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The Mauricio Gastón Institute
for Latino Community Development
and Public Policy

Latinos in Worcester | Massachusetts

by Charles Jones, 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 Worcester, 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 Worcester increased by 1.7%, but its composition changed substantially. Latinos had a larger numerical growth than any other group, increasing by 9,897 people or 60.9%, although both Asians and “some other race” had a higher percent increase. Latinos now represent 15.1% of the population, an increase of 5.6 percentage points and the largest gain of any group. Worcester has the fourth largest population of Latinos in Massachusetts and the eighth largest in the New England states. As a percentage of the total population, the Latino population in Worcester ranks eighth in the state.

Table 1

Worcester - Growth by Ethnicity							
	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Hispanic or Latino	26,155	15.1	16,258	9.6	9,897	60.9	5.6
White	122,211	70.8	141,416	83.3	-19,205	-13.6	-12.5
Black or African American	10,762	6.2	6,746	4.0	4,016	59.5	2.3
American Indian and Alaska Native	550	0.3	429	0.3	121	28.2	0.1
Asian ^a	8,336	4.8	4,608	2.7	3,776	81.9	2.1
Pacific Islander ^a	48	0.0					
Some other race	824	0.5	302	0.2	522	172.8	0.3
Two or more races ^b	3,762	2.2					
Total	172,648		169,759		2,889	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.

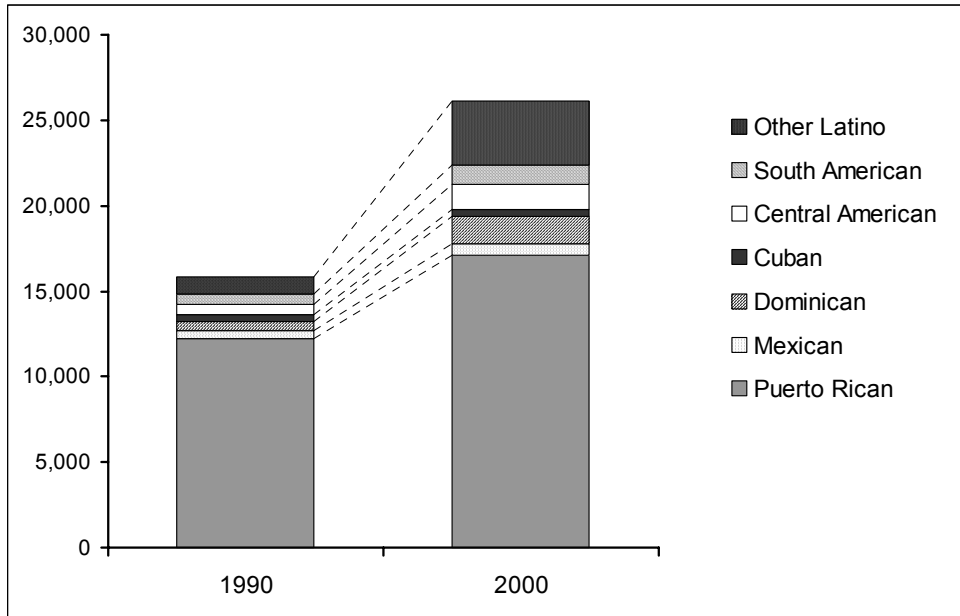
Table 2

Worcester - National Origin of Latinos						
	2000		1990 ^a		Growth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic or Latino	26,155		15,868		10,287	64.8
Mexican	706	2.7	456	2.9	250	54.8
Puerto Rican	17,091	65.3	12,219	77.0	4,872	39.9
Cuban	399	1.5	398	2.5	1	0.3
Dominican Republic	1,611	6.2	546	3.4	1,065	195.1
Salvadoran	1,000	3.8	449	2.8	551	122.7
Other Central American	407	1.6	183	1.2	224	122.4
Ecuadorian	413	1.6	160	1.0	253	158.1
Colombian	383	1.5	252	1.6	131	52.0
Other South American	340	1.3	143	0.9	197	137.8
Other Hispanic or Latino	3,805	14.5	1,062	6.7	2,743	258.3

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

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

Figure 1
Worcester - Growth and Change of the Latino Population



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

Most Latino national-origin groups grew significantly between 1990¹ and 2000. The largest group in Worcester is Puerto Rican, at 65.3%, followed by “Other” Latinos and Dominicans. “Other” Latinos were the fastest-growing population, growing by 258.3%, 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

Worcester - Households by Tenure							
	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Latino Headed Households							
Total Households	7,932		4,524		3,408	75.3	
Owners	1,148	14.5	356	7.9	792	222.5	6.6
Renters	6,784	85.5	4,168	92.1	2,616	62.8	

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

Latino-headed households are much more likely to rent than to own their home, 85.5% versus 14.5%, although there has been a 6.6% 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

Latino households, 74.9%, are families (see table 4). Married couples with children represent 22.9% of Latino-headed households, slightly less than the Massachusetts average of 23.3% but more than they did in 1990. Families made up of a single female with children account for 31.1% of Latino households, which is greater than the state average of 7.5%, but much less than it was in 1990.

Table 4

Worcester - Family Structure						
	2000		1990		Growth Percent	Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Latino Headed Households						
Families:	5,943	74.9	3,629	80.2	63.8	-5.3
with related children ^a :						
Married Couple, with children	1,815	22.9	927	20.5	95.8	2.4
Female Head, with children	2,467	31.1	1,790	39.6	37.8	-8.5
Male Head, with children	335	4.2	144	3.2	132.6	1.0
without related children:						
Married Couple, no children	769	9.7	432	9.5	78.0	0.1
Single, no children	557	7.0	336	7.4	65.8	-0.4
Non-Family Household	1,989	25.1	895	19.8	122.2	5.3
Total Households	7,932		4,524		75.3	

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.

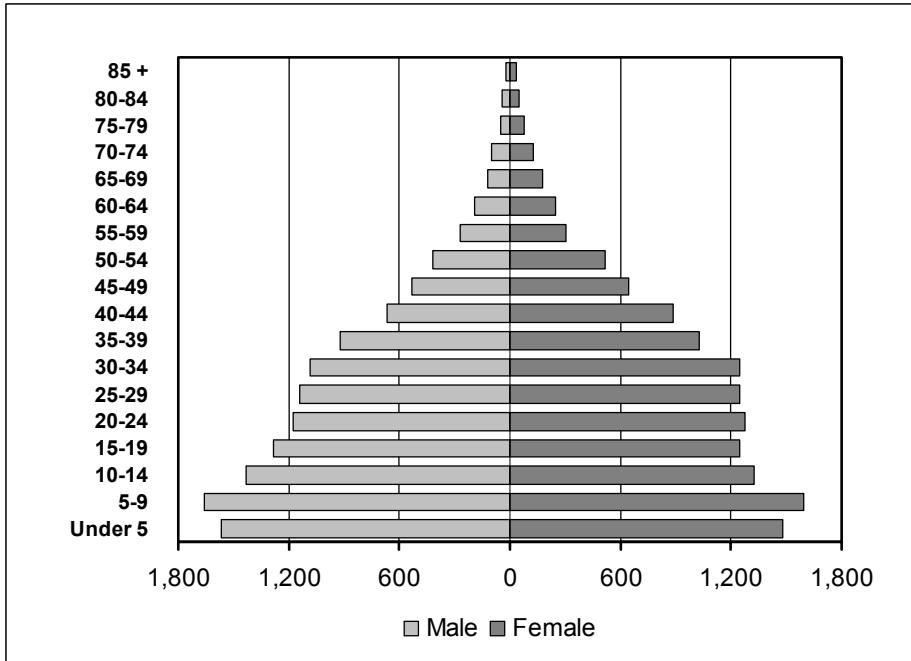
1990(b): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3 (STF3) Sample Data.

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

Notes:

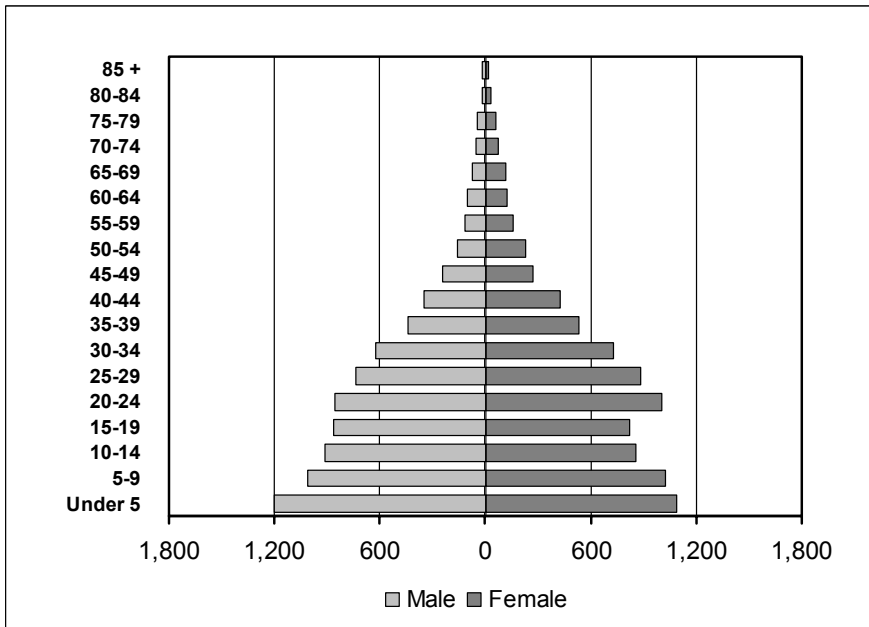
¹ Sample data from 1990 are based on the “Long Form” files. About one person or household in six receives the Long Form Census. The estimates from there do not match the enumerations in the 100% or “Short Form” data. For example there is a 4.5% difference in the total number of Latinos in Massachusetts.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

Figure 2
Worcester - Age Profile 2000



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

Figure 3
Worcester - Age Profile 1990



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

The age composition of Latinos in Worcester has changed. There has been an increase among all age groups, but especially among those aged 30 and over. Even though there are many more children, the overall Latino population is maturing (see figures 2 and 3).

While the Latino population in Worcester and in the rest of the country remains relatively young, it is older than it was in 1990. In 2000, 44.3% of Latinos were younger than 20, just slightly fewer than the 47.8% in 1990 (see table 5). The Latino median age of 23.0 is much younger than the overall Massachusetts median age of 36.5. Women tend to be older than men with a median age higher by 2.8 years, even more than the difference in 1990. In addition to becoming relatively older, Latinas became less concentrated in the 20-29 age group (see tables 6 and 7).

Table 5

Worcester - Latinos by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	6,297	24.1	4,322	26.6	45.7
10-19	5,283	20.2	3,450	21.2	53.1
20-29	4,842	18.5	3,481	21.4	39.1
30-39	4,272	16.3	2,325	14.3	83.7
40-49	2,727	10.4	1,284	7.9	112.4
50-59	1,506	5.8	666	4.1	126.1
60-69	728	2.8	416	2.6	75.0
70 and over	500	1.9	314	1.9	59.2
Total	26,155		16,258		60.9
Median Age	23.0		20.9		

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

Table 6

Worcester - Latino Males by Age				
	2000		1990	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 10 years	3,221	25.5	2,212	28.3
10-19	2,715	21.5	1,771	22.7
20-29	2,316	18.3	1,589	20.3
30-39	2,003	15.8	1,065	13.6
40-49	1,200	9.5	589	7.5
50-59	684	5.4	278	3.6
60-69	306	2.4	177	2.3
70 and over	208	1.6	132	1.7
Total	12,653		7,813	
Median Age	21.5		19.6	

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

Table 7

Worcester - Latina Females by Age				
	2000		1990	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 10 years	3,076	22.8	2,110	25.0
10-19	2,568	19.0	1,679	19.9
20-29	2,526	18.7	1,892	22.4
30-39	2,269	16.8	1,260	14.9
40-49	1,527	11.3	695	8.2
50-59	822	6.1	388	4.6
60-69	422	3.1	239	2.8
70 and over	292	2.2	182	2.2
Total	13,502		8,445	
Median Age	24.3		22.1	

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