Contemporary Immigrant Gateways in Historical Perspective

Audrey Singer

Abstract: This article focuses on settlement trends of immigrants during the periods that bookend the twentieth century, both eras of mass migration. It compares settlement patterns in both periods, describing old and new gateways, the growth of the immigrant population, and geographic concentration and dispersion. Historically, immigrants have been highly concentrated in a few places. Between 1930 and 1990, more than half of all immigrants lived in just five metropolitan areas. Since then, the share of these few destinations has declined, as immigrants have made their way to new metro areas, particularly in the South and West. During the same period, immigrants began to choose the suburbs over cities, following the decentralization of jobs and the movement of opportunities to suburban areas. There are now more immigrants in U.S. suburban areas than cities.

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New immigrant settlement trends have reshaped communities across the United States. The history of immigrant urban enclaves has been fundamentally altered by the post–World War II restructuring of the U.S. economy, the decentralization of cities, and the growth of suburbs as major employment centers. The contemporary immigration "map" has multiple implications for the social, economic, civic, and political integration of immigrants.

Similar transformative processes also characterized the turn of the twentieth century, when the United States was shifting from an agrarian to an industrial economy, inducing both an exodus from rural areas to cities and mass immigration, mainly from Europe. At that time, immigrants significantly altered neighborhoods in burgeoning cities, some of which are still defined by the immigrants who settled there during that period.

Today, these processes are taking place in new geographies and through different industrial transitions. During both periods, the content and the location of working life changed. At the turn of the

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twentieth century, the U.S. economy moved from agriculture toward manufacturing, and the population shifted from rural to urban areas. The turn of the twenty-first century has been characterized by a transition from manufacturing to "new economy" technology and service jobs, and a population movement from urban to suburban and exurban areas.

The historical immigrant settlement narrative typically begins with immigrants arriving at Ellis Island or the ports of California, before making their way to ethnic neighborhoods in cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, or San Francisco. As these communities developed, immigrants worked in local establishments, started their own businesses, sent their children to local schools, and organized places of worship.

Building on this history, the contemporary story entails the arrival of immigrants to established immigrant gateways with well-defined service infrastructures and a receptivity that aids the integration process. But it also includes a large number of immigrants streaming to newer destinations. These new gateways have emerged over the past two decades, creating a different context for integration and eliciting a mixed response from local communities. In some areas, immigrants have been welcomed, while in others they have stimulated conflict. Rapid demographic shifts in the newest gateways often have an impact on public institutions, whose adjustments to the changes unfold across immigrant and native-born communities that may be unprepared for change. This article focuses on settlement trends of immigrants in the two periods that bookend the twentieth century, both eras of mass immigration. It compares settlement patterns in both periods, describing old and new gateways, the growth of the immigrant population, and geographic concentration and dispersion. The rise of suburban settlement patterns is examined in the contemporary period.

This analysis examines the size and distribution of the foreign-born population for the period between 1900 and 2010. Much of the analysis focuses on 1900, representing the beginning of the twentieth century, and 2010, representing the beginning of the twenty-first century. County-level data from decennial censuses for the years 1900 to 1950 and 1970 to 2000 were accessed via the Minnesota Population Center's National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGIS).[1] Due to sampling errors noted by the Minnesota Population Center, data for the year 1960 were extracted directly from Census Bureau digital uploads of the *U.S. Census of Population: 1960*, vol. 1, *Characteristics of the Population*.[2] For 2010, American Community Survey (ACS) 2006–2010 5-year estimates were accessed from the Census Bureau because comparable data at the county level are not available from 1-year estimates of the ACS.

While "metropolitan areas" as we know them today did not exist at the turn of the twentieth century, consistent metropolitan definitions based on 2010 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) definitions are used throughout the analysis in order to standardize data comparisons. Metropolitan immigration estimates were constructed from individual county-level data. Thus, metropolitan area definitions are applied to data from 1900, even though population was heavily concentrated in the cities of those areas, and suburbs were not yet well developed. Metropolitan areas are composed of counties or county equivalents and are ranked according to the one hundred most populous metro areas of each decade.

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Two trends emerge from a review of the share of foreign-born populations residing in the primary urban counties of the metropolitan areas with the largest immigrant populations. For contemporary metropolitan areas that developed prior to World War II, the share of the immigrant population in the primary urban county is generally high in the first half of the century. As immigrants began to suburbanize in the second half of the century, this share diminished; St. Louis, Baltimore, and Portland, Oregon, follow this pattern. For newer metropolitan areas that experienced development after the advent of the automobile, the trend tends to be different. The share of immigrants in the primary urban county, often only a small city or town in the early twentieth century, is small, reflecting a more rural foreign-born population. The share of the immigrant population in the primary urban county increases over time, as the region surrounding the cities becomes denser. This pattern is particularly evident in states such as Texas, which shares a border with Mexico, and which has a significant Mexican immigrant population, especially in cities such as Houston and Austin. Areas that tend to have a consistently low share of immigrants residing in the primary urban county are those that have recently emerged or reemerged as immigrant gateways and that have a largely suburban population, such as Salt Lake City, Denver, and Sacramento.

Currently, the OMB defines 366 metropolitan areas in the United States, all of which are included in this study. Thirty-seven percent of U.S. counties (1,168) are located in metropolitan areas. In this analysis, "metropolitan area" is used to describe all urban places, including those at the beginning of the twentieth century. The 100 largest metropolitan areas in 2010 constitute "large metropolitan areas"; the remaining 266 are the "small metropolitan areas." The remainder of the population lives in rural or non-metropolitan areas. The 100 largest metropolitan areas are defined by the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program's State of Metropolitan America Indicator Map.[3] Primary cities are defined as the largest city in each metropolitan area, plus all other incorporated places with populations of at least 100,000. Suburbs are designated as the remainder of the metro areas outside primary cities.

The terms *immigrant* and *foreign born* are used interchangeably here to refer to persons born outside the United States, excluding those born to American citizens abroad. Immigrant status is determined by a question about birthplace in the census questionnaire. This question varies somewhat over the twentieth century, but foreign-born population and total population were determined for each year at the metropolitan level.

During the turn of both the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, immigration levels were high, and the share of the population that was foreign born was at a peak. In this regard, America at the turn of the twenty-first century bears some similarities to America at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1900, immigrants made up nearly 14 percent of the U.S. population; in 2010, they composed 13 percent of the total. However, in absolute terms, the number of immigrants has quadrupled, from 10 million in 1900 to nearly 40 million today.

For several decades prior to 1900, immigrants arrived in great numbers. Between 1860 and 1900, the immigrant population grew by more than 6 million persons, growing by 35 percent between 1860 and 1870 and then varying in growth rates between 12 and 38 percent per decade (see Table 1). Between 1900 and

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Table 1
Foreign-Born Population, including Its Share of the Total Population and Its Change from the Previous Decade, 1860–2010

	Foreign Born	Share of Total	Change from Previous Decade	
			Number	Growth Rate
1860	4,138,697	13.2%	–	–
1870	5,567,229	14.4%	1,428,532	35%
1880	6,679,943	13.3%	1,112,714	20%
1890	9,249,547	14.8%	2,569,604	38%
1900	10,341,276	13.6%	1,091,729	12%
1910	13,515,886	14.7%	3,174,610	31%
1920	13,920,692	13.2%	404,806	3%
1930	14,204,149	11.6%	283,457	2%
1940	11,594,896	8.8%	-2,609,253	-18%
1950	10,347,395	6.9%	-1,247,501	-11%
1960	9,738,091	5.4%	-609,304	-6%
1970	9,619,302	4.7%	-118,789	-1%
1980	14,079,906	6.2%	4,460,604	46%
1990	19,767,316	7.9%	5,687,410	40%
2000	31,107,889	11.1%	11,340,573	57%
2010	39,955,854	12.9%	8,847,965	28%

Source: Author's calculations of 1860–2000 data via Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850–2000," Population Division Working Paper No. 81 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, February 2006), http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0081/twps0081.html; and 2010 ACS 1-year estimates, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/.

1910, the immigrant population grew by a whopping 3.2 million, a rate of 31 percent, yielding a U.S. population in 1910 that was nearly 15 percent foreign born.

What followed were six decades of much lower immigration levels, as the Great Depression and two world wars curtailed immigration worldwide. This slow and, at times, negative growth of the immigrant population, coupled with restrictive immigration policy and the mid-century baby boom, rendered a nation that was almost entirely native born. By 1960, the share of the population that was foreign born was less than 5 percent, amounting to fewer than 10 million immigrants.

Between 1970 and 1980, immigration began to pick up again in earnest, increasing steadily over the four decades between 1970 and 2010. The greatest increase came in the 1990s, when more than 11.3 million immigrants arrived, a growth of 57 percent. Immigration in the 2000s slowed a bit after the recession; still, nearly 9 million immigrants arrived, boosting the U.S. foreign-born population to nearly 13 percent, the highest share since 1920.

During the 1960s and 1970s, changes in U.S. admissions policy regarding national origins as well as political and economic conditions in sending countries affected the composition of immigrants entering the United States.[4] Thus, the two periods also differ greatly in the regional origins of immigrants. In 1900, the vast majority of the 10 million immigrants residing in the United States were from European countries, but by 2010, Europeans made

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up less than 13 percent of all immigrants (see Table 2). At the turn of the twentieth century, 11 percent of immigrants were from Northern America (in addition to Canada, this includes Bermuda, Greenland, and St. Pierre and Miquelon). Mexican immigrants then made up only 1 percent of the total, as did immigrants from all Asian countries combined. The remainder of Latin America, Africa, and Oceania each contributed less than 1 percent of the total. By 2010, however, immigrants from Mexico had the largest share of the total, at 30 percent. The rest of Latin America contributed 23 percent and all Asian countries combined were another 28 percent of the total. Africans comprised 4 percent, Northern America 2 percent, and immigrants from Oceania less than 1 percent.

As the United States has urbanized and developed, the destinations of immigrants have shifted. While the United States developed from a largely rural to a largely urban society, the number and density of cities increased.[5] Eventually, the cities themselves expanded, growing from dense urban cores to metropolitan areas with large suburban areas extending outward.

Immigrant workers contributed mightily to the workforce during the industrial transformation of the U.S. economy. Sociologists Charles Hirschman and Elizabeth Mogford estimate that immigrants and their children held half of all U.S. manufacturing jobs by 1920.[6] Thus, the industrializing cities of the Northeast and Midwest attracted workers to manufacturing jobs in great numbers, and immigrants played a major role in the process of urbanization. Indeed, 67 percent of all immigrants lived in the largest metropolitan areas in 1900, as compared to just 44 percent of the native born (see Figure 1).

Including small "metros," more than three-quarters of immigrants lived in metropolitan areas and less than one-quarter lived in rural areas in 1900. In contrast, 58 percent of the native-born population lived in metro areas and 42 percent in non-metropolitan areas. By 2010, 95 percent of foreign-born residents lived in metropolitan America, as compared with only 81 percent of the native born. Among the large metropolitan areas in 1900, the majority of the foreign born lived in the Northeast (41 percent) and Midwest (20 percent). Only a small share lived in large metro areas in the South (3 percent) and the West (3 percent), and another 10 percent lived in smaller metropolitan areas (see Figure 2).

By 2010, however, the large metropolitan areas in the Northeast housed only 20 percent of the immigrant population and the Midwest dropped to only 9 percent of the total, reflecting broader population shifts to the South and West. Metropolitan areas in the South (25 percent) and the West (31 percent) are now home to more than half of all immigrants. Small metro areas make up another 10 percent of the total.

Immigrants were drawn to cities that were flourishing at the turn of the twentieth century. Indeed, metropolitan immigrant settlement was highly concentrated (see Figure 3).[7] For most of the century, just five cities ruled as major settlement areas, where half of all immigrants chose to live. New York is by far the dominant destination, garnering at least one-quarter of all immigrants for each decade throughout most of the century. No other metropolitan area comes close to that share until 1990, when Los Angeles matches New York's share at 19 percent, or 3.4 million immigrants each. Only New York and Chicago make the top-five list for every decade between 1900 and 2010. New York is ranked first (with the exception of 1990, when it shares that rank with Los Angeles)

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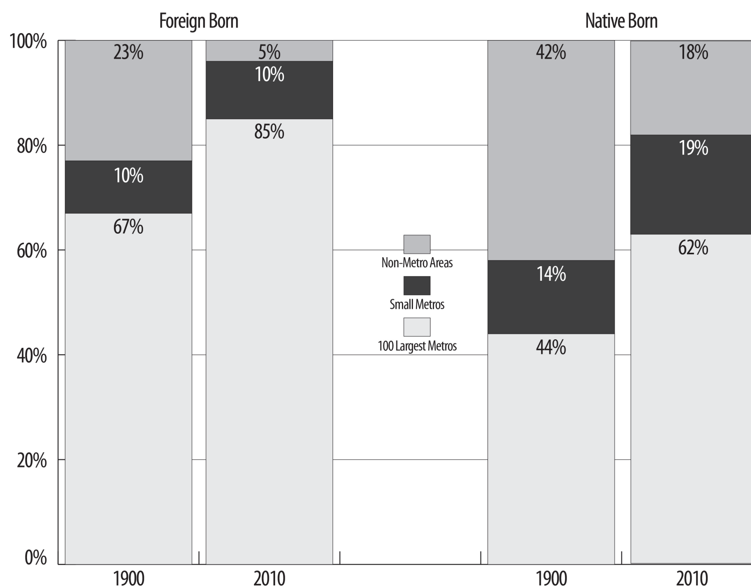
Table 2
Foreign-Born Population by Region or Country of Birth, 1900 and 2010

	1900		2010	
Region or Country	Number	Share	Number	Share
Europe	8,881,548	86.0%	4,817,437	12.1%
Asia	120,248	1.2%	11,283,574	28.2%
Africa	2,538	<0.1%	1,606,914	4.0%
Oceania	8,820	0.1%	216,736	0.5%
Latin America (excluding Mexico)	34,065	0.3%	9,512,984	23.8%
Mexico	103,393	1.0%	11,711,103	29.3%
Northern America	1,179,922	11.4%	806,925	2.0%
Total	**10,330,534**		**39,955,673**	

The table excludes unreported country of birth (1900 only). Source: Author's calculations of 1860–2000 data via Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850–2000," Population Division Working Paper No. 81 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, February 2006), http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0081/twps0081.html; and 2010 ACS 1-year estimates, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/.

Figure 1
Metropolitan/Non-Metropolitan Residence by Nativity, 1900 and 2010



Source: Author's calculations of 1900 Decennial Census data accessed via Minnesota Population Center's National Historical Geographic Information System, http://www.nhgis.org; and 2006–2010 ACS 5-year estimates, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/.

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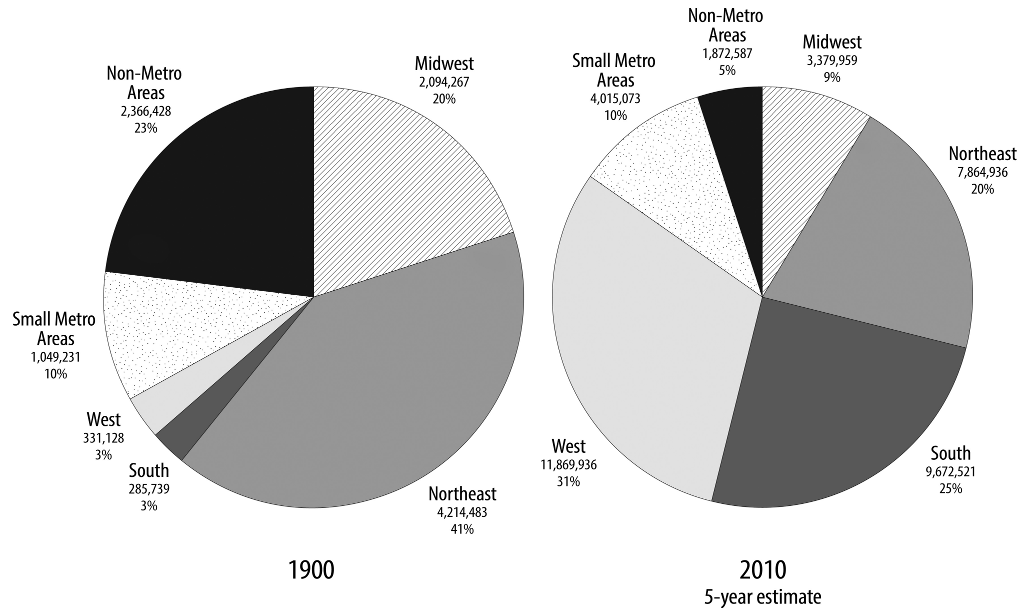
Figure 2
Regional Share of Foreign Born in Large Metropolitan Areas, Small Metropolitan Areas, and Non-Metropolitan Areas, 1900 and 2010



Midwest, Northeast, South, and West divisions include the 100 largest metropolitan areas for 1900 and 2006–2010. Source: Author's calculations of 1900 Decennial Census data accessed via Minnesota Population Center's National Historical Geographic Information System, http://www.nhgis.org; and 2006–2010 ACS 5-year estimates, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/.

and Chicago ranks second all the way through 1960, after which Chicago drops in rank, though all the while gaining immigrants in absolute numbers.[8]

In the early decades of the twentieth century, industrial Philadelphia maintains a rank in the top five, but by 1940 it suffers a net loss of immigrants. Pittsburgh, another industrial city, also appears in the first three decades, only to be trumped by Detroit, which occupies a top spot from 1930 to 1960 as job opportunities there expanded. Boston maintains a continuous presence on the list through 1960, despite a net decline in the number of immigrants. San Francisco claims a strong and growing share from 1970 to 2010, reflecting gains in immigrants from the Pacific Rim. Los Angeles rises from mid-century on to assert a large share of all immigrants living in metropolitan America. In a similar fashion, albeit with a smaller share among all metro areas, Miami stakes out third place in the last several decades due to an increase, first, in Cuban immigrants and, later, in immigrants from other Caribbean and Latin American countries.

The concentration of immigrants after 1990 is especially notable. After seven continuous decades – between 1930 and 1990 – when just five metro areas housed about half of all immigrants living in metropolitan areas, the share declines to 45 percent in 2000 and 40 percent in 2010 as immigrant newcomers make their way to new metro areas, particularly in the South and West. If growth trajectories of

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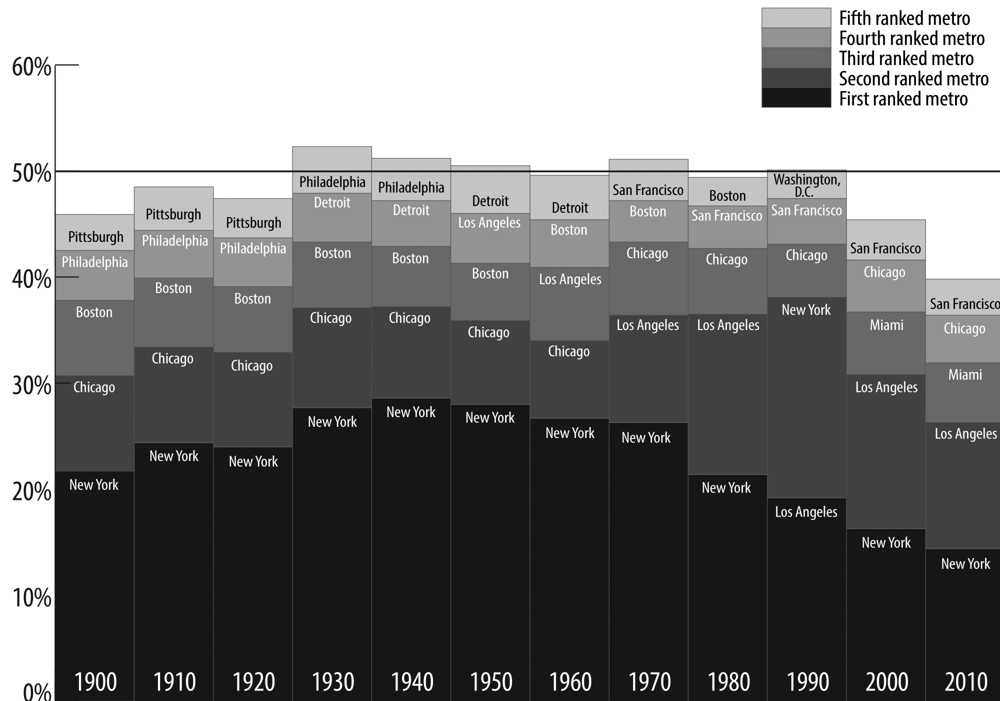
Figure 3
Five Largest Immigrant Populations in Metropolitan Areas as a Share of All Metropolitan Areas, 1900–2010



2010 values represent 2006–2010 5-year estimates. Source: Author's calculations of 1900–1950 and 1970–2000 Decennial Census data accessed via Minnesota Population Center's National Historical Geographic Information System, http://www.nhgis.org; 1960 Decennial Census data accessed via U.S. Census Bureau, *U.S. Census of Population: 1960*, vol. 1, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963); and 2006–2010 ACS 5-year estimates, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/.

dispersal continue into the next decade, the immigrant population in the five largest metropolitan areas may only amount to slightly more than one-third of the total.

Mapping the largest immigrant populations within metropolitan areas in 1900 and 2010 reveals just how dispersed the foreign-born population has become (see Map 1). With the exception of San Francisco, all of the big immigrant destinations in 1900 were in the Midwest or Northeast, including cities in the Great Lakes region such as Buffalo, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Milwaukee, which all share a manufacturing past and no longer draw immigrants in great numbers. New England also drew immigrants to jobs in Worcester, Providence, New Haven, and Boston. The big magnets of Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia attracted large numbers of immigrants.

By 2010, the immigration map had been redrawn. While San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia are on both maps, more notable are the metro areas in the South and West that have risen to the top. Los Angeles, Riverside, Phoenix, Dallas, and Houston are among the metro areas in the Southwest

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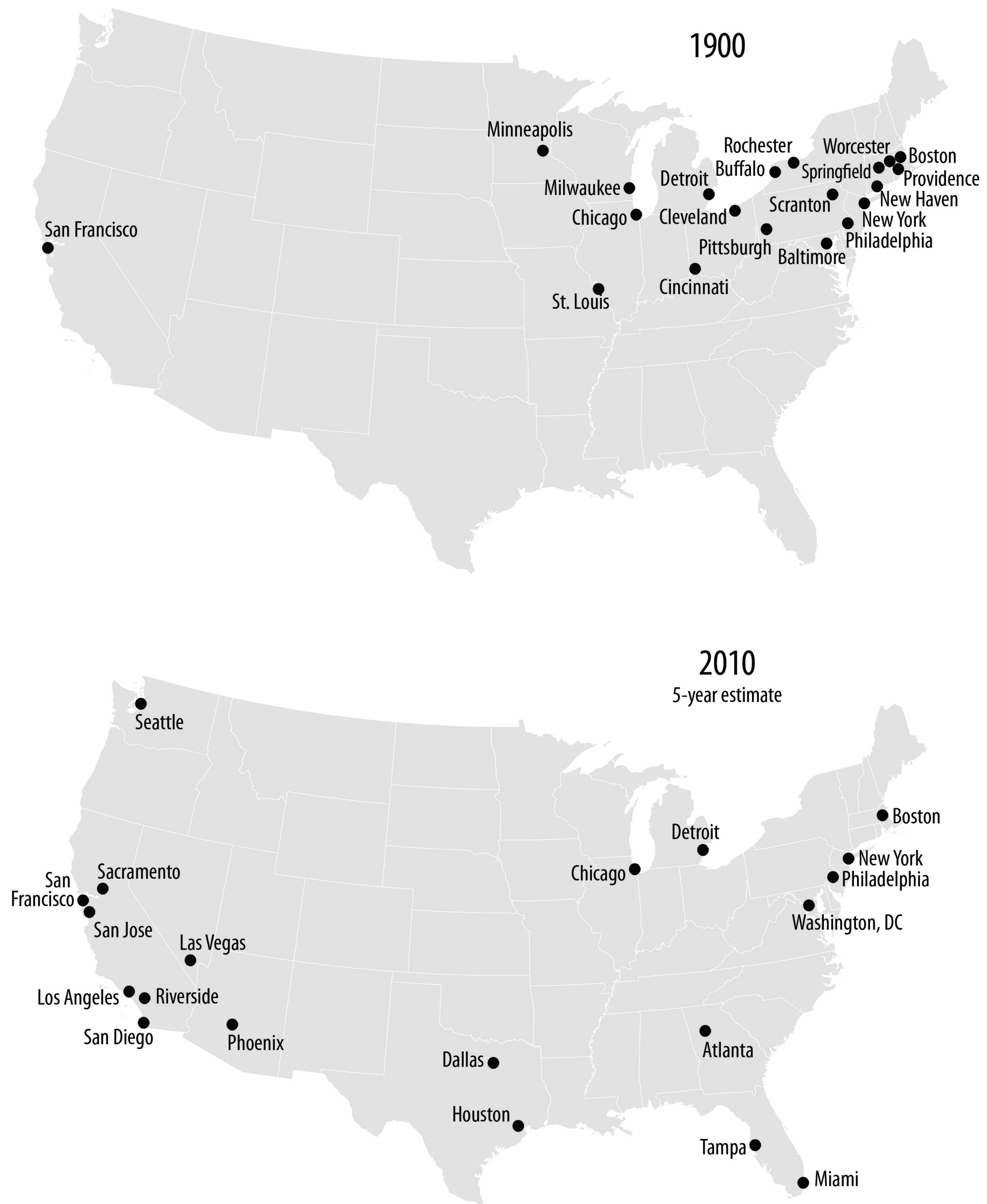
Map 1
Twenty Metropolitan Areas with the Largest Immigrant Populations, 1900 and 2010



Source: Author's calculations of 1900 Decennial Census data accessed via Minnesota Population Center's National Historical Geographic Information System, http://www.nhgis.org; and 2006–2010 ACS 5-year estimates, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/.

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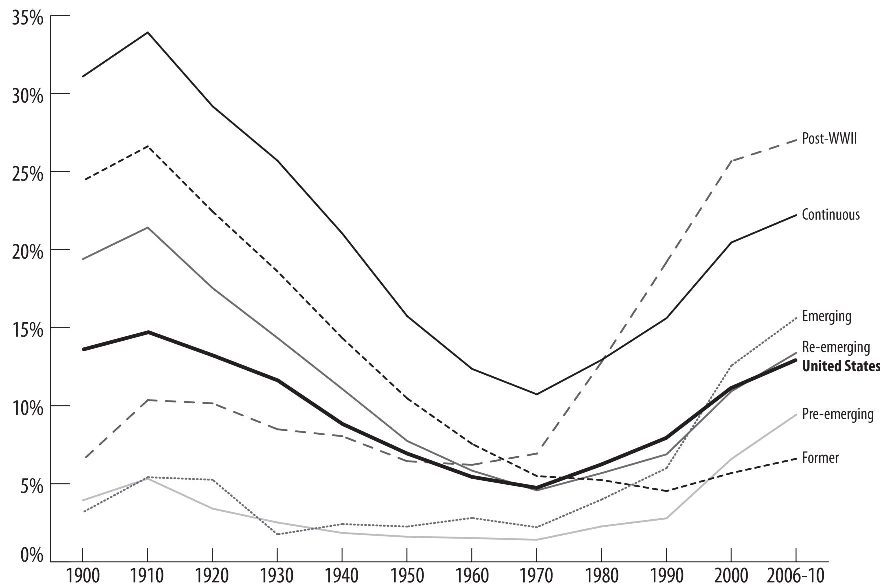
Figure 4
Percent of Foreign Born in Metropolitan Areas, by Gateway Type, 1900–2010



Source: Author's calculations of 1900–1950, 1970–2000 Decennial Census data accessed via Minnesota Population Center's National Historical Geographic Information System, http://www.nhgis.org; 1960 Decennial Census data accessed via U.S. Census Bureau, *U.S. Census of Population: 1960*, vol. 1, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963); and 2006–2010 ACS 5-year estimates.

that rank highly, along with Miami, Tampa, and Atlanta in the Southeast.

The body of work that analyzes contemporary immigrant gateways in historical perspective sheds further light on the stature and composition of today's destinations.[9] A typology of immigrant gateways reflects the size and geography of immigrant settlement patterns shaped by industrial histories, economic conditions, proximity to immigrant sending countries, and social networks.[10] In the contemporary period, they vary in size and national-origin composition, skills distribution, and neighborhood concentration. The share of the population that is foreign born, aggregated by gateway type, illustrates the long-term patterns of growth and decline within each type (see Figure 4).

Cities such as Cleveland, Milwaukee, and St. Louis, which had populations with a higher immigrant share than the national average from 1900 to 1970, followed by a lower share in every decade since, are former immigrant gateways. New York, Boston, San Francisco, and Chicago are the quintessential immigrant destinations, having large and sustained immigrant populations over the entire twentieth century. These are the "major" continuous gateways responsible for much higher than average shares of immigrants for every decade of the twentieth century. In addition, the "minor" continuous gateways, like their larger counterparts, have had long histories of immigrant settlement, but the size of the immigrant population is historically smaller.

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There are two groups of minor continuous gateways, most easily described by their geographies. The first group includes New England metro areas such as Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport that attracted Europeans in the early part of the twentieth century, and that now receive a mixture of Europeans, Caribbeans, and other groups. The other group of metropolitan areas is primarily located among border states, which have been long-term settlement areas for Mexican immigrants. These include Bakersfield and Fresno in the central valley of California and San Antonio and McAllen in Texas.[11]

Post–World War II immigrant gateways such as Miami, Los Angeles, Houston, and Washington, D.C., all emerged as major immigrant destinations in the second half of the twentieth century (albeit in different decades). Until the 1960s, these places had comparatively small immigrant populations making up small shares of their total population, but they grew rapidly thereafter, and now include some of the largest contemporary gateways. Their populations had lower shares of immigrants than the national average for the first six decades of the century, followed by spiking rates up to the present.

Due to expanding economic and housing opportunities in several regions – the Southeast and the Mountain West in particular – many metropolitan areas quickly drew immigrants to work in construction, real estate, health care, and service sector jobs. Many metropolitan areas that became new gateways at the turn of the twenty-first century also attracted domestic migrants in large numbers, outweighing the growth due to immigrants.[12] Atlanta, Las Vegas, and Phoenix lead the emerging gateways. These places saw immigrant growth rates exceed the national average during one of the last three decades of the twentieth century, but until then had small numbers of immigrants. The immigrant share in emerging gateways has been higher than the national average since 2000.

Similar to the continuous gateways, the reemerging gateways, including Seattle, the Twin Cities, and Baltimore, drew immigrants in large numbers in the early part of the twentieth century, but experienced low levels of immigration during the rest of the century. They then had fast immigrant growth at the very end of the twentieth century and into the 2000s, reemerging as significant destinations. Among all the gateways types, foreign-born shares in the reemerging gateways most closely mirror the national average. Other metro areas, such as Nashville, Charlotte, and Columbus, have little history of immigration, but recently have seen extraordinary growth in their immigrant populations. Still relatively small in absolute terms and as a share of the population, the rates of growth in these "pre-emerging" gateways have been at least three times the national rate during the past two decades.

The newest gateways, designated "twenty-first-century gateways" elsewhere, differ from the more established continuous gateways and the former gateways in that they developed largely as auto-dependent metropolises and thus are very suburban in form.[13] They tend to be large and sprawling compared to the metropolitan areas with dense cities at their core that received immigrants in the early twentieth century. Growth patterns in areas such as metropolitan Atlanta and Washington, D.C., have led to extensive suburbs surrounding comparatively small central cities. Most of the population, including immigrants, lives in the suburbs. Other new destinations like Phoenix, Charlotte, and Austin are comprised of very large central cities resulting from

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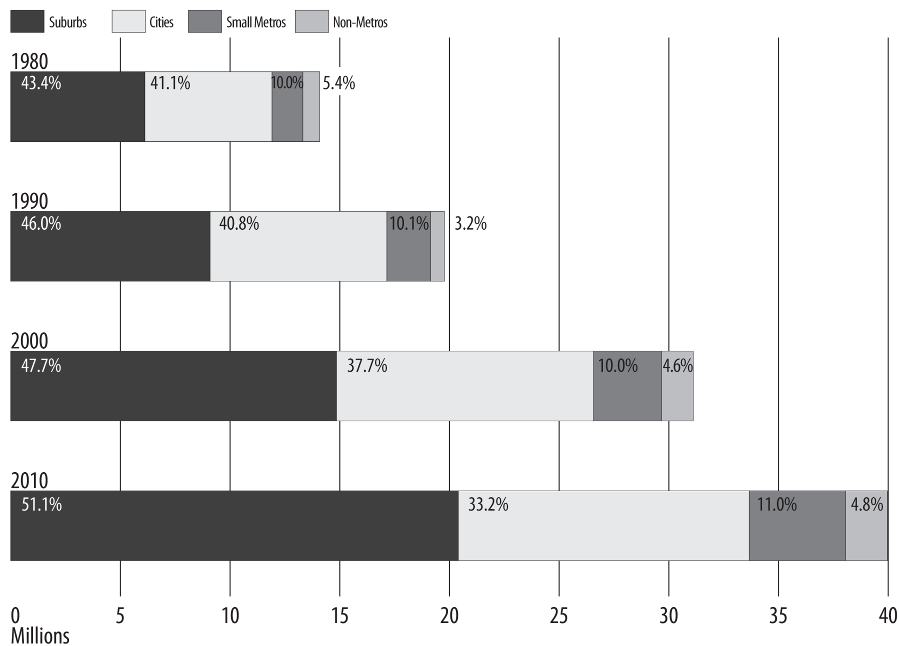
Figure 5
Residence of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States, 1980–2010



Cities and suburbs are defined for the 95 largest metropolitan areas based on the 2010 population. Primary cities are those that are named in metropolitan area title, as well as any incorporated places that had at least 100,000 in total population in 2010. The residual of the metro area is defined as suburban. In 5 of the 100 largest metropolitan areas, foreign-born population data at the city level are not available from the ACS. Thus, metro areas that are not in the top 95 are classified as "small metros." Source: Author's calculations of Decennial Census data; and 2010 ACS 1-year estimates, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/.

annexation. Here, the official city limits encompass vast suburban-like areas.

Nonetheless, the geography of U.S. immigrant settlement is now decidedly suburban (see Figure 5). Just thirty years ago, similar shares of immigrants lived in the cities and the suburbs of the largest metropolitan areas in the United States (41 percent and 43 percent, respectively). By 2010, only 33 percent of U.S. immigrants lived in central cities of the 100 largest metro areas, while 51 percent lived in the suburbs of these cities. All the while, the immigrant population increased nearly threefold. Throughout this period, about 11 percent of immigrants lived in the smaller metro areas, and another 5 percent were in non-metropolitan or rural areas, while also growing in absolute terms.

The list of metropolitan areas with the largest suburban population reflects divergent trends (see Table 3). Slightly more than 20 million immigrants – about half of all immigrants in the United States – live in the suburbs of ten metropolitan areas. These ten places include many of the largest metropolitan areas in the country; although some are well-established continuous gateways such as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, others are mid-century gainers such as Los Angeles, Miami, and Houston. Atlanta, a gateway that only recently emerged, is also on the list.

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Table 3
Largest Number, Highest Share, and Fastest Growth of Immigrants in the Suburbs of the 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas, 2010

Largest Number of Immigrants Living in the Suburbs

Rank	Metro Area	Immigrants
1	Los Angeles, CA	2,639,567
2	New York, NY	2,330,889
3	Miami, FL	1,893,530
4	Chicago, IL	1,065,839
5	Washington, D.C.	1,055,461
6	San Francisco, CA	815,914
7	Riverside, CA	757,105
8	Houston, TX	726,498
9	Atlanta, GA	682,813
10	Dallas, TX	617,036
	All Large Metro Areas	**20,401,330**

Highest Share of Foreign-Born Population Living in the Suburbs

Rank	Metro Area	Share Foreign Born
1	Atlanta, GA	95.3%
2	Miami, FL	87.4%
3	Orlando, FL	87.0%
4	Detroit MI	86.8%
5	Washington, D.C.	86.3%
6	Birmingham, AL	86.0%
7	Cleveland, OH	85.6%
8	Lakeland, FL	84.0%
9	McAllen, TX	83.0%
10	Dayton, OH	82.7%
	All Large Metro Areas	**60.6%**

Fastest Suburban Foreign-Born Growth Rate, 2000–2010

Rank	Metro Area	Growth Rate
1	Louisville, KY	246%
2	Jackson, MS	159%
3	Knoxville, TN	150%
4	Des Moines, IA	148%
5	Little Rock, AR	141%
6	Indianapolis, IN	141%
7	Birmingham, AL	140%
8	Scranton, PA	136%
9	Cape Coral, FL	133%
10	Austin, TX	124%
	All Large Metro Areas	**27%**

Source: Author's calculations of 2000 Decennial Census data; and 2010 ACS 1-year estimates, http://www.census.gov/acs/www/.

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Atlanta also tops the list of metropolitan areas with the greatest proportion of immigrants living in the suburbs: 95 percent. This is not surprising due to its small central city population, as is the case with Washington, D.C., Detroit, and Cleveland, all of which also have vast majorities of the population in suburbs. On average, the metropolitan areas on this list have over 80 percent of immigrants residing in their suburbs, compared to an average of 60 percent across the 100 largest metro areas.

Not coincidentally, the fastest-growing suburban immigrant populations correspond to the metropolitan areas with the fastest-growing immigrant populations in the country. Eight of the ten areas with suburban immigration growth of at least 124 percent in the last decade were metro areas whose immigrant populations doubled during the same period.[14] The foreign-born population grew by 246 percent in Louisville's suburbs, Jackson's by 159 percent, and Knoxville's by 150 percent. All of the metropolitan areas on this list are newer destinations, or in the case of Scranton, reemergent ones. Seven of the ten are in the Southeast.

The history of immigration to the United States is intertwined with the American narrative. This story is often cast as the movement of people in search of economic opportunity, political and religious freedom, and a better life for their children. These desires have not changed over time, but the U.S. locations where opportunity unfolds have been altered by industrial restructuring, changes in transportation, and new technology. No longer are immigrants confined to urban ethnic neighborhoods; rather, they are a strong presence in many suburbs. In this way, the history of immigration also parallels the history of American urbanization.

As immigrant settlement patterns have shifted alongside those of the native-born population, immigrant metropolitan settlement trends since 1990 have taken at least two new turns. For most of the twentieth century, the majority of immigrants were drawn to only a handful of established gateways. But new opportunities in metro areas with little history of receiving immigrants led to significant spikes in the foreign-born populations of these places.

In a second shift, immigrants began bypassing cities to settle directly in suburban areas. During industrialization in the early part of the twentieth century, immigrants moved to cities to be close to jobs. Now, as jobs have decentralized and suburban opportunities have opened up, there are more immigrants residing in suburbs than in cities. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, as regions experienced sluggish recovery following the recession, immigration to the United States slowed.

These new patterns are not without conflict and stress, especially as major institutions in the newest metropolitan destinations now confront the challenge of how to serve this diverse population. Many areas have yet to recover from the effects of the recession, and immigrants are often viewed as competitors for jobs and scarce public resources. In some of the metropolitan areas that recently experienced fast immigrant growth, state and local measures to control immigration, especially unauthorized immigration, have been proposed or legislated. But other areas have welcomed immigrants, including places with well-established foreign-born populations that have been integrating immigrants since mid-century or prior. Moreover, cities such as Detroit, Pittsburgh, and Dayton would like to attract and retain immigrants to stem

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population loss and to stimulate economic activity; those regions are putting out the welcome mat for immigrant newcomers. These distinct and shifting patterns of receptivity will no doubt yield future changes to twenty-first-century immigrant settlement patterns.

ENDNOTES

Author's Note: I would like to acknowledge the excellent research assistance provided by Nicole Svajlenka.

1 Minnesota Population Center, *National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 2.0* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2011), http://www.nhgis.org.

2 U.S. Census Bureau, "Social Characteristics of the Population, for Counties: 1960," *U.S. Census of Population: 1960*, vol. 1, *Characteristics of the Population* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), Table 82.

3 The Brookings Institution, "State of Metropolitan America Indicator Map," http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/state-of-metropolitan-america-indicator map#/?subject=7&ind=70&dist=0&data=Number&year=2010&geo=metro&zoom=0&x=0&y=0.

4 See Nancy Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000); and Aristide Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006).

5 Sukkoo Kim and Robert A. Margo, "Historical Perspectives on U.S. Economic Geography," in *Handbook of Regional and Urban Economics*, 1st ed., vol. 4, ed. J. Vernon Henderson and Jacques-François Thisse (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1986), chap. 66, 2981–3019.

6 Charles Hirschman and Elizabeth Mogford, "Immigration and the American Industrial Revolution from 1880 to 1920," *Social Science Research* 38 (2009): 897–920.

7 Figure 3 shows "metropolitan areas" for each decade. These are constructed at the county level and are consistent throughout. While metropolitan areas as we know them today did not exist in the early part of the twentieth century, full metropolitan area definitions for 2010 are used for the sake of making consistent comparisons. See the earlier methodology section for a more detailed discussion.

8 Data on absolute change not shown.

9 See Audrey Singer, "The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways" (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, February 2004), http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/reports/2004/2/demographics%20singer/20040301_gateways.pdf; Audrey Singer, Susan W. Hardwick, and Caroline B. Brettell, eds., *Twenty-First Century Gateways: Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008); and Matthew Hall, Audrey Singer, Gordon F. De Jong, and Deborah Roempke Graefe, "The Geography of Immigrant Skills: Educational Profiles of Metropolitan Areas" (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, June 2011), http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2011/6/immigrants%20singer/06_immigrants_singer.pdf.

10 Hall et al., "The Geography of Immigrant Skills."

11 See ibid. for listing of all metropolitan areas by gateway type.

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[12] Singer, "The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways."

[13] Singer et al., *Twenty-First Century Gateways*.

[14] See Jill H. Wilson and Audrey Singer, "Immigrants in 2010 Metropolitan America" (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, October 2011), http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2011/10/13%20immigration%20wilson%20singer/1013_immigration_wilson_singer.pdf. Only Des Moines and Austin did not double their immigrant populations between 2000 and 2010.

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