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ABSTRACT

Many minorities in Boston (Massachusetts) do not feel part of the entire community because the city does not work for people in minority groups in fundamental ways. This report analyzes the content and consequences of Boston's many contradictions and the challenges these contradictions pose for the city's three major communities of color: Blacks, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans. It begins with a demographic overview of Boston, comparing ethnic and racial groups and stressing important population characteristics, such as size, racial and ethnic makeup, age, and residency patterns. Also examined are selected socioeconomic variables of income, employment, education, and housing. The second part of the report is a historical and institutional portrait of Boston's Black, Asian American, and Latino communities. The report concludes by exploring the challenges and opportunities for all who care about the health and vitality of the city. (Contains 4 maps, 16 figures, and 29 references.) (SLD)

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A Dream Deferred

CHALLENGES, NEW

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A Dream Deferred

Changing Demographics, Challenges & New Opportunities for Boston

A Dream Deferred

CHAN[illegible]ICS, CHALLENG[illegible]TUNITIES

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■

A SPECIAL STUDY COMMISSIONED BY THE BOSTON FOUNDATION
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Contents

List of Figures and Maps ix

Preface xi

Acknowledgments xiii

I. Introduction:

Two Sides of the City and the Search for Community 1

II. Demographic & Socioeconomic Profile of Boston 5

Population Characteristics 5

Size and Growth 5

Recent Immigration 6

Residency Patterns 9

Age 15

Household Size 16

Socioeconomic Characteristics 17

Income and Poverty 17

Employment and Unemployment 19

Education 20

Housing 21

III. Recent History & Institutional Overview:

Blacks, Asian Americans and Latinos in Boston 23

History and Development to 1960 23

The 1960s and Beyond 24

The Changing Boston Economy 24

Consequences of Change 25

Urban Renewal 26

The Changing Political Culture 26

Migration and Immigration 26

III. Recent History & Institutional Overview (continued)

Responses 27

Local Economic Development 29

Employment Impacts 30

Minority Businesses 31

Institutions 32

Politics 32

Culture 34

Community Organizations 35

The Old and the New 36

IV. Challenges & Opportunities 39

Building a Diverse and Workable Community 39

Political Power 39

Economic Empowerment 40

Community-based Structures 41

Unity with Diversity 41

A New Boston 42

References 45

List of Figures and Maps

Figure

1. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1980 6
2. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1990 6
3. Change in Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1980–1990 7
4. Newcomers as a Percent of Population, 1990 7
5. Latino Population by National Origin, 1990 8
6. Asian American Population by National Origin, 1990 8
7. Neighborhoods by Race and Ethnicity, 1990 9
8. Change in White Population by Neighborhood, 1980-1990 14
9. Median Age by Race and Ethnicity, 1990 16
10. Average Number of Persons and Children per Household by Race and Ethnicity, 1990 16
11. Families and Children in Poverty by Race and Ethnicity, 1990 17
12. Per Capita Income by Race and Ethnicity, 1990 18
13. Unemployment Rate by Race and Ethnicity, 1990 19
14. Educational Attainment by Race and Ethnicity, 1990 20
15. Owner Occupancy Rates by Race and Ethnicity, 1990 21
16. Change in Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1960-1990 25

Map

1. Blacks by 1990 Census Tracts 10
2. Latinos by 1990 Census Tracts 11
3. Asian Americans by 1990 Census Tracts 12
4. Whites by 1990 Census Tracts 13

Preface

This report was commissioned through the Ford Foundation's "Changing Communities, Diverse Needs" initiative, in which the Boston Foundation is one of twenty participating community foundations. "A Dream Deferred: Changing Demographics, Challenges, and New Opportunities for Boston" is intended to assist us, as a community foundation and as a community, to better understand and respond to the transformation of Boston into one of the most racially and ethnically diverse cities in the nation.

Boston's accelerating demographic transformation over the past half century, and particularly over the past several decades, has generated deep-seated conflict as well as new resilient partnerships. Today, Boston stands at a crossroads, facing a choice between embracing or turning its back on a new and vibrant future. We all have a stake in this decision. Increasingly we are made aware of the ethnically-based warfare splintering the world and the vast differences in perception and experience across race and class in this nation. There is perhaps no more urgent task than generating public dialogue about our differences in order to find and affirm our shared concerns and aspirations.

In that spirit, the Boston Foundation commissioned this report from three research institutes at the University of Massachusetts Boston, which are providing a model for collaborative, multicultural research and analysis: the Institute for Asian American Studies; the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy; and the William Monroe Trotter Institute. The institutes each draw from and respond to their own community's constituencies while at the same time, providing multicultural perspectives and expertise in an academic setting. Because of their growing history of collaborative work, Boston now has access to a unique institutional capacity for complex analyses of our communities. The Boston Foundation is pleased to have been able to benefit from the work of the institutes and their staffs.

This report presents a wealth of demographic and historical information and, at the same time raises difficult issues and questions for further dialogue and debate. We hope that it will contribute to the kind of honest, constructive dialogue in which all of us as members of the Greater Boston community must engage if we are to realize our city's great potential in the coming years.

Anna Faith Jones, President
The Boston Foundation

Acknowledgments

A dominant theme of this study is the search for community—a collectivity committed to common pursuits that supports and builds upon the individual strengths and proclivities of diverse sectors. Readers of this study will find that for Boston, despite some notable advances, the full realization of community remains problematic. Fortunately the writers and researchers that prepared this report are drawn from a genuine community of scholars at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The Institute for Asian American Studies, the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, and the William Monroe Trotter Institute contribute to the university's unique, collaborative multicultural research capacity. In addition to my co-authors, I want to thank Connie Chan, Peter Kiang, and Shirley Mark for their insightful comments and contributions. Michelle Janmey provided valuable editorial assistance. Marilyn Wu was responsible for design and layout. Finally, I am grateful to the Boston Foundation and the Ford Foundation for their support of this project. In particular, I want to acknowledge the Boston Foundation for its belief that "the vitality of the Greater Boston community depends upon the ability of people to be responsible for themselves and concerned about one another."

Paul Watanabe
University of Massachusetts Boston

Introduction

Two Sides of the City and the Search for Community

Bostonians love celebrations. Fireworks on the Esplanade, Tall Ships sailing majestically in the harbor, the Boston Marathon, and a championship for the Celtics elicit exuberance and pride in the hearts of the city's residents. Civic spirit is one of Boston's most endearing qualities.

There is another side to Boston that is less recognized. While large numbers of residents may come together to celebrate, too often there is a feeling, particularly in the Black, Latino, and Asian American communities, that serious problems are hidden and they are left to deal with them alone. For some ethnic minorities, it is difficult to create a true sense of civic pride beyond their own communities. The city does not work for a large proportion of these people in fundamental ways—economically, socially, culturally, educationally, or politically. Instead of uplifting the spirit, a sense of alienation and the racial differences that often feed it are enduring.

This report analyzes the content and consequences of Boston's many contradictions. These contradictions are evident everywhere. For example, Boston has been called the "Athens of America," a magnet drawing the best minds and intellectual talent from across the nation and even the world. Yet, at the time this report was written, more than one-fourth of Boston's fifteen high schools are in danger of losing accreditation. Boston is a tourist mecca, welcoming thousands of visitors from every corner of the globe. Yet certain areas of the city are regarded as inhospitable and "off-limits" to certain groups.

This report is more than a tale of two sides of the city. It also examines the challenges that these troubling contradictions pose for the city's three

major communities of color. Will a privileged few continue to enjoy prosperity while many others remain in poverty? Will some participate enthusiastically while others remain uninterested in or locked-out of the political process? Will the city continue its tradition of relying on top-notch exam schools to serve a select few or begin instead to implement excellence throughout the school system to serve all its students?

The discussion of the city's contradictions and challenges is intimately linked to the dramatic changes that Boston has experienced in the last few decades. Data from a variety of sources, most notably the 1990 U.S. Census,[1] is presented and the implications of the city's on-going demographic and socioeconomic transformations are considered. Boston's population is becoming more diverse with an increasing percentage of persons of color. The growing Black, Latino, and Asian American populations are also experiencing expanded diversity within their own membership. Gaps in income, poverty, and unemployment are evident and in some cases widening.

In addition to addressing the challenges that accompany change, it is crucial to take account of the considerable opportunities that are offered as well. In many ways, through economic development, community organizing, and boosting personal pride and initiative, Boston's Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans are fostering ambition and building strength in themselves, their families, their neighborhoods, and the city as a whole. As described in the recently published book, *New Migrants in the Marketplace: Boston's Ethnic Entrepreneurs* (Halter, 1995), a range of new immigrant groups are encouraging fresh and innovative small business activity and a unique economic culture in areas of Boston. Community development initiatives in the city's minority neighborhoods often go unrecognized and unheralded. They have struggled to hold their communities together, but the resources made available to them cannot for much longer remain inadequate.

This report also explores the elusive search for a sense of community. The process of change and the persistence of divisive contradictions make it difficult to find ways of binding people together. Indeed at times centrifugal forces seem to hold sway over forces that unite. In Boston, as in many cities that have undergone dramatic demographic and related transformations, relations between racial and ethnic groups have been marred on occasion by misunderstandings, suspicion, and violence. The troubled dimensions of change have led some individuals to denounce the emphasis on differences and to decry

[1]The 1990 U.S. Census allows for the examination of the situation of Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans and provides the most comprehensive available information on these groups. It should be recognized, however, that there are some limitations in the data. In particular, linguistic, cultural, and other barriers contribute to undercounting. Aggregation and errors in coding also limit the reliability of some census data. In addition, it should be noted that Latinos are generally not treated as a distinct racial category. Consequently, they may be of any race.

pluralism and multiculturalism. Their belief is that separateness must be replaced by sameness, heterogeneity by homogeneity. Other individuals want to maintain the distance between ethnic groups, believing distinctive destinies should take precedence over common purpose.

Based on past experiences and future aspirations, neither viewpoint alone is adequate. A true community in Boston cannot exist without diversity, and diversity cannot flourish without a sense of community. Pluralism must be allowed to prosper in the city as long as it is manifested without hierarchy. Otherwise Boston risks being torn asunder by intolerant racial and ethnic chauvinism masquerading as healthy racial and ethnic pride. If this attitude prevails, the city will be one where, paraphrasing George Orwell, all groups are equal, but some groups are more equal than others.

Contradictions, challenges, changes, opportunities, and the desire to build a sense of community with diversity are the themes of this report. All of these suggest that important decisions lie ahead for those struggling to hold on to power in Boston and those desiring to have it shared more equitably. For many individuals in Boston's racial and ethnic communities, the choices available are fraught with uncertainty. Should people be guided by their own assessment of the harsh, troubling, and prolonged realities they face daily or by the hope that things can and will change for the better? The noted poet Phillis Wheatley, a Black slave, accounted for the inner power and sustaining vision of women caught in wretched slavery and starving for freedom by stating, "She feeds on truths and uncreated things." How much longer can those in the city relegated to the sidelines be expected to gain sustenance not from what is but from what can be? The unconfronted challenge, as Langston Hughes so eloquently posed it, is: "What happens to a dream deferred?"[2]

[2]Harlem

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore –
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over –
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load

Or does it explode? (1951)

Those who wish to take total advantage of what Boston has to offer hope that all of its residents will feel free to tread safely wherever they want to go, to educate children in quality schools, and to participate fully and fairly in the economic, political, and social life of the city. The reality is that many in each of Boston's racial groups have neighborhoods where they fear they are not welcome and schools desperately in need of attention. Those who care about all of the city's residents hope that change will promote progress. Perhaps the city that comes together so easily in celebration can address in a constructive and collective way, and with equal zeal, economic hardship wherever it exists, the despair and cynicism that accentuate political alienation, and the persistent racism that damages individual dignity and divides Boston.

This report, arranged in several parts, begins with a demographic overview of Boston, comparing ethnic and racial groups and stressing important population characteristics—size, racial and ethnic makeup, age, and residency patterns. Also examined are selected socioeconomic variables—income, employment, education, and housing. The second part of the report is an historical and institutional portrait of Boston's Black, Asian American, and Latino communities. The report concludes by exploring the resulting challenges and opportunities for Boston's residents, leaders and for those who care about the health and vitality of the city.

The report is intended to catalyze serious discussion, especially in broad and participatory community forums, about Boston and its future. What must be addressed is bettering the lives and destinies of the diverse individuals that make up Boston's current population. With the world watching what John Winthrop extolled as "the city on a hill," the quality of life of all its residents is the true measure of Boston's success and failure.

II Demographic & Socioeconomic Profile of Boston

Population Characteristics

Size and Growth

Studies of the 1990 U.S. Census and other data have chronicled Boston's rapid demographic changes.[1] Until recently Boston was known as one of the last major cities in the United States that was largely white, marked by its sizeable and long-established white ethnic neighborhoods. In fact, Boston is now decidedly diverse. The proportion of Blacks, Latinos[2], and Asian Americans has risen sharply while the non-Latino white share of the population has fallen from 68% in 1980 to 59% in 1990. Among the nation's twenty most populous cities in 1990, Boston had the sixth largest Asian American population, the tenth largest Latino population, and the eleventh largest Black population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991b).

Asian Americans and Latinos are the fastest growing segments of the city. Between 1980 and 1990 Boston's Latino population grew from 6.4% of the population to 10.8% (a 69% increase), a growth rate behind only three Texas cities (San Antonio, Dallas, and Houston) and Washington, D.C., Boston's Asian American community saw an even larger increase, growing from 2.7% of the population to 5.3% (an 83% increase). Boston's Black community experienced a moderate increase. In 1980 Blacks comprised 21.7% of the city's population. A decade later the Black proportion was 23.8% (a 14% increase).

[1]Studies completed by the Institute for Asian American Studies, the Mauricio Gastón Institute, and the William Monroe Trotter Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston and the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in conjunction with the Boston Foundation analyze this data in greater detail

[2]Latinos may included in other racial categories and, therefore, in figures that include Latinos, totals may exceed 100 percent

Figure 1. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1980

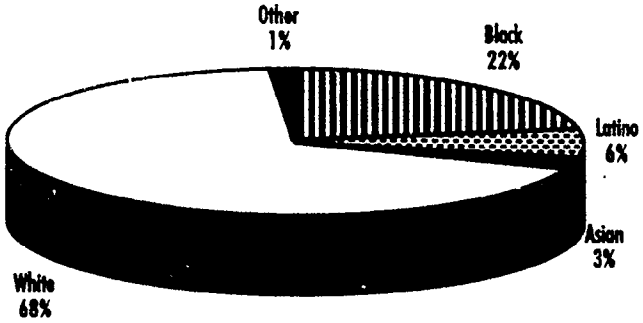
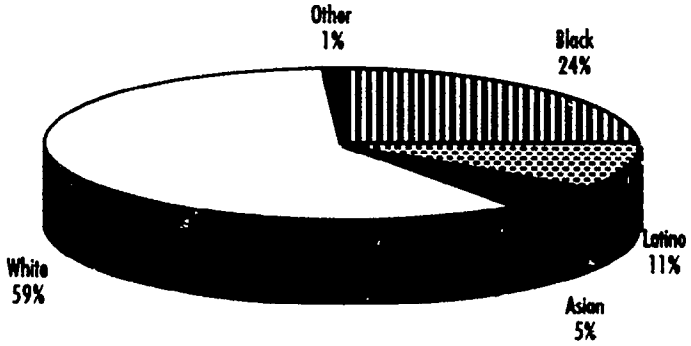


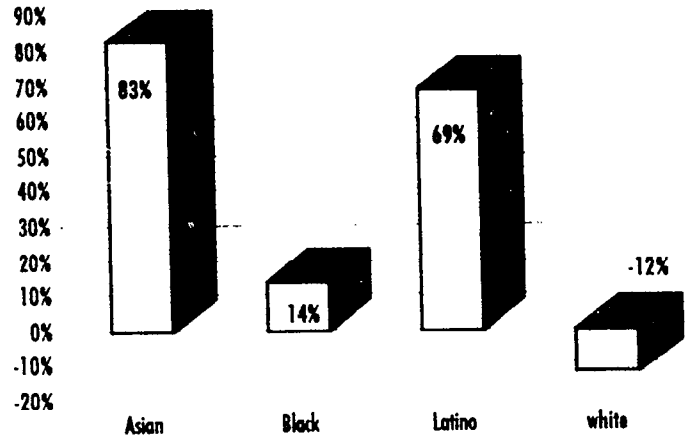
Figure 2. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1990



Recent Immigration

Immigration has been a major force shaping Boston's changing composition. Twenty-eight percent of residents in 1990 had moved into the city within the previous five years (Sum, with Fogg, & Sum, 1994b). About one in four of these new residents were immigrants (Sum et al., 1994b). Of the more than 63,000 immigrants who came to Boston between 1980 and 1990, the largest number came from Asia and the Caribbean, followed by Europe, Central and South America, Africa, and the Soviet Union

Figure 3. Change in Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1980-1990



(U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992c). In 1990 metropolitan Boston's foreign-born population was estimated to be approximately 350,000—the twelfth largest in the nation (Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, 1994). From 1970 to 1990 the proportion of foreign-born Bostonians increased substantially

Figure 4. Newcomers as a Percent of Population, 1960-1990

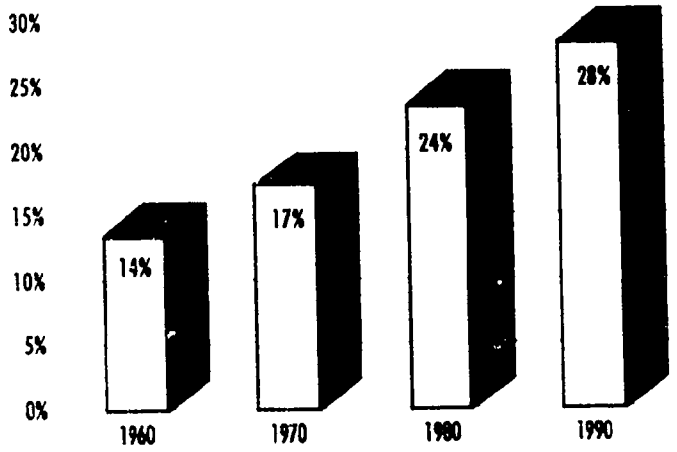


Figure 5. Latino Population by National Origin, 1990

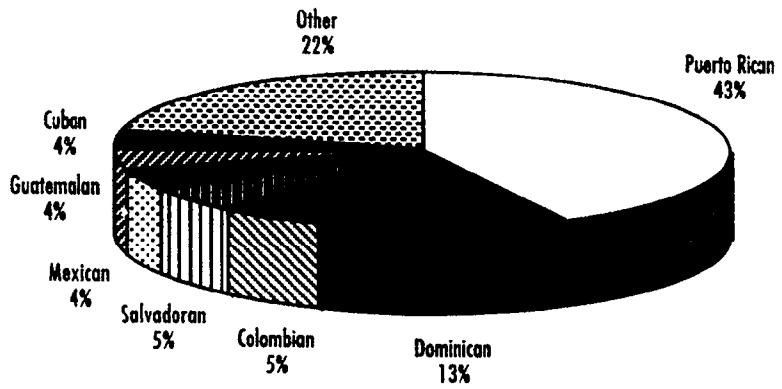
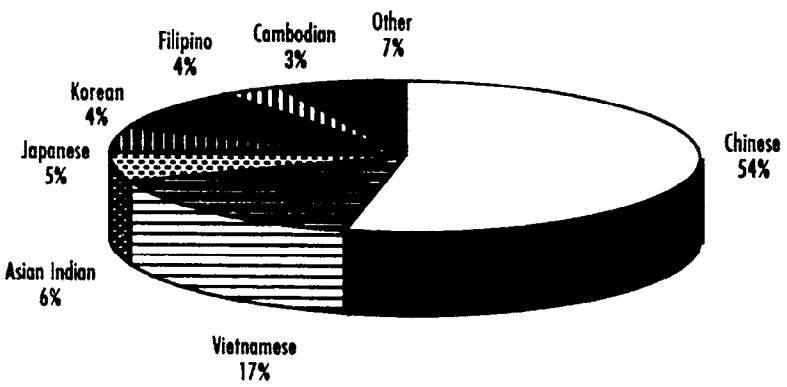


Figure 6. Asian American Population by National Origin, 1990



from about 13% to 20% (Sum et al., 1994a).

Diversity within the Black, Latino, and Asian American groups has also increased, due primarily to accelerating and shifting immigration patterns. Latino is no longer equivalent to Puerto Rican, while Asian is no longer equivalent to Chinese. In 1980 Puerto Ricans constituted 53% of Boston's Latino population. A decade later the Puerto Rican share had dropped to 42% with significant growth in the proportions of Dominicans and Central Americans. Although Chinese accounted for over one-half (53.4%) of Boston's Asian

American population in 1990, a decade earlier the Chinese share of the Asian American population was nearly three-quarters (74%). The most rapid growth among Asian Americans in Boston has been recorded by Southeast Asians. The number of Vietnamese in Boston, for example, expanded by nearly 500% during the 1980s (Institute for Asian American Studies, 1994). Similarly, within the Black community, Haitians and other Caribbean Islanders, Cape Verdeans, Ethiopians, Somalians, and Nigerians constitute growing segments. By the early 1990s Boston's Haitian population was behind only Miami and New York in size (Massachusetts Department of Health, 1993). A new influx of Irish, Eastern Europeans, and Russians and other former residents of the Soviet Union has added to Boston's white ethnic populations.

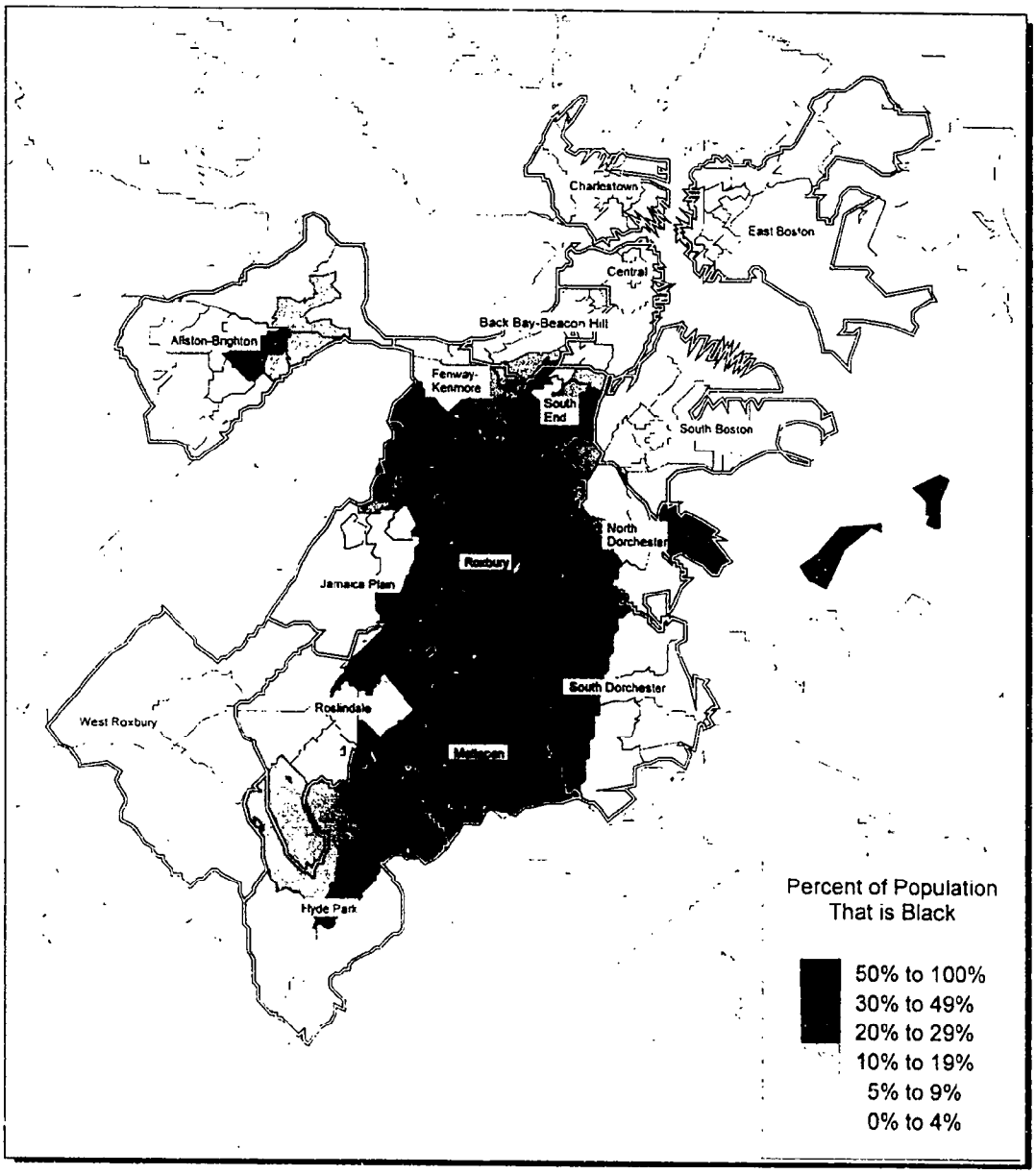
Residency Patterns

The impact of these demographic transformations on Boston's neighborhoods has been multifaceted. The city remains one of unique neighborhoods often distinguished by distinctive racial, ethnic, and cultural

Figure 7. Composition of Boston Neighborhoods by Race and Ethnicity, 1990

	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Other
Allston/Brighton	10.8%	6.8%	8.7%	73.1%	3.6%
Bay Bay/Beacon Hill	4.3%	3.5%	3.2%	89.2%	0.9%
Central	15.0%	3.0%	2.1%	79.6%	1.0%
Charlestown	2.9%	0.4%	1.7%	94.9%	0.7%
East Boston	4.1%	1.6%	17.3%	76.4%	6.7%
Fenway/Kenmore	9.4%	10.4%	7.4%	71.8%	4.2%
Hyde Park	1.4%	22.0%	5.1%	71.2%	1.9%
Jamaica Plain	5.7%	18.2%	25.1%	50.6%	13.9%
Mattapan/Franklin Field	0.9%	82.2%	5.9%	10.5%	3.7%
North Dorchester	6.3%	21.8%	14.8%	50.2%	15.8%
Roslindale	2.9%	6.2%	11.9%	79.0%	5.8%
Roxbury	0.7%	71.7%	18.6%	6.0%	13.2%
South End	12.1%	32.8%	15.1%	39.5%	8.6%
South Boston	1.7%	0.9%	1.0%	95.8%	0.7%
South Dorchester	3.3%	37.9%	9.1%	47.4%	7.5%
West Roxbury	1.6%	1.5%	1.7%	95.1%	0.8%

Map 1. Blacks by 1990 Census Tracts



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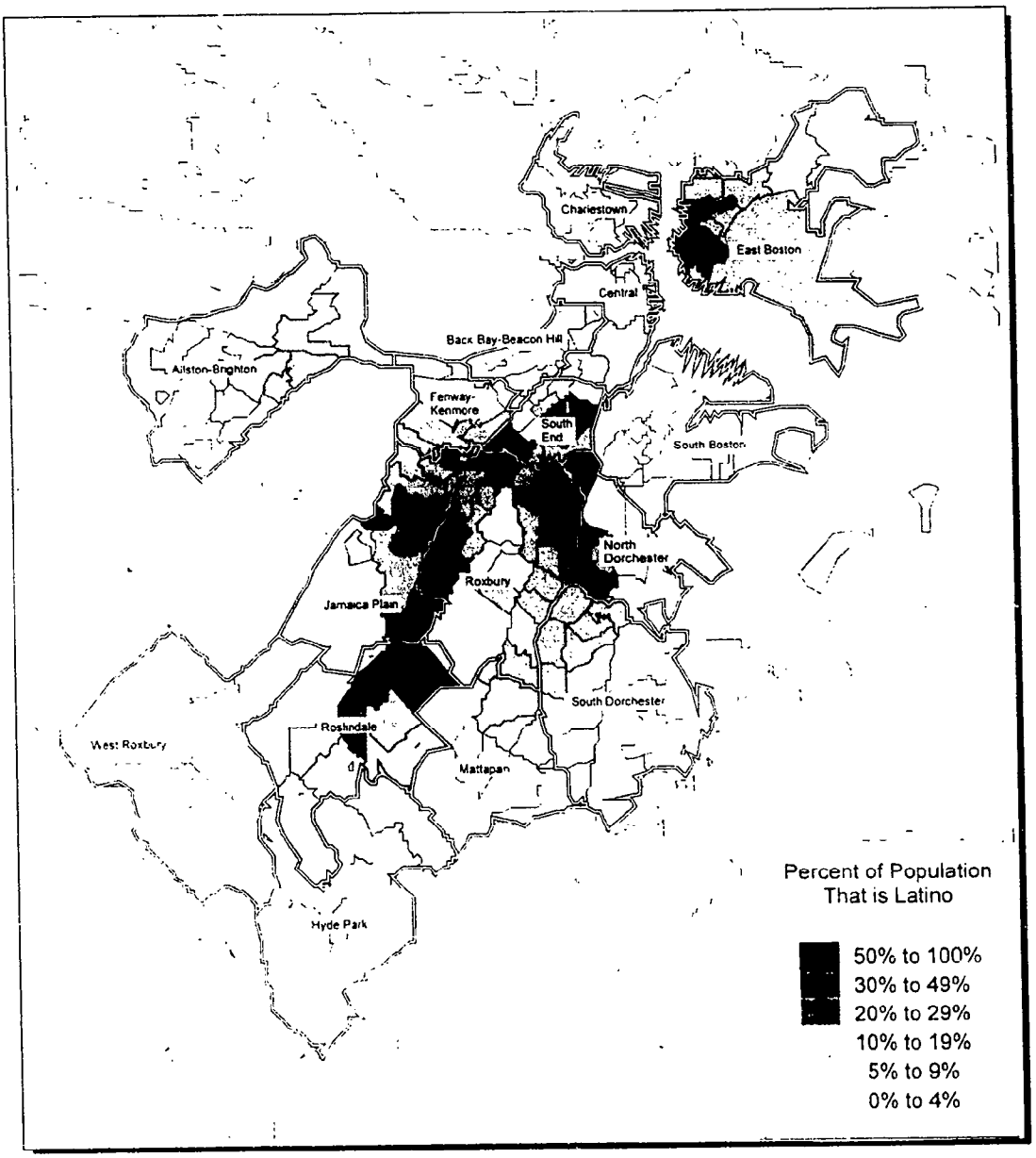
Map 2. Latinos by 1990 Census Tracts



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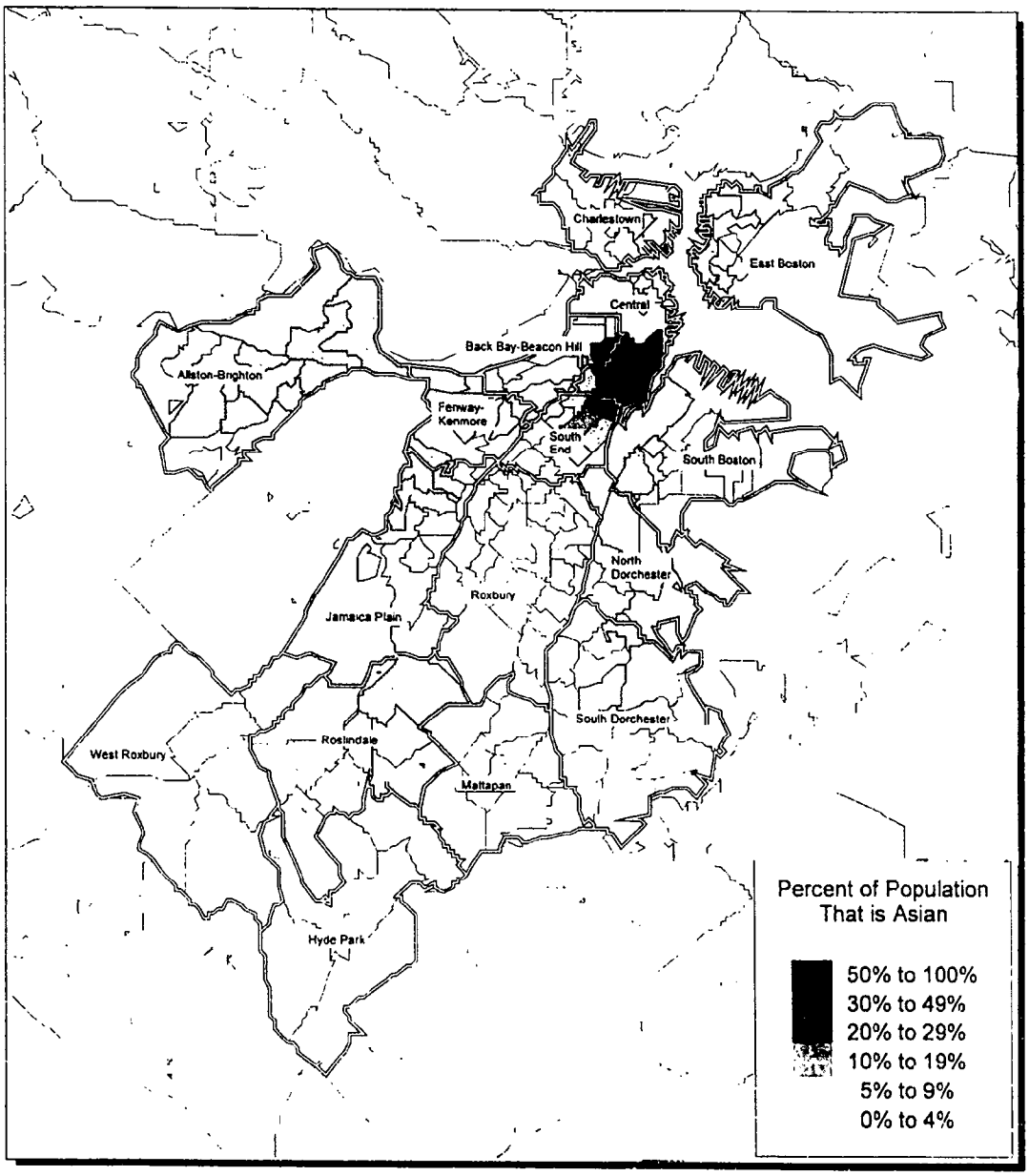
Map 3. Asian Americans by 1990 Census Tracts



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Map 4. Whites by 1990 Census Tracts

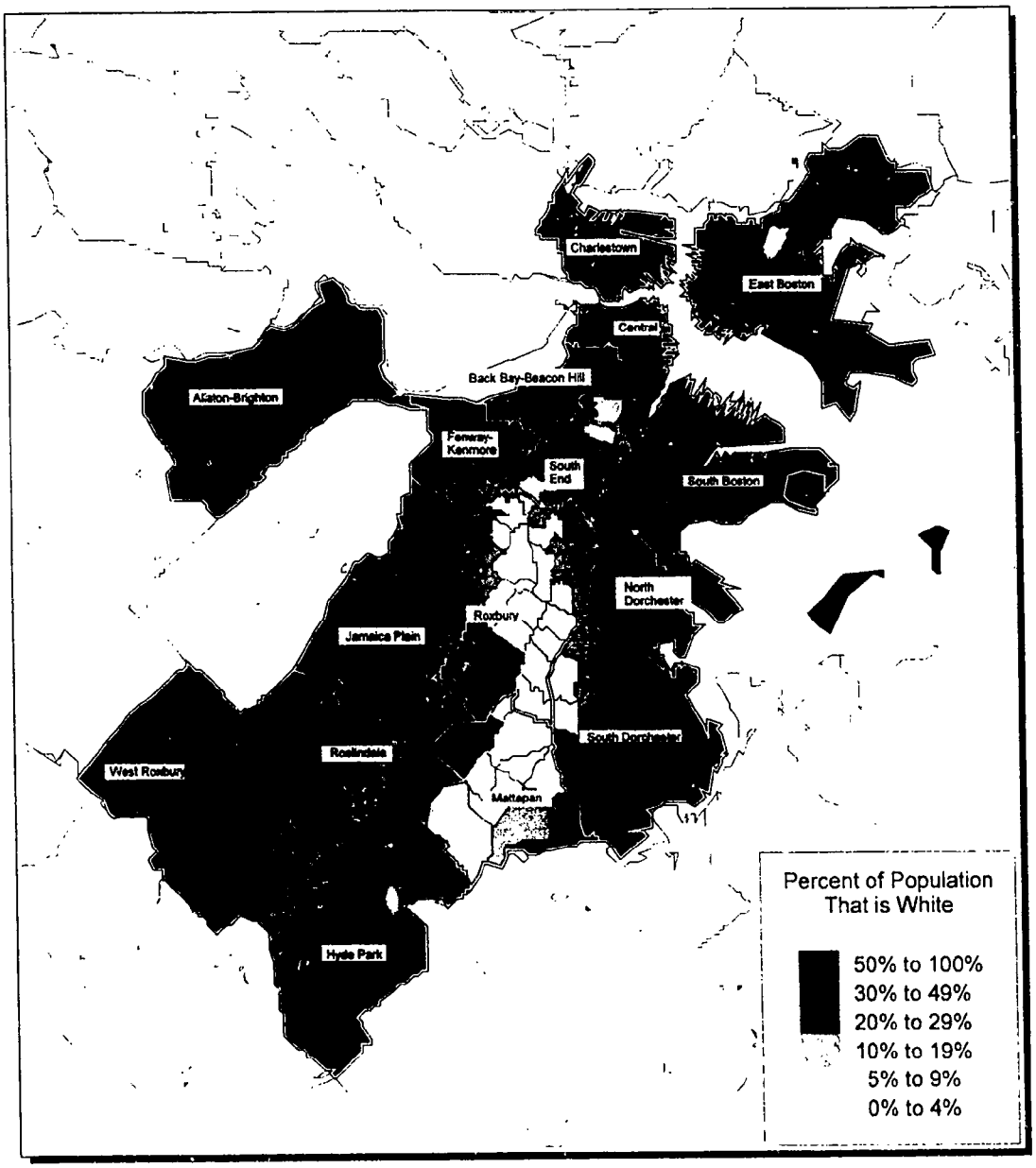

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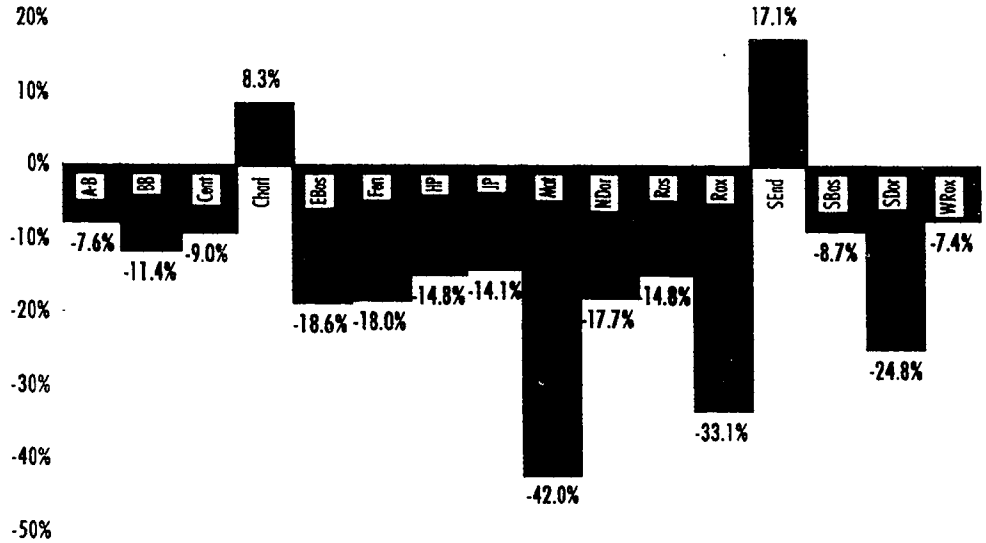
Figure 8. Change in White Population by Neighborhood, 1980-1990



characteristics, as well as economic status and immigration patterns, but every neighborhood in the city experienced an increase in its Latino and Asian American populations during the 1980s. During this same period, ten of Boston's sixteen neighborhoods[3] also experienced increases in their Black population. All but two neighborhoods, Charlestown and the South End, experienced decreases in the percentage of non-Latino white persons in their total population during the 1980s (Fogg, Leone, Sum, & Tortora, 1994). In Dorchester and East Boston, for example, nearly one-half of the new residents arriving between 1985 and 1990 were foreign-born, in Roxbury and Mattapan more than one-third of the newcomers came from abroad, and in Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, and Allston/Brighton between one-fourth and one-third of all newcomers were foreign-born. In contrast, only one in twenty of Charlestown's new arrivals came from abroad (Fogg et al., 1994).

In 1990 four Boston neighborhoods were diverse to the extent that no single racial or ethnic group made up more than half of its population. In the South End, for example, 40% of the population was non-Latino white, 33% was Black, 15% was Puerto Rican, and

[3]The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) has divided the city into the following sixteen neighborhoods: Allston/Brighton, Back Bay/Beacon Hill, Central, Charlestown, East Boston, Fenway/Kenmore, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan/Franklin Park, North Dorchester, Roslindale, Roxbury, South End, South Boston, South Dorchester, and West Roxbury

12% was Asian American. North and South Dorchester and Jamaica Plain had similarly diverse populations (Fogg et al., 1994).

Even though in 1990 slightly more than 40% of the city's residents were Black, Latino, or Asian American, several Boston neighborhoods still had populations that were approximately 90% white: Back Bay/Beacon Hill 89%, Charlestown and West Roxbury 95%, and South Boston 96%. Two traditionally white neighborhoods, on the other hand, experienced relatively significant changes in their make-up. In East Boston, the Latino population increased from 3.1% of the population in 1980 to 17.3% in 1990. Roslindale's Latino population also grew significantly, from 3% in 1980 to almost 12% in 1990 (Fogg et al., 1994).

Blacks are the only non-white group that constitute a majority in any Boston neighborhood. In 1990 the Black population in Mattapan/Franklin Park and Roxbury was respectively 82% and 72% of the total population (Fogg et al., 1994). Latinos and Asian Americans are less concentrated than Blacks, and, despite their substantial growth in certain areas, neither group constitutes a majority in any neighborhood.

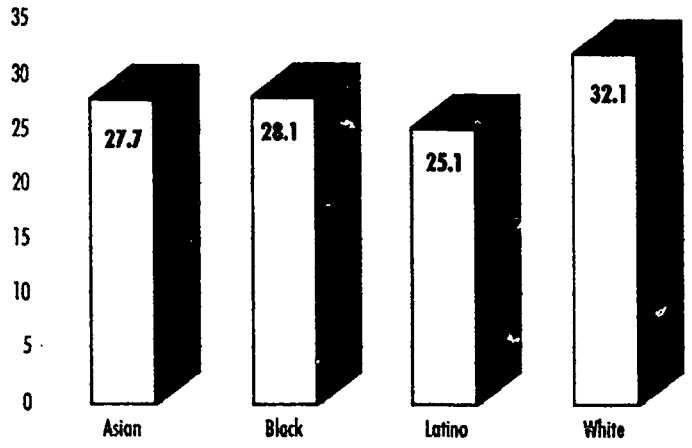
The residency patterns of Boston indicate the prevalence of a considerable degree of geographic separation. A pattern has emerged of a large core area comprised of a high percentage of Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans surrounded by a largely white outer ring. Latinos are located on the northern peripheries of the Black concentrations. Although there are neighborhoods where considerable mixing takes place, East Boston and Allston/Brighton for example, the population centers of communities of color are notably separate from those of the predominantly white communities.

Age

Boston's residents of color tend to be younger than its white population. In order of declining median age, whites, Blacks, Asian Americans, and Latinos are respectively 32.1, 28.1, 27.7, and 25.1 (Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 1995). The Latino community was by far the youngest in the city in 1990, with 32% of Latinos under the age of 18 and 3% aged 65 and over. Thirty percent of Blacks were under 18 years of age, and 7% were aged 65 and over. The proportion of Asian Americans under 18 years of age was 22% and those 65 years old and older 7%. The white community was the "grayest" group with almost 15% aged 65 years old and over and only slightly more than 13% 18 years old and under (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991b).

In 1990 the "youngest" neighborhoods in the city were Roxbury and Mattapan, where slightly less than one-third of the population was under 18 years old. Other neighborhoods with high proportions of young people included North and South Dorchester,

Figure 9. Median Age by Race and Ethnicity, 1990

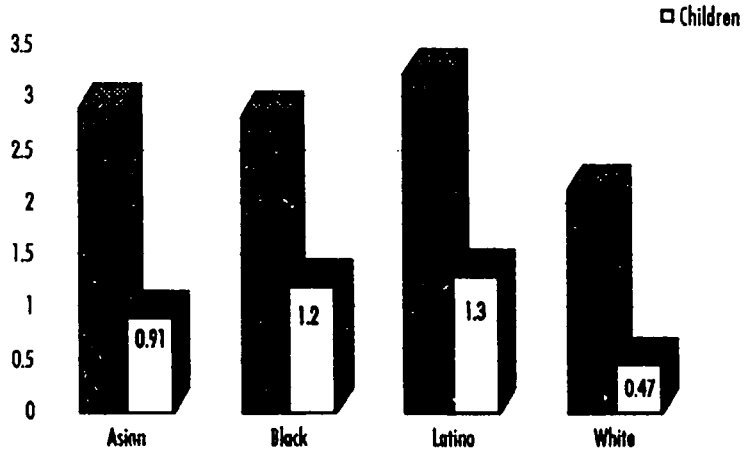


Hyde Park, Roslindale, East Boston, and Jamaica Plain (Fogg et al., 1994).

Household Size

Households of color in Boston tend to be larger and have more children than white households. In 1990 the number of persons per household for Latinos in Boston was 3.23, compared with 2.89 for Asian Americans, 2.82 for Blacks, and 2.12 for whites. The same general pattern held true for the average number of

Figure 10. Average Number of Persons and Children per Household by Race and Ethnicity, 1990



children per household, for Latino households 1.3 children, for Black households 1.2, for Asian American households 0.91, and for whites 0.47. In other words, households of color had at least twice as many children on average than white households (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992b).

Approximately one-half of all families in Mattapan, Roxbury, North and South Dorchester, and Jamaica Plain have children. Neighborhoods with relatively low numbers of families with children were the Back Bay/Beacon Hill, Central, Fenway/Kenmore, and West Roxbury (Fogg et al., 1994), which also tended to be largely white.

Socioeconomic Characteristics

Income and Poverty

In addition to being younger and having households with more children, Boston's Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans tended to be poorer than the city's white population as a whole. From 1980 to 1990, overall, median income for Boston's households rose 36% in constant dollars (1982), $17,291 to $23,548 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992d). The distribution of income growth, however, was highly inequitable and polarized. The bottom 20% of the population moved further away from the city median in the 1980s. While 20% of the households had less

Figure 11. Families and Children in Poverty by Race and Ethnicity, 1990

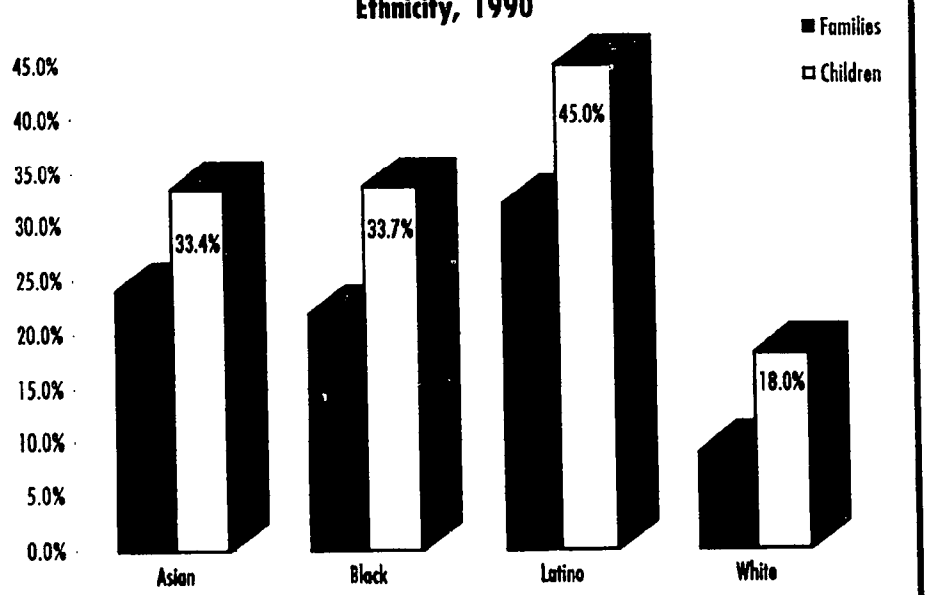
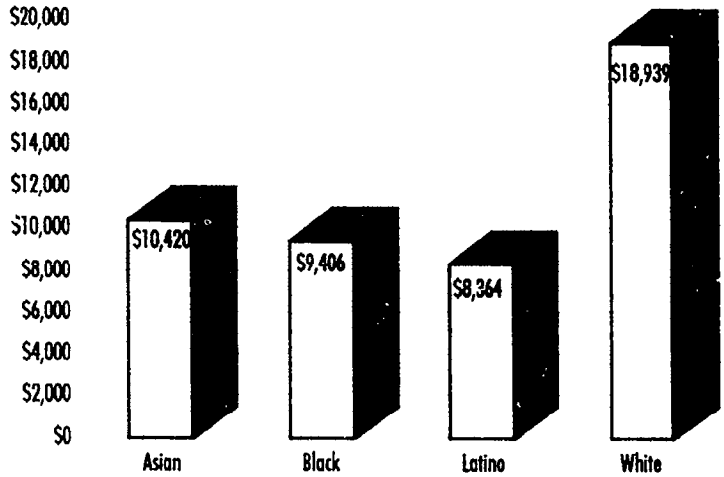


Figure 12. Per Capita Income by Race and Ethnicity, 1990

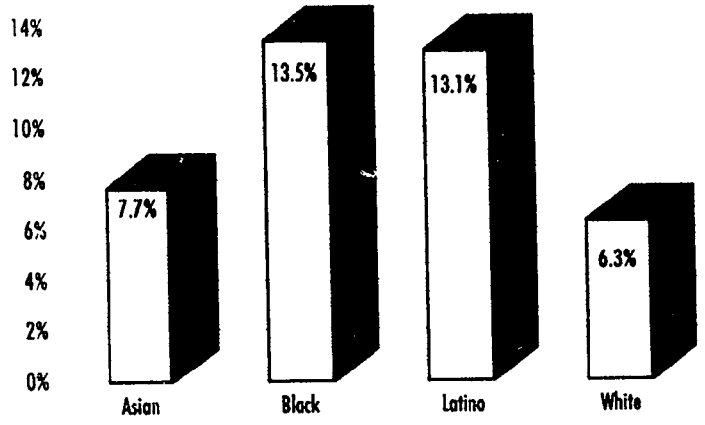


than 40% of the median income in 1980, 20% of the households had less than 34% of the median income in 1990. The proportion of households that made four times the median income or more in 1980 was less than 2.8% (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983). In 1990 households making four and one-quarter times the median income or more had slipped to just over 2.5% (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993).

Neighborhoods with the highest numbers of persons of color and with the largest percentage of families with children tended to have the lowest mean family incomes. Roxbury, for example, with 94% of its population being persons of color and over 52% of its households having children, had the lowest mean family income of all Boston neighborhoods in 1990: $28,979 for all families, and $23,239 for families with children. Back Bay/Beacon Hill, West Roxbury, and Charlestown, in contrast, were among those neighborhoods with the highest mean family incomes. Mean incomes, for families with children, in these neighborhoods were $136,764 Back Bay/Beacon Hill, $57,162 West Roxbury, and $42,227 Charlestown (Fogg et al., 1994).

Fifteen percent of all families in Boston lived below the poverty level in 1990. Thirty-two percent of Latino families, 24% of Asian American families, 22% of Black families, and 9% of white families were below the poverty line (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992a). Roxbury (28.1%), Fenway/Kenmore (22.7%), the South End (21.9%), and

Figure 13. Unemployment Rate by Race and Ethnicity, 1990



Mattapan/Franklin Park (19.8%) had the highest family poverty rates. West Roxbury (3.2%) and Back Bay/Beacon Hill (3.9%) had the lowest rates (Fogg et al., 1994).

Children were especially victimized by poverty, and the gap between white and non-white children was considerable. For the population as a whole, 28% of children lived in poverty. Over 45% of Latino children lived in poverty, as well as 33.7% of Black children, and 33.4% of Asian American children. For white children the poverty rate was considerably lower, 18.1%, and concentrated for the most part in census tracts with public housing developments (Sum with Bonacci, Fogg, Goicoechea, & Sum, 1994a).

Per capita income levels reflected similar inequalities. According to the 1990 U.S. Census (1992b), Latino per capita income was the lowest at $8,364, Blacks at $9,406, and Asian Americans at $10,420. Whites had the highest per capita income by a wide margin at $18,939.

Employment and Unemployment

Overall unemployment rates in the city for Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans have consistently been higher than those for whites. By the beginning of the 1990s the Black rate was 13.5%, Latinos 13.1%, Asian Americans 7.7%, and whites 6.3%. Sectors with particularly high unemployment rates included Black males, Latino males and females, and Asian American males (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992a).

In 1990 Asian Americans had the lowest overall labor force participation

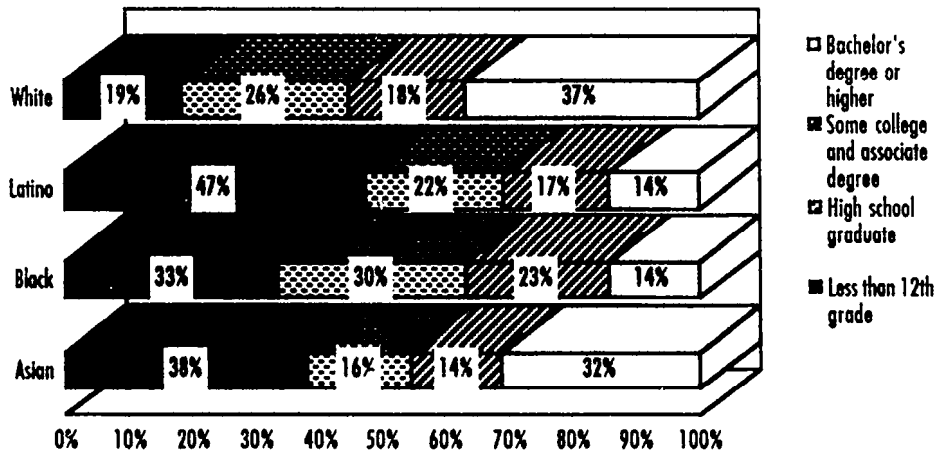
rates of any group, 63.5% for men and 54.7% for women. Latino rates were mixed. Latino males had the highest participation rate of any segment, 74.1%, while Latino females had the lowest rate of any segment, 54.1%. Black labor force participation rates were comparable to those of whites: Black males, 71.5%; white males, 73.3%; Black females, 61.1%; and white females, 62% (Institute for Asian American Studies, 1994).

Education

One of the consequences of the relative youthfulness of Boston's non-white communities is that a higher percentage of people from these communities attend school compared to whites. For Asian Americans, 45.7% were enrolled in school in 1990; for Latinos, 36.6%; for Blacks, 34.7%; and for whites, only 26.2% (Institute for Asian American Studies, 1994).

Taken as a whole, Boston's population is highly educated with 49.1% of the total adult population in 1990 having one or more post-secondary degrees or some post-secondary training. Significant differences in educational attainment, however, exist among the city's various racial and ethnic groups. In 1990 47.2% of Latinos, 38.1% of Asian Americans, 33.3% of Blacks, and 18.5% of whites had not earned a high school diploma. Fifty-five percent of whites have received education beyond the high school degree level. The comparable figures for other groups were Asian Americans 45.6%, Blacks 36.8%, and Latinos 30.6% (Institute for Asian American Studies, 1994).

Figure 14. Educational Attainment by Race and Ethnicity, 1990



Housing

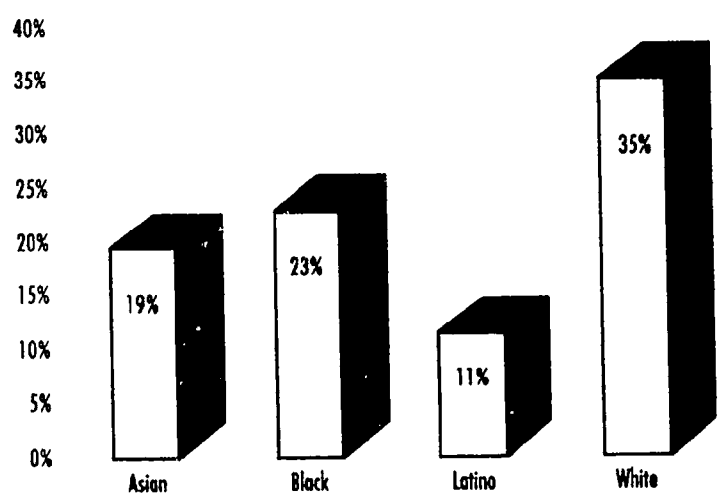
The owner-occupancy rate of non-whites in Boston trails rates for whites by considerable margins. Only about one out of ten Latino households in 1990 was an owner-occupied dwelling. Comparable figures for Asian Americans were less than one in five, for Blacks slightly more than one in five, and for whites more than one in three. Whites represented 78.9% of all owner-occupied units in Boston, while Blacks represented 16.4%, Latinos 3.4%, and Asian Americans 2.7% (Institute for Asian American Studies, 1994).

In 1990 the average value of single-family homes owned by whites was $179,500. Comparable figures for other groups indicated lower values than that of whites: Asian Americans, $170,800; Latinos, $162,900; and Blacks, $155,300 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991a).

Of the Boston residents with a mortgage, 57.1% of Latinos had monthly mortgage payments of $1,000 or more. Forty-one percent of Asian Americans, 39.5% of Blacks, and 28.2% of whites had mortgage payments of $1,000 or more (Mauricio Gastón Institute, 1994).

Rents paid by different groups in Boston, did not reflect consistent patterns. In 1990 31% of white renters paid less than $500 monthly compared to 33% of Asian Americans, 41.4% of Latinos, and 44.5% of Blacks. Only 7.2% of Blacks paid a monthly rent of $1,000 or more, while 7.8% of Latinos, 11.4% of Asian Americans, and 14% of

Figure 15. Owner Occupancy Rates by Race and Ethnicity, 1990



whites paid $1,000 or more (Mauricio Gastón Institute, 1994).

In summary, the portrait of Boston described above indicates a city undergoing dramatic changes that have not altered and often exacerbated some longstanding inequities. The next section of this report chronicles the development of Boston's communities of color emphasizing the interplay of traditional structures with transformations in several domains—economic, political, social and cultural.

III Recent History: Institutional Overview

Blacks, Asian Americans, and Latinos in Boston

History and Development to 1960

Blacks, Asians, and Latinos have been present in Boston for centuries. Blacks lived in Boston since the early days of its founding and throughout the colonial, revolutionary, and early federal periods. In 1729, for example, Blacks comprised approximately 8% of the city's population. West Indians began to immigrate to Boston in the early 19th century, although they did not come in sizable numbers until the first quarter of the 20th century. New England's vigorous trade with China and India meant that Asian sailors, merchants, servants, and students were present in Boston beginning in the early 1800s. The first notable Asian American community was established in the 1870s by Chinese workers who settled in the South Cove area of the city near the South Station railroad yards. Records of the struggle for the independence of Cuba and Puerto Rico from Spain show the presence of Latinos in Boston as early as 1892 (Uriarte, 1992).

Following the Civil War, Blacks arrived in Boston through various avenues and for various reasons. Blacks moved to Boston from northern and southern states drawn by the prospect of economic gain. The promise of economic advancement also drew immigrants from the West Indies early in the 19th century and in sizable numbers during the first quarter of the 20th century. The pace of Black arrivals to Boston rose and fell in accordance with shifting economic conditions in other parts of the country and the West Indies. Additionally, Black migrants were drawn to the city to join family or friends who had settled in the area. By 1940 Blacks constituted 3% of Boston's total population, which was over 95% white. In the next two decades, the Black share of Boston's population grew to 5% in 1950 and 9% in 1960, largely due to two factors: the continued

growth of the Black population, fed especially by migration from the South and immigration from the Caribbean; and the movement of many white Bostonians to the suburbs. By 1960 the white proportion of the population had dropped to 90%.

Despite many barriers, including restrictiive immigration laws aimed at Chinese and other Asians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Boston's Chinese population remained an enduring and stable community. In the first half of the 20th century growth of the Chinese population, which for the most part constituted Boston's Asian American community, was limited, and the Chinese population was largely male. In this period as well, relatively few Chinese in Boston did not reside in Chinatown. Between 1910 and 1950 four out of five Chinese in Boston lived in Chinatown. The repeal of discriminatory immigration exclusion acts led to the establishment of Chinese families in Boston and the steady growth of the population from 1,600 in 1940 to 5,200 in 1960 (The Chinatown Coalition, 1994).

The recruitment of Puerto Rican farm workers in the 1940s began a circulation of that population between Puerto Rico and the Boston area (Uriarte, 1992). The South End became a favorite destination of these Latinos. In 1960 Boston's Latino population numbered 2,000.

The 1960s and Beyond

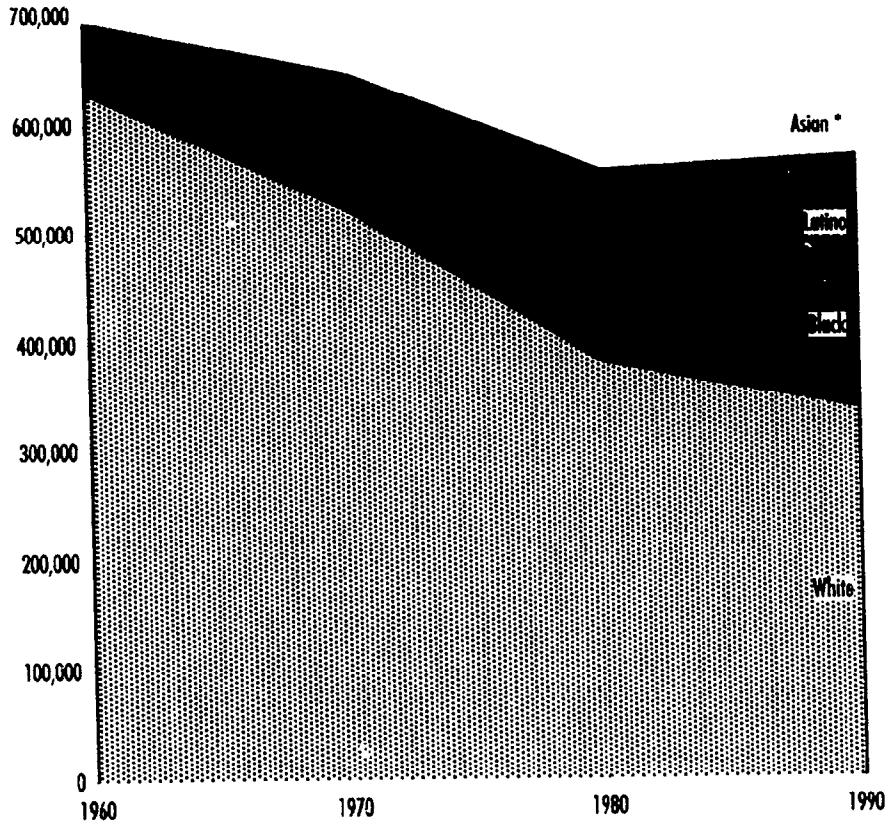
The Changing Boston Economy

By the 1960s Blacks, Asians, and Latinos constituted a growing share of Boston's population. At this time, Boston's economic base was stagnant and preparing to undergo great change. After the end of World War II, Boston was ill-prepared financially for a peacetime economy. Employment in New England's textile plants dropped from 280,000 in 1947 to 90,000 in 1965. Unemployment was high in the working class neighborhoods of Charlestown, South Boston, the West End, and Roxbury. The financial clout of Boston Brahmins had begun to focus on development of the Route 128 electronics industry and to withdraw from the city's manufacturing base of textiles, shoes, and leather goods and its shipping and fishing industries. Following their investments, many white Bostonians moved out of the city.

The one bright spot in the city's economic picture, seldom mentioned at the time, was the growth of the business service sector, including financial, insurance, and legal services, concentrated in the downtown area (Kennedy, 1992).

During the 1960s, the shift from a manufacturing to a service-based economy accelerated dramatically. This trend along with a changing political culture in the city and significant demographic transformations converged to create substantial alterations

Figure 16. Change in Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1960-1990



*Asians were not systematically identified in the US Census prior to 1980.

in the city's economic, political, and social landscape.

Consequences of Change

Reflective of a familiar theme in Boston's history change often proved to be more harmful than helpful to Boston's Black, Latino, and Asian American residents. Despite the positive changes that have been attempted, for example desegregation of schools and housing, they have been met with considerable resistance from more entrenched elements. Boston's non-white communities have also not been called on to play major roles in shaping the course of change in the economic and political arenas. Consequently the

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Black, Latino, and Asian American communities have relied heavily on developing their own community-based structures and institutions to serve their needs and to advocate for their often neglected interests.

Urban Renewal

Boston's movement away from a manufacturing-based economy was accompanied by the decision of many cities, catalyzed by national policies under the 1949 and 1954 U.S. Housing Acts, to revitalize downtown business areas. In Boston this urban strategy was articulated by a succession of growth-oriented city administrations, commencing with Mayor John Hynes, and a business community intent on accessing and utilizing federal funds to carry out ambitious new construction plans. The strategy was most dramatically implemented by Mayor John Collins, who took office in 1960, and his director of the then recently created Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), Ed Logue. Mayor Kevin White in the 1970s continued urban renewal plans, remaking the skyline of Boston and forever changing many neighborhoods.

The Changing Political Culture

Stirrings of change in the city's political culture also manifested themselves in the 1960s. For much of the post-World War II period, Boston's Black community was in what Mel King, a prominent Black community activist, politician, and educator, called "the service stage," where they bartered their leverage for a portion of city services (King, 1981). This stage was typified by Shag and Bal Taylor, who formed the first significant Black political organization. Their "machine" approach to politics achieved somewhat improved services for the Black community and a limited number of patronage jobs in exchange for Black support.

The civil rights movement bred a growing attitude first among Blacks and then other communities that openly questioned authority and emphasized mass organizing. This approach was basically adversarial and called for the equitable distribution of resources and power. For decades those demands have defined the political aspirations of many of the city's nonwhite residents and of white allies anxious for change.

Migration and Immigration

The racial and ethnic complexion of Boston was altered considerably in the 1960s and 1970s. Black migration from various locales in the United States and especially immigration from the West Indies to Boston increased in that decade. The Black portion of the population grew dramatically from 9% in 1960 to 16% in 1970 to 30% in 1980. Events in the international arena and changes in immigration laws resulted in an enhanced and exceedingly diverse flow of immigrants from non-European countries. Cubans, for example, came in large numbers as part of

the resettlement program organized through the federally funded Cuban Refugee Program established in 1961 to receive Cuban exiles. Puerto Ricans, from both the island and other parts of the United States, came in large numbers in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act amendments lifted many restrictions on immigration from the Third World and resulted in a startling increase of immigrants to Boston. Dominicans began to arrive in the mid-1960s. Educational and medical institutions in the Boston area attracted a significant number of South American immigrants, and small colonies of Colombians, Argentineans, and Chileans have lived in the city. Central American immigration, exacerbated by wars and economic and political conflicts, increased steadily in the 1970s and boomed in the 1980s. Large numbers of new Chinese immigrants came to Boston in the 1960s and 1970s. South Asian Indians and Koreans, often with high levels of education and professional skills, settled in the Boston area. Communist victories in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos set off successive waves of refugees from Southeast Asia also settling in Boston. The first wave of largely well-educated Cambodian, Lao, and predominantly Vietnamese professionals and former government officials arrived soon after 1975. A second wave from 1979 to 1983 included large numbers of ethnic Chinese "boat people" from merchant backgrounds in Vietnam, Cambodians escaping Khmer Rouge killing fields, fishermen and farmers with little formal education, and unaccompanied "anchor" children sent by their families.

The total effect of migration and immigration of people of color to Boston from 1960 to 1980 was extraordinary. In 1970 the non-white share (20%) of the city's total population represented a doubling of its 1960 share, and by 1980 the non-white proportion had expanded to 32%. As detailed in the preceding section of this report, by 1990 Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans constituted over 40% of Boston's population.

The interaction of change on these three fronts—the Boston economy, the political culture, and the racial and ethnic make-up of the city—had an explosive impact in myriad ways, influencing residential patterns, the composition of neighborhoods, and the cultural life of the city.

Responses

The emphasis placed on urban renewal by political and business decisionmakers created a scenario for confrontation and the specter of urban development at the expense of poorer neighborhoods. The drive to focus on income and tax revenue-producing projects increased the vulnerability of poor sections near downtown. Among these were areas newly settled by less politically influential non-white populations.

Initial development plans not only changed the downtown area but also dismantled the low-income communities of the multicultural West End and the New York streets of the South End. Other areas that were threatened or cleared away included Chinatown, Roxbury, East Boston, the North End, Charlestown, other parts of the South End, Jamaica Plain, Dorchester, and Brighton.

After a passive beginning and the loss of much low-income housing, many locales (the South End, Chinatown, East Boston, Roxbury, Charlestown, and Brighton) began to wage determined battles over the effects of urban renewal actions and policies. Popular mobilization against "top-down" urban construction culminated in the stoppage in 1973 of the I-95 construction segment known as the Southwest Highway and the Inner Belt by a coalition led by African American community organizations. This coalition was also able to influence the dispensation of federal highway trust funds for public transit.

The interplay of urban renewal and people of color moving into the city had at least two notable effects on the existing white population, which led to increased white out-migration. First, the destruction of areas like the West End drove some whites out of the city. Little provision had been made for their displacement, and the substitution of luxury housing, such as Charles River Park in the West End and Harbor Towers in the North End, did not provide an affordable housing option for most residents.

A second effect was that the destruction of minority neighborhoods created a migration into previously white enclaves. When Blacks first migrated into the city, they were essentially confined to its inner core of Roxbury and the South End. The destruction of the New York streets housing and the construction of Washington Park in the heart of Roxbury forced Blacks into areas like West Dorchester, where Boston's Jewish community was then centered. With the continuing influx of Blacks from southern states and the West Indies, many Blacks began to move further into Dorchester. In a similar fashion, many Chinese displaced by the erosion of Chinatown moved into other areas such as Allston/Brighton. The renewal of the South End and increasing Latino migration led Puerto Ricans and Cubans to settle in Jamaica Plain; Puerto Ricans and Dominicans to reside in Dorchester around Uphams Corner, Dudley Street, and Columbia Point; and Cubans and South Americans to live in Brighton. In the 1970s Central Americans and Cambodians settled in East Boston, and Vietnamese refugees began to move into the Fields Corner section of Dorchester and Allston/Brighton. While some Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans moved to the suburbs, for most, low incomes, the relative inaccessibility of mass transportation, the absence of supportive ethnic

infrastructures, language barriers, and racial discrimination limited the viability of the suburban option.

As the racial and ethnic composition of many former largely white neighborhoods changed, some white Bostonians, fearful of alleged property devaluation, crime, and racial tensions, left the city. Furthermore, whites with the resources and the inclination to do so often exercised the option of abandoning a deteriorating urban infrastructure and seeking economic opportunities in suburban industries and offices. In contrast, the dilemma for many nonwhites was that this same option of fleeing the city was not open to them, and as they stayed, they generally lacked the political and economic clout necessary to fight the changes that damaged their well-being.

In this often highly charged and volatile atmosphere, some of the more established residents reacted with hostility toward the newcomers. In East Boston and Dorchester, for example, Southeast Asians were subjected to physical assaults, arson of their residences, and vandalization of their cars. The integration of public housing in neighborhoods such as South Boston and Charlestown often spawned a number of racial incidents and protests.

Despite the fact that many Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans have made relatively smooth transitions into formerly homogeneous areas and that there have been successful efforts to integrate public housing projects in white-dominated areas in Boston, geographical separation has continued to a considerable degree.

The impact of changing demographics on the social and economic fabric of many neighborhoods has been a mixed blessing. Instability and transient populations in some neighborhoods caused both by the recent arrivals of people of color and the suburban fixation of many older residents undermined interest and participation in established civic associations and other neighborhood institutions. On the other hand, the new populations often catalyzed or formed many new community organizations.

Local Economic Development

Neighborhoods have made significant progress in attempting to control earlier unchecked community development. Early organizing efforts in the South End and Roxbury against gentrification, for example, resulted in formal recognition of community processes to influence community development. Through the South End Planning Area Committee and other organizations, the community in the South End was able to influence neighborhood development. In Roxbury the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative became a national community development model as it gained control, including successfully obtaining eminent domain rights, and exercised veto power over construction and land use within the Dudley Square area. These and other endeavors have forced city hall to be

more inclusive in its approach to neighborhood development.

The new populations also have begun to reverse the decline of neighborhood centers as shopping areas. Neighborhoods such as Fields Corner, Allston/Brighton, Jamaica Plain, and Chinatown are now centers of immigrant commerce, respectively drawing in Vietnamese, Brazilians, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, and Chinese from the entire Boston metropolitan area.

Many of Boston's non-white new arrivals have found themselves in neighborhoods with established community structures primarily built by and serving the dominant white population. Rotary Clubs, civic associations, churches, social clubs, and merchants associations traditionally have served useful purposes including bringing residents together. Although some of these structures have adapted to welcome newcomers, many individuals have not fit in easily, leading to alienation or the creation of new structures.

Employment Impacts

Urban development strategies were designed to serve a post-industrial Boston of expanded financial and business services and a declining manufacturing sector. The construction of the Central Artery and the proposed Southwest Highway catered to suburban professionals employed in new downtown edifices. The hollowing out of what had been Boston's industrial labor force was symbolized by fleeing white middle-class residents. High wage, professional jobs that required advanced education degrees attracted childless "yuppies" into the city.

Many of Boston's Latinos, Asian Americans, and Blacks with low levels of education filled the low-wage and low-benefit secondary labor market that serviced downtown office buildings and firms. A recent study of Latino employment, for example, found that in the late 1980s 25% of low-income Latinos were employed in cleaning service occupations (Osterman, 1992). Overall, the proportion of the Latino population in service occupations grew to one-third (Jennings, Baker, Williams, Evereteze, & Napier, 1993). Many Vietnamese found employment in light manufacturing and services, along with Chinese who also were heavily represented in the restaurant industry and garment sweatshops. Blacks tended to be concentrated in service occupations in proportions comparable to Latinos and Asian Americans. In summary, in most cases new populations of color have become the low-wage workforce in the city, occupying lower level service occupations and working in the remaining small manufacturing firms, which often survive on low-wage workers.

In the nation and in Massachusetts, there have been indications that non-whites have steadily improved their share of highly educated professionals. Within Boston, however, the non-white professional community remains rather

small. By the early 1990s slightly more than one out of seven (14.3%) of Boston area Blacks held high-income professional positions, for Latinos it was approximately one out of ten (9.6%). These shares were below the 20.9% of the total population in professional positions (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992a). Especially frustrating has been the fact that many well-educated Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans have not been able to translate their educational achievements into higher levels of professional advancement.

Minority Businesses

The picture for minority businesses in Boston, with some exceptions, has been disappointing. Businesses owned by the new populations are disproportionately fewer, smaller, and earn significantly lower revenues than mainstream businesses (Williams & Kim, 1995). In 1987 Blacks owned only 2% of all proprietorships; partnerships, and 1120S corporations; for Asian Americans the figure was 1.5%; and for Latinos the figure was 0.8%. Of the existing minority businesses, the distribution is skewed toward services and retail trade and away from construction, finance, insurance, wholesale trade, and real estate. Even the participation in services, which would seem to be one positive piece of an otherwise gloomy picture, is tempered by the observation reported by Russell Williams and Sue Kim (1995) that, "the particular sources of growth [for Boston] are not services as a whole but rather knowledge based services.... minority-owned firms may be concentrated in the lower skilled areas of the service sector" (p. 53).

An alternative economic strategy of the new populations has been the generation of active "enclave economies" within the city. An enclave economy is a form of market segmentation where businesses established and managed by members of a certain ethnic or racial group also employ and market to other members of that group. It offers to ethnic businesspeople opportunities unavailable in the larger economy. Boston's Chinatown is a good example with 176 businesses concentrated within that area. The median number of years of operation is only six years, and 75% of these businesses have fewer than ten employees (Williams & Kim, 1995). Enclave economies in Boston have also been created by the Vietnamese, Dominican, Russian, Cape Verdean, and Brazilian communities. Immigrants and newcomers have also established themselves in niche markets serving larger mainstream clientele. The recent sharp increase in Vietnamese ownership of nail salons in the city is a good example of this.

Although enclave businesses enhance economic activity in many communities, there have been some drawbacks. Many workers employed in these businesses have experienced lower wages, fewer benefits and opportunities for advancement, harsher working conditions, and less job security than in the general labor market.

In short, it can be said that Boston's post-manufacturing economy has not been substantially directed toward or shared with the new populations. The city's economy still primarily benefits the long-standing business structure and a workforce that does not live in the city. Economic progress that has been made has been largely attributable to the newcomers' own efforts, either through the creation of somewhat separate economies or through personal investments in education.

Institutions

Politics

Although the difficulties of Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans to break into the city's mainstream economy have been substantial, they pale in comparison to the resistance encountered by these groups as they have attempted to penetrate the political system. For decades the city's changing demographics have held out the potential of creating more diverse governmental representation. The expanding Black political base and the legacy of the civil rights and Black power movements led to some Black political representation and the integration of more Black workers into the public sector workforce. The inroads, however, made by Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans either through elective office or through major appointments have been limited.

Before direct representation in Boston in 1981, the Boston City Council, with two exceptions, had not seated a Black. In 1995 there were two Blacks on the city council and five Blacks in the state legislature, including one state senator. Prior to the elimination of the elected school committee in 1990, only five Blacks had ever sat on the Boston School Committee. The Black community has searched for ways to expand its role, principally by challenging the mechanics of the electoral process—district representation rather than at-large representation, redistricting, voting registration procedures, and so forth. Since the successful referendum restoring district representation, however, no major victories have been won.

One notable Black achievement that embraced other communities of color was the "rainbow" politics developed from the electoral activities associated with Mel King's 1983 campaign for mayor. While King's candidacy met eventual defeat, several ideas raised during the campaign, including Boston jobs for Boston residents, neighborhood development funds collected from downtown development projects, and neighborhood councils linked to the city administration, were eventually developed during the subsequent administrations of Mayor Raymond Flynn. The formation of Black political institutions, such as the Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus and the Black Political Task Force, which influences

elections and legislation, has also been a positive step.

The rapid ascendancy of Latinos has not resulted in extensive political representation. Unlike the Black population that has been more concentrated in inner Boston, Latinos have been dispersed into various neighborhoods. Latinos have also been limited by having the lowest percentage of adults among the communities of color. Only recently has there been sporadic success in electing Latinos to political office. Grace Romero was elected to the Boston School Committee in the mid-1980s. In 1990 Nelson Merced became the first Latino elected to the state legislature. His success was followed by the election of Marta Rosa in neighboring Chelsea as the first Latino official in that city. In order to organize and enhance its clout, the Latino community has formed institutions such as the Latino Political Action Committee.

Despite the 120-year presence of significant numbers of Asians in Boston, no Asian American has held elective office in state government or in the city. Political structures in the Asian American community have been limited. Although an Asian Pacific Caucus has existed in the Massachusetts Democratic Party, there has been no Asian political action committee or endorsement mechanism. A recent attempt to improve the political influence of Asian Americans has been the formation of an Asian Pacific American Agenda Coalition (APAAC) made up of individuals and organizations drawn extensively from the Boston area.

Communities of color have participated in the political process at levels below that of the rest of the population. Historically and at present, institutional barriers, and citizenship status have all played important roles in limiting their political participation. The immigrant character of much of the Latino and Asian American communities and the Haitian and Cape Verdean and other island populations in the Black communities has meant that many residents do not have the citizenship status necessary to vote in Boston. Difficult and restrictive voter registration procedures and the periodic and large-scale removal of voters from the rolls were standard procedures in some parts of the city until reforms in the 1980s and 1990s.

While the percentage of whites 18 years old and over hovers close to 90%, the percentages for Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans range from 68% to 78.4%. Certain sections of the city have particularly dismal registration and voting rates. Surveys of Chinatown, for example, have found that about 75% of eligible voters were unregistered (Asian American Resource Workshop, 1991). Voter turnout in sample precincts has shown that the turnout of registered voters of color has lagged behind white voters by about ten percentage points. In the 1992 election, for example, only about two-thirds of registered non-whites turned out, compared with nearly 80% of registered whites (Powers, 1993).

Determined efforts to overcome many of the obstacles that stand in the way of full political participation have been undertaken. Recently the Latino and Asian American communities have followed the lead of the Black community in organizing voter registration efforts. A volunteer effort in the early 1980s evolved into a chapter of the national organization Operation Big Vote, leading to the registration of 30,000 new voters. Another program, Part of the Solution, has carried on this registration work. The Latino community has launched a large-scale effort to register voters, reflected in the Massachusetts Hispanic Voter Registration and Education Project which registered thousands of voters in half a decade.

No doubt many in the non-white population feel distant and removed from the political system. The lack of progress in developing integrated political structures fuels frustration. This frustration has manifested itself in appeals by some for the total autonomy of Boston's Black community through the secession of Roxbury from Boston.

Culture

Boston's changing population has helped stimulate efforts at multiculturalism. The appropriate recognition of diverse cultures has been utilized as an important criterion to judge school curricula. Public recognition of non-white cultures has expanded, resulting in particular in Black History Month and an increase in events such as the Puerto Rican and Caribbean festivals and numerous multicultural days in sections of the city, including Allston/Brighton and Dorchester. Community-based efforts to produce such cultural events as those at the Jorge Hernandez Cultural Center and the Strand Theater in Uphams Corner have been well-received.

Local media have included more programming and coverage of communities of color. Television programs such as Urban Update, Mosaic, and Asian Focus have been developed. Boston cable television has also made some strides in better covering the city's diverse population. Negative images of communities of color, however, have been prominent in the news media. Recent studies have indicated, for example, that one-third of all stories in major print and electronic media concerning non-whites revolved around crime and violence (Johnson, 1987; The Media Project, 1992).

Cultural groups, such as the Dance Umbrella, and theaters and movie houses have held cultural events or weeks with Black, Latino, and Asian American themes. However, recent surveys of some of Boston's most venerable arts institutions, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Boston Ballet, and the Boston Symphony for example, have found widespread neglect of communities of color in both representation and

programming (Hartigan & Lewis, 1991). A 1991 review of the region's major art and cultural institutions found that only 5% of their board members were persons of color. The boards of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Boston Symphony, and the Boston Ballet, with a combined total of 148 members, had only three persons of color (Hartigan & Lewis, 1991). Boston's professional sports teams have traditionally not had a front office nor a fan clientele that mirrors to any degree the racial and ethnic diversity presented on the field of play and in the city at large.

In summary, the transition from recognition to the integration of diverse cultures in the Boston area has remained largely unfulfilled. The cultural range has been broadened but still has not been reflective of the city's diversity. Media attention has continued to be rather infrequent and often distorted. Thus new residents have often had to construct their own structures to showcase their cultures.

Community Organizations

Community-based institutions in Boston's non-white sectors have developed in response to a number of factors, including a feeling that many existing institutions had been unresponsive, inappropriate, or antagonistic to non-white sectors. In the 1960s the Black community developed a new organizational structure out of the prevailing framework represented by the NAACP, the Urban League, and a network of settlement houses to battle more aggressively for civil rights. Educational and economic and urban development issues led to the formation of new organizations, such as the Boston Action Group, the Community Assembly for a United South End, Operation Exodus, and the revitalization of older organizations. The Third World Workers Association fought pitched battles on construction sites for jobs, and the decades-long pursuit of equal education led to the creation of a number of organizations. Attempts to strengthen the Black community have led to the formation of organizations such as the Black Agenda Coalition, the Greater Roxbury Neighborhood Authority, and the William Monroe Trotter Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

The goal of equal treatment has inspired activists in the Latino and Asian American communities. Often these communities have attempted to replicate the strategies of the more experienced Black community. The institution building of the Latino community in the South End and the fierce twenty-year opposition to institutional expansion in Chinatown have built on ideas and tactics honed in the Black community. Latinos occupied the offices of Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) to start the first service organization in Boston for Latinos, Association Pro Constitutional Rights of the Spanish Speaking (APCROSS). In the South

End, Latino efforts were focused on controlling gentrification and redevelopment. The Emergency Tenants Committee (ETC) won control over the development of a disputed parcel of land. Growing out of the ETC was Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion (IBA), which developed over thirty acres of land and 800 units of housing in the area and became the largest community controlled development in the country.

The Chinatown community utilized demonstrations, marches, and grassroots mobilizations—familiar tactics in the civil rights movement—to oppose the New England Medical Center's expansion into the Chinatown area. This new aggressive attitude led to the creation of grassroots organizing vehicles such as the Asian American Resource Workshop, the Chinese Progressive Association, and the Chinatown Housing and Land Development Task Force.

Many of Boston's social and religious institutions have been characterized by structures paralleling those in the dominant group. Boston's Black churches, over eighty in number, have been the center of the Black community. They continue to grow and expand in membership, providing much needed services and educational alternatives to the community. More recently, a new generation of Black ministers has assumed the pulpit, giving new impetus to the social activist role of the church.

Although for the most part absent prior to 1960, a network of Latino agencies has been built very quickly since that time. This network has included community development organizations such as IBA and Neustra Communidad, strategic planning institutions such as the Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation, and cultural centers such as the Hernandez. In 1989 the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston was created.

Of the over 200 hundred Asian American organizations in Massachusetts many are traditional family and district associations, churches, Buddhist temples, and cultural groups that exist alongside service and grassroots organizations. Several service agencies for Asian Americans grew out of Great Society programs—the Quincy School Community Council, the South Cove Health Center, and the Chinese American Civic Association. The Institute for Asian American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston was established in 1993 to increase the research and policy analysis, community development, and educational capacity of the Asian American community.

Recent refugee and immigrant communities in Boston have been assisted by the formation of many mutual aid associations, serving Southeast Asians, Caribbeans, Ethiopians, Russians, Irish, and many other groups.

The Old and the New

Undoubtedly, many of the city's traditional institutions have strived to open

themsel··es to Boston's non-white residents. The Mayor's Office has begun to include more liaisons to diverse constituencies. Governmental bureaucracies have become more integrated. The percentage of minority officers in the Boston police force, for example, has grown to 25%. The city's numerous educational institutions have become more diverse. Some foundations have placed a high priority on supporting community-based initiatives and organizations. Many individuals in Boston's non-white communities, however, have remained skeptical and distrustful. The pace and extent of full integration into mainstream structures in even the best of circumstances has been limited. Furthermore, non-white participation often appears to be mere tokenism, which is not regarded as a substitute for fundamental change.

In its recent history, the critical sectors of the economic, political, social, and cultural life of Boston have generally not adapted swiftly or well to the needs and interests of Boston's expanding communities of color. Only a few established institutions have been introspective enough to carefully contemplate the consequences of operating in or serving a city that demographically has changed dramatically in a relatively short period of time. By being more open to Black, Latino, and Asian American participation in crucial decisionmaking and established structures, the city could have ameliorated many of the problems faced by these communities. Instead, traditional city and neighborhood institutions have found their absolute dominance, if not their overall clout, challenged by new enterprises and structures intent on either building bridges to the mainstream or developing autarkical enclave communities as much as possible.

IV Challenges & Opportunities

Building a Diverse and Workable Community

The patterns, changes, and contradictions portrayed in this report present both formidable challenges and new opportunities for Boston. It is difficult in these pages to delineate the implications completely. Consequently the remainder of the report is intended to summarize and identify only a portion of the challenges and opportunities facing the city. In defining and dealing with Boston's strengths and needs, a paramount goal must be building a diverse, adaptable, and workable community. In pursuit of that objective it is essential that Bostonians commence a broad and inclusive dialogue to assess the meaning and implications of the city's changing demography and varied socioeconomic realities. The manner in which Boston's institutions and individuals go about this inquiry will have a profound impact on the city's ability to marshal its enormous capabilities and tackle its perplexing problems. Politicians, policymakers, educators, foundations, business and community leaders, and residents from every neighborhood must act with foresight, vision, and courage to enhance collective and individual efforts to realize fully the city's true potential.

Political Power

One of the principal challenges facing Boston is the more equitable distribution of political and economic power and, especially, the transformation of the growing number of non-whites into sources of economic opportunity and political clout. A severe disjunction now exists between the distribution of power and the shape of the populace.

A system of representative democracy relies on the active involvement by those governed in the selection of their governmental leaders. The current political situation in Boston with low participation rates by communities of color causes great concern because this limits the ability of citizens to influence policymaking and, instead, makes it easier for political figures to ignore their needs. Government, as a result, becomes less efficacious and more distant. As cynicism grows, alienation also increases.

Although limited overall participation makes it easier to maintain the status quo, significant gains could be made through the electoral process with even modest increases and concentration of voting by Boston's Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans. An increase in voter registration and voter turnout would present opportunities for substantial political gains. This is especially true when overall participation in the political process is low.

Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans must see to it that their dramatically expanded numbers manifest themselves in expanded political clout. Working to increase the political impact of non-whites encompasses many activities including greater involvement in the civic affairs of neighborhoods and the city from parent councils to voluntary associations to governmental boards, voter registration and get-out-the-vote campaigns, and grooming viable candidates for public office.

Each of the minority communities can build political strength from within by developing coalitions among diverse nationality groups. An even more potent political force would be the expansion of coalition-building among communities of color. The goal of establishing and maintaining such a cross-community coalition has been an elusive one. The deleterious consequences of "going alone or not going at all" should serve to strengthen the allure of coalition-building. Whatever strategies are pursued, the fundamental challenge is to turn the potential into real power.

Indeed, the opening-up of Boston's political system is in the best interest of all of the city's residents. The political base of Boston's dominant political institutions will continue to decline due to demographic change, as long as such institutions remain relatively exclusive, closed, and narrow "clubs." Inevitably the time will come for a reckoning when the new populations discover and take advantage of paths to political empowerment.

Economic Empowerment

Dramatic transformations in Boston's demographic make-up coupled with a changing economy offer substantial challenges and potentially promising opportunities. Wise economic planning will take into consideration the characteristics and contributions of minority employees and businesses. New ethnic-owned shops and enterprises, whether specializing in the needs and

tastes of a particular community or engaging in mainstream pursuits from nail salons to financial institutions, should be regarded as valuable resources for all Bostonians. In addition, it would be wise not to neglect the importance of Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans as avid consumers in a strong Boston economy.

Without economic vitality and strength in Boston's growing communities of color there can be no lasting prosperity for the city's residents. Moreover, a host of social ills from lawlessness, to endangered public health, to domestic and child abuse will surely accompany prolonged economic despair and inequality. Persistent poverty's impact on the dignity and well-being of individuals and families and the future of Boston cannot be overemphasized.

Community-Based Structures

An important source of strength is the impressive network of community-based organizations in Boston. These organizations have been sources of youth programs, skills training, political leadership development, vital information, advocacy, and countless other activities. Many organizations have relied heavily on funding from federal, state, and local governments. The future does not look promising for high levels of government support. Funding from other sources, including some large foundations, has been tightly squeezed. Community-based organizations will be challenged to do more with less. Chances are that many valuable organizations will not survive, and if so the loss in some areas will be devastating.

Beyond financial support, community agencies could profit immensely through partnerships with institutions such as colleges and universities. Every one of Boston's numerous schools of higher education should be guided by and take seriously their urban missions. Technical assistance, leadership training, and the expanded availability of scholarships for city residents should be crucial components of "town and gown" relations in Boston. Community agencies are a source of hope for many Boston residents, and they need help from the public sector, private foundations and funders, and more established institutions including academia.

Structures based in Boston's Black, Latino, and Asian American communities can significantly enhance the strength and livelihood of these communities. The fact remains, however, that community-based organizations cannot meet all of the needs of Boston's diverse population. These organizations have been necessary but inadequate alternatives to an often impenetrable economic, political, and social system.

Unity with Diversity

Whites, Blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans, and others must learn to acknowledge differences without pro-

moting racial and ethnic hierarchies and to build collective strength by forging alliances and breaking down boundaries. Managing diversity within Black, Latino, and Asian American communities also poses significant challenges and opportunities. There has been an influx of new ethnic groups such as Ethiopians, Haitians, Nigerians, Somalians, and black Latinos into Boston's traditionally African American population. The Latino community in Boston is one of the most diverse Latino communities in the United States. And in the Asian American community substantial numbers of Southeast Asians have settled in the city augmenting the large and well-established Chinese population.

Invariably change requires adjustments by both the more established groups and relative newcomers. The challenge is to overcome differences that may exist among various subgroups and to continue to strive for the well-being of the whole. This is an appropriate goal for all groups within the city but is especially important for Boston's minority communities. These communities are already underrepresented politically and economically, and division further weakens them. On the other hand, strength and opportunity lie in unity.

Although cultural and language differences can be barriers to full participation, equal access, and justice for many residents, these same differences can also be sources of strength and can create opportunities when properly recognized and harnessed. In a world where economic, cultural, and social linkages across national boundaries are burgeoning, Boston businesses and other institutions could capitalize on the talents, cultural familiarity, and contacts of the city's diverse population. The proliferation of wide-ranging cultural connections and language capabilities could be used by astute entrepreneurs of all races to compete more effectively in international arenas and other settings.

Cultural and language differences can, in a somewhat ironic fashion, assist in bringing diverse communities together. The awareness of growing diversity within Boston's racial and ethnic groups may develop a greater appreciation of the need for programs and institutions that acknowledge and build on differences. For example, support for bilingual and multicultural education programs may gain broader support as more communities experience a medley of cultural and language variations.

A New Boston

Boston's many contradictions pose important challenges for those who live in and care about the city. Rapidly changing demographics and persistent socioeconomic inequalities have made the challenges even more compelling and the consequences of failing to meet them even more decisive. Individuals of vision and good will must undertake

to build a new community in Boston that learns from the past while harnessing the current forces of change. This new Boston would recognize that racial and ethnic diversity creates opportunities, rather than burdens, for all of the city's residents. If a cooperative spirit prevails no one in the city would need to suffer alone and all Bostonians could celebrate together.

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About the Institutes
at the University of Massachusetts Boston

Institute for Asian American Studies

The Institute for Asian American Studies was established in 1993 with support from Asian American communities and direction from the state legislature. The Institute brings together resources and expertise within both the university and the community to conduct research on Asian Americans; to expand Asian American studies in the curriculum; and to strengthen the community development capacity of Asian Americans. The Institute also taps resources within the statewide UMass system which includes campuses in Amherst, Lowell, Dartmouth, and Worcester.

Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development & Public Policy

The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy was established in December of 1989. The creation of the Gastón Institute responds to the need for better understanding of the experience and conditions of life of Latinos in the Commonwealth. Its purpose is to conduct research about the Latino population in Massachusetts and to develop the kind of information and analysis necessary for the development of sound public policy and for the effective participation of the Latino population in public policy development in the Commonwealth.

William Monroe Trotter Institute

The William Monroe Trotter Institute was founded in 1984 to address the needs and concerns of the Black community of Boston and Massachusetts through research, technical assistance, and public service. Many forms of technical assistance are provided to community groups, organizations, and public agencies. The Institute sponsors public forums as a means for disseminating research and involving the community in the discussion of public policy and other issues impacting Blacks, locally and nationally.

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