

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN BOSTON'S HISTORY, NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS TOP 50 PERCENT

• *Family households in Boston continued to decrease in the year 2000*

• *Single-parent households account for over one-fifth of Boston's households.*

• *Nearly 40% of Boston's households consist of persons living alone.*

In 2000, for the first time in Boston's history, non-family households (people living either alone or with non-family members) accounted for the majority of households in the city.

Between 1980 and 2000, Boston, the state of Massachusetts, and the nation experienced a decline of 5.2%, 6.2%, and 5.6%, respectively in the percentage of family households (people living with persons related by blood or marriage). According to census data, 48.1% of Boston's households consist of families, compared to 64.5% on the state level, and 68.1% on the national level.

Persons living alone account for almost two-fifths of Boston's households- 8.7 percentage points above the national level, and 7.3 points above the state's level. This is partially due to

Boston's high proportion of students, young persons starting a career and elderly residents, many of whom live alone.

Between 1980 and 2000, the number of households shared by unrelated people in Boston increased nearly 70%. Multiple person non-family households now constitute 14.8% of all households in Boston – almost 2.5 times greater than the national percentage of multiple person non-family households, and 2 times greater than that of Massachusetts.

FAMILY vs. NON-FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

Between 1980 and 2000, non-family households in Boston increased by over 5 percentage points, about the same rate of increase experienced at the national level and just below the state's level of 6 percentage points.

In 1980, non-family households represented 46.7% of all households in Boston, 29.2% of those in Massachusetts, and 26.3% of the nation's households. In 1990, non-family households had increased to 49.3% of all Boston households, 32.6% of Massachusetts' households, and 29.8% of the nation's households. By the year 2000, these percentages reached 51.9% for Boston, 35.5% for Massachusetts, and 31.9% for the U.S.

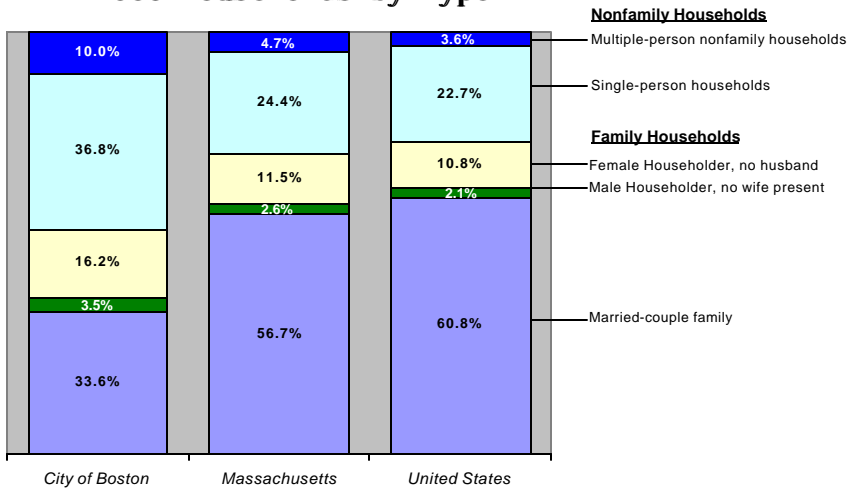
The proportion of non-family households in Boston has consistently been 20 percentage points higher than the nation's and around 17 percentage points higher than that of Massachusetts for 1980, 1990, and 2000. Although Boston, the state and the nation experienced the same proportionate increase in non-family households, Boston experienced a significantly greater increase in non-family households with multiple members.

Shifts In Boston, Massachusetts, and U.S. Household Demographics: 1980-2000

	2000			1990			1980		
	Boston	Massachusetts	United States	Boston	Massachusetts	United States	Boston	Massachusetts	United States
Family Households	48.1%	64.5%	68.1%	50.7%	67.4%	70.2%	53.3%	70.7%	73.7%
Married-Couple Family	27.4%	49.0%	51.7%	29.8%	52.1%	55.1%	33.6%	56.7%	60.8%
Other Family	20.6%	15.5%	16.4%	20.9%	15.3%	15.1%	19.9%	14.1%	17.5%
Male Householder, no wife present	4.2%	3.6%	4.2%	4.2%	3.2%	3.5%	3.5%	2.6%	2.1%
Female Householder, no husband present	16.4%	11.9%	12.2%	16.8%	12.1%	11.6%	16.2%	11.5%	10.8%
Non-Family Households	51.9%	35.5%	31.9%	49.3%	32.6%	29.8%	46.7%	29.2%	26.3%
Living Alone	37.1%	28.0%	25.8%	35.5%	25.8%	24.6%	36.8%	24.4%	22.7%
Not Living Alone	14.8%	7.5%	6.1%	13.7%	6.8%	5.6%	10.0%	4.7%	3.6%

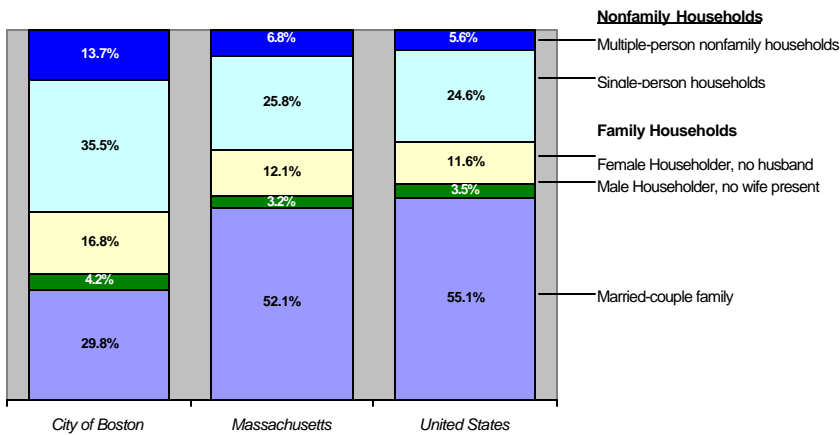
Sources: U.S. Census

1980 Households by Type



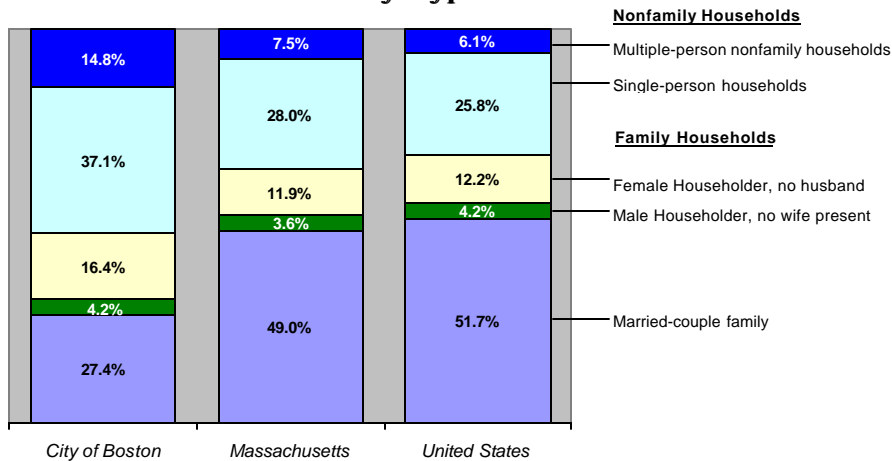
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

1990 Households by Type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2000 Households by Type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

PEOPLE SHARING HOUSING

The period from 1980 to 2000 was also characterized by a sharp increase in households with unrelated persons living together. The percentage of multiple person non-family households in Boston rose from 10% in 1980, to 13.7% in 1990, and reached 14.8% in 2000. Boston's 4.8 percentage point increase in housing shared by unrelated persons was almost twice as big as the increase experienced by the nation and the state in this category for the same period.

Nationally, the percentage of people living in multiple person non-family households increased from 3.6% in 1980 to 5.6% in 1990, and to 6.1% in 2000. Similarly, Massachusetts' multiple person non-family households percentage increased from 4.7% in 1980 to 6.8% in 1990, and to 7.5% in 2000.

PEOPLE LIVING ALONE

In 2000, persons living alone represented 37.1% of all Boston households, more than 11 percentage points above the national percentage. Boston's percentage was also significantly greater than that of Massachusetts, at 9 percentage points above the state's level. Between 1980 and 2000 the proportion of households consisting of people living alone in Boston increased by 0.3%, or 8,638 households. During this same period Massachusetts and the U.S. experienced a higher percentage change with increases of almost 4 percentage points and 3 percentage points, respectively.

CONCLUSION

Boston's household composition has been experiencing a clear shift toward less traditional settings. Single person and roommate households have different patterns of consumption, investment, use of public services, and other features than traditional families or single-parent families. Future policy decisions regarding education, health, public safety, economic development, and job training need to be based on an understanding of these demographic shifts that are occurring among Boston's households.