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Cleveland: A High-Skilled Immigrant Destination

A Report Brief

January 2015

By Richey Piiparinen and Jim Russell

The Center for Population Dynamics at Cleveland State University's Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs aims to help partner organizations competitively position the region for economic and community development. It will do so through the lens of migration, applied demography, macroeconomics, and culture.

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Executive Summary: The Cleveland metro ranks 44th out of the nation's 50 largest metros in the concentration of population who are foreign born, at 5.5%. However, in measuring the skill level of each metro, Cleveland has the 7th largest concentration of college-educated immigrants, at 40%. Also, 21.2% of the region's immigrants have graduate or professional degrees, ranking Cleveland 5th in the nation. It is suggested that Cleveland's "eds and meds" sector, which ranks 11th in total employment in the nation, is driving a higher proportion of high- compared to low-skilled immigrants. Implications are discussed.

Introduction

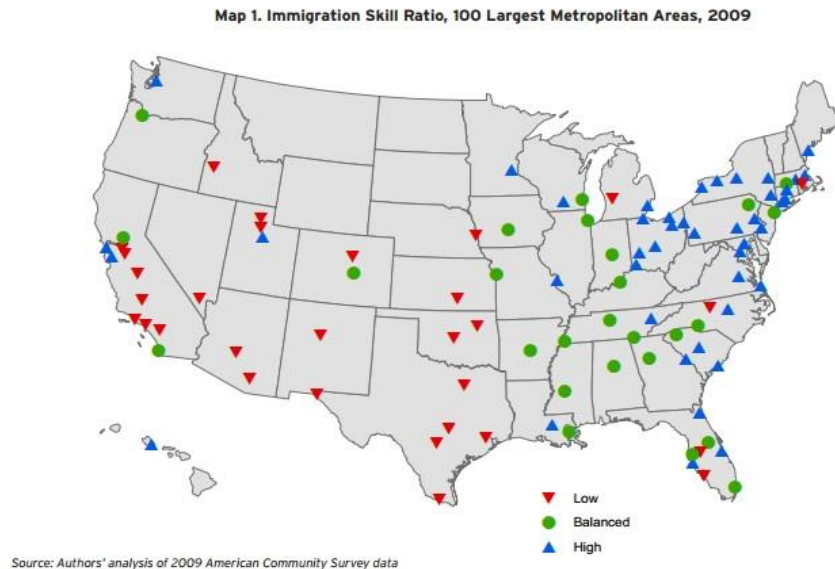
Contrary to popular belief, the United States, as a whole, is not being inundated with low-skill immigrants. According to a 2011 Brookings' report entitled "The Geography of Immigrant Skills: Educational Profiles of Metropolitan Areas"¹, the percentage of foreign born without a high school diploma has declined from 39.5% in 1980 to 27.8% in 2010. Meanwhile, the percentage of "high-skilled" immigrants, or those with at least a bachelor's degree, has increased, going from 19% in 1980 to 29.6% in 2010.

The data reflect a longstanding shift in the nation's positioning in the global economy. America's comparative advantage is in the production of knowledge, and so the nation's skillset has gone from less "brawn" to more "brain"—meaning job demand is increasingly for college-educated workers². Hence, the increase of high-skilled immigrants, and the decrease of low-skilled immigrants.

Still, the geography of high- and low-skilled immigrants in the United States is not even. Certain areas have a larger proportion of college-educated immigrants than others. For instance, the aforementioned Brookings report found that Greater Cleveland is one of 44 (out of 100) metros classified as "high-skill immigrant destinations", in which college-educated immigrants outnumber immigrants without high school diplomas by at least 25 percent.

As shown in Figure 1, high-skill immigrant destinations are clustered in the Northeast and the Rust Belt. While much ink and angst has been spilled on Rust Belt cities lacking a number of immigrants, less attention is paid to the impact a concentration of high-skill immigrants can have on these cities. This omission has led to a poor understanding of how immigrants are—or are not—aiding in the economic rebuilding of the Rust Belt. The current brief aims to plug this gap, with a focus on Cleveland.

Figure 1: Map of High- and Low-Skill Immigrant Destinations (Courtesy of Brookings)



¹ Hall, Matthew, et al. "The geography of immigrant skills: Educational profiles of metropolitan areas." State of Metropolitan America Series (2011).

² See: <http://www.collegespark.org/files/CollegeAdvantage.ExecutiveSummary.081412.pdf>

A Profile of Immigrants in Cleveland

The five-county Cleveland metropolitan statistical area (MSA) has approximately 114,500 foreign-born residents, which is 5.5% of the regional population—ranking the metro **44th** out of the nation’s largest **50** metros in the percent of foreign-born residents³. The only metros with less of a concentration of immigrants are Memphis, Louisville, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Birmingham, AL. Conversely, Miami, San Jose, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York lead the nation in concentration of immigrants, each with over 28% of their residents being foreign born. A cursory takeaway of these findings suggests that Greater Cleveland lacks the birthplace diversity found in the nation’s largest urban areas.

But a slice of the aggregate numbers paint a different picture, particularly related to the skill-level of each metro’s immigrant populations. Forty-percent (40%) of Cleveland’s immigrants have a bachelor’s degree or higher, ranking the metro **7th** in the nation in the concentration of college-educated immigrants, just behind Washington, D.C. (see Table 1 and Appendix A). As well, the region’s immigrants are more educated than native-born Clevelanders. Only twenty-nine percent (29%) of natives have at least a bachelor’s degree, ranking the region 39th.

Moreover, the Cleveland metro ranks **5th** in the nation in the percentage of foreign born residents with an advanced or professional degree (21.2%), just ahead of Boston (See Table 2 and Appendix B). By contrast, only 10.7% of native-born Clevelanders have a graduate degree, ranking the metro 35th.

Taken together, what Cleveland—and several other Rust Belt metros, particularly Pittsburgh and St. Louis—lack in the quantity of foreign born, they make up for in quality. Explanations and implications for these findings follows.

What’s Behind Cleveland’s High-Skilled Migration?

Why does Cleveland have a higher concentration of college-educated immigrants? Put simply, because opportunities in the regional knowledge economy— particularly in the “eds and meds” sector—are attracting higher-skilled immigrants.

Specifically, when it comes to regional employment in hospitals, colleges, and universities, the Cleveland metro ranks **11th** in the nation in total jobs, followed by Pittsburgh and St. Louis at 14th and 15th place, respectively (See Table 3 next page). Given that the “eds and meds” sector is a magnet for human capital

Table 1: Metro Rankings in Percent of Immigrants with a 4-Year Degree or Higher

Rank	Metro	% w/ BA or higher
1	Pittsburgh	56.9%
2	San Jose	47.0%
3	Baltimore	46.0%
4	St. Louis	42.6%
5	Cincinnati	42.1%
6	Washington, D.C.	41.3%
7	Cleveland	40.0%
8	Raleigh, NC	39.9%
9	Philadelphia	39.5%
10	Seattle	39.2%

Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Table 2: Metro Rankings in Percent of Immigrants with Advanced or Professional Degree

Rank	Metro	% w/ Advanced Degree
1	Pittsburgh	34.9%
2	San Jose	24.4%
3	Baltimore	24.0%
4	St. Louis	22.5%
5	Cleveland	21.2%
6	Boston	20.5%
7	Buffalo	20.1%
8	Washington, D.C.	19.7%
9	Raleigh, NC	19.6%
10	Cincinnati	18.9%

Source: American Community Survey, 2013

³ Source: American Community Survey, 2013

demand, especially for those with graduate or professional degrees—combined with that the fact that immigrants are overrepresented in occupations requiring an advanced degree, especially physicians and medical researchers⁴—then it follows that Cleveland is gaining a faster share of high- compared to low-skilled immigrants.

Elaborating, the Association of American Medical Colleges projects a shortage of 130,600 physicians in the United States by 2025⁵, which means the demand for doctors has no borders. “High-skilled immigrants tend to complement high-skilled native-born workers by flowing into fast growing fields where native labor supply cannot keep up,” echoes the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas⁶. This is what is occurring in Cleveland. Cleveland’s health care industry is both growing and globalizing. Concomitantly, so is its workforce, out of necessity.

Does this mean Cleveland is a place *only* for high-skilled immigrants? No. It is only to say that the dynamics undergirding Cleveland’s birth place diversification are currently one of professional opportunities in the knowledge economy, as opposed to lower-skilled immigrants who migrate into established ethnic communities via word of mouth.

While this dynamic has not led to a population boom, what it has done is significantly increase the human capital level of the region, contributing to a rise in per capita income. In fact, from 2009 to 2012, Cleveland’s metro income, when adjusted for inflation and cost of living, increased from \$44,109 to \$47,631—the fifth biggest increase in the nation⁷. This increase has coincided with a parallel rise in Cleveland’s concentration of high-skilled immigrants across time. The region’s percentage of immigrants with an advanced degree grew by nearly 3% from 2009 to 2013 (18.4% versus 21.2%)⁸.

Perhaps more importantly, the high-skilled migration has also deepened the region’s “knowledge bank” related to health innovation. “Immigrants may embody knowledge and skills that are not otherwise readily accessible locally, and they often have access to a different set of personal and business networks from those of non-immigrant residents,” notes the paper “Immigration and Innovation”⁹. “These differences have the potential to raise the productivity and creativity of local interactions, and to promote knowledge spillovers and innovation.”

Table 3: Top Metros for Total Employment in Hospitals, Colleges, and Universities

Rank	Metro	Total Employment 2012
1	New York	581,389
2	Chicago	272,730
3	Los Angeles	269,203
4	Boston	262,442
5	Philadelphia	239,213
6	Houston	137,285
7	Washington, DC	122,987
8	Miami	117,466
9	Dallas	113,630
10	Baltimore	112,696
11	Cleveland	108,675
12	Phoenix	107,817
13	Pittsburgh	104,923
14	St. Louis	104,083
15	Atlanta	99,409

Source: U.S. Cluster Mapping Project

⁴ See: Orrenius, Pia, and Madeline Zavodny. "From Brawn to Brains: How Immigration Works for America." Annual Report (2010).

⁵ See: https://www.aamc.org/advocacy/campaigns_and_coalitions/fixdocshortage/

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

⁸ Source: American Community Survey, 2009, 2013

⁹ Maré, David C., Richard Fabling, and Steven Stillman. Immigration and innovation. No. 5686. Discussion paper series//Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit, 2011.

Cleveland High-Skilled Immigrant Destination, Piiparinen and Russell (2015)

In other words, a dynamic has evolved in Cleveland in which a critical mass of health services and research requires high-skilled immigrants who, in turn, further deepen the regional knowledge base, sending off successive waves of innovation, job growth, and high-skilled demand. This dynamic is arguably *the* key driver in Greater Cleveland's resurgence going forward.

Appendix A: Metro Rankings, Percent with Bachelor's or Higher for Foreign- and Native- Born Residents

Geography	% Foreign-Born w/ BA or higher	Rank % Foreign-Born BA or higher	Total Foreign-Born BA or higher	% Native-Born w/ BA or higher	Rank % Native-Born BA or higher	Total Native-Born BA or higher
Pittsburgh	56.9%	1	41,475	31.2%	33	504,712
San Jose	47.0%	2	302,660	46.3%	4	302,747
Baltimore	46.0%	3	99,006	35.7%	17	597,189
St. Louis	42.6%	4	43,013	32.0%	30	576,343
Cincinnati	42.1%	5	30,895	30.5%	35	408,220
Washington, DC	41.3%	6	465,954	51.5%	1	1,486,182
Cleveland	40.0%	7	40,248	29.0%	39	384,489
Raleigh, NC	39.9%	8	46,081	44.3%	5	300,030
Philadelphia	39.5%	9	204,175	33.8%	21	1,207,525
Seattle	39.2%	10	209,338	39.5%	10	768,553
San Francisco	38.8%	11	467,543	49.0%	2	978,889
Detroit	38.8%	12	131,352	27.7%	42	712,866
Boston	38.7%	13	270,479	46.4%	3	1,175,383
Columbus, OH	38.3%	14	43,981	33.3%	23	394,622
Buffalo	38.1%	15	20,085	29.6%	37	216,177
Richmond, VA	36.3%	16	26,552	32.1%	29	248,190
Hartford, CT	34.9%	17	46,719	36.9%	13	257,972
Virginia Beach	33.9%	18	31,055	29.2%	38	299,591
Jacksonville	33.1%	19	33,029	27.7%	43	234,518
Minneapolis	32.8%	20	88,628	40.2%	9	820,985
Indianapolis	32.8%	21	33,265	30.6%	34	361,669
Memphis	31.3%	22	17,951	26.0%	46	209,657
New York	31.1%	23	1,563,533	41.1%	8	3,544,329
Austin	31.0%	24	72,100	43.9%	6	434,425
Atlanta	30.9%	25	191,108	36.0%	16	1,067,541
Milwaukee	30.9%	26	28,384	33.4%	22	319,562
Charlotte	30.5%	27	56,910	32.3%	28	438,262
Chicago	29.5%	28	439,852	36.8%	14	1,782,471
Kansas City	29.1%	29	31,217	34.1%	19	429,250
Portland	28.8%	30	70,713	36.3%	15	488,153
Nashville	28.0%	31	29,107	32.7%	25	347,194
Tampa	27.6%	32	87,714	27.6%	44	474,089
San Diego	27.5%	33	183,347	37.8%	11	548,751
New Orleans	26.1%	34	20,657	27.6%	45	211,740
Denver	26.0%	35	70,420	42.7%	7	661,606
Houston	25.9%	36	313,981	33.1%	24	917,719

Cleveland High-Skilled Immigrant Destination, Piiparinen and Russell (2015)

Orlando	25.8%	37	81,016	30.5%	36	366,371
Sacramento	25.6%	38	88,923	32.4%	26	359,602
Salt Lake City	25.2%	39	27,834	32.3%	27	189,881
Dallas	24.9%	40	250,951	35.0%	18	1,163,598
Los Angeles	24.7%	41	983,546	37.7%	12	1,776,900
Miami	24.7%	42	497,036	33.9%	20	704,601
Oklahoma City	21.5%	43	18,757	28.5%	40	217,926
Phoenix	20.9%	44	113,980	31.3%	32	725,296
San Antonio	20.7%	45	46,649	27.9%	41	340,056
Providence, RI	19.8%	46	35,434	31.5%	31	290,007
Las Vegas	19.4%	47	76,155	23.2%	47	222,854
Riverside, CA	17.0%	48	143,003	21.5%	48	400,498

Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2013

Appendix B: Metro Rankings, Percent with Advanced Degree for Foreign- and Native- Born Residents

Geography	% Foreign-born w/ Advanced Degree	Rank % Foreign-Born w/ Advanced Degree	Total Foreign-Born Advanced Degree	% Native-Born w/ Advanced Degree	Rank % Native-Born w/ Advanced Degree	Total Native-Born w/ Advanced Degree
Pittsburgh	34.9%	1	25,439	11.5%	26	186,032
San Jose	24.4%	2	157,126	18.3%	4	119,660
Baltimore	24%	3	51,655	15.4%	7	257,611
St. Louis	22.5%	4	22,718	11.8%	22	212,527
Cleveland	21.2%	5	21,331	10.7%	35	141,863
Boston	20.5%	6	143,277	19.6%	2	496,498
Buffalo	20.1%	7	10,596	13%	18	94,943
Washington, DC	19.7%	8	222,259	24.7%	1	712,790
Raleigh, NC	19.6%	9	22,636	15%	8	101,590
Cincinnati	18.9%	10	13,870	11.1%	30	148,565
Hartford, CT	18.7%	11	25,033	15.8%	6	110,459
Philadelphia	18.4%	12	95,109	13.2%	15	471,578
Columbus, OH	18.4%	13	21,129	11.5%	25	136,281
Detroit	17.9%	14	60,598	10.7%	36	275,367
Richmond, VA	17.6%	15	12,874	11.7%	24	90,462
Seattle	16.4%	16	87,580	13.6%	13	264,616
San Francisco	15.8%	17	190,391	19.6%	3	391,555
Milwaukee	15.2%	18	13,962	10.8%	33	103,331
Indianapolis	15.1%	19	15,314	10.7%	37	126,466
Austin	13.6%	20	31,631	14.5%	10	143,489
Minneapolis	13.5%	21	36,478	13.2%	16	269,577
Memphis	13.2%	22	7,570	9.4%	43	75,799
Kansas City	12.9%	23	13,839	12.2%	21	153,573
New York	12.8%	24	643,512	17.1%	5	1,474,648
New Orleans	12.3%	25	9,735	10.1%	39	77,484
Atlanta	12.2%	26	75,453	12.8%	19	379,570
Chicago	12.2%	27	181,905	14.2%	12	687,801
Portland	12.2%	28	29,955	13.1%	17	176,165
Charlotte	12.2%	29	22,764	9.9%	40	134,328
Jacksonville	12%	30	11,974	8.7%	46	73,657
Denver	11.9%	31	32,231	14.8%	9	229,315
Nashville	11.9%	32	12,371	11.2%	29	118,916
Virginia Beach	11.8%	33	10,810	10.8%	34	110,808
Houston	11%	34	133,351	10.7%	38	296,665

Cleveland High-Skilled Immigrant Destination, Piiparinen and Russell (2015)

San Diego	10.9%	35	72,672	14.5%	11	210,500
Tampa	10.8%	36	34,323	9.5%	42	163,183
Dallas	10.4%	37	104,815	11.1%	31	369,027
Sacramento	9.6%	38	33,346	11.5%	27	127,637
Oklahoma City	9.6%	39	8,375	9.2%	44	70,348
Salt Lake City	9.5%	40	10,493	11.4%	28	67,017
Providence, RI	9.3%	41	16,643	11.8%	23	108,638
Phoenix	8.6%	42	46,901	11.1%	32	257,214
Orlando	8.5%	43	26,691	9.1%	45	109,311
Miami	8.3%	44	167,020	12.6%	20	261,887
Los Angeles	8.2%	45	326,521	13.4%	14	631,577
San Antonio	8%	46	18,029	9.6%	41	117,008
Las Vegas	5.7%	47	22,375	7.9%	48	75,886
Riverside, CA	5.3%	48	44,583	8%	47	149,022

Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2013