



BROOKINGS INSTITUTION METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAM

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# **Recent Immigration to Philadelphia**

## ***Regional Change in a Re-Emerging Immigrant Gateway***

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The Free Library of Philadelphia  
Philadelphia, PA  
November 13, 2008

# Major questions addressed in the report



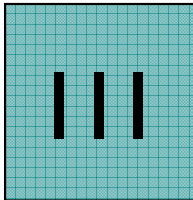
I

**Where do Philadelphia's immigration trends fit into the national picture?**



II

**What are the major contemporary trends in immigration to Philadelphia?**



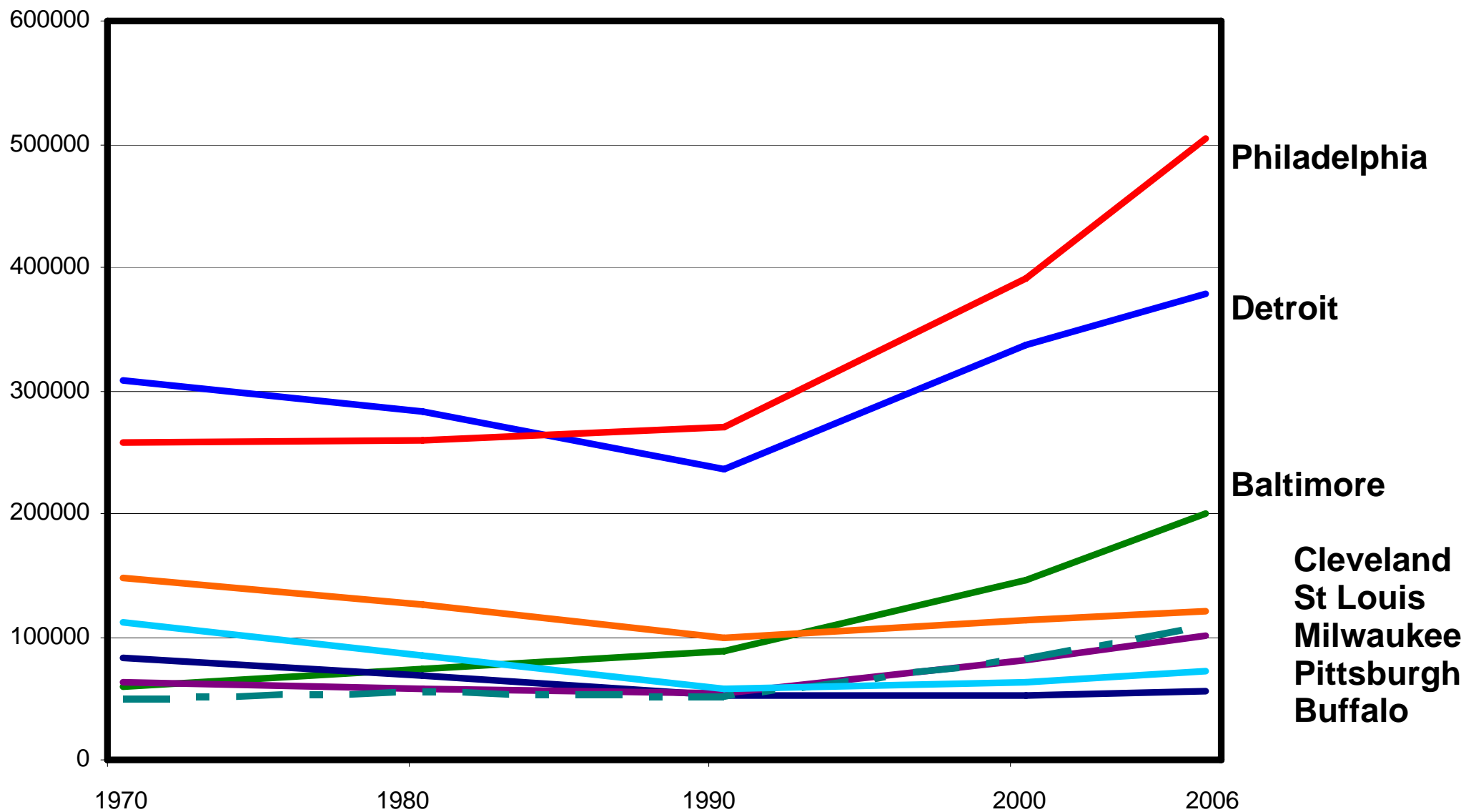
III

**How might the region work towards socially, economically, and civically integrating immigrant newcomers**

# **Historical and comparative trends**

# Compared with other “former” gateways, greater Philadelphia’s trajectory shows recent and fast growth

Foreign-Born Population of Former Immigrant Gateways, 1980-2006



# In 1900, the city of Philadelphia ranked 3rd among all U.S. cities on the number of foreign-born residents

## Number of Immigrants ranked by city, 1900

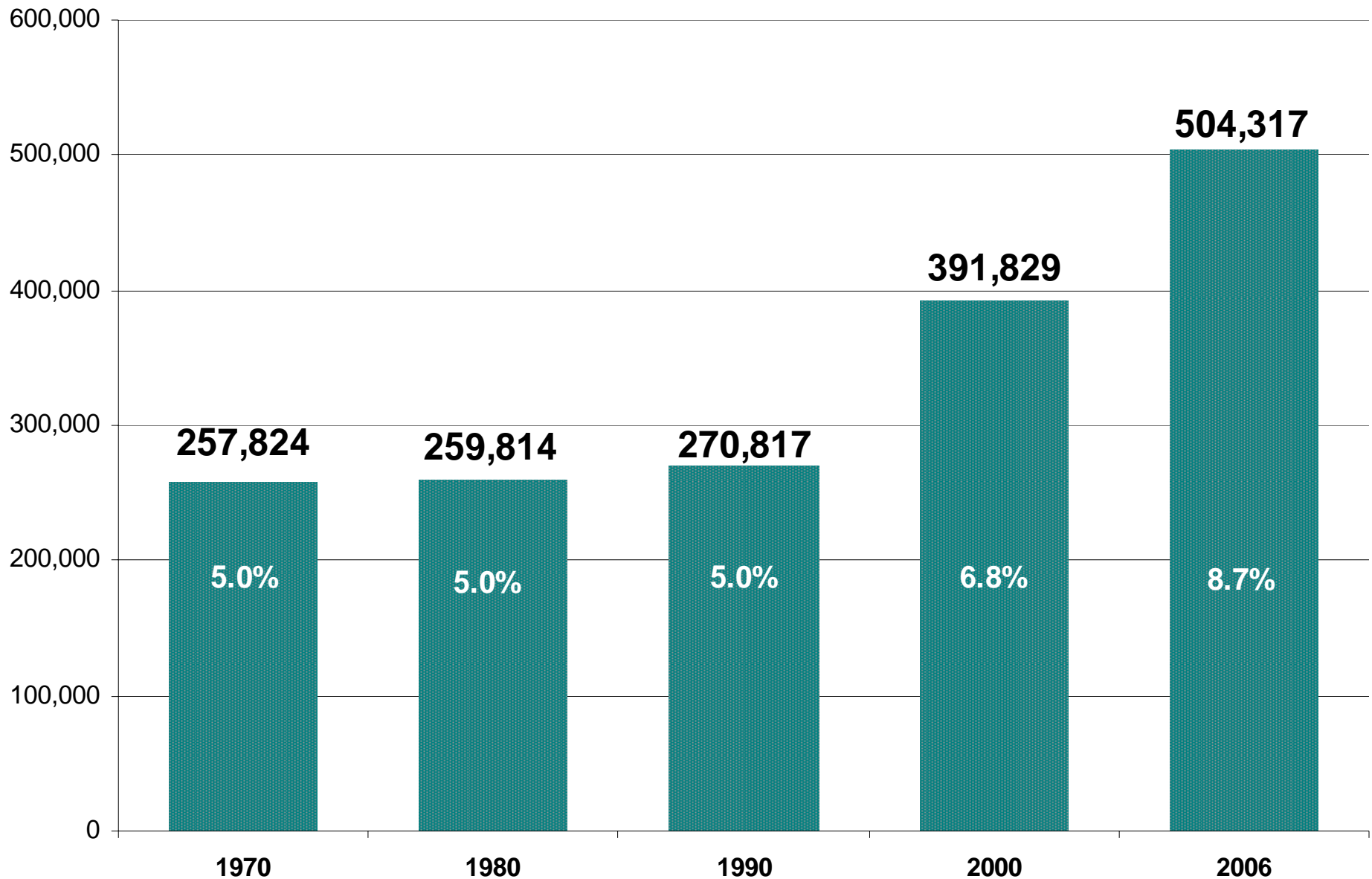
		Number	Percent
1	New York	1,270,080	37.0
2	Chicago	587,112	34.6
3	<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>295,340</b>	<b>22.8</b>
4	Boston	197,129	35.1
5	Cleveland	124,631	32.6
6	San Francisco	116,885	34.1
7	St. Louis	111,356	19.4
8	Buffalo	104,252	29.6
9	Detroit	96,503	33.8
10	Milwaukee	88,991	31.2

# By 2006, metropolitan Philadelphia dropped rank to 16th among all metropolitan areas

## Number of Immigrants ranked by metropolitan area, 2006

		Number	Percent
<b>1</b>	New York	5,304,270	28.2
<b>2</b>	Los Angeles	4,432,288	34.2
<b>3</b>	Miami	2,023,711	37.0
<b>4</b>	Chicago	1,695,417	17.8
<b>5</b>	San Francisco	1,235,778	29.6
<b>6</b>	Houston	1,193,931	21.5
<b>7</b>	Dallas-Fort Worth	1,078,552	18.0
<b>8</b>	Washington	1,063,033	20.1
<b>9</b>	Riverside-San Bernardino	898,235	22.3
<b>10</b>	Boston	706,586	15.9
<b>16</b>	<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>504,317</b>	<b>8.7</b>

# Philadelphia's immigrant population grew to half a million after stagnating at 250K for decades



Source: US Census 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and ACS 2006

# **Greater Philadelphia: Definitions and Data**

# The Philadelphia Metropolitan Area

## City of Philadelphia

### PA Suburbs

Bucks County, PA

Chester County, PA

Delaware County, PA

Montgomery County, PA

### NJ Suburbs (Camden Metro Division)

Burlington County, NJ

Camden County, NJ

Gloucester County, NJ

### Wilmington Metropolitan Division

New Castle, DE

Salem County, NJ

Cecil County, MD

# Data Sources and Definitions

**Decennial Census: 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000**

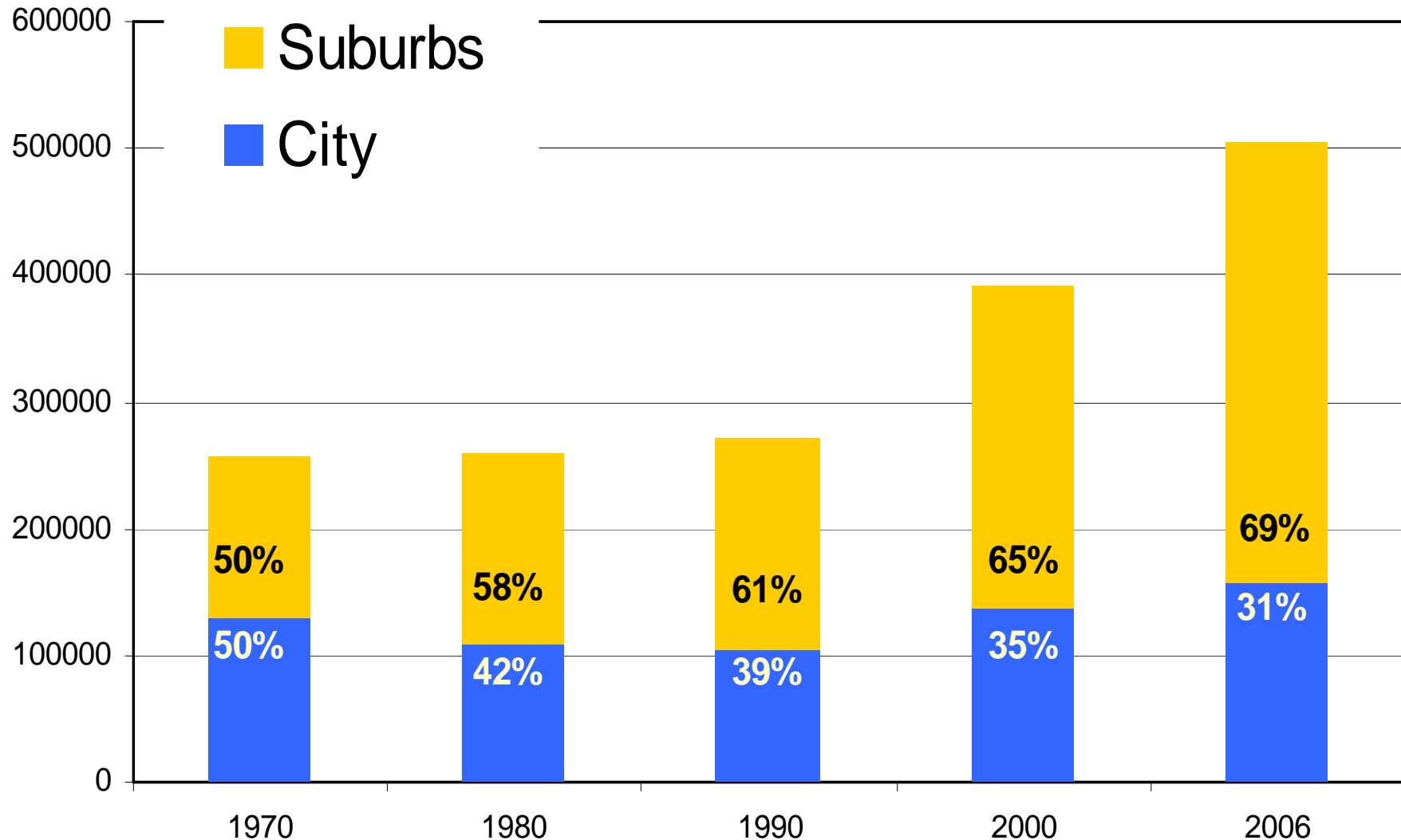
**American Community Survey: 2006**

**“Foreign born” refers to all persons born outside the United States, regardless of status**

**In-depth sidebars**

**Where do  
Philadelphia's  
immigrants live?**

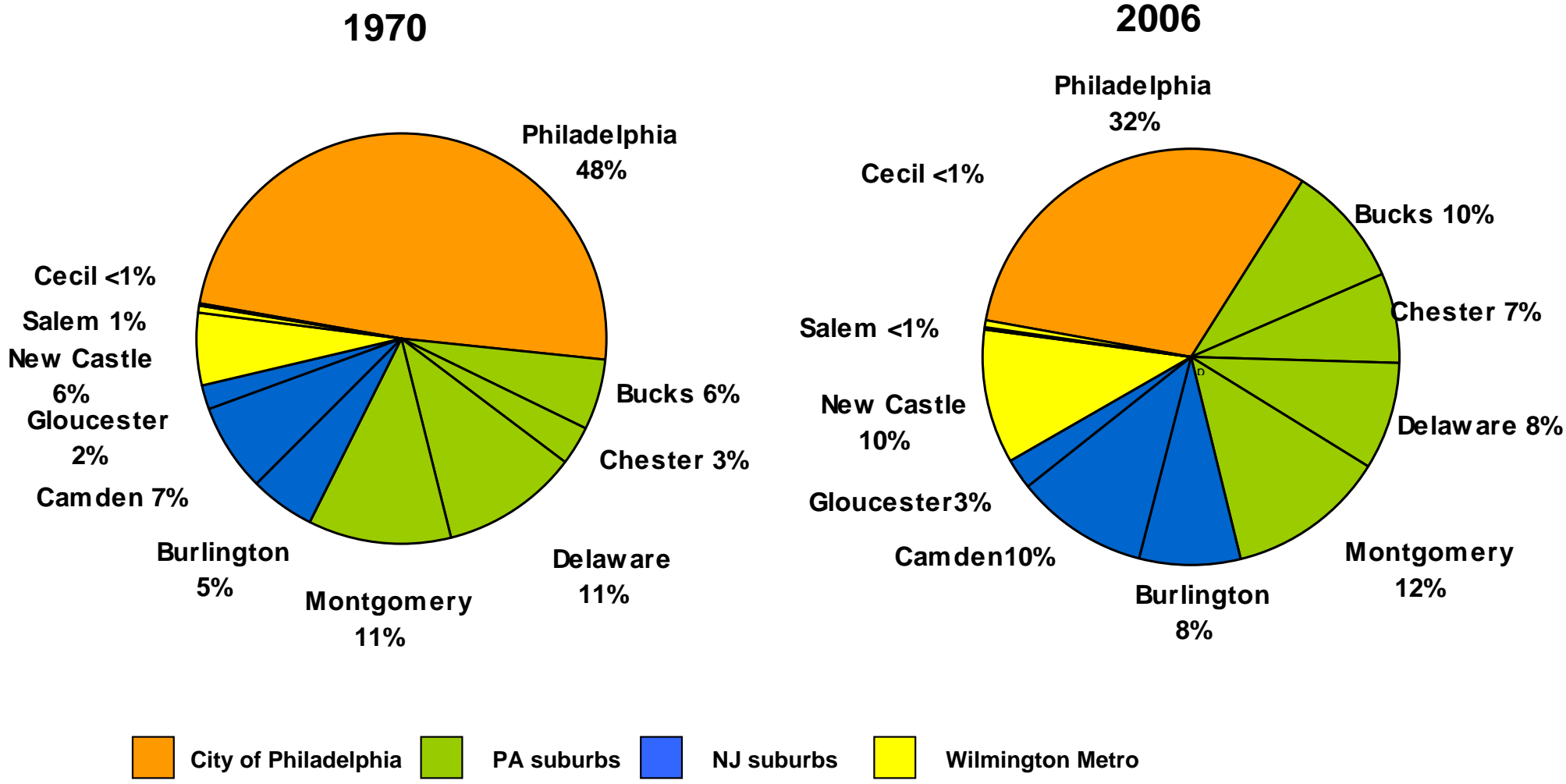
In 1970, immigrants were spread evenly between the city and the suburbs; now 2/3 live outside the city



Source: Brookings Analysis of Decennial Census and American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

# More than one-third of immigrants now reside in the PA suburbs

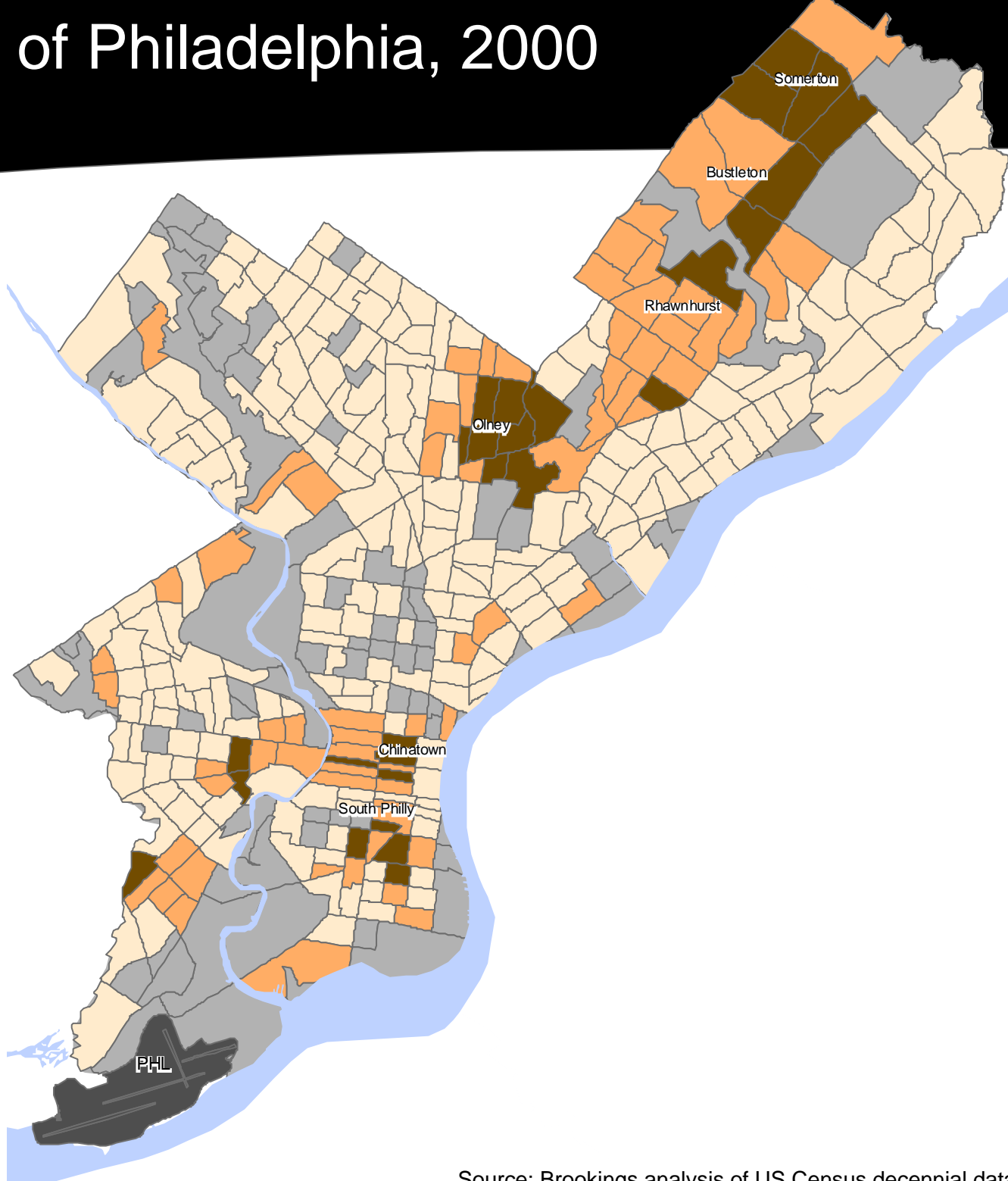
Foreign Born Regional Distribution, 1970 and 2006



# Foreign Born in City of Philadelphia, 2000

**Percent Foreign Born by Tract**

- less than 10 percent
- 10 to 19 percent
- 20 percent or higher
- Total Population less than 100 or  
Total Foreign Born less than 50

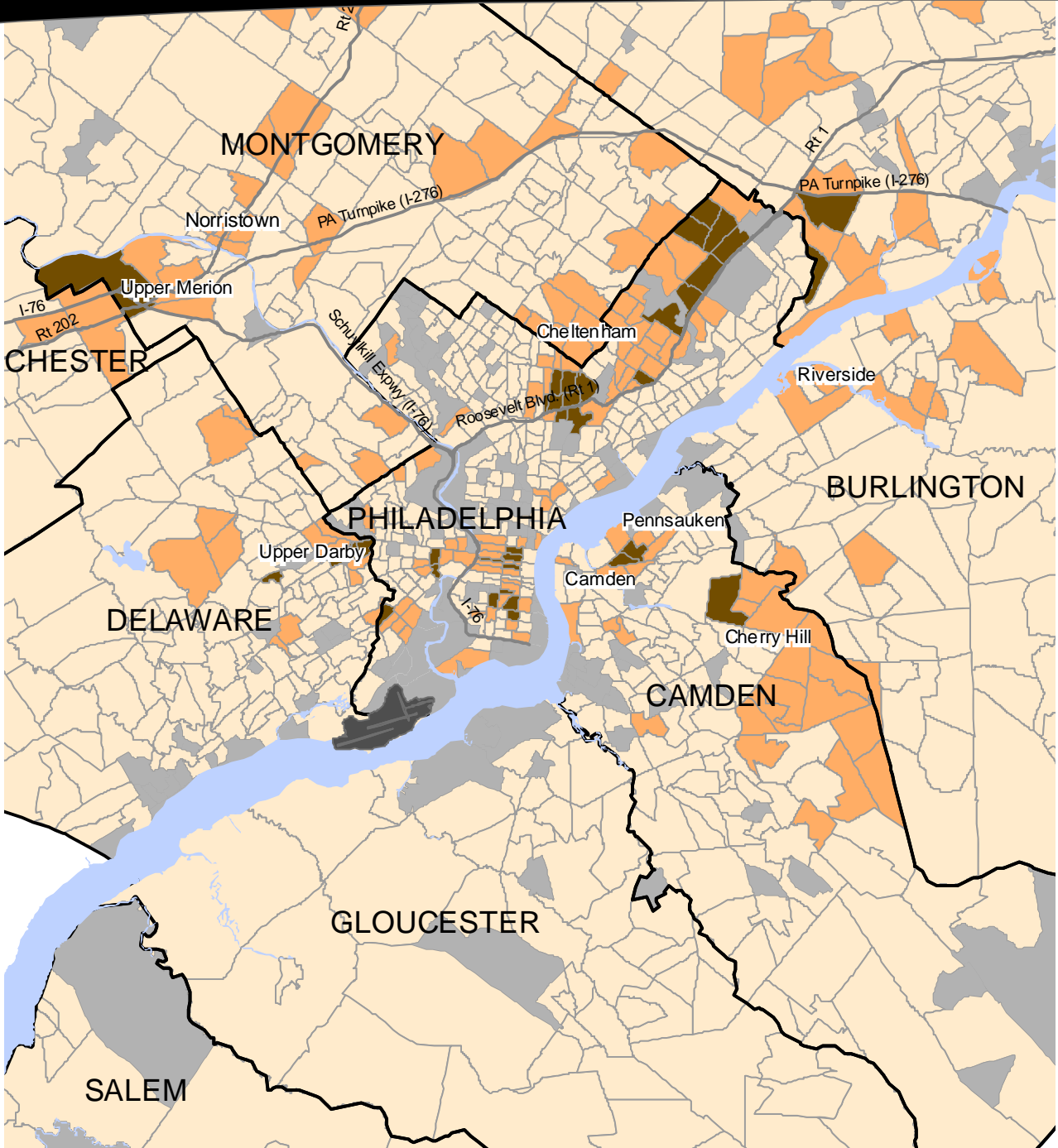


Source: Brookings analysis of US Census decennial data

# Foreign Born in Metropolitan Philadelphia, 2000

## Percent Foreign Born by Tract, 2000

- Less than 10 percent
- 10 to 19 percent
- 20 percent or greater
- Total Population less than 100 or Total Foreign Born less than 50

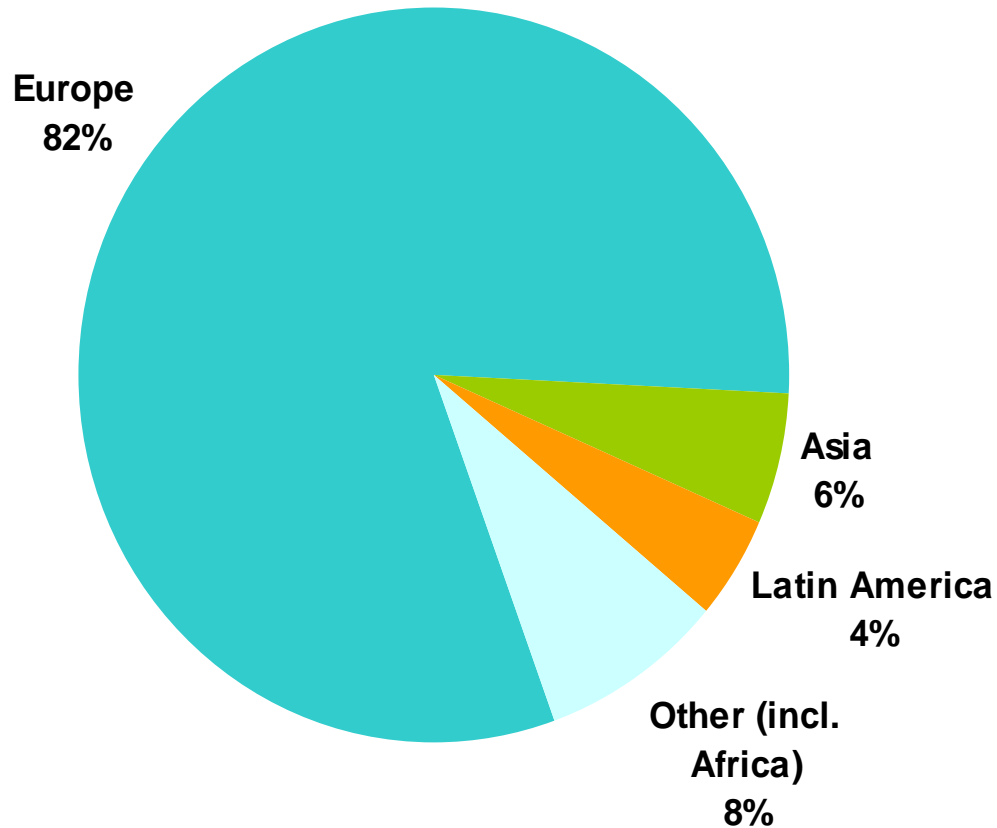


Source: Brookings analysis of US Census decennial data

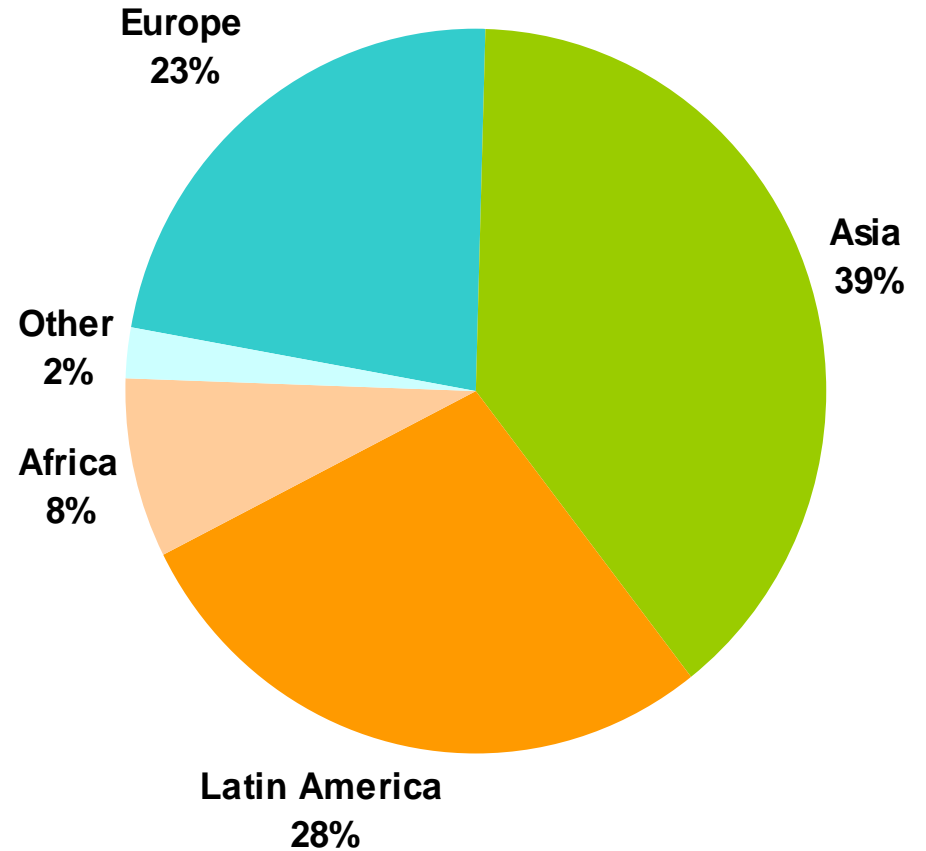
**Where do  
Philadelphia's  
immigrants come  
from?**

# As recently as 1970, Philadelphia's immigrants were primarily from Europe

1970



2006



# The largest number of immigrants come from India

## Ten largest countries of origin, 2006

City		Metro	
1 India	13,419	1 India	51,870
2 China <sup>^</sup>	11,226	2 Mexico	42,410
3 Vietnam	10,024	3 China <sup>^</sup>	27,648
4 Ukraine	6,900	4 Vietnam	23,780
5 Jamaica	6,822	5 Korea	23,575
6 Dominican Republic	6,356	6 Italy	15,177
7 Haiti	5,537	7 Ukraine	14,536
8 Other Eastern Europe <sup>^^</sup>	4,890	8 Philippines	14,487
9 Mexico	4,402	9 Jamaica	14,103
10 Liberia	3,983	10 Germany	12,796
<b>Other</b>	<b>84,102</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>263,935</b>
<b>Top Ten Total</b>	<b>73,559</b>	<b>Top Ten Total</b>	<b>240,382</b>
<b>Total Foreign-born Population</b>	<b>157,661</b>	<b>Total Foreign-born Population</b>	<b>504,317</b>

<sup>^</sup>excludes Hong Kong and Taiwan

<sup>^^</sup>includes Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Slovenia, Serbia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, Kosovo, Montenegro, former USSR

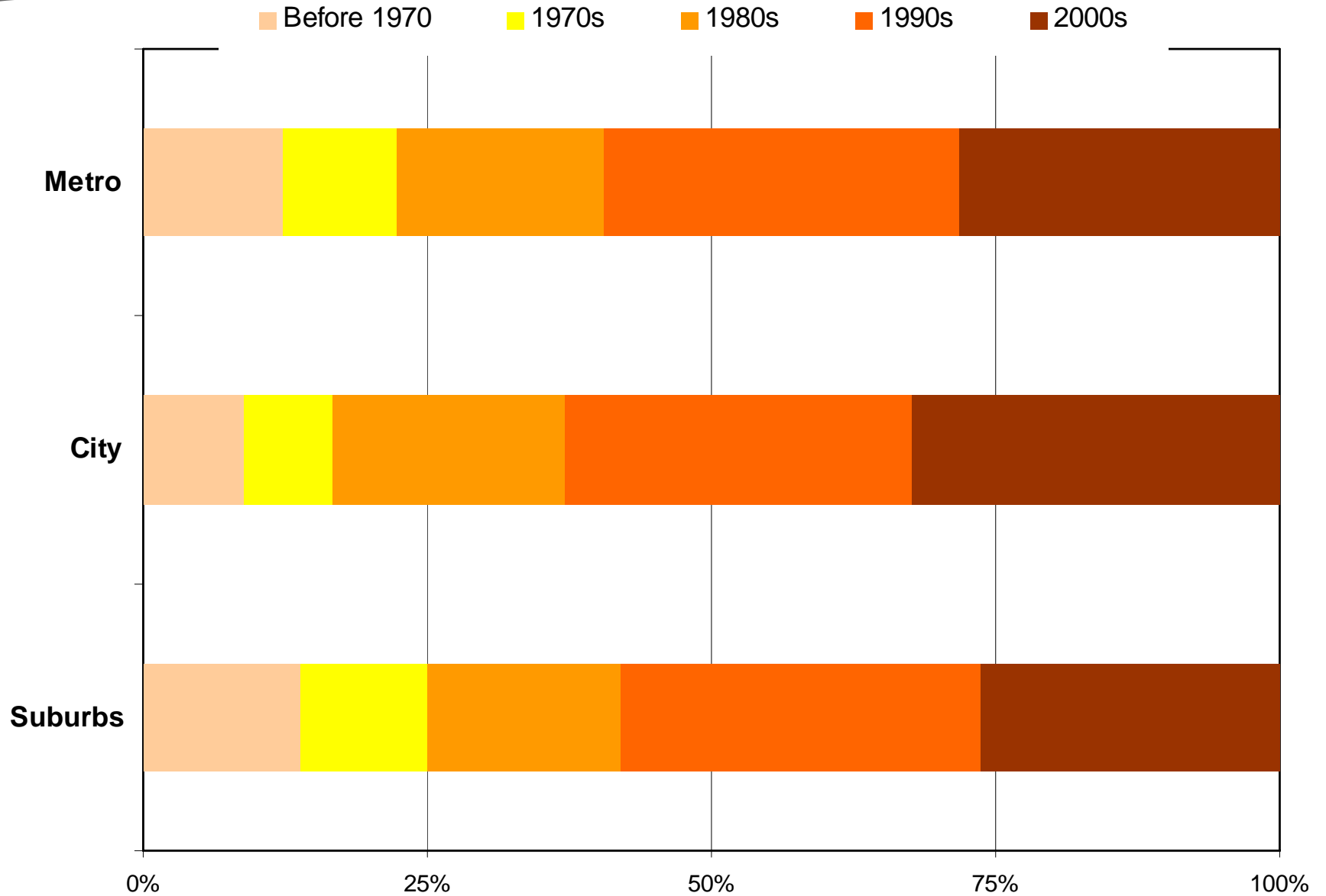
# Philadelphia has resettled nearly 33,000 refugees, primarily from 10 countries

## Refugees resettled in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area, 1983-2004

Country	Count	%Total
1 USSR	15,312	46.4%
2 VietNam	7,140	21.6%
3 Liberia	2,716	8.2%
4 Cambodia	2,496	7.6%
5 Yugoslavia	825	2.5%
6 Poland	821	2.5%
7 Laos	705	2.1%
8 Ethiopia	573	1.7%
9 Romania	447	1.4%
10 Haiti	323	1.0%
<b>Other</b>	<b>1,623</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
<b>Top Ten Total</b>	<b>31,358</b>	
<b>Total Refugee Population</b>	<b>32,981</b>	

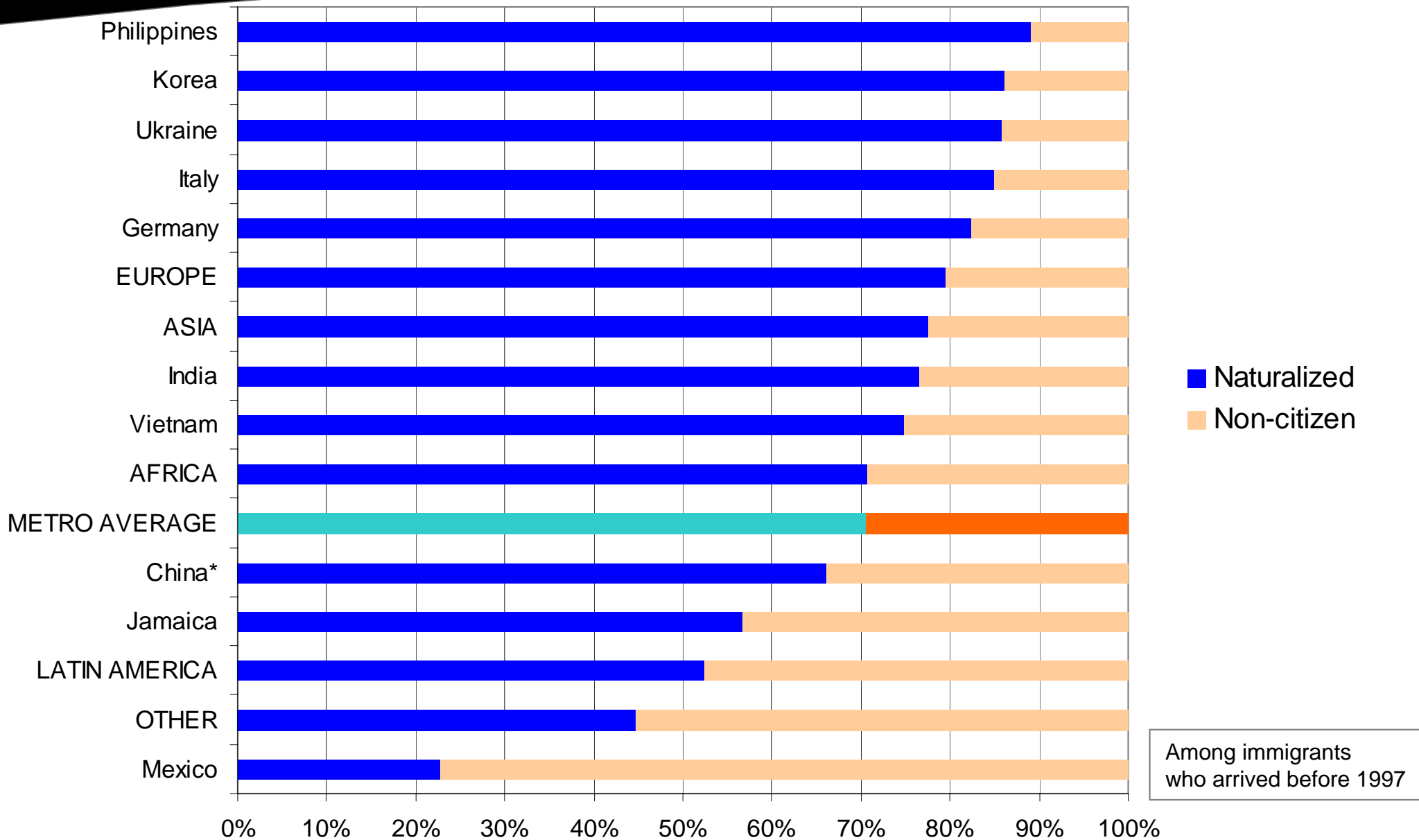
**What are the migration,  
social, and economic  
characteristics of  
Philadelphia's  
immigrants?**

# Nearly 1/3 of all immigrants residing in the city arrived since 2000, 2/3 since 1990



Source: Brookings analysis of US Census Bureau American Community Public Use Microdata

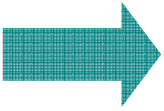
# More than 70 percent of the region's immigrants have become U.S. citizens



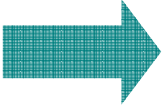
\*excludes Hong Kong and Taiwan

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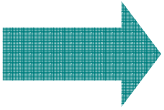
# Demographic, human capital and social characteristics



**Philadelphia's immigrants are primarily in the working ages (82% vs 61 % for the NB)**

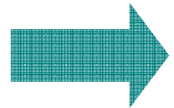


**Immigrants are more likely than U.S.-born Philadelphians to have a BA or higher; but also more likely to be without a high school diploma**

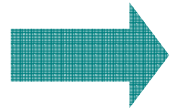


**About 1/3 report speaking English very well; but 43 percent do not speak English very well. (23 percent speak English only)**

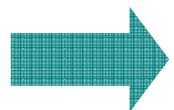
# Workforce characteristics



**Nearly 75 percent of the growth in the region's workforce since 2000 can be attributed to immigrants**



**Philadelphia's immigrants have the same employment rate as those residents born in the United States (73%)**



**On average, immigrant-headed households are larger than native born, have more workers, but earn less**

# Philadelphia's immigrants work in the full range of occupations

Foreign-Born Workers	US-Born Workers
Computer Software Engineer	Secretary
Cook	Elementary/Middle School teacher
Home health aide	Misc. manager, incl. postal service workers
Registered Nurse	Registered Nurse
Cashier	Retail salesperson
Janitor	Retail sales manager
Retail sales manager	Cashier
Postsecondary teacher	Customer service representative
Maid, housekeeper	Accountant
Grounds maintenance	Truck driver
<b>% of all occupations 24.4</b>	<b>% of all occupations 22.2</b>

# **New Approaches to Immigration for the Region**

# Build English Skills and Increase Language Access

Build on the Mayor's language access program region-wide

Increase availability of English training

Connect newcomers to services and opportunities in their own languages

# Make Immigrant Integration a Shared Regional Goal

Recognize that immigration is a region-wide issue by creating a **Council on Immigration**

Draw on city and suburban leaders to develop a regional plan for meeting immigrants' needs and facilitating integration

Build networks between agencies and organizations to develop and prioritize strategies to serve immigrant newcomers and long-term residents alike

# Understand Changing Dynamics through a Centralized Data Source

Timely data is needed for greater understanding of the changes in immigration; no existing source provides everything

Create a central data clearing house that builds on existing research and data

Collect data, prioritize reporting topics, produce timely reports and online databases