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The Mauricio Gastón Institute
for Latino Community Development
and Public Policy

Latinos in Willimantic | Connecticut

by Daniel W. Vasquez, Research Associate

The Mauricio Gastón Institute of the University of Massachusetts Boston conducts research on and for the Latino population. A goal is to generate the kind of information and analysis necessary to develop sound public policy, and to improve Latino participation in the policy making process. In an effort to present vital information about Latinos to diverse audiences, the Gastón Institute has produced a series of basic demographic profiles for the states and selected cities of New England, based on the United States Census 2000.

Census 2000 data include changes in the way people were counted. The most significant change is to allow persons to select more than one race, creating a new multiracial category of “two or more races”, but meaning people may not be included in the race with which they most identify. There was, however, no way to choose more than one ethnicity; one must choose either Latino or not. Throughout this profile, numbers reflect Latinos of all races, or non-Latinos by race, with persons of two or more races counted separately. All categorizations are based solely on self-identification. All of this complicates comparisons between 1990 and 2000 data. However, the concepts are similar enough to make trends and patterns clear.

In Willimantic, the general population changes from 1990 to 2000 were similar to national and state trends. The population of people of color — African Americans, Asians, Latinos, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders — grew at a higher rate than did the population of non-Hispanic Whites, which actually shrank (see table 1). The total population of New London increased by 7.3%, but its composition changed substantially. Latinos had a larger numerical growth than any other group, increasing by 2,434 or 103.9%. Latinos now represent 30.2% of the population, an increase of 14.3 percentage points and the largest gain of any group. Willimantic has the 12th largest population of Latinos in Connecticut and the 34th largest in the New England states. As a percentage of the total population, the Latino population in Willimantic ranks third in the state.

Table 1

Willimantic - Growth by Ethnicity							
	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Hispanic or Latino	4,777	30.2	2,343	15.9	2,434	103.9	14.3
White	9,589	60.6	11,710	79.4	-2,121	-18.1	-18.8
Black or African American	816	5.2	427	2.9	389	91.1	2.3
American Indian and Alaska Native	58	0.4	55	0.4	3	5.5	0.0
Asian ^a	259	1.6	184	1.2	92	50.0	0.5
Pacific Islander ^a	17	0.1					
Some other race	11	0.1	27	0.2	-16	-59.3	-0.1
Two or more races ^b	296	1.9					
Total	15,823		14,746		1,077		7.3

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

Note: Growth figures will not balance due to the new multiracial category.

^a 'Asian and Pacific Islander' was split for the 2000 census. Growth and changes reflect combined total.

^b There was no equivalent category in the 1990 census.

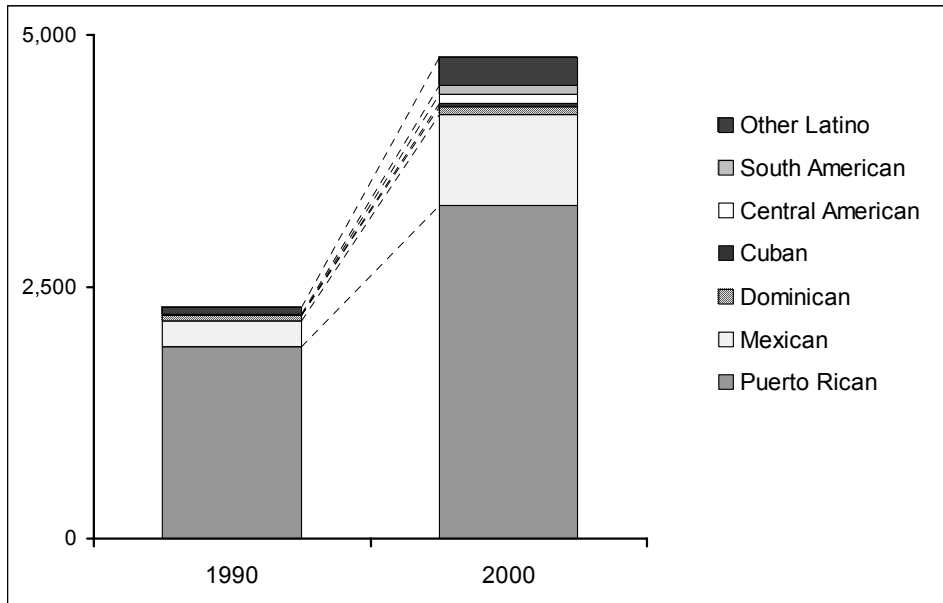
Table 2

Willimantic - National Origin of Latinos						
	2000		1990 ^a		Growth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic or Latino	4,777		2,289		2,488	108.7
Mexican	902	18.9	257	11.2	645	251.0
Puerto Rican	3,310	69.3	1,903	83.1	1,407	73.9
Cuban	42	0.9	0	0.0	42	-
Dominican Republic	71	1.5	53	2.3	18	34.0
Other Central American	86	1.8	0	0.0	86	-
Other South American	93	1.9	16	0.7	77	481.3
Other Hispanic or Latino	273	5.7	60	2.6	213	355.0

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(b).

^a 1990 figures for nationality are from sample data only and differ from population counts.¹

Figure 1
Willimantic - Growth and Change of the Latino Population



Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

All Latino national-origin groups grew significantly between 1990¹ and 2000. The largest group in Willimantic is Puerto Rican, at 69.3%, followed by Mexicans and "Other Latinos." "Other" Latinos were among the fastest-growing population - behind "Other South Americans", growing by 355%, a trend seen across the U.S. (see table 2 and figure 1). A person is counted as "Other" if they write in "Spanish" or give an answer that can't be assigned to a particular nationality (such as "Latino"), or if they identify more than one origin, or leave the answer blank. Future scholarly studies may better describe the composition of this category. The detailed breakdown of Central and South Americans is available at the Census Bureau's American Fact Finder service, online at: factfinder.census.gov.

Table 3

Willimantic - Households by Tenure							
Latino Headed Households	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Households	1,303		642		661	103.0	
Owners	228	17.5	93	14.5	135	145.2	3.0
Renters	1,075	82.5	549	85.5	526	95.8	

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

Latino-headed households are much more likely to rent than to own their home, 82.5% versus 17.5%, although there has been a 3% increase in home ownership since 1990 (see table 3). Still, this is much lower than the state average of 66.8%. Although there has been a small growth in the proportion of non-family households, it is still true that most Latinos, 77%, live in family households (see table 4). Married couples with children represent 27.6% of Latino-headed households, slightly more than the Connecticut average of 24.5%. Families made up of a single female with children account for 26.9% of Latino households, which is greater than the state average of 7.9%, but less than it was in 1990.

Table 4

Willimantic - Family Structure						
Latino Headed Households	2000		1990		Growth Percent	Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Families:	1,003	77.0	517	80.5	94.0	-3.6
with related children ^a :						
Married Couple, with children	359	27.6	181	28.2	98.3	-0.6
Female Head, with children	351	26.9	200	31.2	75.5	-4.2
Male Head, with children	69	5.3	21	3.3	228.6	2.0
without related children:						
Married Couple, no children	121	9.3	83	12.9	45.8	-3.6
Single, no children	103	7.9	32	5.0	221.9	2.9
Non-Family Household	300	23.0	125	19.5	140.0	3.6
Total Households	1,303		642		103.0	

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a).

^a Own or related children under 18 only.

Data Sources:

All available at American Fact Finder [online service]: <http://factfinder.census.gov/>
U.S. Census Bureau:

2000: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1) 100% Data.

1990(a): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 1 (STF1) 100% Data.

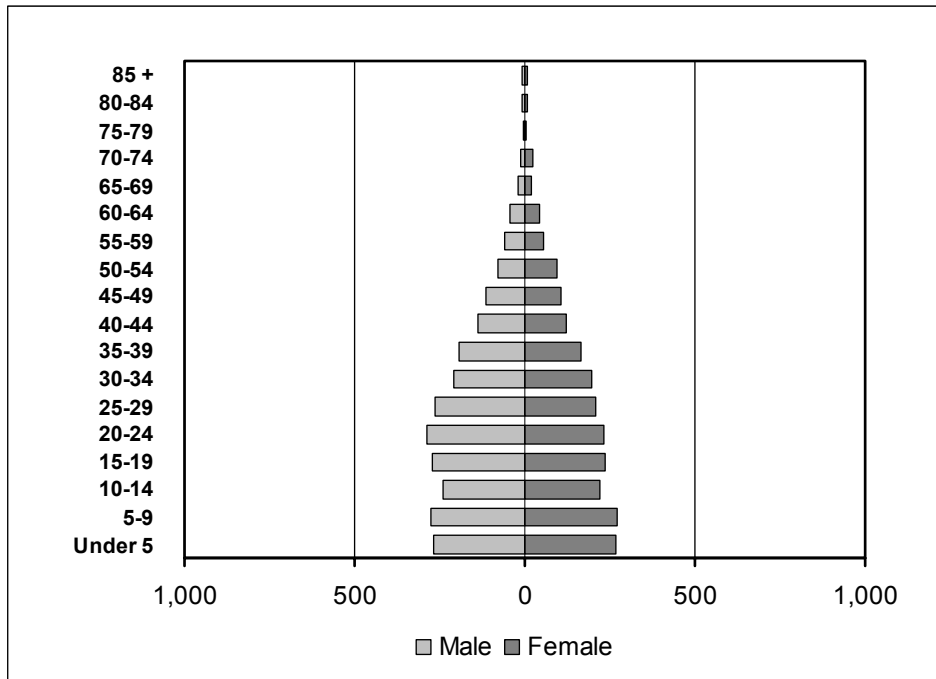
1990(b): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3 (STF3) Sample Data.

1992: 1990 Census of Population: General Population Characteristics. Washington DC: GPO.

Notes:

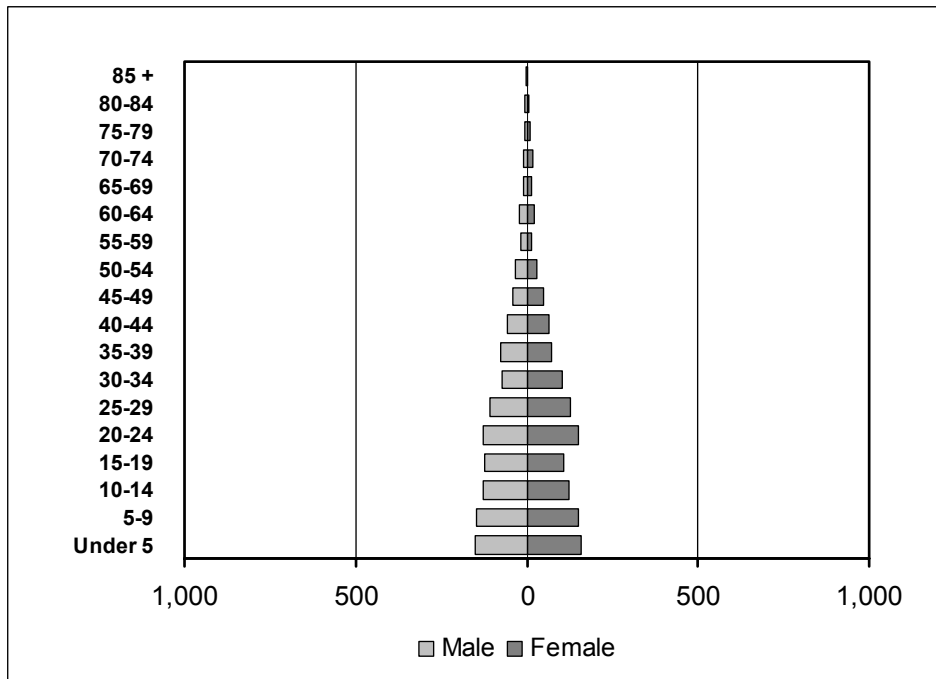
¹ Sample data from 1990 are based on the “Long Form” files. About one person or household in six receives the Long Form Census. The estimates from there do not match the enumerations in the 100% or “Short Form” data. There are sources of error in any census or survey; however the estimates here are accurate enough to note trends and patterns.

Figure 2
Willimantic - Age Profile 2000



Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

Figure 3
Willimantic - Age Profile 1990



Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

The age composition of Latinos in Willimantic has changed. There has been an increase among all age groups, but especially among those in the middle years. Even though there are many more children, the overall Latino population is maturing (see figures 2 and 3).

While the Latino population in Willimantic and in the rest of the country remains relatively young, it is older than it was in 1990. In 2000, 43% of Latinos were younger than 20, fewer than the 46.5% in 1990 (see table 5). The Latino median age of 23.1 is much younger than the overall Connecticut median age of 37.4. Women still tend to be older than men, but the gap closed during the 1990s. In addition to becoming relatively older, both Latinos and Latinas became less concentrated in the 20-29 age group (see tables 6 and 7).

Table 5

Willimantic - Latinos by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	1,085	22.7	606	25.9	79.0
10-19	971	20.3	483	20.6	101.0
20-29	993	20.8	513	21.9	93.6
30-39	765	16.0	322	13.7	137.6
40-49	478	10.0	210	9.0	127.6
50-59	288	6.0	95	4.1	203.2
60-69	125	2.6	61	2.6	104.9
70 and over	72	1.5	53	2.3	35.8
Total	4,777		2,343		103.9
Median Age	23.1		21.2		

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

Table 6

Willimantic - Latino Males by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	545	21.9	297	26.4	83.5
10-19	511	20.5	251	22.3	103.6
20-29	552	22.2	233	20.7	136.9
30-39	401	16.1	148	13.2	170.9
40-49	251	10.1	96	8.5	161.5
50-59	138	5.5	51	4.5	170.6
60-69	63	2.5	29	2.6	117.2
70 and over	29	1.2	20	1.8	45.0
Total	2,490		1,125		121.3
Median Age	23.2		20.5		

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.

Table 7

Willimantic - Latina Females by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	540	23.6	309	25.4	74.8
10-19	460	20.1	232	19.0	98.3
20-29	441	19.3	280	23.0	57.5
30-39	364	15.9	174	14.3	109.2
40-49	227	9.9	114	9.4	99.1
50-59	150	6.6	44	3.6	240.9
60-69	62	2.7	32	2.6	93.8
70 and over	43	1.9	33	2.7	30.3
Total	2,287		1,218		87.8
Median Age	23.0		21.8		

Sources: Census Bureau: 2000, 1990(a), 1992.