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Latinos in Somerville

Part of a Series of Profiles of Latinos in Massachusetts Completed with Support from the Boston Foundation.

The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy

The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy was established at the University of Massachusetts at Boston 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. In an effort to facilitate access to vital information about Latinos to various audiences, and with support from the Boston Foundation, the Gastón Institute has produced a series of basic demographic profiles for selected cities in the Commonwealth based on the 1990 United States Census. These profiles are but one part of the Gastón Institute's broader initiative to disseminate the 1990 United States Census and to address other relevant aspects of the social and economic situation of Latinos in the Commonwealth.

General population changes in the city of Somerville reflected statewide trends, with the black, Latino and Asian populations growing faster than the non-Latino white population. Between 1980 and 1990 the total population of Somerville decreased by 1.5%, and its composition changed substantially. The total Latino population of Somerville grew from 1,530 in 1980 to 4,784 in 1990, for an intercensal increase of 212.7%. While Latinos represented 2% of the total population in 1980, they represented 6.3% in 1990. Somerville had the thirteenth largest absolute number of Latinos in Massachusetts in 1990, and its Latino population as a proportion of the total population of the city ranked (in combination with Brockton) fourteenth in the Commonwealth. (For more information about Latinos in Massachusetts see the back page.) The number of non-Latino whites decreased by 12.1% between 1980 and 1990, and the number of non-Latino blacks and Asians increased by 191.3% and 298.3% respectively.

Somerville: Total Population by Race and Ethnicity for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number of persons	% of total population	Number of persons	% of total population	
Non-Latino population*	75,842	98.0	71,426	93.7	-5.8
White	73,166	94.6	64,287	84.4	-12.1
Black	1,367	1.8	3,982	5.2	191.3
Asian**	709	0.9	2,824	3.7	298.3
Other	600	0.8	333	0.4	-44.5
Latino population	1,530	2.0	4,784	6.3	212.7
Total	77,372	100.0	76,210	100.0	-1.5

* Mutually exclusive categories

** This count of Non-Latino Asians includes Latinos who are Asians.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980. Census of Population and Housing: Summary Population and Housing Characteristics: Massachusetts. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office. U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990. Census of Population and Housing, Massachusetts. Massachusetts Summary Tape File 1A.

¹ Latino will be used throughout to refer to a person living in the United States of Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, or Mexican ancestry as well as other Spanish-speaking people from Central or South American countries.

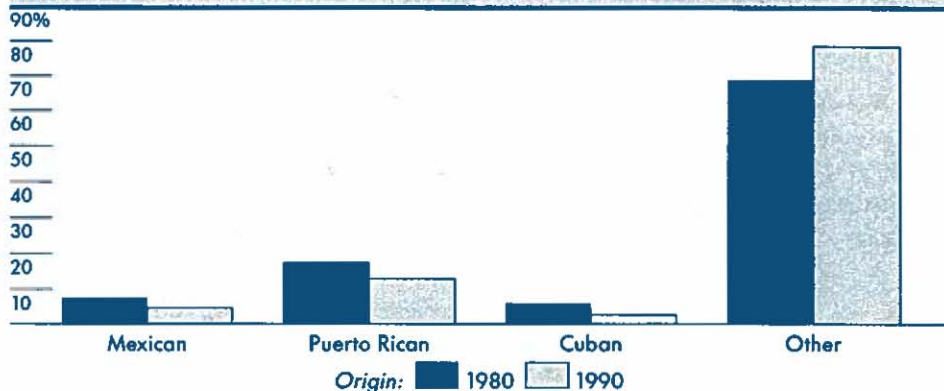
“Other” Latinos and Puerto Ricans were the largest Latino subgroups in the city, accounting respectively for 78.8% and 13.3% of the total Latino population. Making up this “Other” category are Latinos from the Dominican Republic, Central and South America.² The number of “Other” Latinos almost tripled between 1980 and 1990, remaining the largest Latino subgroup in the city. While “Other” Latinos represented 69% of the total Latino population in 1980, this group represented 78.8% of the total population in 1990.

Somerville: Composition of Latino Population by National Origin for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Mexican	114	7.5	233	4.9	104.4
Puerto Rican	270	17.6	635	13.3	135.2
Cuban	91	5.9	147	3.1	61.5
Other	1,055	69.0	3,769	78.8	257.3
Total	1,530	100.0	4,784	100.0	212.7

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980 and 1990.

Somerville: Latino Population by Origin (Percent of total Latinos in 1980-1990)

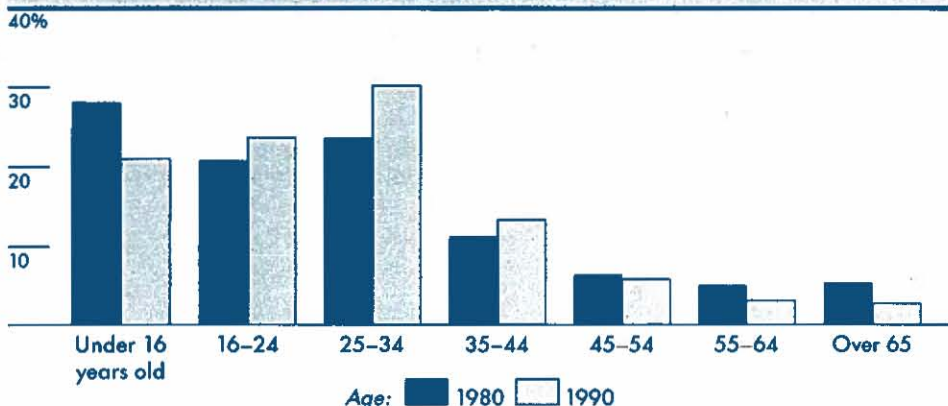


Somerville: Latino Population by Age for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Under 16 years old	428	28.0	1,004	21.0	134.6
16-24	317	20.7	1,128	23.6	255.8
25-34	359	23.5	1,440	30.1	301.1
35-44	172	11.2	643	13.4	273.8
45-54	96	6.3	284	5.9	195.8
55-64	77	5.0	147	3.1	90.9
Over 65	81	5.3	138	2.9	70.4
Total	1,530	100.0	4,784	100.0	212.7
Median age	25.5		26.6		

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980 and 1990.

Somerville: Latino Population by Age (Percent of total Latinos in 1980-1990)



The Latino population in the city of Somerville, while remaining relatively young, became older in general. Latino median age increased from 25.5 years in 1980 to 26.6 years in 1990. While Latinos 24 years of age or younger represented 48.7% of the total Latino population in 1980, their representation dropped to 44.6% in 1990. Conversely, for the same period, the share of Latinos between 25 and 54 years of age increased from 41% to 49.4%. The share of Latinos 55 years of age or older, however, decreased from 10.3% to 6%.

²It is not possible to disaggregate the “Other” Latino category so as to differentiate the share of those individuals from the Dominican Republic, South and Central American countries. Still unpublished 1990 U.S. Census data by nativity would further permit some degree of differentiation.

Somerville: Composition of Male Latino Population by Age for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Under 16 years old	220	27.7	496	19.0	125.5
16-24	167	21.0	644	24.7	285.6
25-34	197	24.8	833	31.9	322.8
35-44	87	11.0	372	14.3	327.6
45-54	48	6.0	150	5.7	212.5
55-64	34	4.3	60	2.3	76.5
Over 65	41	5.2	54	2.1	31.7
Total	794	100.0	2,609	100.0	228.6
Median age	25.5		26.8		

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980 and 1990.

Somerville: Composition of Female Latino Population by Age for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Under 16 years old	208	28.3	508	23.3	144.2
16-24	150	20.4	484	22.2	222.7
25-34	162	22.0	607	27.9	274.7
35-44	85	11.5	271	12.5	218.8
45-54	48	6.5	134	6.2	179.2
55-64	43	5.8	87	4.0	102.3
Over 65	40	5.4	84	3.9	110.0
Total	736	100.0	2,175	100.0	195.5
Median age	25.6		26.3		

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980 and 1990.

Between 1980 and 1990 in Somerville, the composition of the Latino population by household type changed dramatically. Among the most noteworthy changes were declines in the share of married-couple households with and without related children and an increase in the share of male-headed households. The number of householders living alone decreased by a small percentage, while the number of householders living with unrelated individuals increased by a sizable amount. Contrary to commonly held views, the share of female-headed households with and without related children did not increase dramatically during this period.

Somerville: Latino Population by Household Type for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Married-couple family with related children	170	34.6	372	27.3	118.8
Married-couple family, no related children	111	22.6	214	15.7	92.8
Male householder, no wife present, with or without related children	20	4.1	126	9.2	530.0
Female householder, no husband present, with related children	39	7.9	154	11.3	294.9
Female householder, no husband present, no related children	23	4.7	70	5.1	204.3
Householder living alone	79	16.1	190	13.9	140.5
Householder not living alone	49	10.0	237	17.4	383.7
Total	491	100.0	1,363	100.0	177.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980 and 1990.

The median age of both Latino males and females in Somerville increased in general, while Latino males — in contrast to most cities in Massachusetts with high concentration of Latinos — showed a greater median age than Latino females. Median age for Latino males increased from 25.5 years in 1980 to 26.8 years in 1990, while Latino females' median age increased from 25.6 years to 26.3 years.

Latinos in Massachusetts

The following charts correspond directly to those on the previous pages and offer a quick reference to the population, age and household status of Latinos in Massachusetts. In brief:

- The total population of Massachusetts increased from 5,737,037 in 1980 to 6,016,425, with Latinos growing in absolute number more than any other racial/ethnic group, becoming the largest minority group in the Commonwealth.
- Puerto Ricans and "Other" Latinos were the largest Latino subgroups in the state, accounting respectively for 2.5% and 1.9% of the total population. (Latinos in the "Other" category are from the Dominican Republic, Central and South America.)
- The Latino population, while remaining relatively young, became older in general, with the Latino median age increasing from 21.2 years in 1980 to 23.7 years in 1990.
- The median age of both Latino males and females increased between 1980 and 1990, with the median age for Latino males increasing from 20.3 years in 1980 to 23.1 years in 1990, and Latino females' median age increasing from 22.2 years to 24.3 years.

Massachusetts: Composition of Total Population by Racial/Ethnic Group and Latino Population by National Origin for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Non-Latino — white	5,305,963	92.5	5,280,292	87.8	-0.5
Non-Latino — black	212,608	3.7	274,464	4.6	29.1
Non-Latino — Asian	49,501	0.9	143,392	2.4 ^a	189.7
Latino origin	141,043	2.5	287,549	4.8	103.9
Mexican	7,385	0.1	12,703	0.2	72.0
Puerto Rican	76,450	1.3	151,193	2.5	97.8
Cuban	6,617	0.1	8,106	0.1	22.5
Other	50,591	0.9	115,547	1.9	128.4
Total Population	5,737,037	100.0^b	6,016,425	100.0^c	4.9

^a This count of Non-Latino Asians includes Latinos who are Asians. In 1980, 892 Latinos (0.6% of all Latinos) identified their race as Asian in Massachusetts.

^b The 1980 total population includes 27,922 persons who are of other races and not of Latino origin.

^c The 1990 total population includes 30,728 persons who are of other races and not of Latino origin.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980. Census of Population and Housing: Summary Population and Housing Characteristics: Massachusetts. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office. U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990. Census of Population and Housing, Massachusetts. Massachusetts Summary Tape File 1A.

Massachusetts: Latino Population by Household Type for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Married-couple family with related children	12,648	31.5	20,371	24.9	70.2
Married-couple family, no related children	5,995	14.9	10,201	12.5	222.9
Male householder, no wife present, with or without related children	1,600	4.0	5,166	6.3	145.0
Female householder, no husband present, with related children	9,449	23.6	23,150	28.4	115.9
Female householder, no husband present, no related children	1,725	4.3	3,725	4.6	53.4
Householder living alone*	8,689	21.7	13,330	16.3	53.4
Householder not living alone			5,706	7.0	
Total	40,106	100.0	81,649	100.0	103.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980 and 1990.

*In 1980, this category includes non-family householders (living alone or not)

Massachusetts: Latino Population by Age for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Under 16 years old	53,503	37.9	97,135	33.8	181.6
16-24	28,477	20.2	55,042	19.1	193.3
25-34	24,655	17.5	59,333	20.6	140.7
35-44	14,531	10.3	35,774	12.4	146.2
45-54	8,809	6.2	19,081	6.6	116.6
55-64	5,915	4.2	10,731	3.7	81.4
Over 65	5,153	3.7	10,453	3.6	102.9
Total	141,043	100.0	287,549	100.0	103.9
Median age	21.2		23.7		

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980 and 1990.

Massachusetts: Composition of Male Latino Population by Age for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Under 16 years old	27,378	40.0	49,663	34.9	81.4
16-24	13,801	20.2	27,685	19.4	100.6
25-34	11,610	17.0	29,633	20.8	155.2
35-44	6,687	9.8	17,460	12.3	161.1
45-54	4,117	6.0	9,000	6.3	118.6
55-64	2,660	3.9	4,885	3.4	83.6
Over 65	2,133	3.1	4,137	2.9	94.0
Total	68,386	100.0	142,463	100.0	108.3
Median age	20.3		23.1		

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980 and 1990.

Massachusetts: Composition of Female Latino Population by Age for 1980 and 1990

	1980		1990		1980-1990 % change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Under 16 years old	26,125	36.0	47,472	32.7	81.7
16-24	14,676	20.2	27,357	18.9	86.4
25-34	13,045	18.0	29,700	20.5	127.7
35-44	7,844	10.8	18,314	12.6	133.5
45-54	4,692	6.5	10,081	6.9	114.9
55-64	3,255	4.5	5,846	4.0	79.6
Over 65	3,020	4.2	6,316	4.4	109.1
Total	72,657	100.0	145,086	100.0	99.7
Median age	22.2		24.3		

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1980 and 1990.