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The Mauricio Gastón Institute
for Latino Community Development
and Public Policy

Latinos in Lowell | Massachusetts

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 Lowell, 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 Lowell increased by 1.7%, but its composition changed substantially. Latinos had the second largest numerical growth behind Asians, increasing by 4,235 or 40.3% — although “some other race,” African Americans, and Asians had higher percent increases. Latinos now represent 14% of the population, an increase of 3.9 percentage points and the largest gain of any group except Asians. Lowell has the eighth largest population of Latinos in Massachusetts and the 15th largest in the New England states. As a percentage of the total population, the Latino population in Lowell ranks ninth in the state.

Table 1

Lowell - Growth by Ethnicity								
	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Hispanic or Latino	14,734	14.0	10,499	10.1	4,235	40.3	3.9	
White	65,760	62.5	79,165	76.5	-13,405	-16.9	-14.0	
Black or African American	3,644	3.5	2,093	2.0	1,551	74.1	1.4	
American Indian and Alaska Native	170	0.2	144	0.1	26	18.1	0.0	
Asian ^a	17,302	16.5	11,270	10.9	6,044	53.6	5.6	
Pacific Islander ^a	12	0.0						
Some other race	474	0.5	268	0.3	206	76.9	0.2	
Two or more races ^b	3,071	2.9						
Total	105,167		103,439		1,728	1.7		

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.

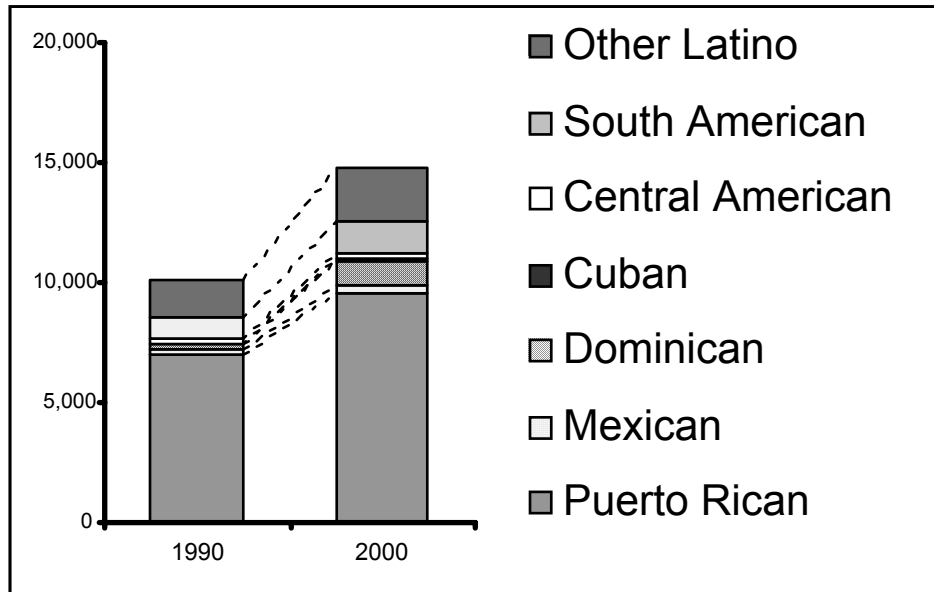
Table 2

Lowell - National Origin of Latinos						
	2000		1990 ^a		Growth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic or Latino	14,734		10,089		4,645	46.0
Mexican	282	1.9	143	1.4	139	97.2
Puerto Rican	9,604	65.2	7,025	69.6	2,579	36.7
Cuban	121	0.8	57	0.6	64	112.3
Dominican Republic	1,024	6.9	275	2.7	749	272.4
Other Central American	229	1.6	200	2.0	29	14.5
Colombian	1,167	7.9	761	7.5	406	53.4
Other South American	169	1.1	85	0.8	84	98.8
Other Hispanic or Latino	2,138	14.5	1,543	15.3	595	38.6

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

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

Figure 1
Lowell - 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 Lowell is Puerto Rican, at 65.2%, followed by “Other” Latinos and Colombians. Behind Dominicans, Cubans, “Other South Americans,” Mexican, and Colombian, “Other” Latinos were the fastest-growing population, growing by 38.6%, 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

Lowell - Households by Tenure							
Latino Headed Households	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Households	4,317		3,103		1,214	39.1	
Owners	669	15.5	361	11.6	308	85.3	3.9
Renters	3,648	84.5	2,742	88.4	906	33.0	

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

Latino-headed households are much more likely to rent than to own their home, 84.5% versus 15.5%, although there has been a 3.9% increase in home ownership since 1990 (see table 3). Still, this is much lower than the state average of 61.7%. Although there has

been a small growth in the proportion of non-family households, it is still true that most Latinos, 75%, live in family households (see table 4). Married couples with children represent 22.7% of Latino-headed households, slightly more than the Massachusetts average of 23.3%. Families made up of a single female with children account for 30.9% of Latino households, which is greater than the state average of 7.5%, but less than it was in 1990.

Table 4

Lowell - Family Structure						
	2000		1990		Growth Percent	Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Latino Headed Households						
Families:	3,239	75.0	2,444	78.8	32.5	-3.7
with related children ^a :						
Married Couple, with children	979	22.7	787	25.4	24.4	-2.7
Female Head, with children	1,335	30.9	1,039	33.5	28.5	-2.6
Male Head, with children	244	5.7	114	3.7	114.0	2.0
without related children:						
Married Couple, no children	373	8.6	310	10.0	20.3	-1.4
Single, no children	308	7.1	194	6.3	58.8	0.9
Non-Family Household	1,078	25.0	659	21.2	63.6	3.7
Total Households	4,317		3,103		39.1	

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.

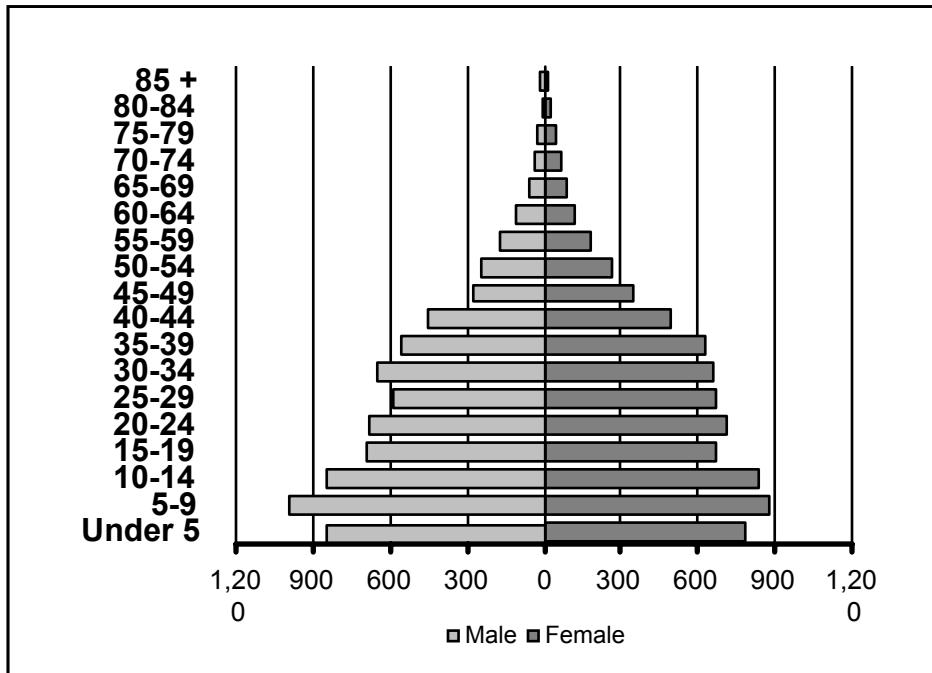
1990(b): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3 (STF3) Sample Data.

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

Notes:

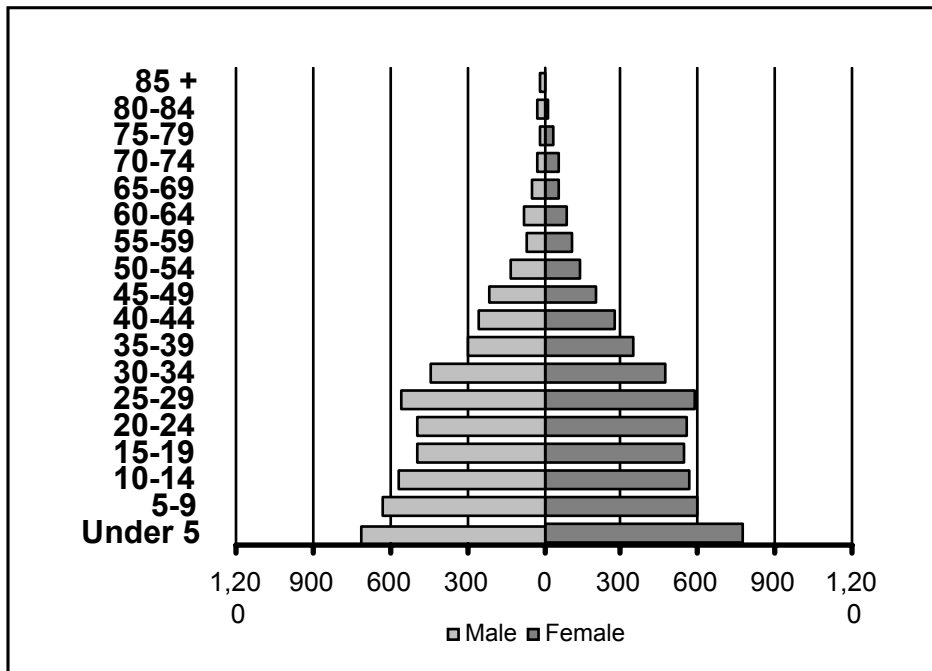
¹ Sample data from 1990 are based on the “Long Form” files. About one person or household in six receives the Long Form Census. The estimates from there do not match the enumerations in the 100% or “Short Form” data. For example there is a 4.5% difference in the total number of Latinos in Massachusetts. There are sources of error in any census or survey, however the estimates here are accurate enough to note trends and patterns.

Figure 2
Lowell - Age Profile 2000



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

Figure 3
Lowell - Age Profile 1990



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

The age composition of Latinos in Lowell 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 Lowell and in the rest of the country remains relatively young, it is older than it was in 1990. In 2000, 44.5% of Latinos were younger than 20, just slightly fewer than the 46.7% in 1990 (see table 5). The Latino median age of 22.8 is much younger than the overall Massachusetts median age of 36.5. 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

Lowell - Latinos by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	3,511	23.8	2,728	26.0	28.7
10-19	3,053	20.7	2,172	20.7	40.6
20-29	2,638	17.9	2,192	20.9	20.3
30-39	2,493	16.9	1,558	14.8	60.0
40-49	1,570	10.7	947	9.0	65.8
50-59	861	5.8	447	4.3	92.6
60-69	372	2.5	264	2.5	40.9
70 and over	236	1.6	191	1.8	23.6
Total	14,734		10,499		40.3
Median Age	22.8		21.6		

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

Table 6

Lowell - Latino Males by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	1,845	25.5	1,354	26.7	36.3
10-19	1,544	21.3	1,064	21.0	45.1
20-29	1,265	17.5	1,051	20.7	20.4
30-39	1,210	16.7	739	14.6	63.7
40-49	727	10.0	468	9.2	55.3
50-59	419	5.8	200	3.9	109.5
60-69	159	2.2	117	2.3	35.9
70 and over	80	1.1	81	1.6	-1.2
Total	7,249		5,074		42.9
Median Age	21.7		21.2		

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

Table 7

Lowell - Latina Females by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	1,666	22.3	1,374	25.3	21.3
10-19	1,509	20.2	1,108	20.4	36.2
20-29	1,373	18.3	1,141	21.0	20.3
30-39	1,283	17.1	819	15.1	56.7
40-49	843	11.3	479	8.8	76.0
50-59	442	5.9	247	4.6	78.9
60-69	213	2.8	147	2.7	44.9
70 and over	156	2.1	110	2.0	41.8
Total	7,485		5,425		38.0
Median Age	23.9		22.1		

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