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The Mauricio Gastón Institute
for Latino Community Development
and Public Policy

Latinos in New Bedford | 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 New Bedford, 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 Bedford decreased by 6.2%, but its composition changed substantially. Latinos had a larger numerical growth than any other group, increasing by 2,923 or 43.9%, although Asians had a higher percent increase. Latinos now represent 10.2% of the population, an increase of 3.6 percentage points and the largest gain of any group. New Bedford has the ninth largest population of Latinos in Massachusetts and the 20th largest in the New England states. As a percentage of the total population, the Latino population in New Bedford ranks 13th in the state.

Table 1

New Bedford - Growth by Ethnicity								
	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Hispanic or Latino	9,576	10.2	6,653	6.7	2,923	43.9	3.6	
White	70,520	75.2	84,286	84.4	-13,766	-16.3	-9.1	
Black or African American	3,503	3.7	3,492	3.5	11	0.3	0.2	
American Indian and Alaska Native	394	0.4	371	0.4	23	6.2	0.0	
Asian ^a	600	0.6	393	0.4	241	61.3	0.3	
Pacific Islander ^a	34	0.0						
Some other race	4,503	4.8	4,727	4.7	-224	-4.7	0.1	
Two or more races ^b	4,638	4.9						
Total	93,768		99,922		-6,154	-6.2		

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.

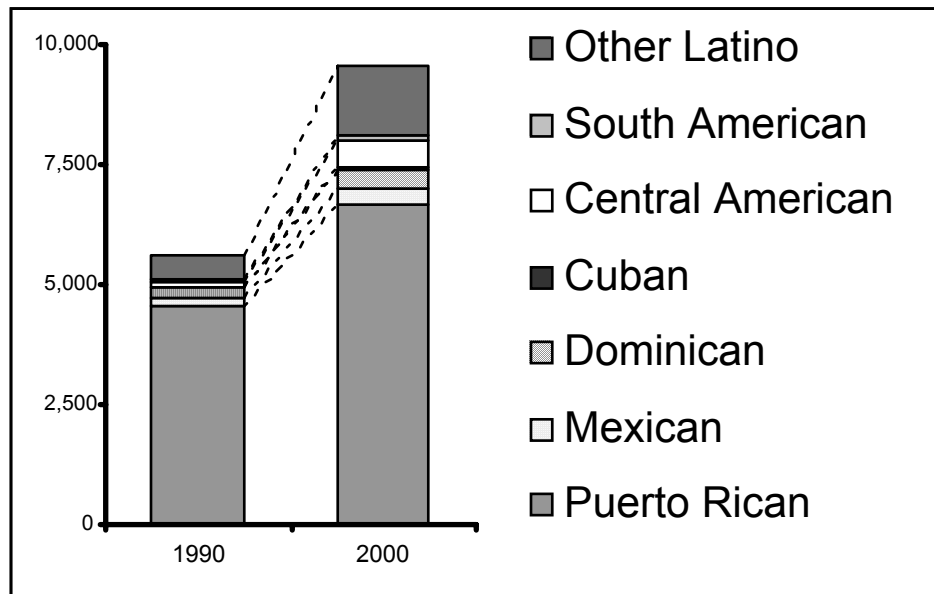
Table 2

New Bedford - National Origin of Latinos						
	2000		1990 ^a		Growth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic or Latino	9,576		5,622		3,954	70.3
Mexican	322	3.4	184	3.3	138	75.0
Puerto Rican	6,657	69.5	4,532	80.6	2,125	46.9
Cuban	59	0.6	6	0.1	53	883.3
Dominican Republic	430	4.5	205	3.6	225	109.8
Guatemalan	303	3.2			303	
Other Central American	228	2.4	106	1.9	122	115.1
Other South American	101	1.1	59	1.0	42	71.2
Other Hispanic or Latino	1,476	15.4	530	9.4	946	178.5

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

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

Figure 1
New Bedford - 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 New Bedford is Puerto Rican, at 69.5%, followed by “Other” Latinos and Dominicans. Behind Cubans, which only totaled 59, “Other” Latinos were the fastest-growing population, growing by 178.5%, 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

New Bedford - Households by Tenure							
Latino Headed Households	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Households	2,809		2,010		799	39.8	
Owners	399	14.2	351	17.5	48	13.7	-3.3
Renters	2,410	85.8	1,659	82.5	751	45.3	

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

Latino-headed households are much more likely to rent than to own their home, 85.8% versus 14.2%, and there has been a 3.3% decrease in home ownership since 1990 (see table 3). 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,

75.2%, live in family households (see table 4). Married couples with children represent 20.3% of Latino-headed households, slightly less than the Massachusetts average of 23.3%. Families made up of a single female with children account for 32.3% of Latino households, which is greater than the state average of 7.5%, but less than it was in 1990.

Table 4

New Bedford - Family Structure						
Latino Headed Households	2000		1990		Growth Percent	Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Families:	2,112	75.2	1,583	78.8	33.4	-3.6
with related children ^a :						
Married Couple, with children	570	20.3	451	22.4	26.4	-2.1
Female Head, with children	900	32.0	674	33.5	33.5	-1.5
Male Head, with children	137	4.9	62	3.1	121.0	1.8
without related children:						
Married Couple, no children	273	9.7	253	12.6	7.9	-2.9
Single, no children	232	8.3	143	7.1	62.2	1.1
Non-Family Household	697	24.8	427	21.2	63.2	3.6
Total Households	2,809		2,010		39.8	

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.

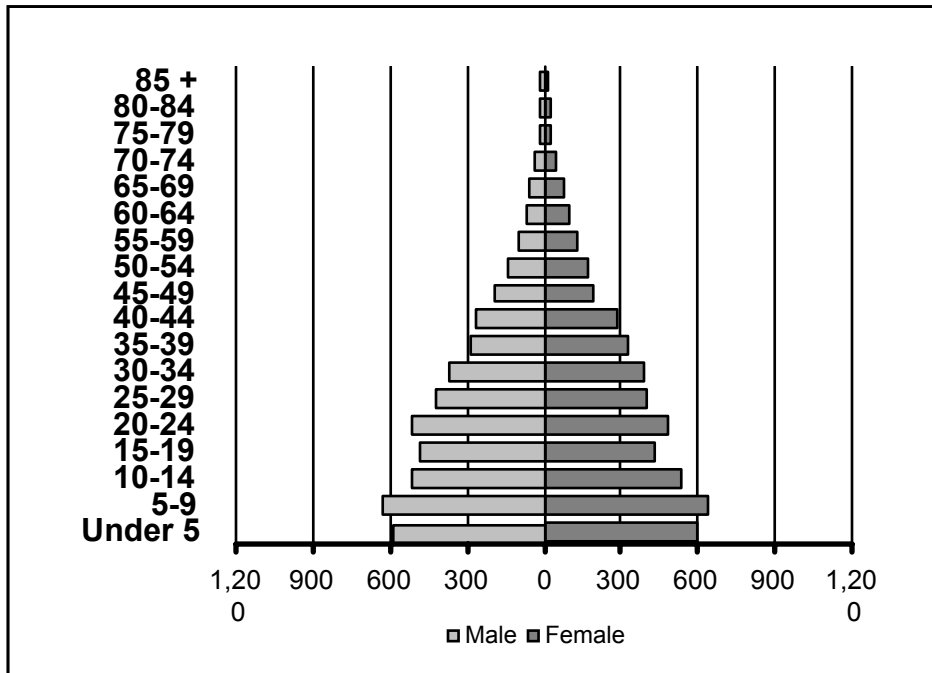
1990(b): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3 (STF3) Sample Data.

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

Notes:

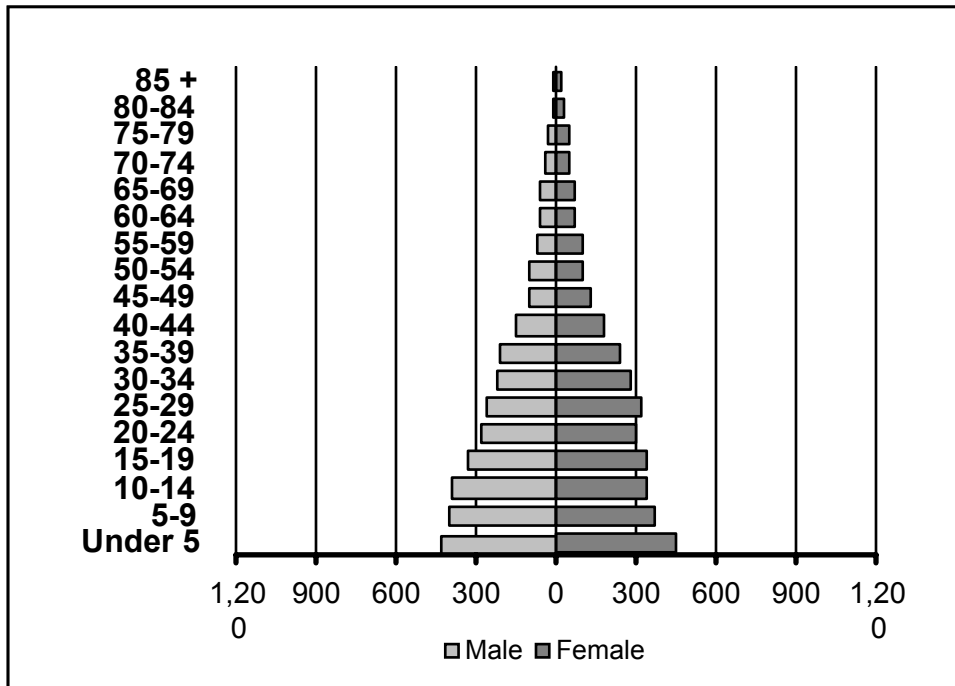
¹ Sample data from 1990 are based on the “Long Form” files. About one person or household in six receives the Long Form Census. The estimates from there do not match the enumerations in the 100% or “Short Form” data. For example there is a 4.5% difference in the total number of Latinos in Massachusetts.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

Figure 2
New Bedford - Age Profile 2000



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

Figure 3
New Bedford - Age Profile 1990



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

The age composition of Latinos in New Bedford 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 New Bedford and in the rest of the country remains relatively young, it is older than it was in 1990. In 2000, 46.3% of Latinos were younger than 20, just slightly fewer than the 46.2% in 1990 (see table 5). The Latino median age of 21.8 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

New Bedford - Latinos by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	2,457	25.7	1,671	25.1	47.0
10-19	1,969	20.6	1,404	21.1	40.2
20-29	1,806	18.9	1,176	17.7	53.6
30-39	1,366	14.3	957	14.4	42.7
40-49	934	9.8	567	8.5	64.7
50-59	544	5.7	374	5.6	45.5
60-69	294	3.1	261	3.9	12.6
70 and over	206	2.2	243	3.7	-15.2
Total	9,576		6,653		43.9
Median Age	21.8		22.0		

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

Table 6

New Bedford - Latino Males by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	1,220	25.9	843	26.5	44.7
10-19	1,002	21.3	720	22.6	39.2
20-29	929	19.7	549	17.2	69.2
30-39	651	13.8	438	13.7	48.6
40-49	457	9.7	254	8.0	79.9
50-59	234	5.0	168	5.3	39.3
60-69	122	2.6	119	3.7	2.5
70 and over	90	1.9	95	3.0	-5.3
Total	4,705		3,186		47.7
Median Age	21.3		20.4		

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

Table 7

New Bedford - Latina Females by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	1,237	25.4	828	23.9	49.4
10-19	967	19.9	684	19.7	41.4
20-29	877	18.0	627	18.1	39.9
30-39	715	14.7	519	15.0	37.8
40-49	477	9.8	313	9.0	52.4
50-59	310	6.4	206	5.9	50.5
60-69	172	3.5	142	4.1	21.1
70 and over	116	2.4	148	4.3	-21.6
Total	4,871		3,467		40.5
Median Age	22.4		23.4		

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