean convergence of the occupational distributions of the foreign born and native born. Full integration would allow the foreign born to have the same access as the native born to occupations that are associated with high status and pay. Managerial and professional occupations typically fit this description. These occupations include occupations in management, business, financial operations, computer, engineering, science, education, legal, community service, arts, media, and healthcare practitioner and technical occupations. There are significant differences in foreign- and native-born employment in managerial and professional occupations. In Boston, 53% of native-born workers and only 33% of foreign-born workers have managerial/professional occupations.

Earnings

The economic and sociological literature considers immigrant earnings an important indicator of immigrant integration into the labor market. Earnings are here defined as wages and salary from a job¹⁴⁹ for full-time, full-year workers. The median annual income for foreign-born Boston resident workers is \$40,961, compared with a median of \$57,346 for native-born workers.

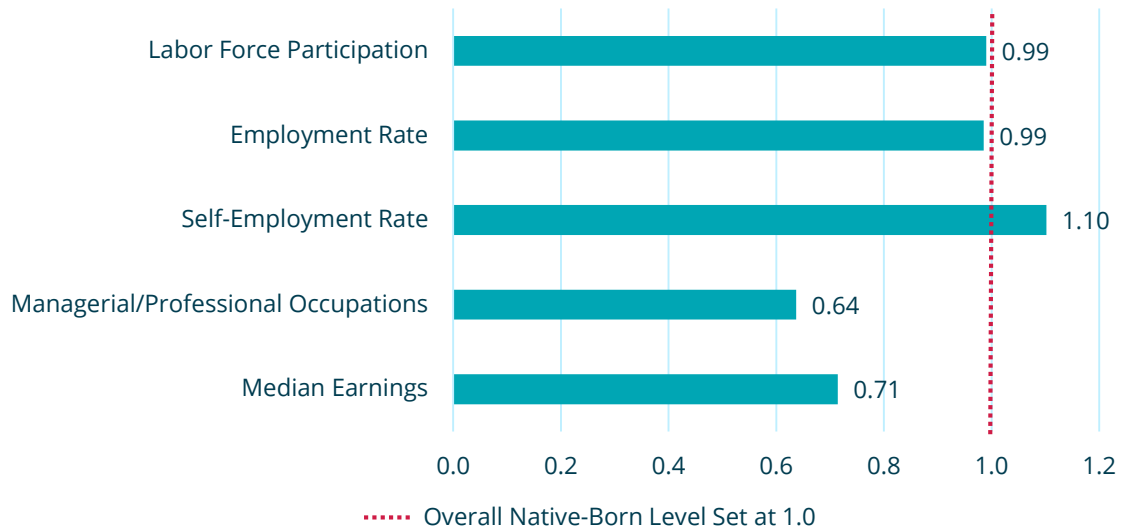
Labor Market Integration Summary Ratios

Setting the native-born rate of labor market activity at 1.00, we can create a ratio of the foreign born to the native born that illustrates the gaps in labor market integration. Figure 9 shows that the foreign born are 10% more likely than the native born to be self-employed. The foreign born participate in the labor force and are employed at nearly the same rates as the native born. However, the foreign born earn 29% less, and are 36% less likely to work in a managerial or professional occupation.

¹⁹ It does not include other sources of income such as Social Security payments, pensions, child support, public assistance, annuities, money derived from rental properties, interest and dividends.

FIGURE 9

Ratios of Foreign Born to Native Born Labor Market Outcome Indicators



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

3.2 Standard of Living Indicators:

The disparities between native born and foreign born in individual labor market integration manifest themselves in disparities in standard of living between households of the native and foreign born. In fact, household formation amplifies the individual disparities since additional wage earners in the household may share the same socio-economic factors (nativity, citizenship, education, English proficiency, etc.) affecting the householder.

- **Median Household Income**
- **Population Above Poverty Threshold**
- **Childhood Poverty**
- **Housing Burden**
- **Homeownership Rate**

Standard of Living Indicators

Household Income

One of the primary measurable outcomes of labor market integration is the ability to provide an income to support one's household. Of the 251,198 households in Boston, approximately 30% have a foreign-born householder.²⁰ These "foreign-born households" have significantly lower household income than the "native-born households": \$40,961 compared to \$61,442.

Population Above Poverty Threshold

The foreign born are less likely to have family income above the poverty threshold – 78% of the native born and 76% of the foreign-born population live above the poverty line.²¹ From the perspective of households, 72% of foreign-born households and 80% of native-born households are above the poverty threshold.

Childhood Poverty

The labor market integration of parents affects the poverty of children. Even though only about 10 percent of Boston's children (under age 18) are foreign born themselves, 42 percent of Boston's children live with only foreign-born parent(s) and 51 percent live with at least one foreign-born parent. Over one third of households with a foreign-born householder have child (ren) under age 18. These households have a poverty rate of 27.8% compared to 25.9% for households with children headed by a native-born householder.

Housing Burden

A household is commonly considered housing burdened if housing costs (including utilities) exceed 30 percent of household income. Among renters, 51.2% of households with a native-born householder and 54.1% of households with a foreign-born householder are housing burdened. Among homeowners, the housing burden rate is 30.9% for households with a native-born householder and 45.6% for households with a foreign-born householder. Overall, the native born are less likely to be housing cost burdened: 48% of foreign-born headed households and 56% of native-born headed households are free from housing cost burdens.

20 U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, BPDA Research Division Analysis. The Census defines the householder as one of the adults in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented.

21 The Census poverty threshold depends on the size and composition of the family. In 2014, the poverty threshold for a single person was \$12,071 and for a family of four with two children was \$24,008 per year.

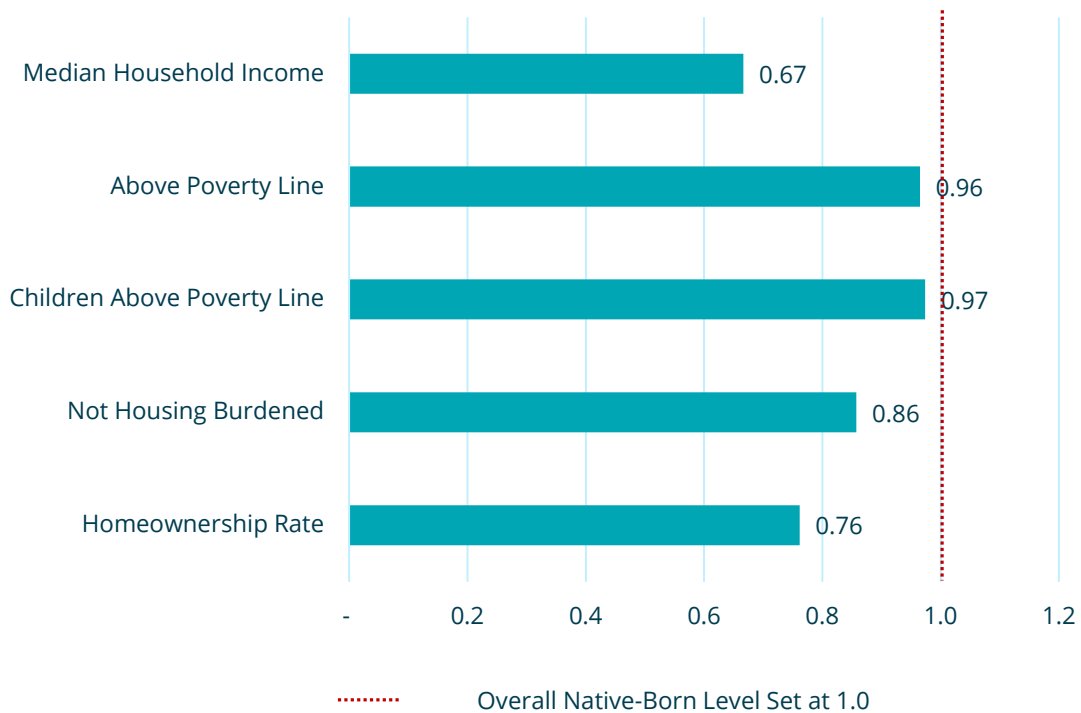
Homeownership Rate

Boston has a low home ownership rate overall, but it is even lower for foreign-born households. 36.9% of native-born householders own their homes, while only 28.1% of foreign-born householders are homeowners.

Standard of Living Summary Ratios

As depicted in Figure 10, by setting the native-born level at 1.0, we can see the gaps in the foreign-born standard of living. Households with foreign-born householders suffer from poverty at approximately the same rates as households with native-born householders, but the median household income of foreign-born households is a third less than that of native-born households. In addition, foreign-born households are more likely to be burdened by housing costs, and are 24% less likely to own their home.

FIGURE 10 Ratios of Foreign Born to Native Born Standard of Living Indicators



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

4. Measures of Labor Market Integration by Demographic

4.1 Gender

Gender can influence the labor market integration of foreign-born men and women. Boston's native-born resident labor force is 49.2% male, while the foreign-born resident labor force is 51.6% male. Foreign-born men have higher labor force participation rates (87.7%) than native-born men (84.3%). In contrast, foreign-born women exhibit lower labor force participation rates than native-born women (75.8% v. 80.5%).

Men and women have similar employment rates. The employment rate for foreign-born men is 88.3% while native-born men have an employment rate of 89.3%. The employment rate for foreign-born and native-born women is 89.1% and 90.8% respectively.

Men are more likely to be self-employed than women. Among male workers, 7.0% of the foreign born and 7.2% of the native born are self-employed. However, foreign-born women are more likely to be self-employed than native-born women. Among female workers, 6.6% of the foreign born and 4.7% of the native born are self-employed.

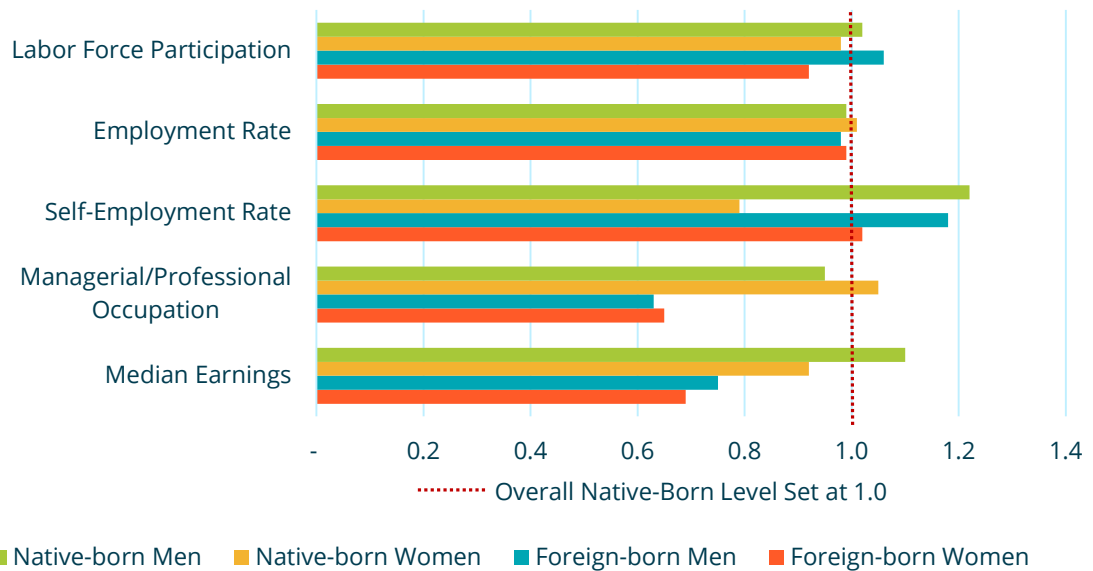
Both native-born and foreign-born women are slightly more likely to be employed in a managerial/professional occupation than their male counterparts. 55% of native-born women and 50% of native-born men are managers or professionals, compared to 34% of foreign-born women and 33% of foreign-born men.

Foreign-born men have median wages of \$42,874 while native-born men have median wages of \$63,240. Women have lower median wages - \$39,389 for foreign-born women and \$52,519 for native-born.

Figure 11 depicts the ratio of labor market outcome indicators for native- and foreign-born of both genders to the overall native-born level set at 1.0. Native-born and foreign-born residents of both genders have similar levels of labor force participation and employment. Foreign-born and native-born men have similar levels of self-employment, but the self-employment rate for foreign-born women is somewhat lower, and that of native-born women is much lower. Foreign-born men and women both fall short of native-born men in earnings and occupational status. Despite having high levels of managerial or professional occupations, native-born women earn 83% of native-born men.

FIGURE 11

Ratios of Labor Market Outcome Indicators by Nativity and Gender



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Although the householder may be only one of the adults living in the household, the gender of the householder is correlated with household income. This disparity may be partially explained by the identification of the householder – 65% of foreign-born married couples and 57% of native-born married couples designate the husband as the householder. Foreign-born women are also more likely to be unmarried heads of family households – 42% compared to 14% of foreign-born men, 26% of native women, and just 8% of native men. Native-born male householders have median household incomes of \$76,640 – significantly higher than foreign-born male householders (\$52,738) and native-born female householders (\$50,421). The median household income of households with foreign-born female householders is by far the lowest at \$32,564, less than half that of native-born men.

While 81% of native-born males live above the poverty line, 79% of native-born females and foreign-born males do as well. Only 74% of foreign-born females avoid poverty.

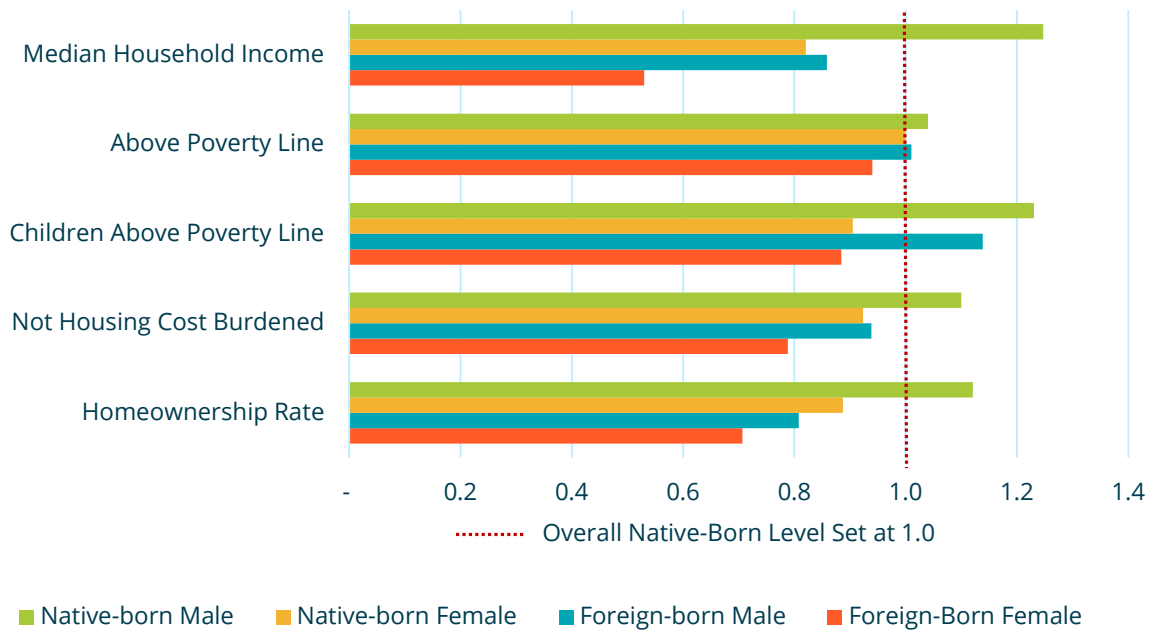
Female-headed households with children, regardless of nativity, have much higher rates of poverty than male-headed households with children. About one-third of female-headed households with children live in poverty.

Households with native-born male householders have the easiest time managing their housing costs: 62% are free of housing cost burdens. Households with foreign-born female householders have the most difficulty with housing costs: only 45% are free of housing cost burdens.

Native-born male householders have the highest home ownership rate at 41%, compared to 33% of native female householders, 30% of foreign-born male householders, and only 26% of foreign-born female householders.

FIGURE 12

Ratios of Standard of Living Indicators by Nativity and Gender



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

4.2 Citizenship

By definition all native-born residents are U.S. citizens, but only 45.6% of the foreign-born Boston resident labor force are naturalized U.S. citizens. The labor force participation of naturalized citizens is almost identical to the native born (82.2% compared to 82.4%), while that of non-citizens is slightly lower - 81.0%).

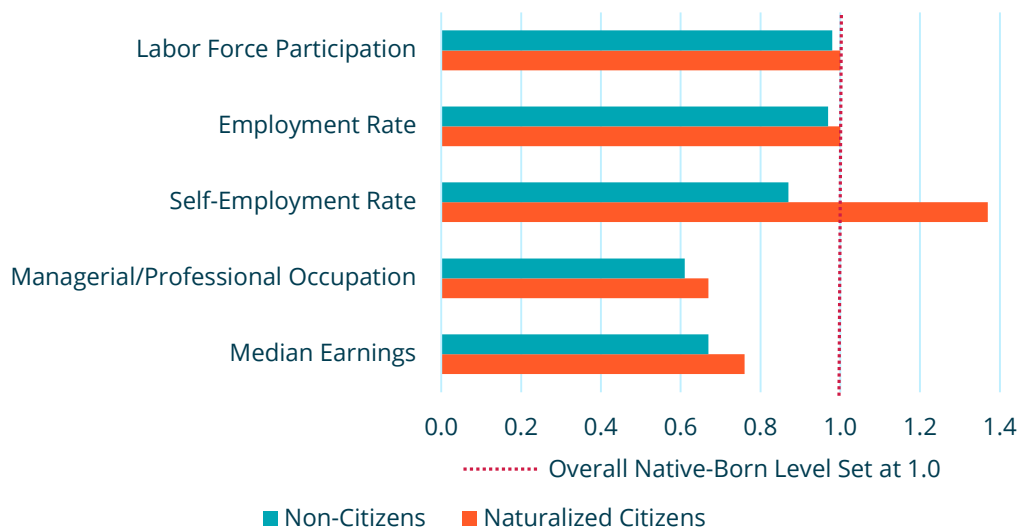
The employment rate for naturalized citizens was 90.1%, about the same as the native born (90.0%). The employment rate for non-citizens was 87.6%.

Naturalized foreign-born workers have a higher self-employment rate than the native born – 8.1% compared to 6.0%. The self-employment rate of non-citizens is 5.2%.

Citizenship does little to change the likelihood that a foreign-born worker is employed in a managerial/professional occupation. Just 35% of naturalized citizens and 32% of non-citizens are managers or professionals, compared to 53% of native-born citizens.

Naturalized immigrant workers have median wages of \$43,749, less than the median wages for the native born (\$57,346), but more than the median wages of immigrant workers who are not citizens (\$38,295).

FIGURE 13 Ratio of Labor Market Integration Indicators by Nativity and Citizenship



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Citizenship of the householder has a small positive correlation with median household income. Foreign-born householders who are naturalized citizens have a median household income of \$43,010 while those who are non-citizens have a median household income of \$39,937. However, both foreign-born citizens and non-citizens fall short of the native median household income (\$61,442).

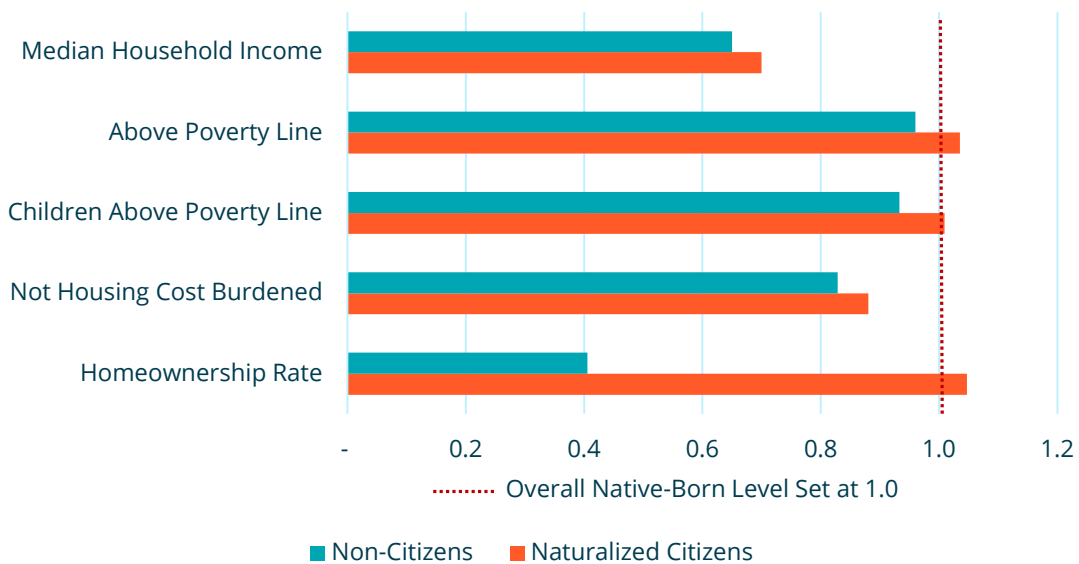
Citizenship has a small correlation with living above the poverty line. Naturalized citizens are more likely to live out of poverty than the native born (81% v.78%). Non-citizens are less likely to live above the poverty line (73%).

Noncitizen-headed households with children have higher rates of poverty than those headed by native-born and naturalized citizens.

There is little variation in freedom from housing cost burden between foreign-born naturalized (49.7%) and non-citizen householders (46.8%). About 56.4% of native-born householders are free from housing burden.

Naturalized foreign-born householders have higher home ownership rates than native-born householders: 39% compared to 38%. On the other hand, only 15% of foreign-born householders who are not U.S. citizens own their home.

FIGURE 14 Ratio of Standard of Living Indicators by Nativity and Citizenship



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

4.3 Educational Attainment

The foreign born tend to have lower educational attainment than the native born – in the Boston labor force, 53.4% of the native born but only 30.2% of the foreign born have a bachelor's degree or higher. Only 5.1% of the native born, but 20.5% of the foreign-born resident labor force have less than a high school education. In general, labor force participation increases with education. However, the foreign born with a college degree have a lower labor force participation rate (87.2%) compared to 93.2% of the native born with a college degree. In contrast, foreign-born residents with less than high school education have a labor force participation rate of 72.3%, compared to 44.4% for the native born without a high school diploma or GED.

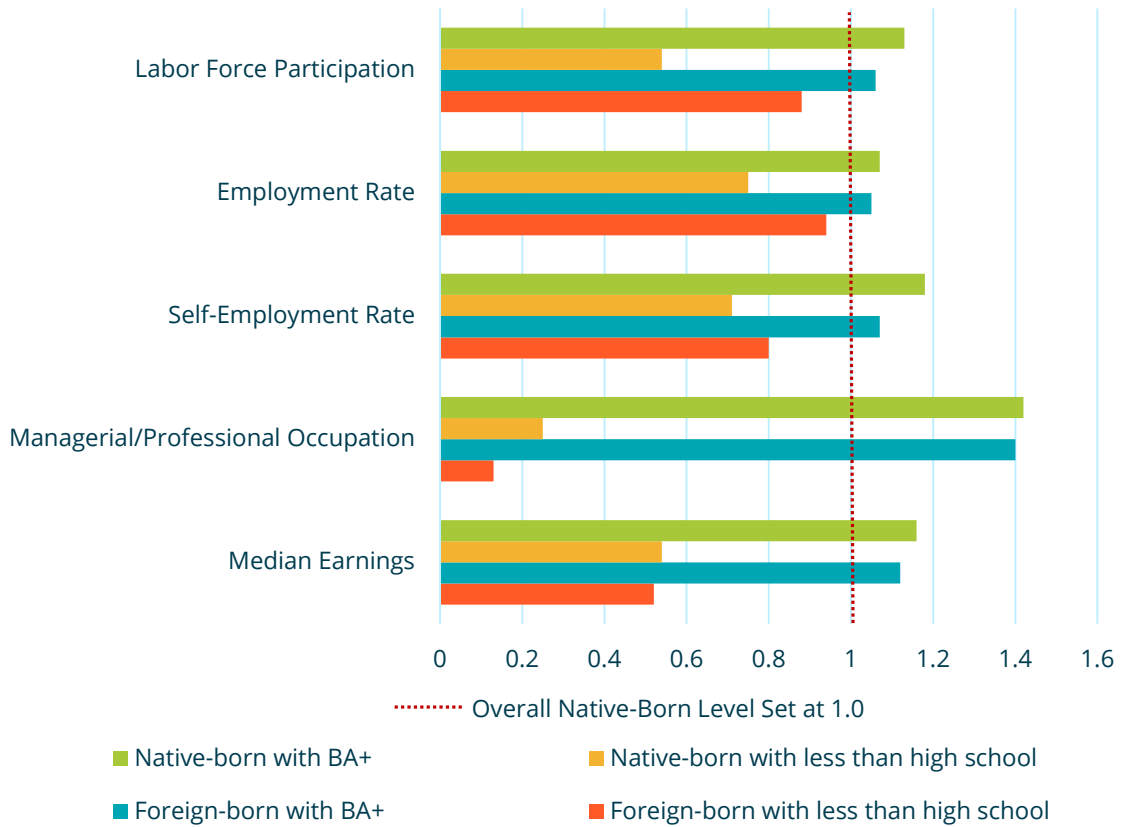
Higher educational attainment opens up employment opportunities. Among those with a bachelor's degree or higher, the foreign born have an employment rate of 94.2% while the native born have a 96.3% rate. In contrast, low levels of education can be a barrier to employment. Foreign-born labor force participants with less than a high school education have employment rates of 84.6%. The native born with less than high school have a rate of only 67.7%.

Self-employment is higher among workers with higher levels of education. Among workers with a bachelor's degree or higher, the foreign born have a self-employment rate of 6.4% while the native born have a self-employment rate of 7.0%. Among workers with less than a high school education, 4.8% of the foreign born and 4.3% of the native born are self-employed.

In contrast to citizenship, education is a strong predictor of whether a worker will be employed in a managerial/professional occupation, regardless of nativity. About 74% of both native-born and foreign-born workers with a bachelor's degree or higher are employed as managers or professionals. However, among those with less than a high school education, only 13% of the native born and 7% of the foreign born have a managerial/professional occupation.

Among full-time, full-year workers who have a bachelor's degree or higher, the gap between foreign and native born wages almost disappears (\$66,742 for native born and \$64,312 for foreign born). Full-time workers with less than a high school education have much lower median wages: \$31,250 for native born and \$29,697 for foreign born.

FIGURE 15 Ratio of Labor Market Integration Indicators by Nativity and Educational Attainment



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

The educational attainment of the householder has a significant correlation with median household income, for both native and foreign born. Native-born householders with at least a bachelor’s degree have a median household income of \$98,472, compared to \$64,312 for foreign-born householders with bachelor’s degrees. Householders with less than a high school education have low household incomes - \$22,185 for the foreign born and even lower - \$15,006 - for the native born.

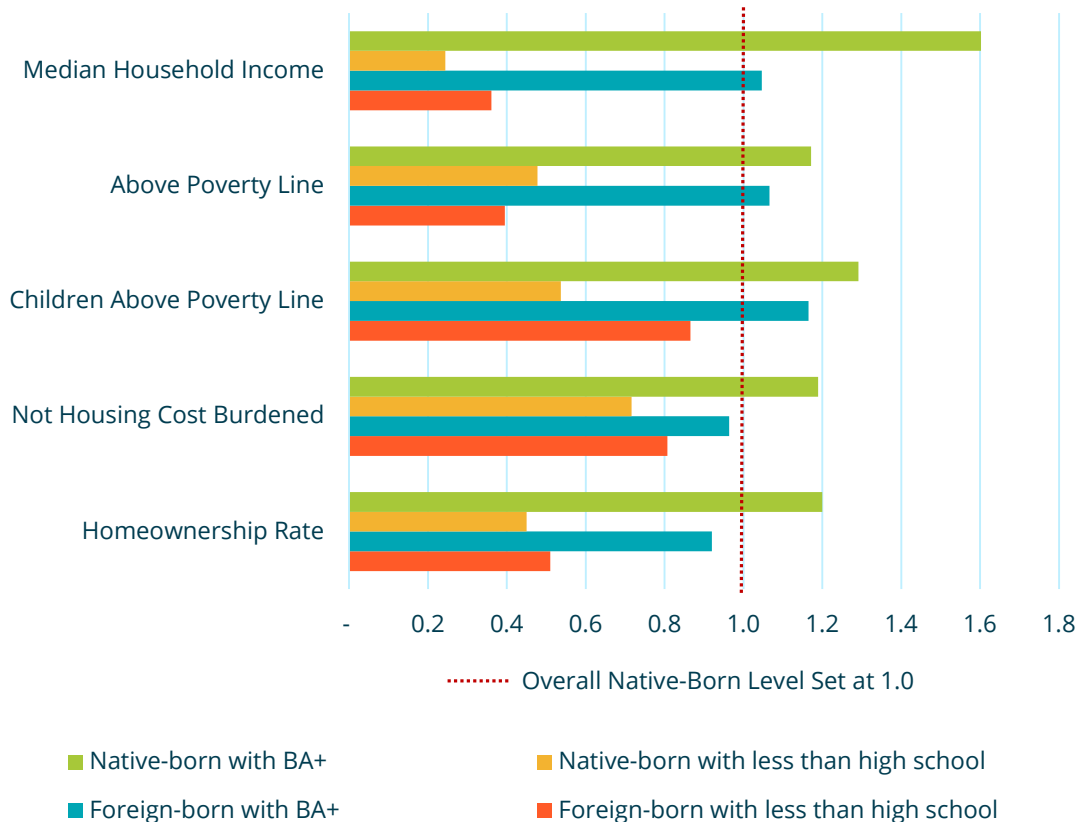
Educational attainment is strongly correlated with the ability to live above the poverty line. Among those age 25 years or older with at least a bachelor’s degree, 92% of the native born and 84% of the foreign born avoid poverty. Among those with less than a high school education who are 18 years old or older, only 63% of the native born and 69 % of the foreign born live above the poverty line.

Households with children in which the householder has less than a high school education have very high rates of poverty: 40% for native-born householders and 36% for foreign-born householders. Among households with children in which the householder has a bachelor's degree or higher, the foreign born have higher rates of poverty: 14% compared to 4%.

Householders with less than a high school education have high housing cost burdens: only 40% of the native born and 46% of the foreign born are free of housing cost burdens. In Boston's high cost real estate market, even householders with college degrees can face high housing cost burdens: only 67% of the native born and 54% of the foreign born pay less than 30% of their income for housing.

Level of educational attainment seems to strongly correlate with home ownership. Native born and foreign-born with bachelor degrees at the least have a home ownership rate of 44% and 34%, respectively. Those with less than a high school degree own homes at a considerably lesser rate; the native born and foreign born have home ownership rates of 17% and 19%, respectively.

FIGURE 16 Ratio of Standard of Living Indicators by Nativity and Educational Attainment



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

4.4 English Proficiency

In the U.S., it is challenging to participate in the labor force without being proficient in English. Compared to native-born residents who are English proficient, foreign-born residents with similar English skills have higher levels of labor force participation – 86.4% compared to 83.3%. On the other hand, residents who are not English proficient have lower labor force participation – 75.1% for the foreign born and 52.4% for the native born.

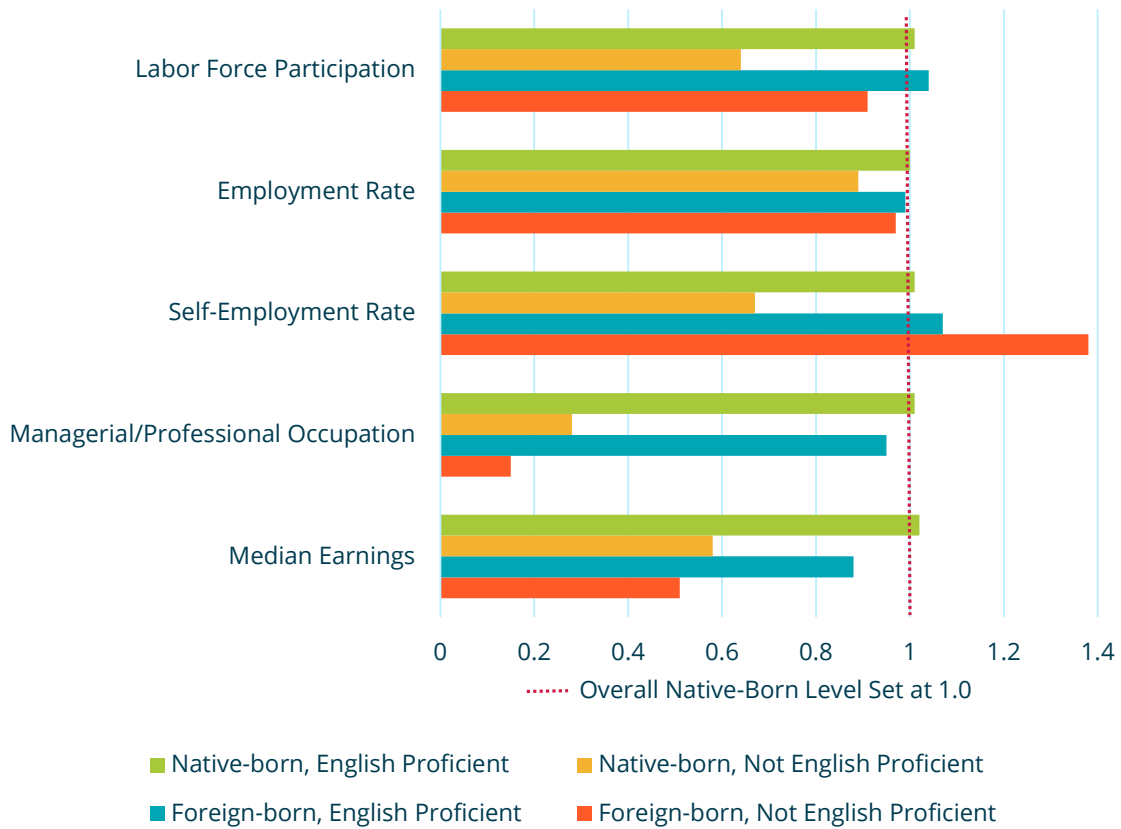
English proficiency also opens up doors for employment. Foreign-born labor force participants who are English proficient had 90.1% employment rate, about the same as the native born who are English proficient (90.3%). On the other hand, foreign-born labor force participants who are not English proficient had 87.0% rate. Native-born labor force participants who are not English proficient also had difficulty finding employment with an employment rate of 80.0%.

Among workers who are English proficient, 5.2% of the foreign born are self-employed and 6.0% of the native born are self-employed. Self-employment is high among foreign-born workers who are not English proficient. These foreign born have a self-employment rate of 8.2% and the native born who are not English proficient have a self-employment rate of 4.0%.

English proficiency is also a strong predictor of employment in a managerial/professional occupation. Among workers who are English proficient, 53% of the native born and 50% of the foreign born work in a managerial/professional occupation. Among workers who are not English proficient, only 15% of the native born and 8% of the foreign born have a managerial/professional occupation.

Foreign-born workers who are English proficient have higher median wages than those who are not English proficient - \$45,954 compared to \$29,185. However, native-born workers who are English proficient have even higher median wages (\$58,333). Some native-born workers are not English proficient, and their median wages are similar to the foreign born (\$32,974).

FIGURE 17 Ratio of Labor Market Outcome Indicators by Nativity and English Proficiency



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Native-born householders who are English proficient have a median household income of \$65,648 while English proficient foreign-born householders have a slightly lower household income at \$57,920. Householders who are not English proficient have much lower household incomes - \$21,883 for the foreign born, and \$16,721 for the native born.

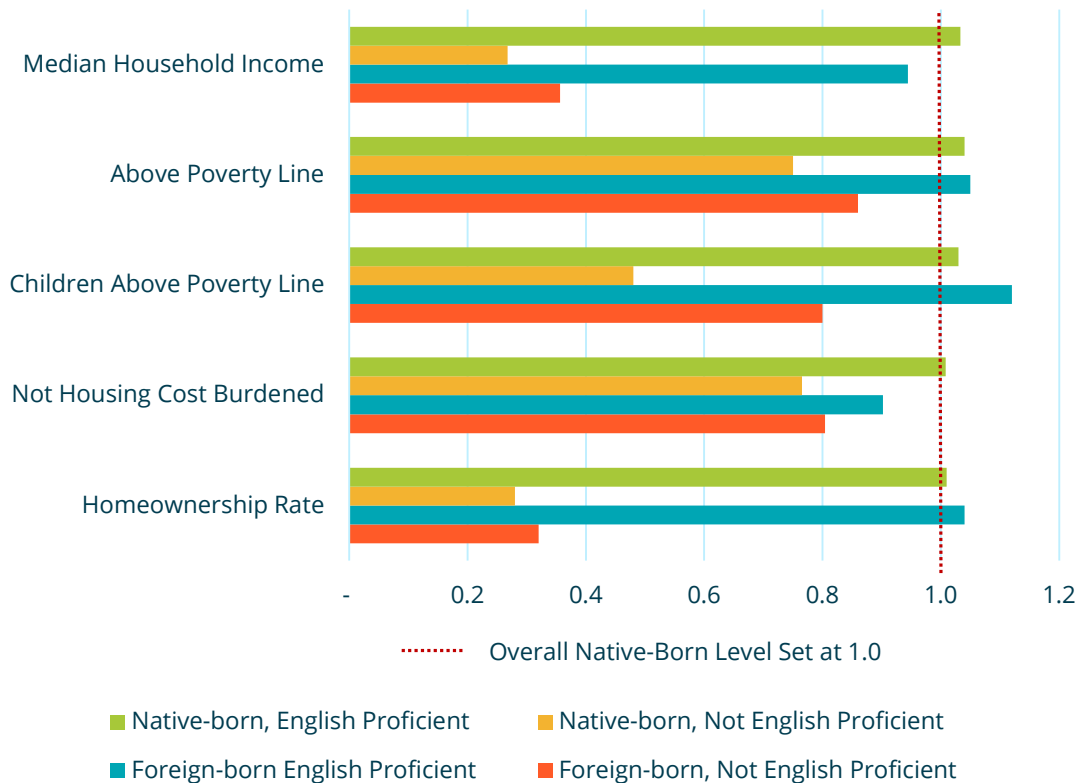
English proficiency is strongly correlated with living above the poverty line. Of those age 5 or older who are English proficient, 81% of the native born and 83% of the foreign born live above the poverty line. Of those who are not English proficient, only 59% of the native born and 67% of the foreign born avoid living in poverty.

Households with children in which the householder is not English proficient also have very high rates of poverty: 65% for the native-born householders and 41% for foreign-born householders. Households with children in which the householder is foreign born but speaks English very well actually have lower rates of poverty than their counterparts with native-born householders – 17% compared to 24%.

Both native-born and foreign-born householders with a higher proficiency in English are freer from housing cost burden (57% and 51%, respectively) than their counterparts who are not English proficient. Native-born householders who are not English proficient are the least free from housing cost burden—only 43% are free from housing burden.

English proficiency also seems to correlate with home ownership. The foreign-born and native-born who are English proficient own homes at a much higher rate (38% v. 37%) than their counterparts who are not English proficient (12% v. 10%).

FIGURE 18 Ratio of Standard of Living Indicators by Nativity and English Proficiency



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

4.5 Length of Time in the U.S.

Immigrant integration into the labor market is a long process, and some immigrants have only been in the United States a short time. However, even immigrants who have been in the U.S. a long time may still experience disparities in labor market integration compared to the native born. This section compares the labor market integration of foreign-born residents who have been in the U.S. since before 2000 and those who arrived in the U.S. in 2000 or later with native born residents. The analysis is restricted to residents ages 35 to 64 (to account for possible differences in age between the groups). The labor force participation rate of native-born residents ages 35 to 64 (who are not enrolled in school) is 76.0%. Similarly aged foreign-born residents have higher labor force participation rates, both those who arrived in the U.S. prior to 2000 (79.4%) and those who arrived in the U.S. in 2000 or later (79.7%). Both earlier and later arrivals have a labor force participation rate of 1.05 times the native born.

Additional time in the U.S. increases immigrants' chances of employment. Immigrants ages 35 to 64 who arrived in the U.S. prior to 2000 have an 89.8% employment rate, compared to 87.3% for more recent immigrants and 90.9% for the native born of the same age.

Self-employment is similarly high for native born workers and immigrant workers who have been in the U.S. a long time. Immigrants who arrived in the U.S. prior to 2000 and are 35 to 64 years old have a self-employment rate of 9.1%, compared to 8.9% for similarly aged native-born workers. Recent immigrants of this age who arrived in the U.S. in 2000 or later have a self-employment rate of 7.6%.

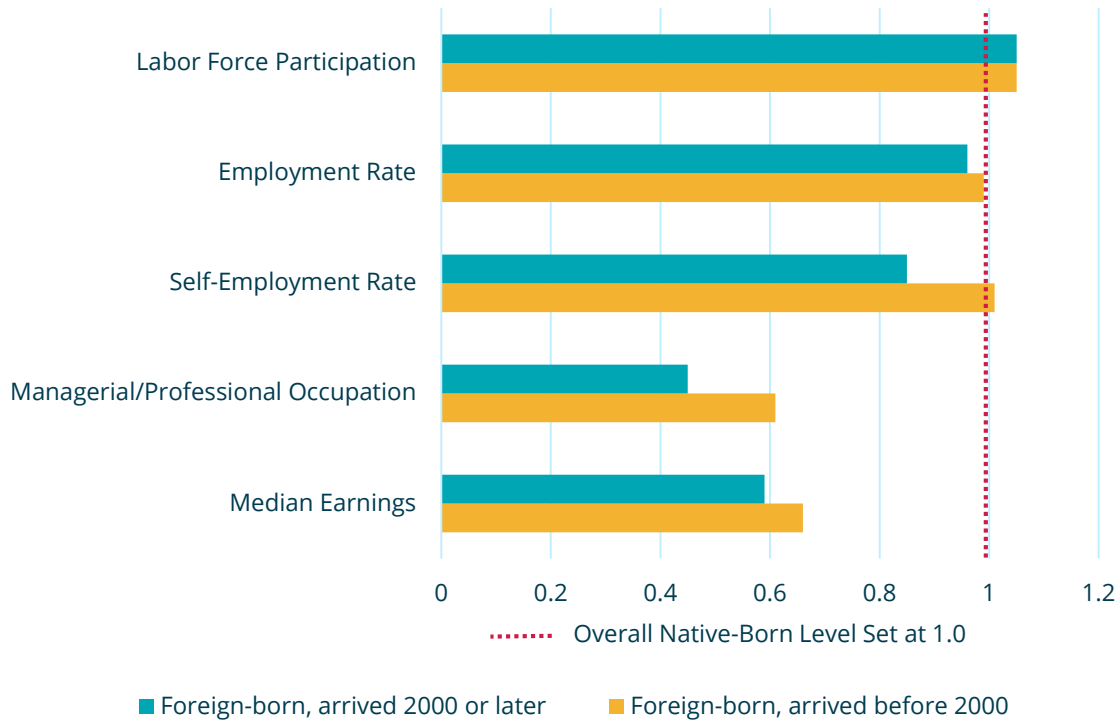
Length of time in the U.S. does not substantially increase immigrant employment in managerial/professional occupations. Among immigrants ages 35 to 64, 33% of those who arrived in the U.S. before 2000 and 34% of those who arrived 2000 or later have managerial/professional occupations. These are both much lower than the 52% of the similarly aged native born with managerial/professional occupations.

Among workers aged 35 to 64, foreign-born workers who arrived in the U.S. before 2000 have median earnings of \$43,766 while those who arrived in 2000 or later have median earnings of \$39,583. The earnings of both groups are significantly lower than those of similarly aged native-born workers (\$66,562).

Among foreign-born householders of similar ages (35 to 64), those who have been in the U.S. longer have higher median household incomes. Those who arrived in the U.S. before 2000 have median household incomes of \$53,593, while those who arrived in the U.S. in 2000 or later have median household incomes of \$41,474. However, both groups trail behind native-born householders aged 35 to 64, who have median household incomes of \$68,610.

FIGURE 19

Ratio of Labor Market Integration Indicators by Nativity and Arrival Date



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

The foreign born aged 35 to 64 who arrived in the U.S. prior to 2000 have slightly higher rates of poverty than the native born of that age – 20% compared to 16%. The foreign born aged 35 to 64 who are more recent immigrants, arriving in the U.S. in 2000 or later, have considerably higher rates of poverty: 30%.

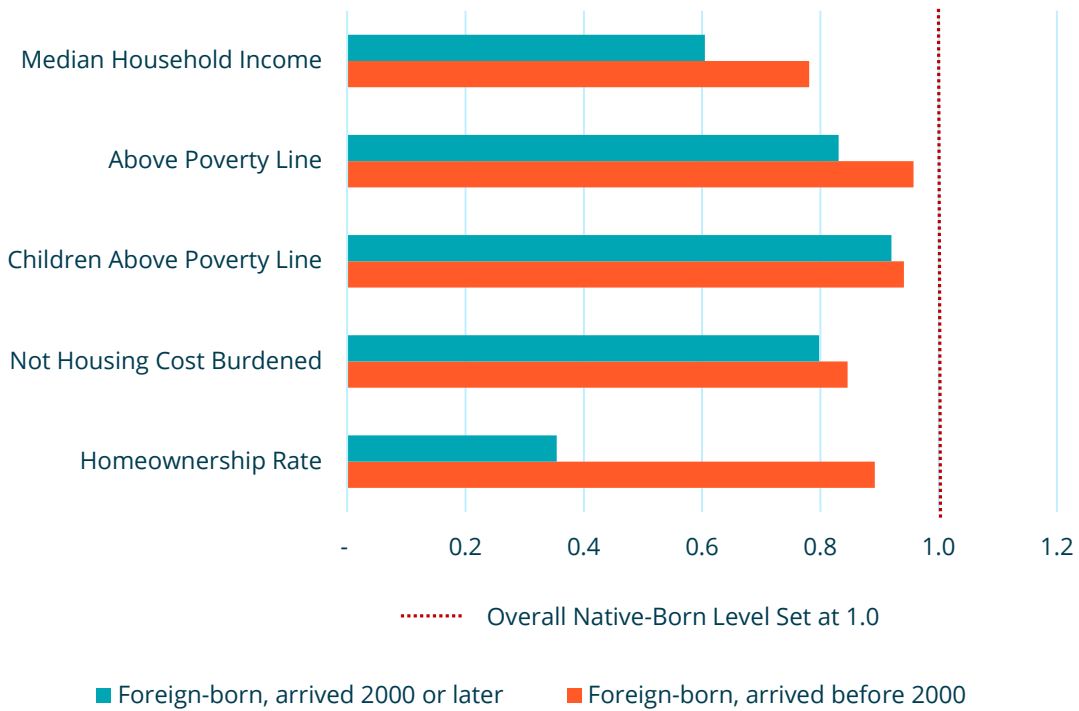
Interestingly, poverty rates among households with children do not vary much by length of time in the U.S. while the poverty rates for individuals varied significantly. The poverty rate for households with children with householders who are recent immigrants aged 35-64 is 26% while the rate for similarly aged immigrant householders with children and who have been in the U.S. since before 2000 is 25%. In contrast, the poverty rate for individuals aged 35 to 64 who are recent immigrants is 30% while for those who arrived in the U.S. before 2000 it is 20%. For these ages, the native-born households with children have a poverty rate of 20% and the individuals have a poverty rate of 22%.

Among 35-64 year householders, the native born are the most free from housing cost burden (60%) compared to the foreign-born arrived before 2000 (51%) and the foreign-born arrived after 2000 (48%).

The foreign-born householders who have been in the United States longer (since before 2000) have a much higher home ownership rate (41%) than the foreign-born householders who arrived in 2000 or later (16%). The native born, who are in the same age group of 35-64, have the highest home ownership rate (46%).

FIGURE 20

Ratio of Standard of Living Indicators by Nativity and Arrival Date



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

4.6 Race

The labor force participation rates of the foreign born are similar, regardless of race or ethnicity – about 82%. This is slightly lower than the rate for native-born non-Hispanic Whites (88%) and higher than the labor force participation rate of native-born non-Whites and Hispanics (73%).

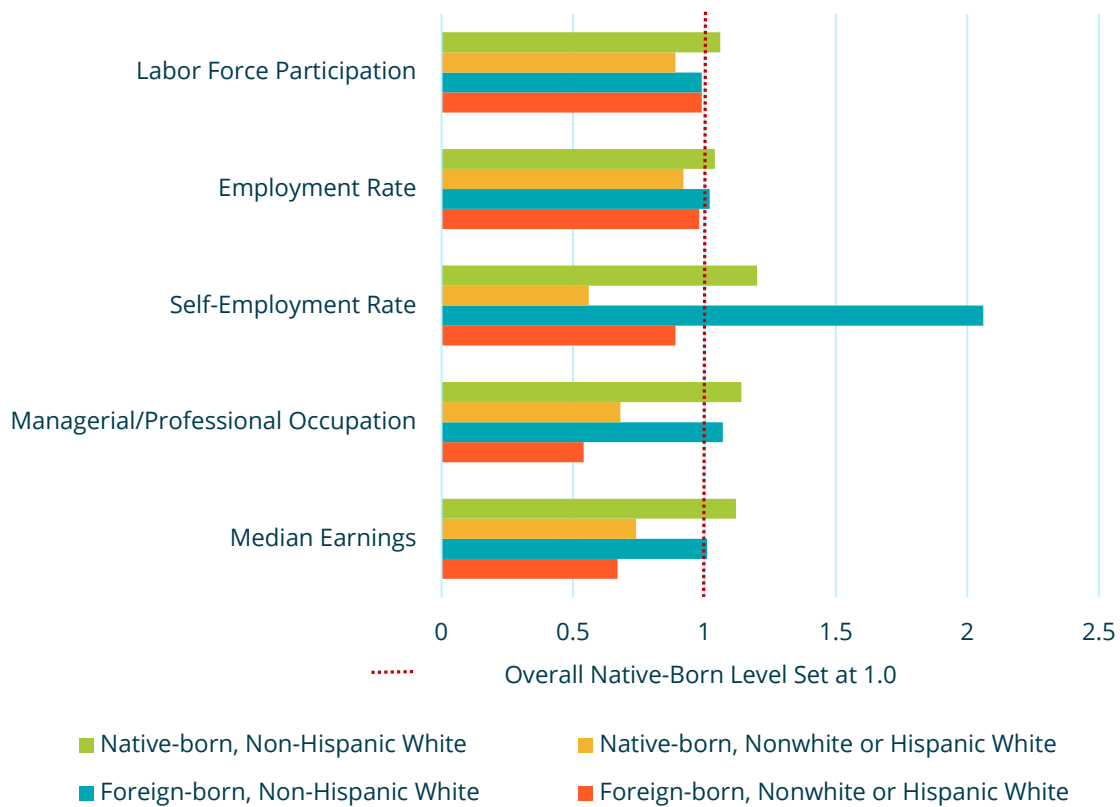
The employment rate of foreign-born Whites (92%) is slightly lower than that of native-born Whites (94%). The employment rate of foreign-born non-Whites and Hispanics (88%) is higher than that of foreign-born non-Whites and Hispanics.

There are substantial differences in self-employment rates by race and nativity. Foreign-born Whites have the highest self-employment rate at 12%. The rate for native-born Whites is 7% and for foreign-born non-Whites and Hispanics is 5%. Native-born non-Whites and Hispanics have the lowest self-employment at 3%.

Work in managerial/professional occupations is more closely correlated with race than with nativity. Foreign-born non-Hispanic Whites have almost the same occupational profile as native-born non-Hispanic Whites: 56% compared to 60% are managers or professionals. Foreign-born people of color are somewhat less likely than native-born people of color to hold jobs in managerial/professional occupations: 29% compared to 36%.

Native-born Whites have the highest median earnings for full-time workers at \$64,312 annually. Foreign-born Whites make about 90% of the native born (\$57,989). Native-born non-White or Hispanic workers make \$42,671 on average, and foreign-born non-White or Hispanic workers make \$38,295.

FIGURE 21 Ratios of Labor Market Outcome Indicators by Nativity and Race



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

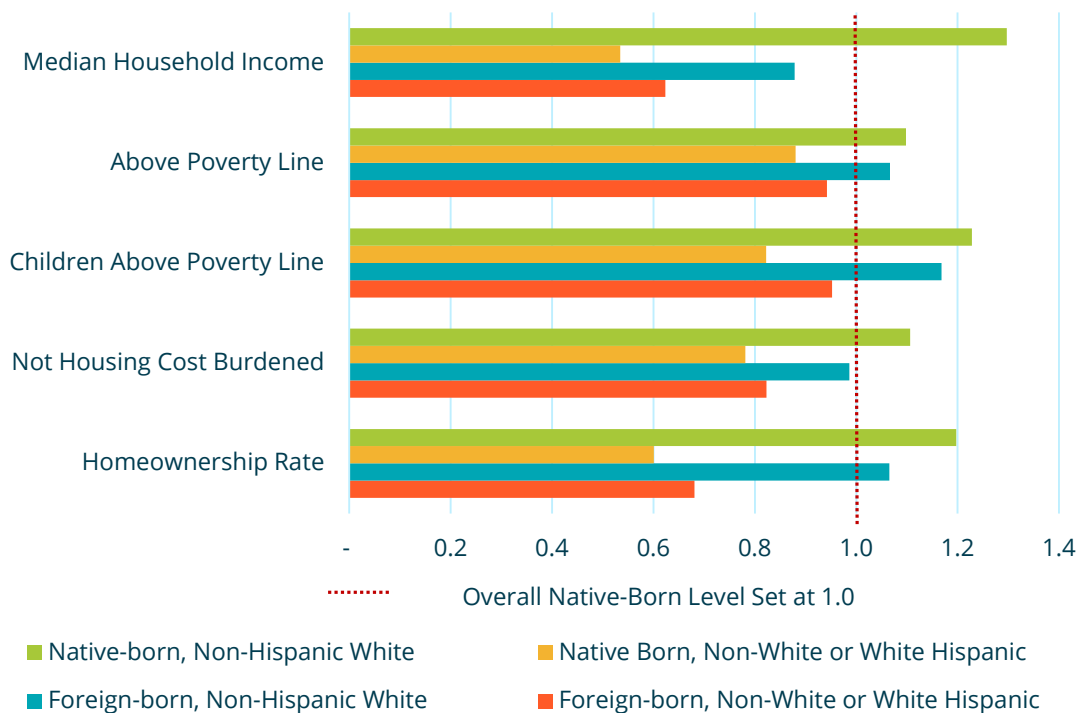
Households headed by a native-born, non-Hispanic White have the highest median incomes by far at \$79,670. Foreign-born White households make \$53,958. Foreign-born non-White or Hispanic households make \$38,320 and native-born non-White or Hispanic households make \$32,824.

The poverty rate for non-Hispanic Whites is low: 14% for the native born and 16% for the foreign born. The poverty rates for non-Whites and Hispanics is higher: 31% for the native born and 26% for the foreign born.

The poverty rates for households with children headed by non-Hispanic Whites are low: 9% for the native born and 13% for the foreign born. The poverty rates of households with children that are headed by non-Whites and Hispanics are higher: 29% for the foreign born and 39% for the native born.

38% of households with a native-born White householder and 44% of households with a foreign-born White householder are housing cost burdened. In contrast, 56% of native-born non-White or Hispanic householders and 54% of foreign-born non-White or Hispanic householders are housing cost burdened.

FIGURE 22 Ratio of Standard of Living Indicators by Nativity and Race



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

44% of native-born White householders and 39% of foreign-born White householders own their homes, while only 22% of native-born non-White householders and 25% of foreign-born non-White householders own their homes.

4.7 Regions and Countries of Origin

Regional Overviews and Comparisons

Immigrants from Central & North America, South America, Europe, and Africa have higher labor force participation rates than the native-born population.¹⁹ Immigrants from South America have the highest labor force participation rate: 86%. Immigrants from the Caribbean and Asia have lower labor force participation rates than the native born. Asian immigrants have the lowest rate at 75%.

Immigrants from South America, Africa, and Europe have higher employment rates than the native born. More than 94% of South Americans in the labor force are employed. Immigrants from the Caribbean and North and Central America have lower employment rates than the native born. Only 87% of Caribbean immigrants in the labor force are employed. Asian immigrants in the labor force have employment rates equal to the native born: 91%.

Self-employment rates of the foreign born vary widely by region of origin. More than 12% of European and 10% of South American immigrant workers are self-employed, much higher than the 6% of the native-born workers who are self-employed. On the other hand, only 3% of African immigrant workers are self-employed.

Immigrants from Europe are more likely than the native born to hold managerial/professional occupations, 57% and 53% respectively. Asian immigrants are similarly likely as the native born to have a managerial/professional occupation (52%). Immigrants from other regions are much less likely, with immigrants from the Caribbean and Central & North America having the lowest rate at 20%.

Median earnings of full-time workers vary considerably by region of origin. European immigrants have the highest median earnings (\$57,357), just below that of native-born full-time workers (\$59,020). Immigrants from Central and North America have the lowest median earnings (\$35,335).

A comparison of foreign-born households by their regions of origin shows that the median income for Europeans and South American households (\$55,271 and \$ 54,568, respectively) is about 89% of what native-born households make (\$62,571). Median household income is lowest for Caribbean households (\$33,316) and Asian immigrant households (\$35,369).

Only 14% of European immigrants and 17% of South American immigrants are poor, a lower rate than the native born. On the other hand, 26% of Caribbean immigrants and 29% of Asian immigrants are poor.

Only 7% of European immigrant families with children live in poverty, lower than native-born headed-households with children (26%). Caribbean immigrant headed-households with children are the most likely to live in poverty (34%).

European immigrants are the least likely to be housing cost burdened – 46% of households pay 30% or more of their income in housing costs, slightly higher than the native born household rate (45%). African and Asian immigrant households have the highest rates of housing cost burden – 58% and 57% respectively.

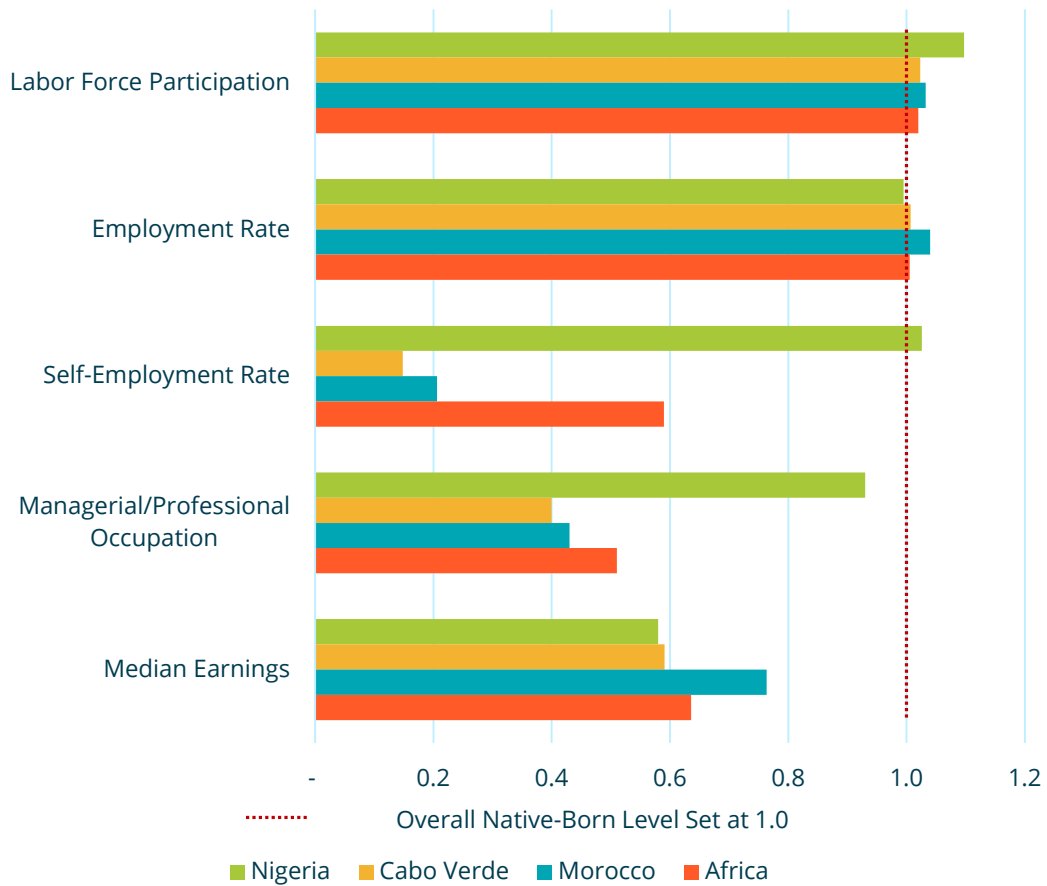
Of the foreign-born householders, Europeans have the highest home ownership rate (41%), higher than the native born rate of 37%. South Americans (23%) and Asians (24%) have the lowest rates of home ownership.

Africa

Immigrants from African countries have slightly higher labor force participation rates (84%) and employment rates (92%) compared to the native born. On the other hand, self-employment rates (3.4%) and median earnings (\$37,523) tend to be lower, and African immigrants are less likely to hold managerial or professional positions (only 26.9% do).

FIGURE 23

Ratios of Labor Market Outcome Indicators for African Immigrants

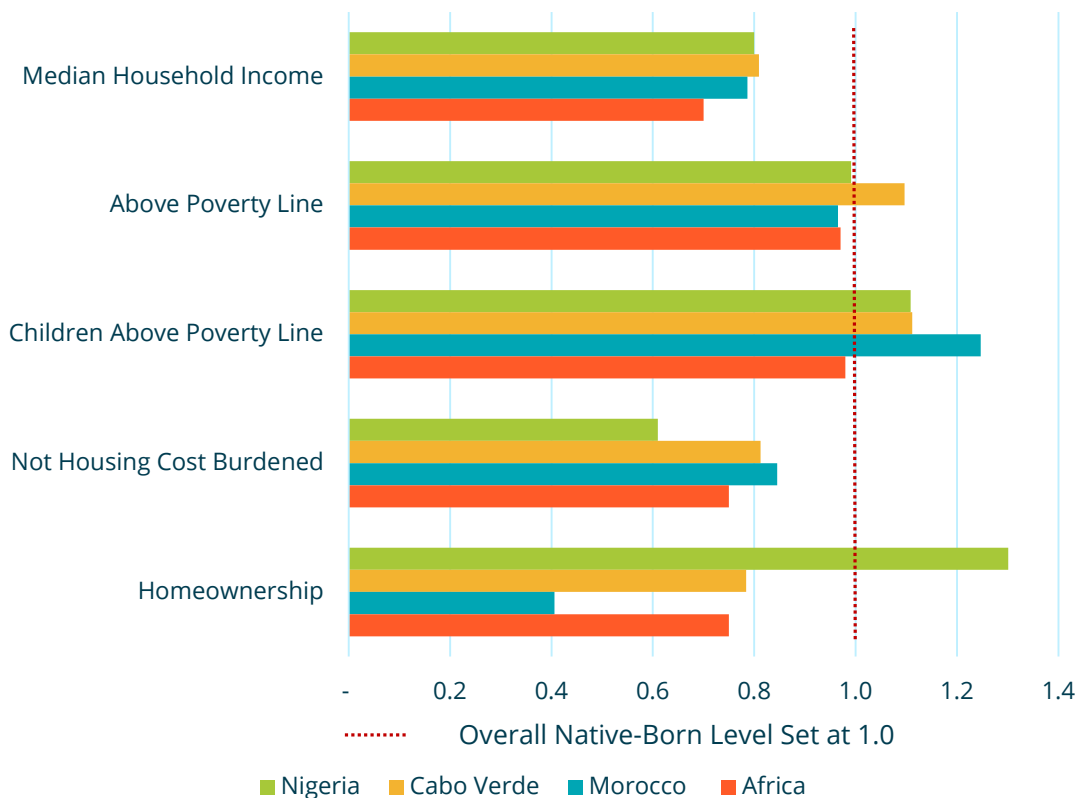


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

As far as standard of living goes, African immigrants are a little less likely to be free from poverty (78.0%) and childhood poverty (72.1%) in comparison to the native born. However, median household incomes (\$43,879.20) and home ownership rates tend to be lower. African immigrants are also less likely to be free from housing burden- only 41.7% spend less than 30% of their income on housing expenses.

Cape Verdeans are the 7th largest immigrant group in Boston’s labor force, making up 4.7% of the foreign-born resident labor force. The pattern of labor market indicators for Cape Verdeans is very similar to that of all African immigrants, with the exception of a much lower self-employment rate (0.9%). The same is true for the standard of living metrics, in which they are more likely to be free from poverty (88%) and childhood poverty (82%) compared to the native born.

FIGURE 24 Ratio of Standard of Living Indicators for African Immigrants



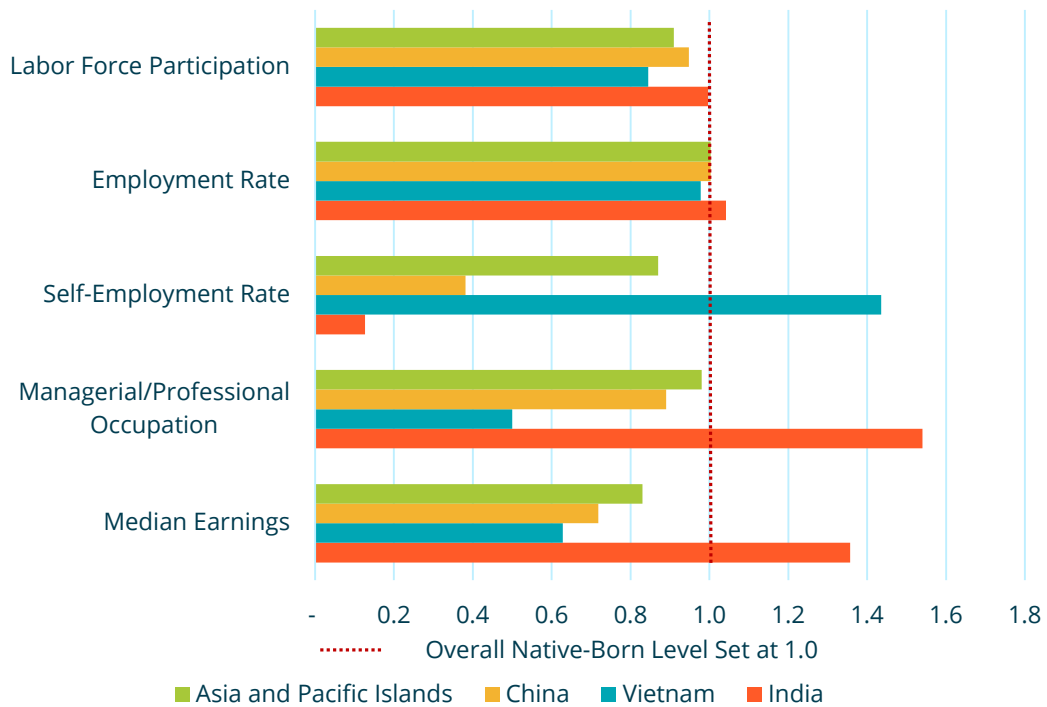
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Asia and the Pacific Islands

Asian immigrants have a similar likelihood of being in managerial or professional occupations (52.0%), and only a slightly lower employment rate (91%) compared to the native born. They have lower median earnings (\$49,210), labor force participation rates (75%), and slightly lower self-employment rates (5.3%). However, the Asian immigrant community is relatively well integrated into the Boston labor market based on these metrics.

FIGURE 25

Ratios of Labor Market Outcome Indicators for Asian Immigrants



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

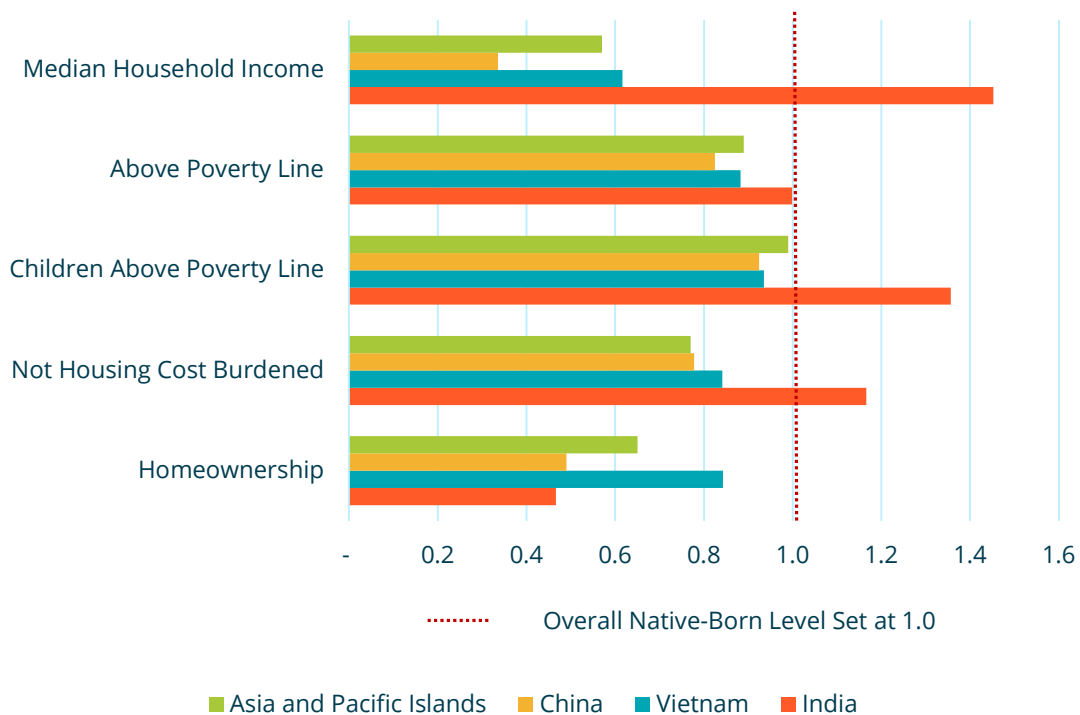
However, Asian immigrants still have a lower standard of living when compared to the native born, with the exception of a very similar rate of freedom from childhood poverty (73.3%). They tend to be less free from housing burden (42.7%), less free from poverty in general (71.4%), have lower homeownership rates (23.9%), and a lower median household income (\$35,370).

China is the 3rd most common country of origin for Boston's foreign-born laborers, with Chinese immigrants making up 7.7% of the foreign-born labor force. Vietnam and India are the 5th and 11th, making up 5.1% and 2.0% of the foreign-born labor force respectively. However all three immigrant groups have different levels of labor market integration.

China, Vietnam, and India have similar labor force participation rates and employments rates compared to the native-born (with the exception of the Vietnamese populating seeing a lower LFPR at 69.5%). Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants earn less on median (\$42,403, \$37,047) and are less likely to be in managerial or professional occupations (47.0%, 26.6%) compared to the native-born, whereas Indian immigrants see higher earnings (\$80,101) and hold more high-wage occupations (81.5% work in managerial/professional positions). Chinese and Indian immigrants have lower self-employment rates (2.2%, 0.7%) than the native-born, but Vietnamese immigrants have higher rates (8.3%).

Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants fare worse on all standard of living metrics when compared to the native born. They have lower homeownership rates (18%, 31%, respectively) and median household incomes (\$21,027, \$38,549). They are also less likely to be free from housing burden (43%, 46%), poverty (66%, 71%), and childhood poverty (68%, 69%). Indian immigrants, however, tend to fare better than the native born on all measures except homeownership rates (17%). They have higher median household incomes (\$90,863), and are more likely to be free from housing burden (64%), poverty (80%), and childhood poverty (100%).

FIGURE 26 Ratio of Standard of Living Indicators for Asian Immigrants



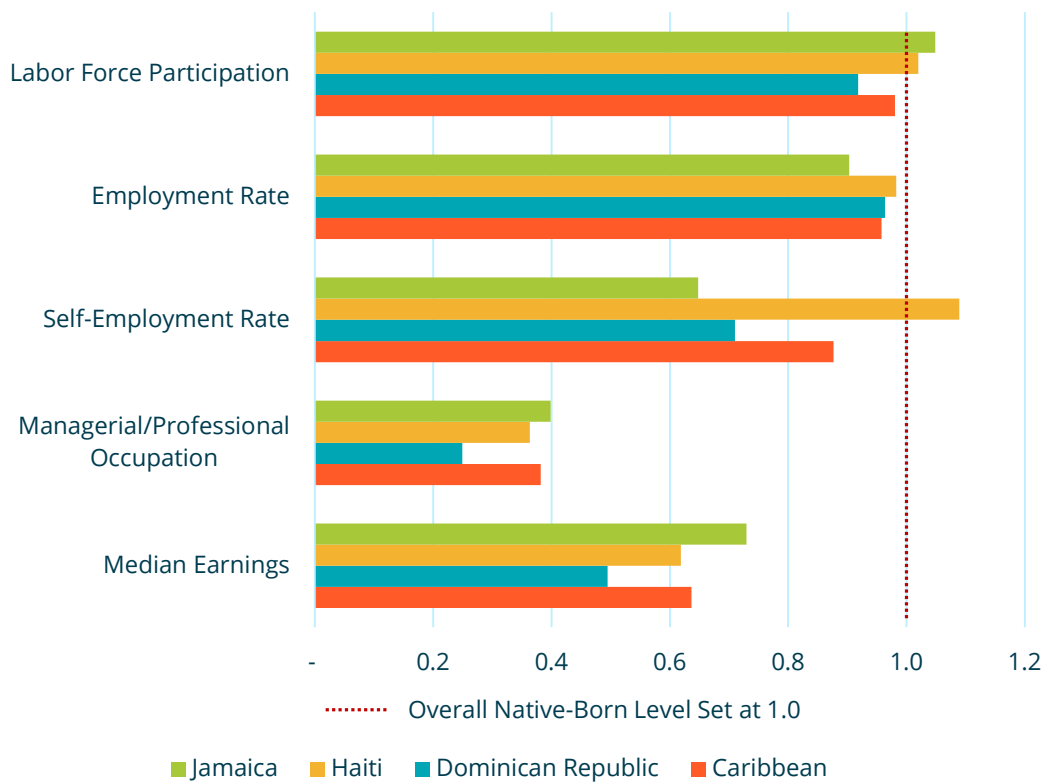
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Caribbean

Caribbean immigrants have lower, but fairly similar, labor force participation rates (81%), self-employment rates (5.1%), and lower employment rates (87%) in comparison to Boston's native born. However, they have significantly lower median earnings (\$37,558) and are less likely to hold managerial or professional positions (20.2%).

FIGURE 27

Ratios of Labor Market Outcome Indicators for Caribbean Immigrants



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Caribbean immigrants have a lower standard of living in comparison to the native born on all metrics. They have a homeownership rate of 26.6% and a median household income of (\$33,316.30). 43.5% are free from housing burdens, 74.5% are free from poverty, and 66.1% are free from childhood poverty.

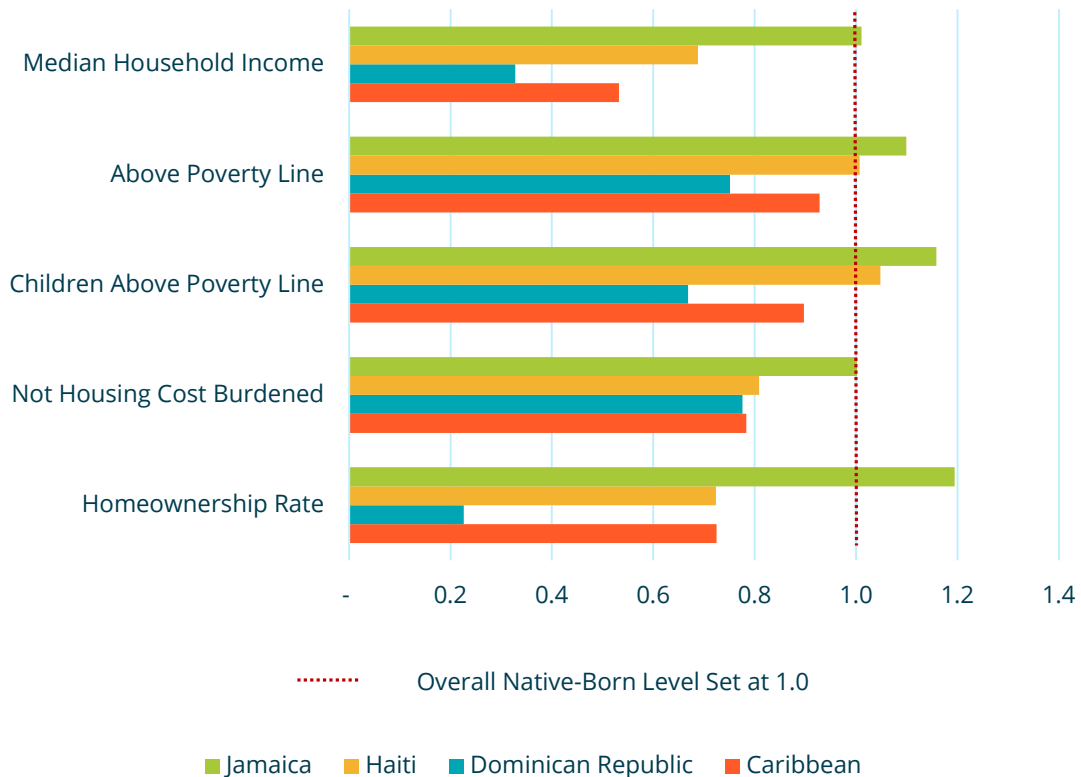
The Caribbean is origin of the two largest groups of Boston's immigrants - 10.8% of the foreign born are from the Dominican Republic and 10.2% are from Haiti. Jamaicans make up the 7th largest immigrant group, or 4.2% of the foreign-born population. Immigrants from all three countries have similar

levels of labor market integration to Caribbean immigrants in general. Haitians have a higher level of self-employment than the native born (6.3%) and Jamaicans have a higher labor force participation rate (86.3%).

Immigrants from the Dominican Republic fare worse on all measures of standard of living compared to Boston's native born. The homeownership rate is 8% and the median household income is \$20,504 for Dominican immigrants. 43% of the population is free from housing burden, 49% is free from childhood poverty, and 60% is free from poverty in general. Haitian immigrants are more likely to be free from childhood poverty (77%) and poverty (81%), but less likely to be free from housing burden (44%). Jamaican immigrants have higher median household incomes (\$63,256) when compared to the native born, and are likely to be free from housing burden (55%). However, they have higher homeownership rates (44%) and are more likely to be free from poverty (88%) and childhood poverty (85%).

FIGURE 28

Ratios of Standard of Living Indicators for Caribbean Immigrants



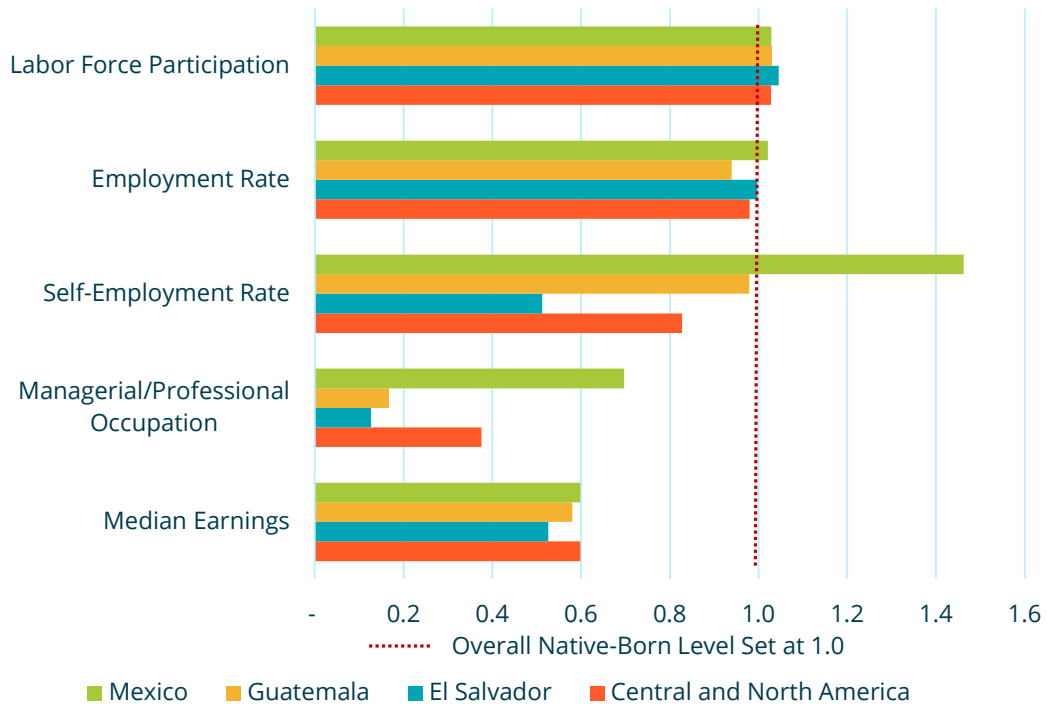
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Central & North America

Central American/Mexican immigrants have a higher labor force participation rate (85%) and a higher employment rate when compared to the native born (89%). They experience lower self-employment (4.8%), lower median earnings (\$35,335.48), and are less likely to hold managerial or professional occupations (19.8%).

FIGURE 29

Ratios of Labor Market Outcome Indicators for Central and North American Immigrants



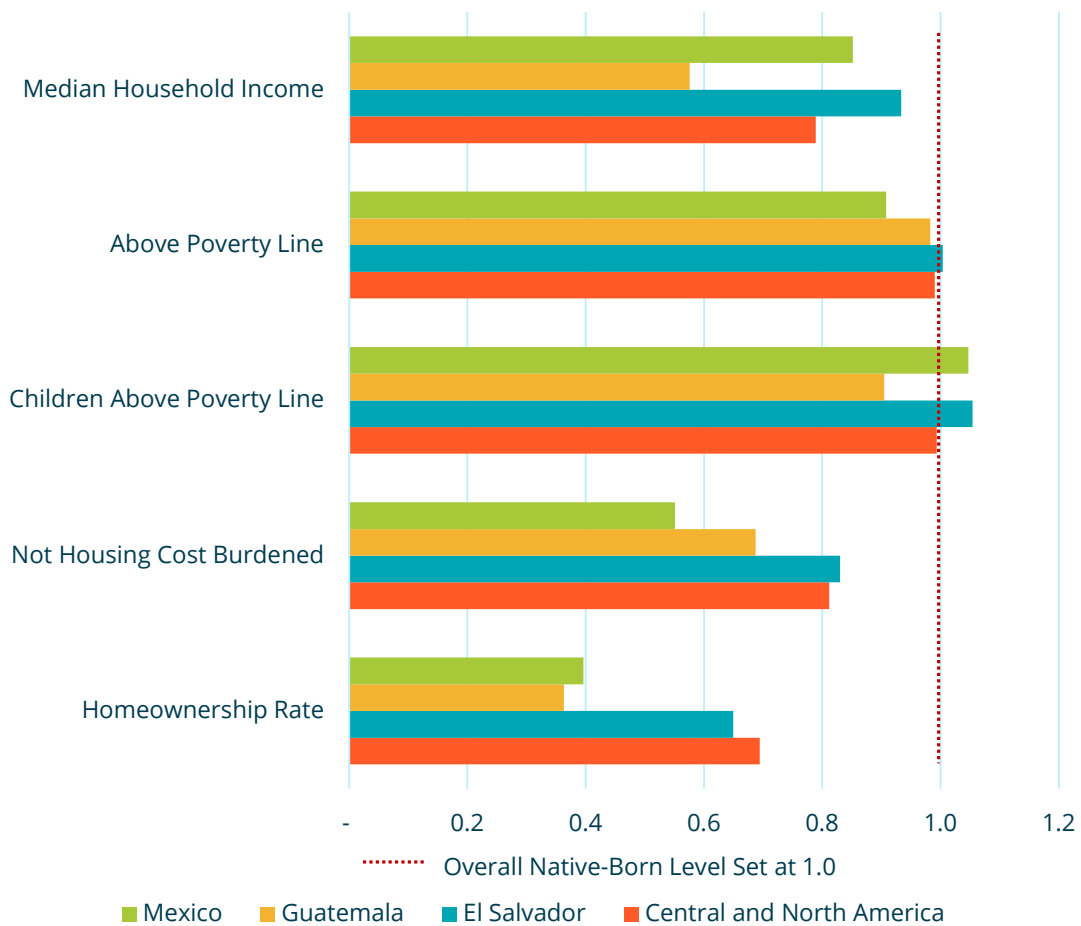
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Central Americans and Mexicans also experience lower standards of living on all metrics when compared to the native born. Those differences are slight when looking at freedom from poverty (79.5%) and freedom from childhood poverty (73.2%), but they grow when looking at median household incomes (\$49,362), homeownership rates (25.5%), and freedom from housing burden (45.0%).

Salvadorans are the 4th largest immigrant group in Boston, making up 7.5% of the foreign-born population, while 2.9% are Guatemalan- the 9th largest immigrant group. The labor market integration

of immigrants from these countries are similar to North and Central American/Mexican immigrants as a whole. However, Guatemalans have a self-employment rate on par with the native-born population, 5.7%. As far as standard of living goes, Guatemalans and Salvadorans show a similar pattern of standard of living compared to immigrants from North and Central American/Mexico as a whole.

FIGURE 30 Ratios of Standard of Living Indicators for Central and North American Immigrants



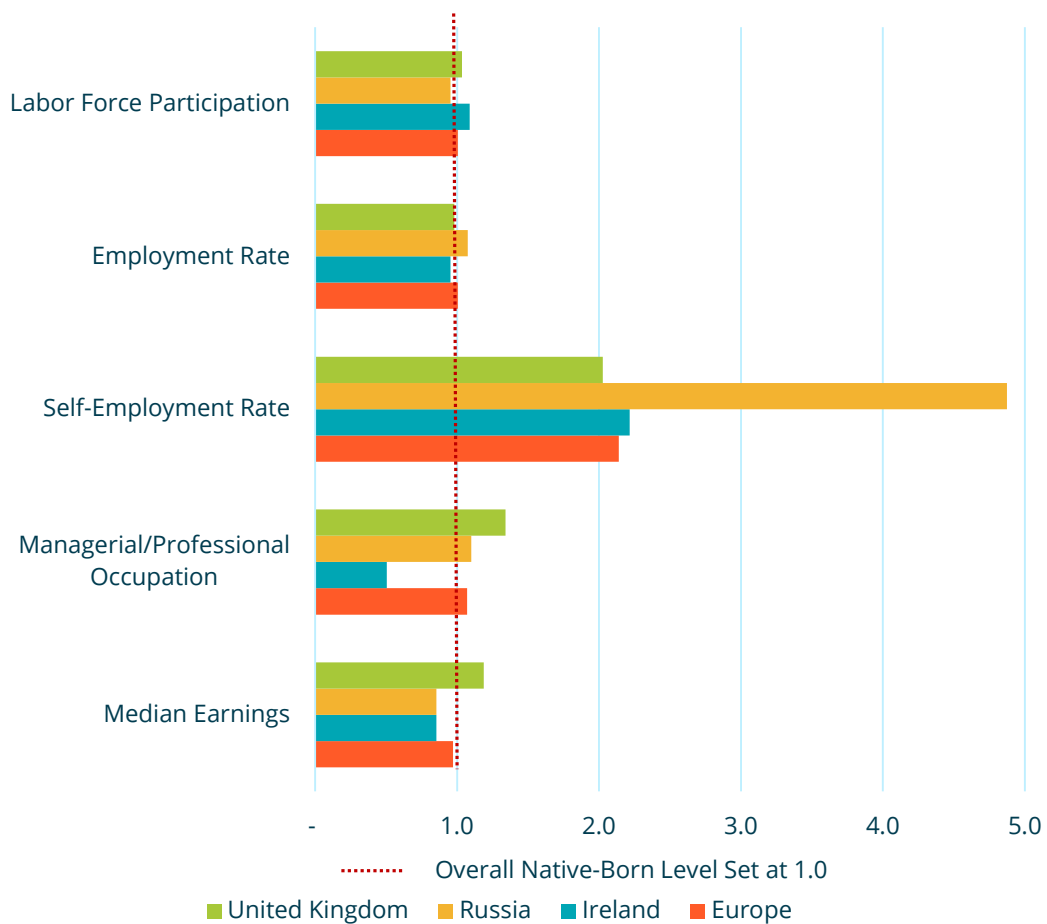
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

Europe

European immigrants have a similar median earnings in comparison to the native born (\$57,357). They have slightly higher employment rates (92%) and labor force participation rates (83%), and are a less likely to hold managerial or professional positions (57%). European immigrants are more than twice as likely to be self-employed (12.4%).

FIGURE 31

Ratios of Labor Market Outcome Indicators for European Immigrants



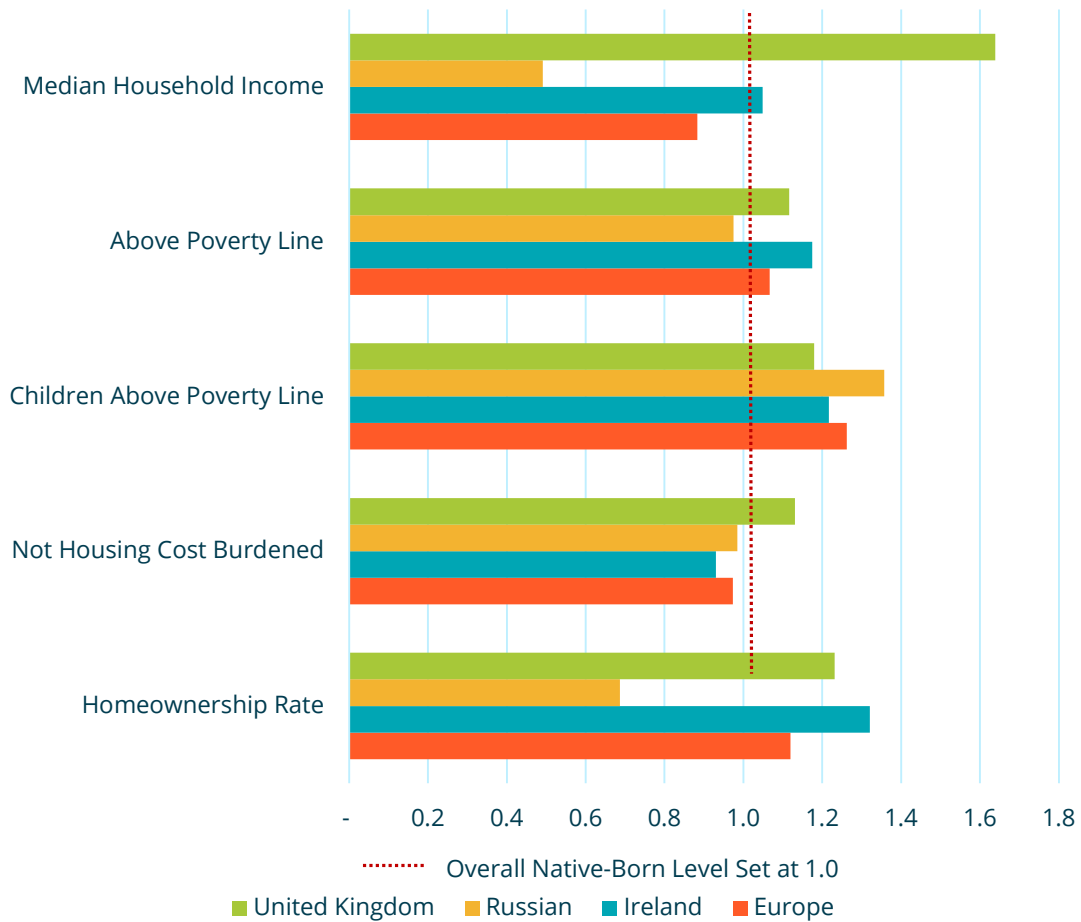
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

4. Measures of Labor Market Integration by Demographic

When compared to the native born, European immigrants have a lower median household income (\$55,271), and are less likely to be free from housing burden (54.0%). However, they have higher homeownership rates (41.1%) free from poverty (85.6%), and free from childhood poverty (93%).

FIGURE 32

Ratio of Standard of Living Indicators for European Immigrants



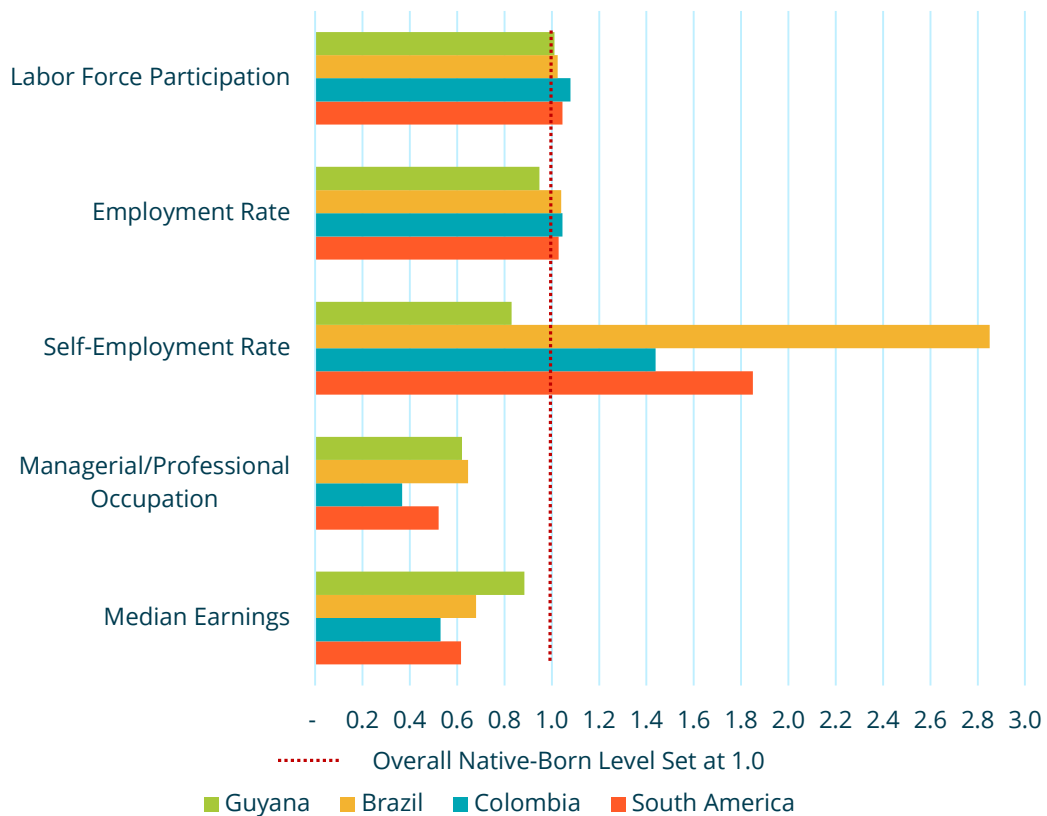
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

South America

South American immigrants have higher labor force participation rates (86%) and employment rates (94%) when compared to the native-born population of Boston. South American immigrants also have nearly double the self-employment rate (10.7%). However, they have lower earnings on median (\$36,345) and are less likely to be employed in managerial or professional occupations (27.6%).

FIGURE 33

Ratios of Labor Market Outcome Indicators for South American Immigrants



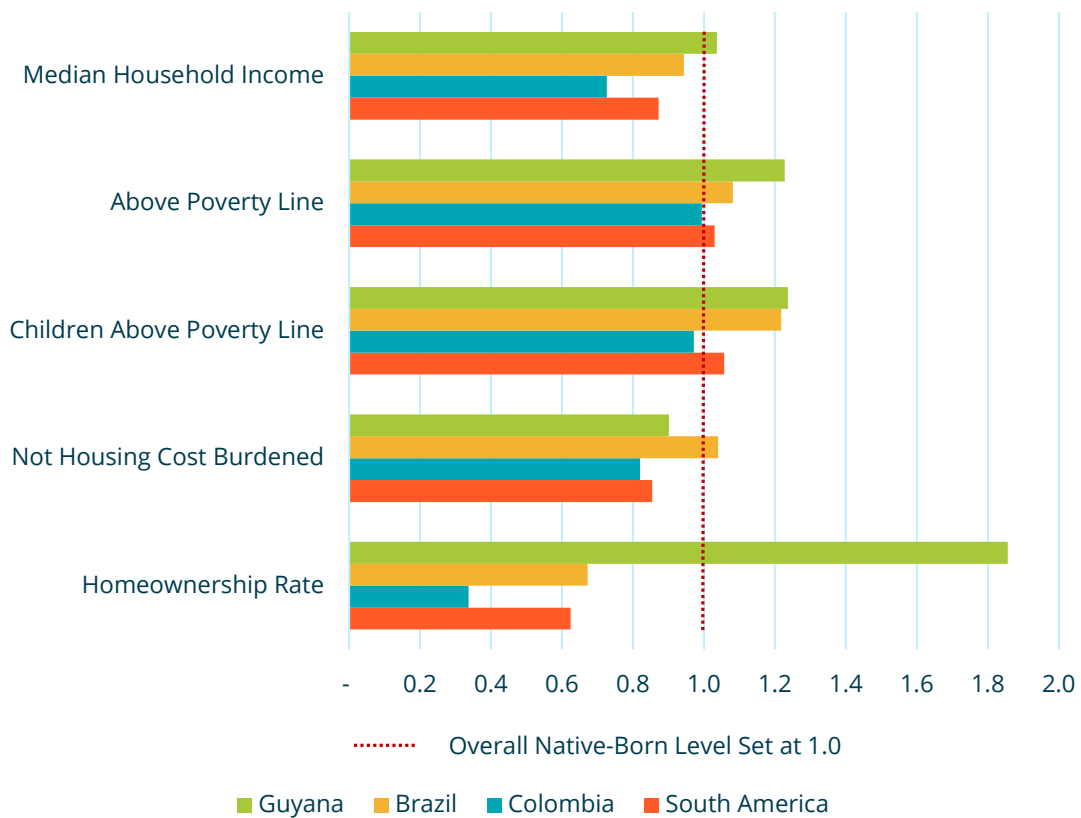
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

In comparison to Boston’s native born population, South American immigrants are more likely to be free from poverty (83.0%) and childhood poverty (77.9%). They are less likely to be free from housing burden (47.4%), have lower homeownership rates (22.9%), and typically earn lower median household incomes (\$54,568).

Colombians make up the 6th largest immigrant group in Boston, or 4.9% of the population. Their pattern of labor market integration is extremely similar to that of South American immigrants in general, along with their standard of living.

FIGURE 34

Ratios of Standard of Living Indicators for South American Immigrants



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

5. Conclusion

Immigrant populations in Boston are diverse, as are their levels of labor market integration and standards of living. Some groups fare better than the native-born population and others fare worse. Immigrants are heterogeneous – differing across many dimensions, and differing at least as much from each other as they do from the population at large. In particular, an immigrant's experiences are more polarized than those for the population as a whole, with larger concentrations at the extremes (e.g. of wealth and poverty, high and low educational levels, etc.).

On balance, the degree of labor market integration varies substantially with immigrant workers' education attainment, English proficiency, citizenship status, region of origin, and duration of residence. Key correlates of success may include education and English proficiency, which interact in complex ways.

Important barriers to immigrant integration in the labor market are the lack of general knowledge about the labor market, restrictions on access to employment, and lack of recognition of qualifications and/or access to certification/re-certification. Immigrants may also face discrimination on the basis of nativity, race, or religion. The persistence of gaps implies that foreign-born workers face systemic barriers, requiring sustained institutional responses.

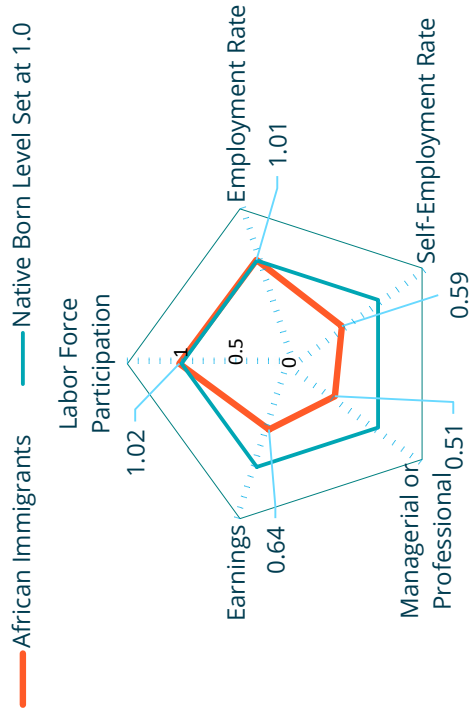
An undercurrent throughout immigrant's integration in the U.S. labor market, but not measured in this analysis, is the impact of legal status. Undocumented status restricts immigrants' labor market entrance and mobility since it effectively closes off opportunities to find jobs, particularly in the regulated portion of the urban labor market - large firms and government agencies.

Immigrant success in the labor market is a core measure of equity and opportunity. Without jobs, immigrants place a burden on governments and on their own communities. Without equitable pay, immigrants foster undesirable sub-economies. Economic self-sufficiency measured by labor force participation and employment rates, earnings and income levels is crucial not only to newcomers but to society as a whole.

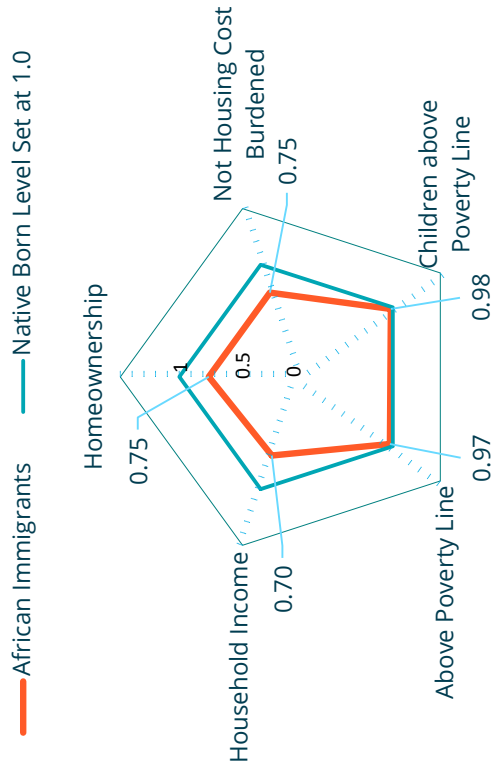
Appendix

Economic Intergration by Regions and Countries of Origin

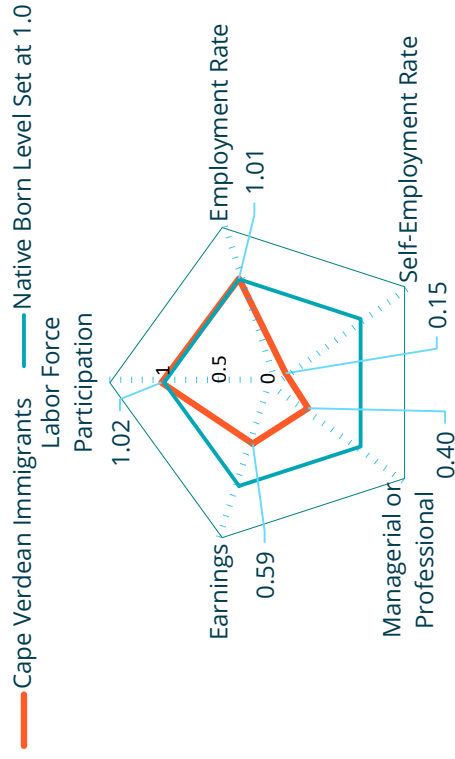
Labor Market Integration: Africans*



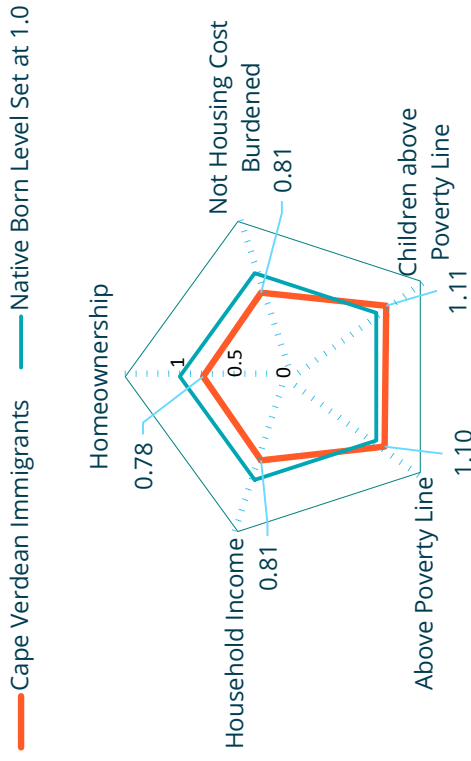
Standard of Living: Africans



Labor Market Integration: Cape Verdeans

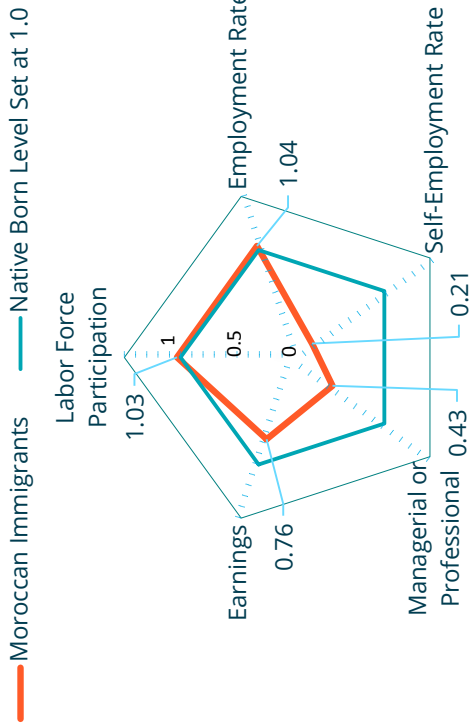


Standard of Living: Cape Verdeans

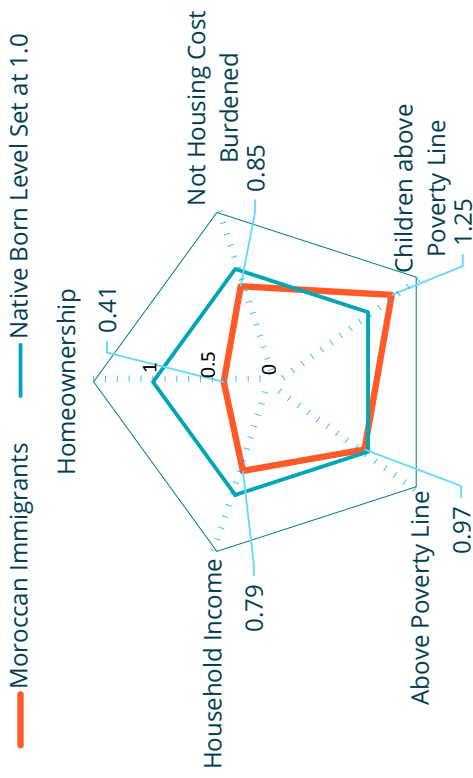


* Note: Africans refer to Boston's immigrants who are or were nationals of African countries.

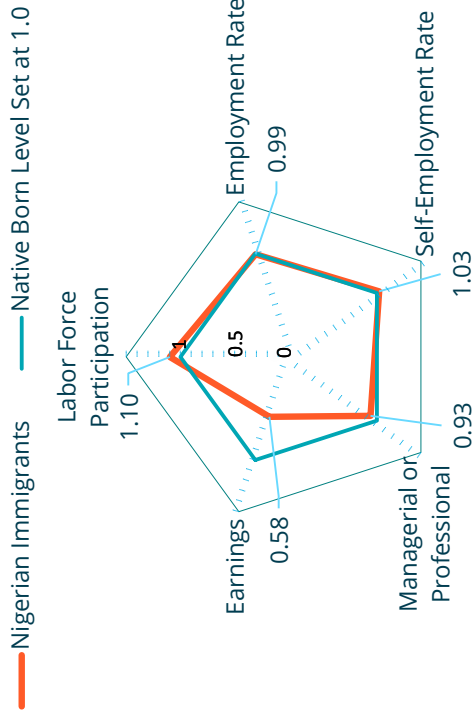
Labor Market Integration: Moroccans



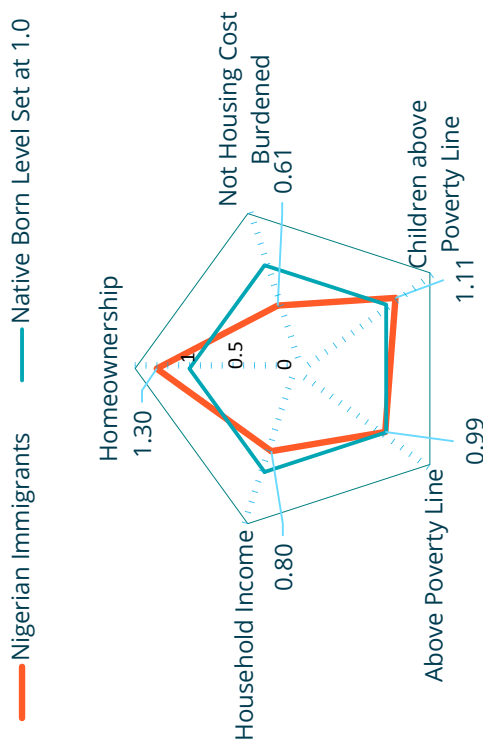
Standard of Living: Moroccans



Labor Market Integration: Nigerians



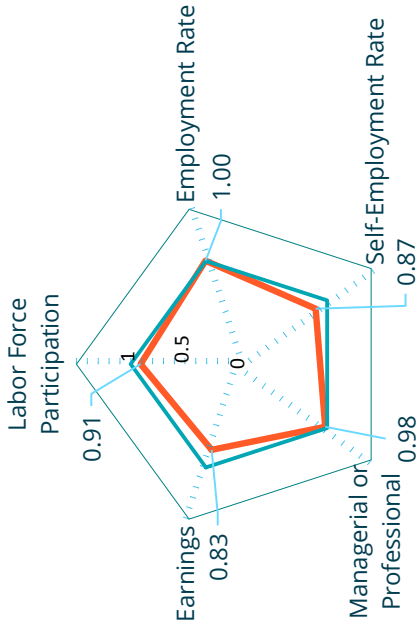
Standard of Living: Nigerians



Note: Cabo Verde, Morocco and Nigeria are largest 3 countries of origin for African immigrants in Boston's labor force.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

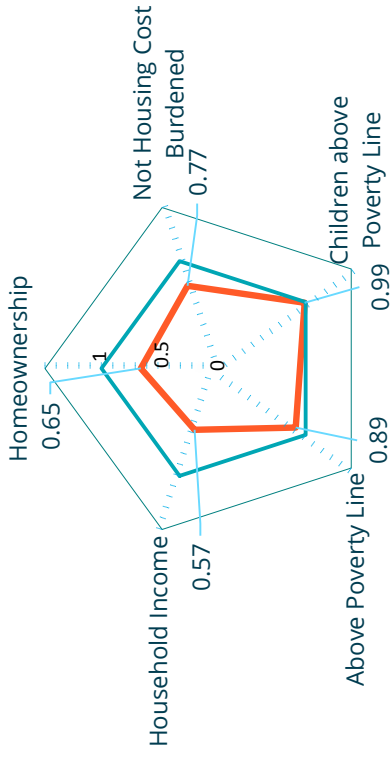
Labor Market Integration: Asians and Pacific Islanders

— Asian and Pacific Islander Immigrants — Native Born Level Set at 1.0



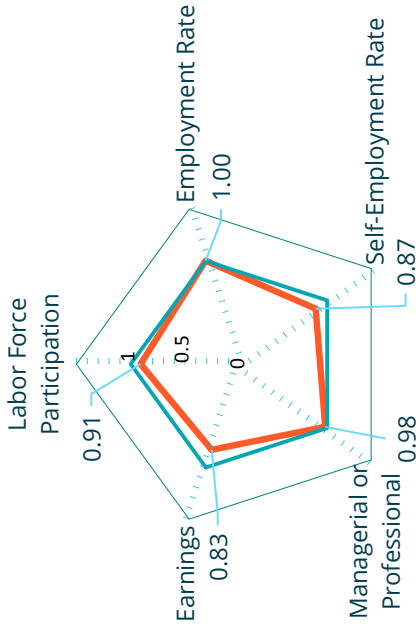
Standard of Living: Asians and Pacific Islanders

— Asian and Pacific Islander Immigrants — Native Born Level Set at 1.0



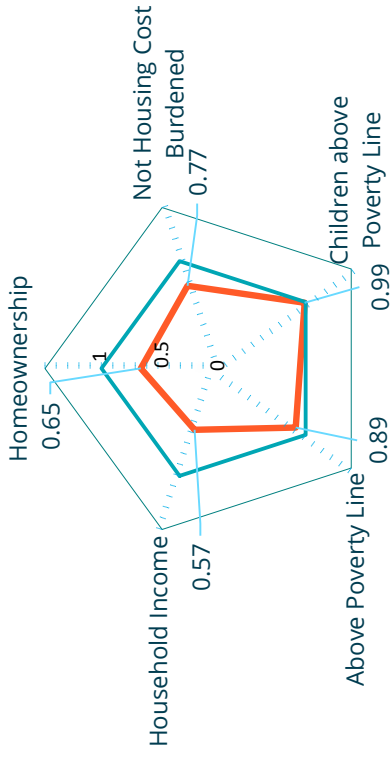
Labor Market Integration: Chinese

— Chinese Immigrants — Native Born Level Set at 1.0



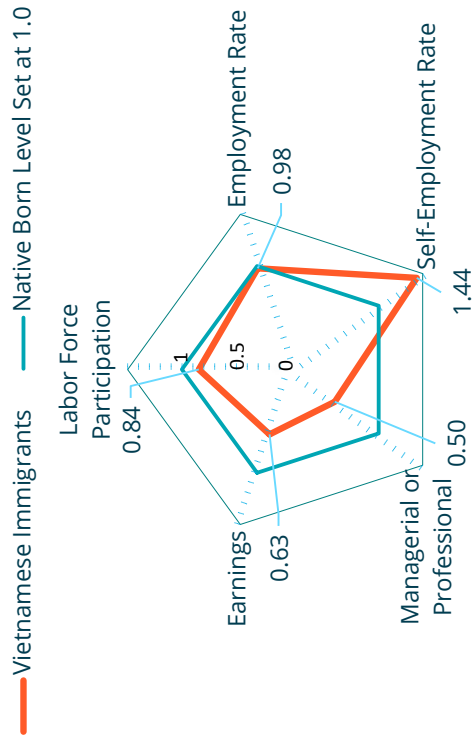
Standard of Living: Chinese

— Chinese Immigrants — Native Born Level Set at 1.0

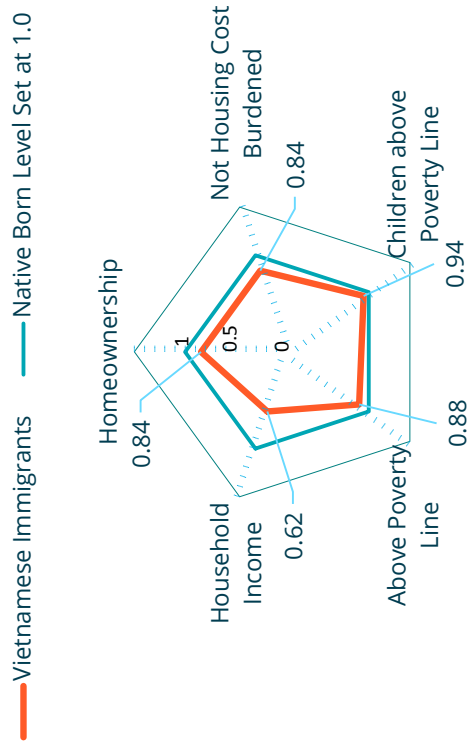


* Note: Asians and Pacific Islanders refer to Boston's Immigrants who are or were nationals of Asian or Pacific island countries.

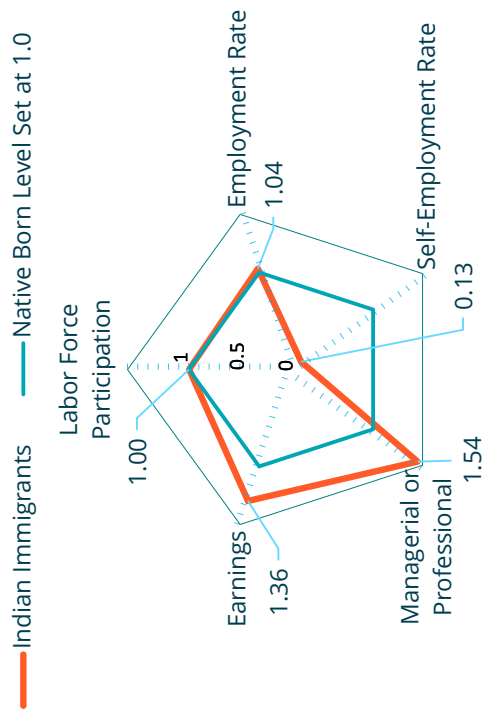
Labor Market Integration: Vietnamese



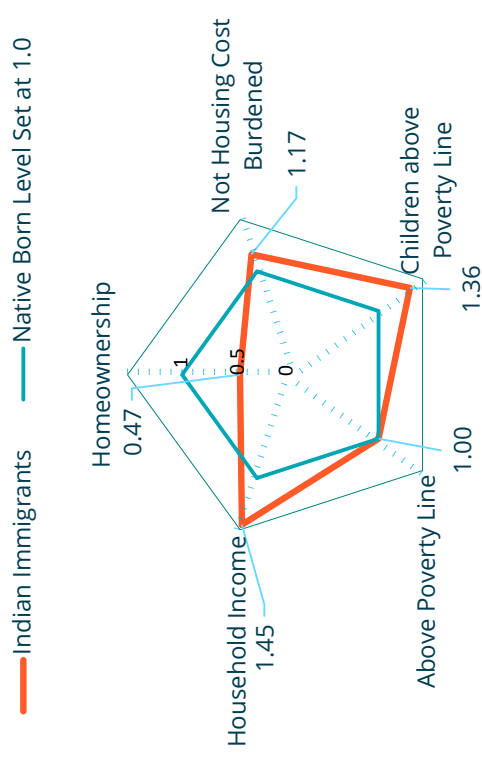
Standard of Living: Vietnamese



Labor Market Integration: Indians



Standard of Living: Indians

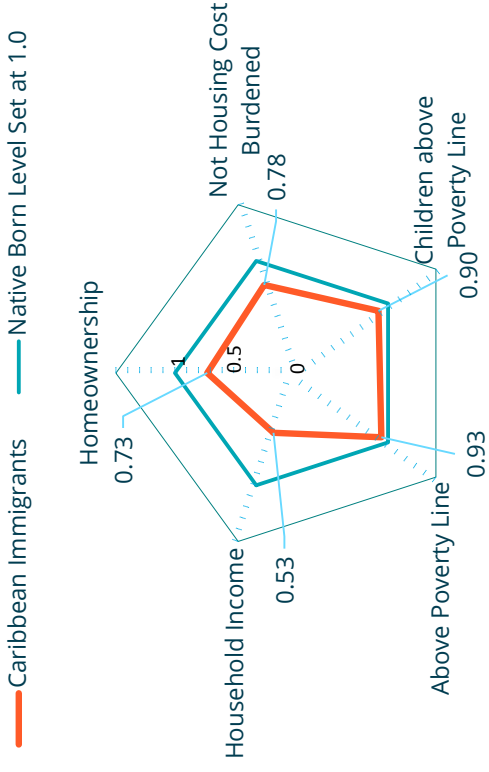


Note: China, Vietnam and India are largest 3 countries of origin for Asian immigrants in Boston's labor force.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

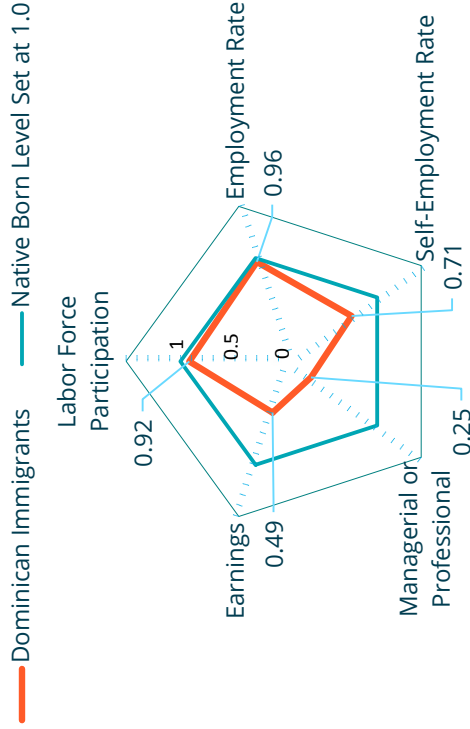
Labor Market Integration: Caribbeans



Standard of Living: Caribbeans



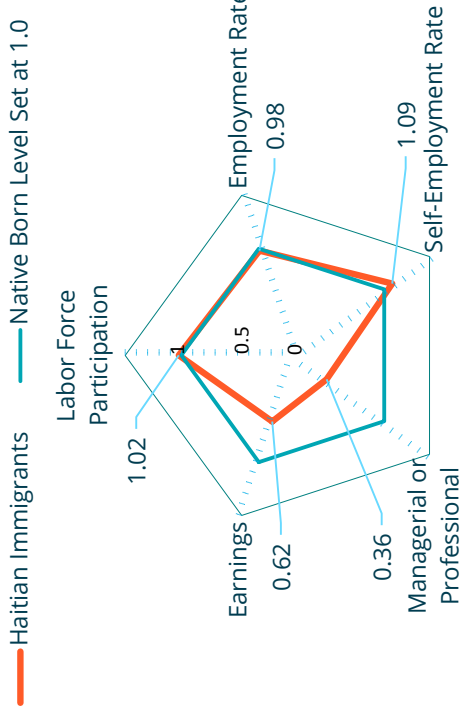
Labor Market Integration: Dominicans



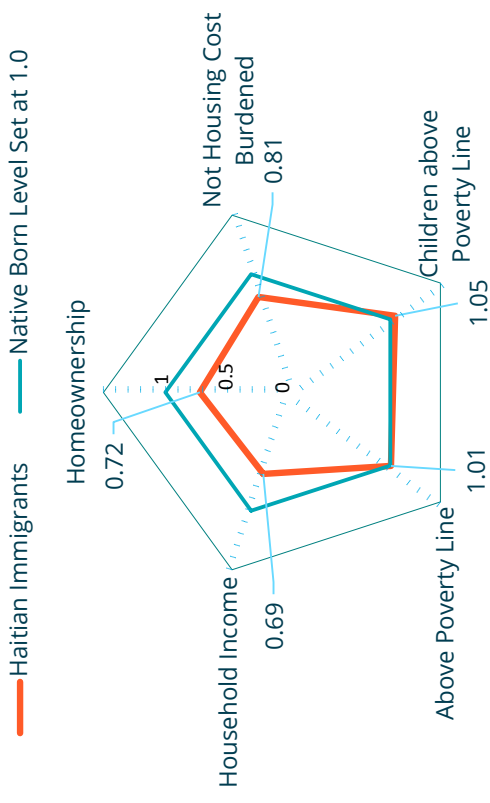
Standard of Living: Dominicans



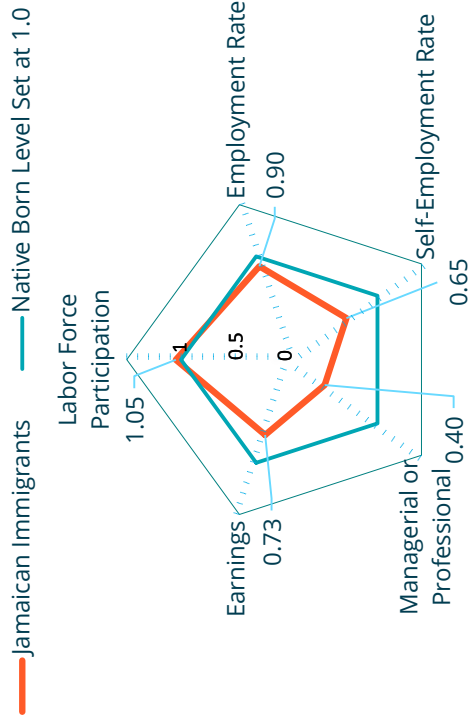
Labor Market Integrations: Haitians



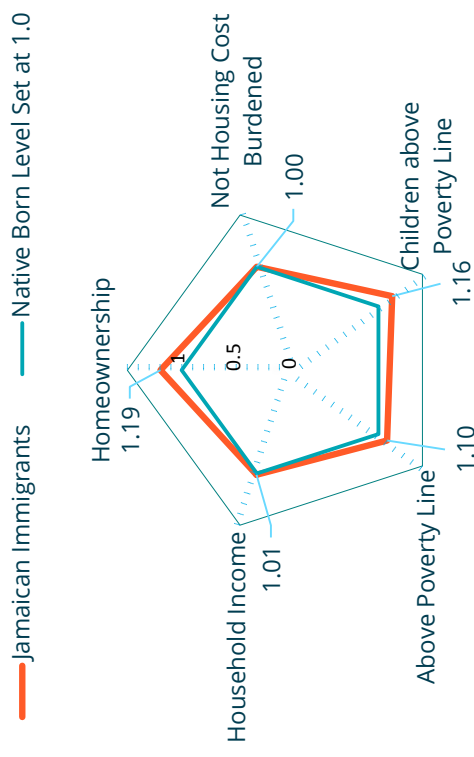
Standard of Living: Haitians



Labor Market Integration: Jamaicans



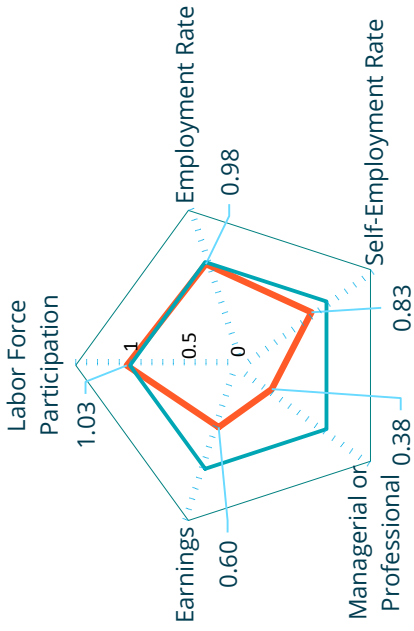
Standard of Living: Jamaicans



Note: Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica are largest 3 countries of origin for Caribbean immigrants in Boston's labor force.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

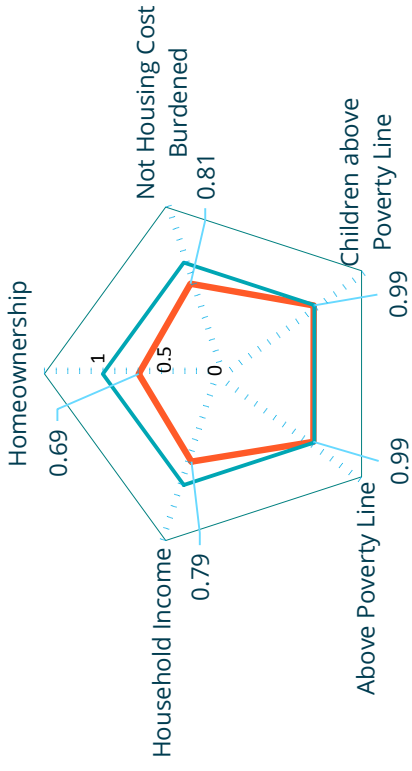
Labor Market Integration: Central and North Americans

— Central and North American Immigrants — Native Born Level Set at 1.0



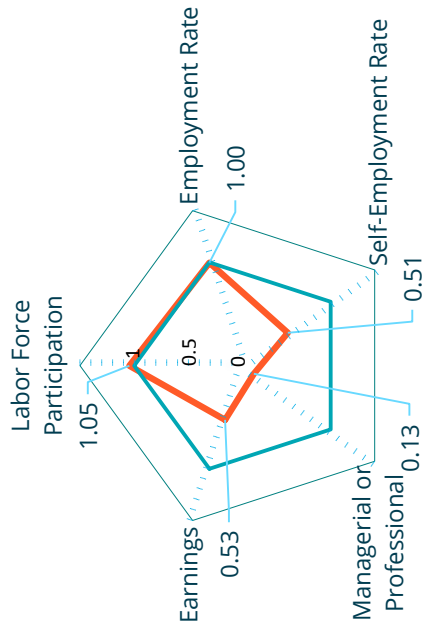
Standard of Living: Central and North Americans

— Central and North American Immigrants — Native Born Level Set at 1.0



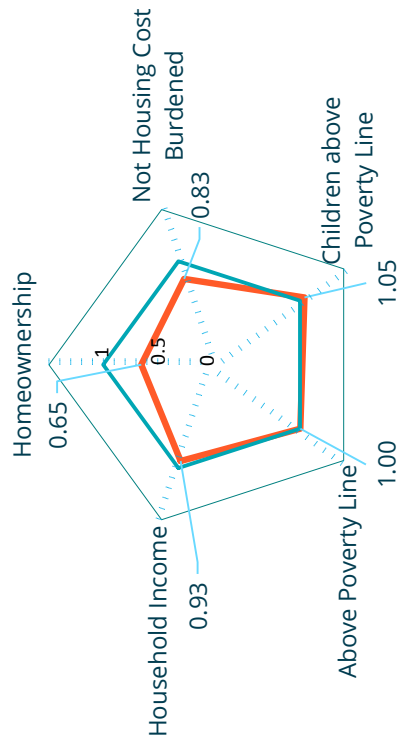
Labor Market Integration: Salvadorans

— Salvadorian Immigrants — Native Born Level Set at 1.0

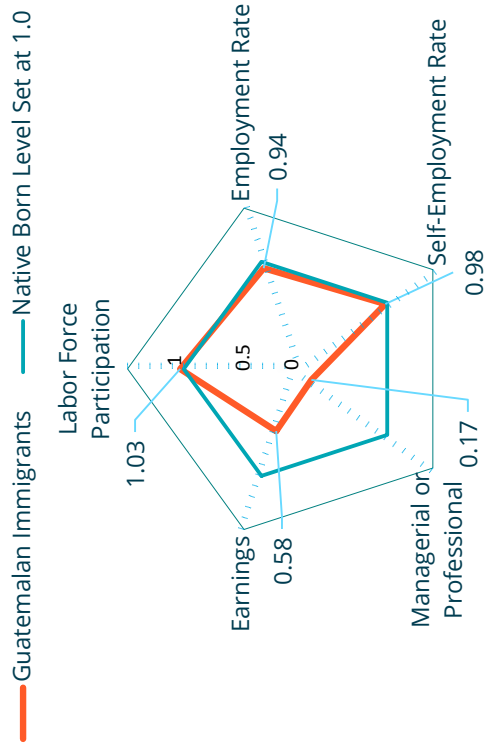


Standard of Living: Salvadorans

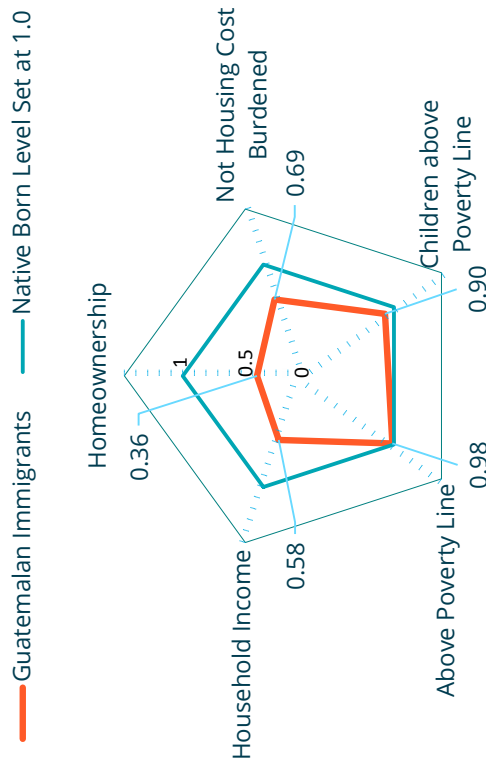
— Salvadorian Immigrants — Native Born Level Set at 1.0



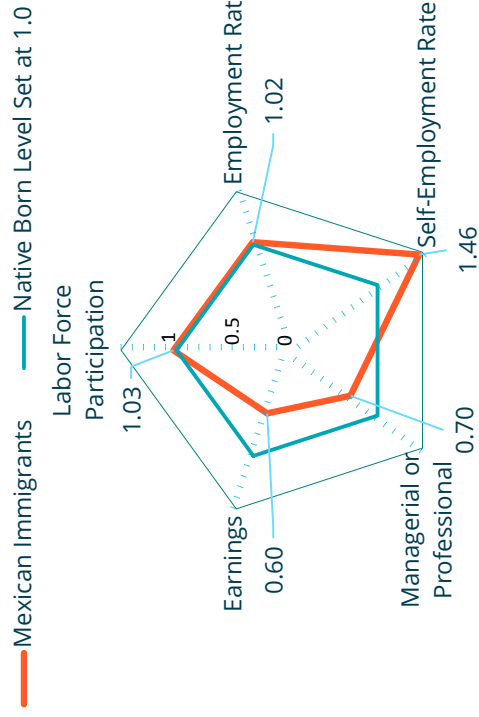
Labor Market Integration: Guatemalans



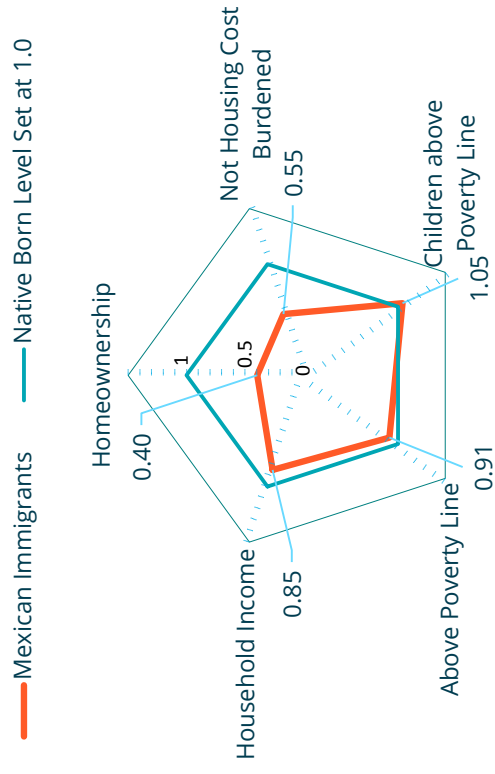
Standard of Living: Guatemalans



Labor Market Integration: Mexicans

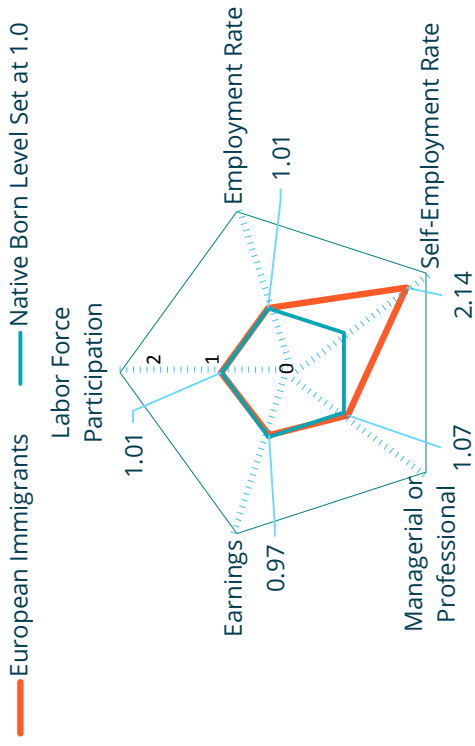


Standard of Living: Mexicans

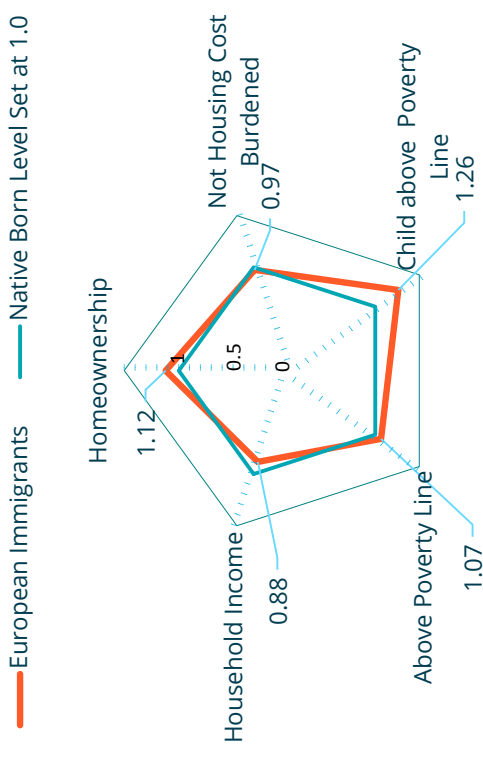


Note: El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico are largest 3 countries of origin for Central and North American immigrants in Boston's labor force. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

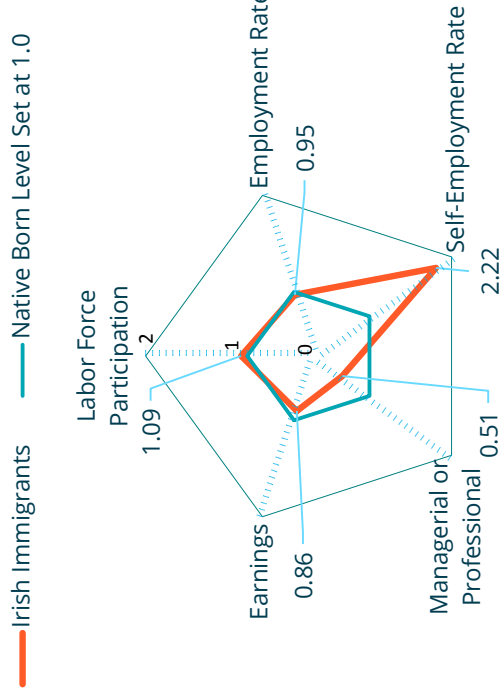
Labor Market Integration: Europeans



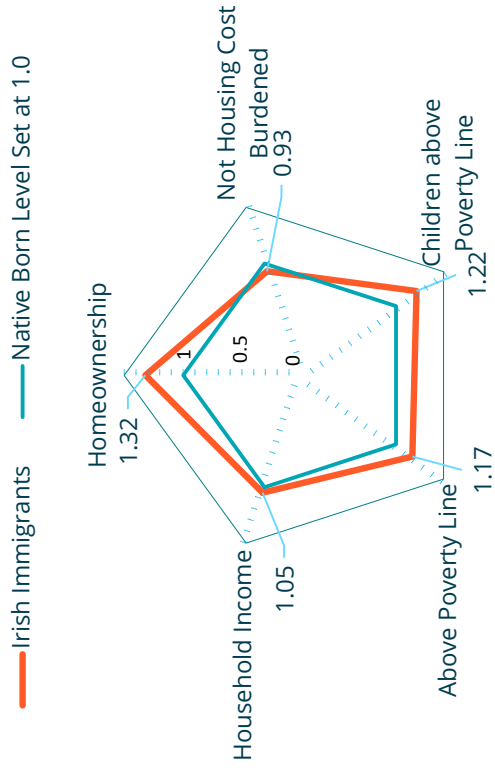
Standard of Living: Europeans



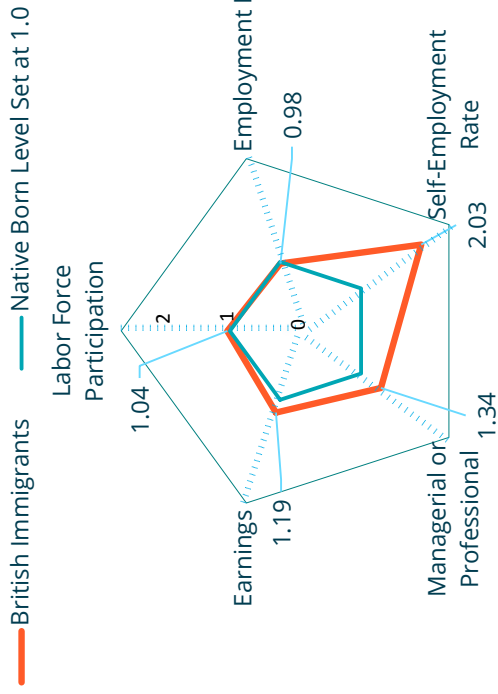
Labor Market Integration: Irish



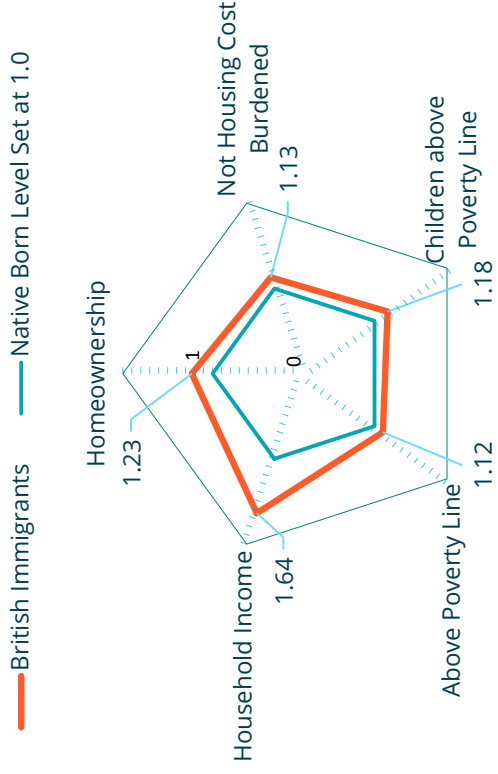
Standard of Living: Irish



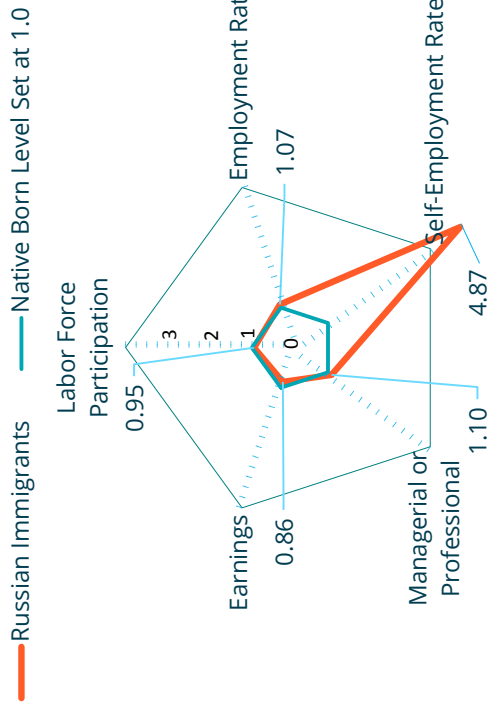
Labor Market Integration: British



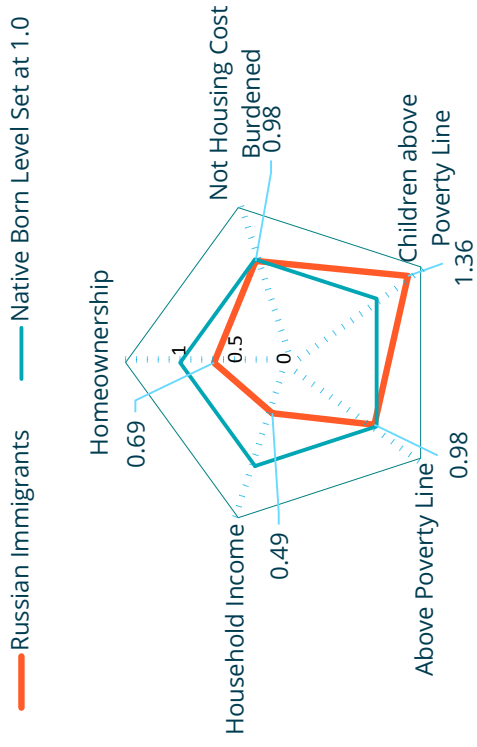
Standard of Living: British



Labor Market Integration: Russians



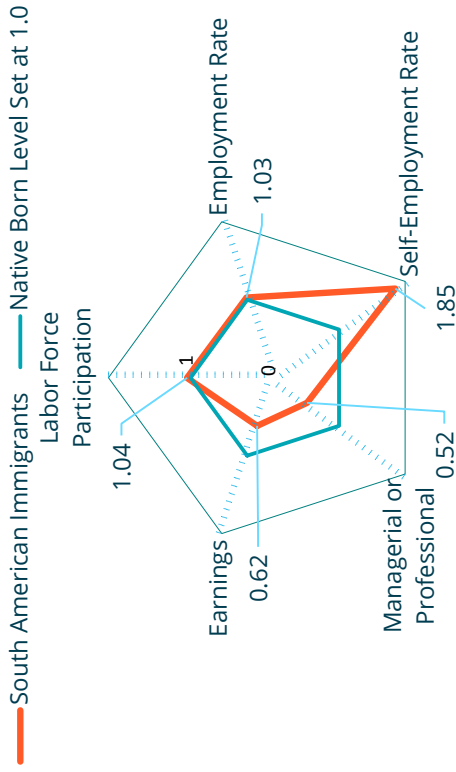
Standard of Living: Russians



Note: Ireland, Russia and the United Kingdom are largest 3 countries of origin for European immigrants in Boston's labor force.
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

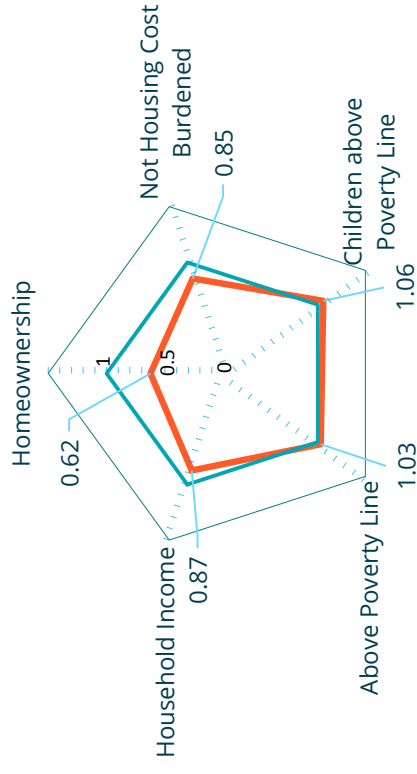
Labor Market Integration: South Americans

Americans



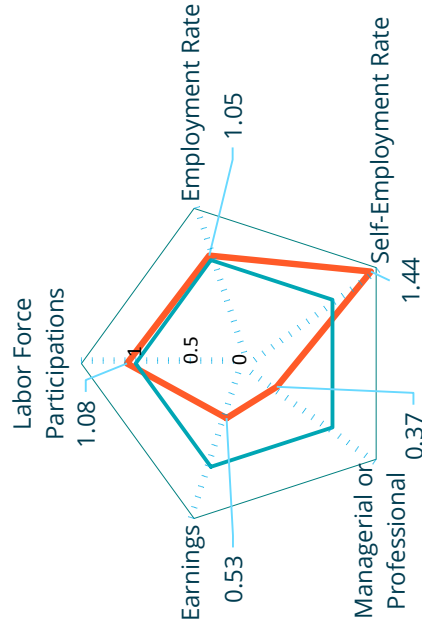
Standard of Living: South Americans

Legend: South American Immigrants (orange line), Native Born Level Set at 1.0 (teal line)



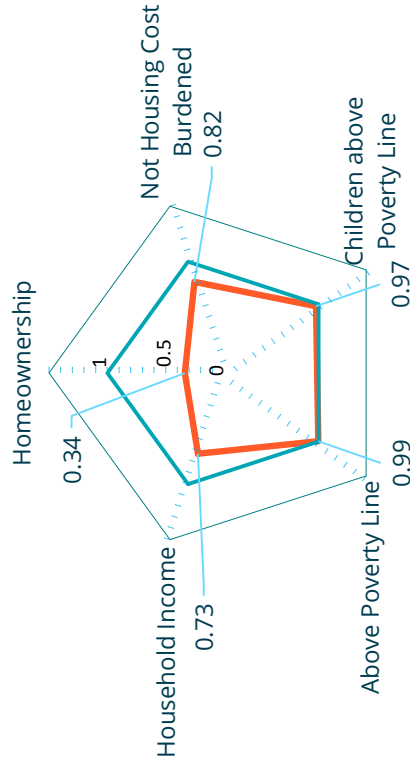
Labor Market Integration: Colombians

Legend: Colombian Immigrants (orange line), Native Born Level Set at 1.0 (teal line)

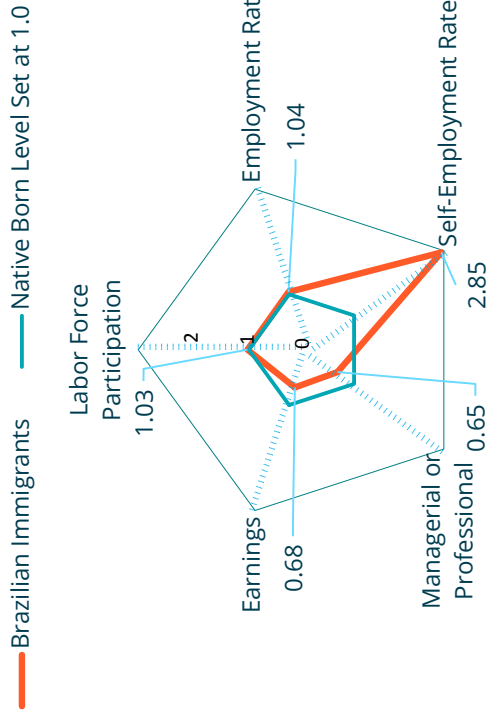


Standard of Living: Colombians

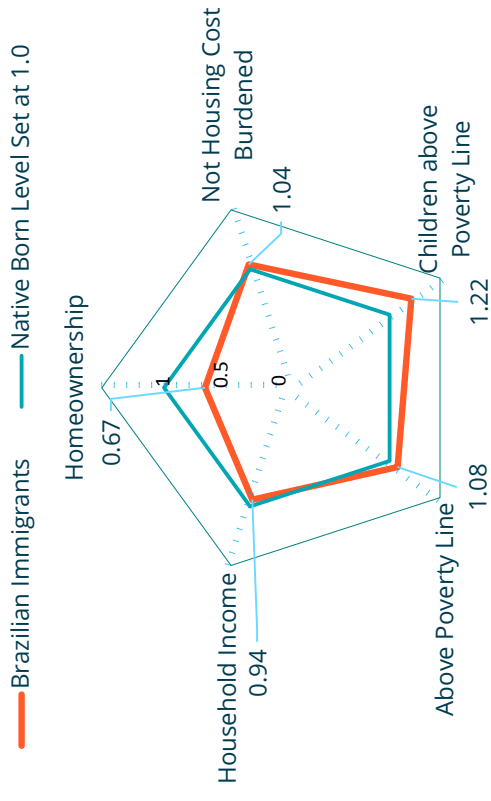
Legend: Colombian Immigrants (orange line), Native Born Level Set at 1.0 (teal line)



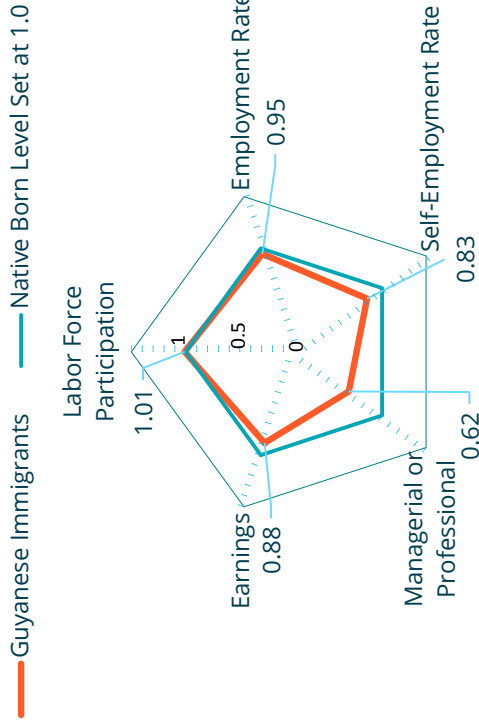
Labor Market Integration: Brazilians



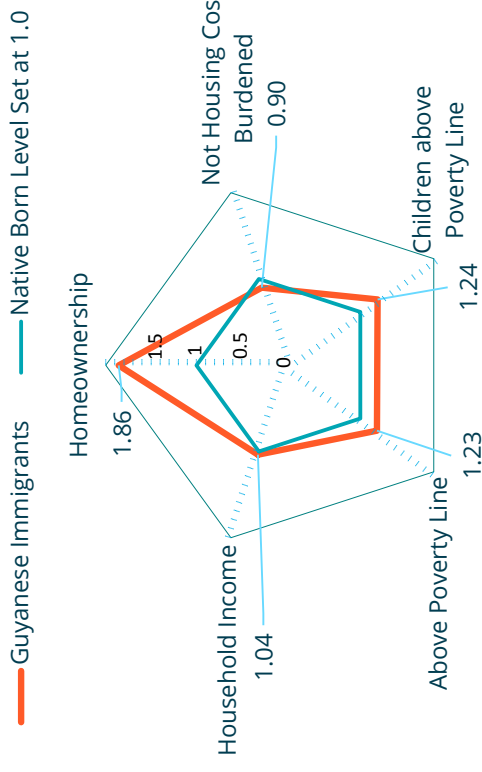
Standard of Living: Brazilians



Labor Market Integration: Guyanese



Standard of Living: Guyanese



Note: Colombia, Brazil and Guyana are largest 3 countries of origin for South American immigrants in Boston's labor force. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), BPDA Research Division Analysis

