

Growing Regional Diversity

The region is growing more diverse, but not everywhere.

The region's growth since 2000 is due entirely to an increasing minority population. The Latino/Hispanic population grew by 48%, the Asian population by 45%, and non-Hispanic Blacks by 16%. Meanwhile, the non-Hispanic White population declined by 6%. As a result, Latino/Hispanics, Asians, and Blacks now comprise a quarter of the region's population, up from 19% in 2000. All indications are that these trends will continue into the foreseeable future. As shown in the chart, over 40% of minority residents are under the age of 25, versus only 30% of non-Hispanic Whites.

Unfortunately, this growing diversity was not reflected throughout the region. Over 60% of the Latino/Hispanic population growth occurred in just 6 cities, led by Boston, Lynn, and Revere. A similar share of non-Hispanic Black population growth was limited to just 9 municipalities, notably Randolph and Malden. Meanwhile, in 79 of the region's cities and towns, the share of Latino/Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black populations increased by less than 4%, meaning that diversity in these communities is growing more slowly than in the region overall.

Notably, the growth of Asian populations was much more dispersed. While the largest gains were seen in Boston and Quincy, the Asian population grew by more than 500 residents in 37 cities and towns, including many suburbs such as Acton (+2,300), Natick (+1,140), and Sharon (+1,080).

These patterns of settlement and segregation have important implications for the region's future population centers and labor market. As baby boomers reach retirement age, younger residents are needed to maintain a stable labor supply. The municipalities with the largest increases in the non-white population are also those that experienced the largest growth in the working age population. Meanwhile, 28 municipalities that generally gained very little racial and ethnic diversity since 2000 now have fewer 18-64 year olds than they did 10 years ago. If these patterns continue, many exclusive communities will be increasingly reliant on workers commuting in from other municipalities, affecting both traffic and economic growth.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, MAPC Analysis

Note: Dots are placed randomly within municipalities.

