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The Mauricio Gastón Institute
for Latino Community Development
and Public Policy

Latinos in Rhode Island

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 Rhode Island, 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 Rhode Island increased by 4.5%, but its composition changed substantially. Latinos had a larger numerical growth than any other group, increasing by 45,068 or 98.5%. Latinos now represent 8.7% of the population, an increase of 4.1 percentage points. Rhode Island has the third largest population of Latinos in New England and the 34th largest in the 50 states.

Table 1

Rhode Island - Growth by Ethnicity								
	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Hispanic or Latino	90,820	8.7	45,752	4.6	45,068	98.5	4.1	
White	858,433	81.9	896,109	89.3	-37,676	-4.2	-7.4	
Black or African American	41,922	4.0	34,283	3.4	7,639	22.3	0.6	
American Indian and Alaska Native	4,181	0.4	3,629	0.4	552	15.2	0.0	
Asian ^a	23,416	2.2	17,584	1.8	6,152	35.0	0.5	
Pacific Islander ^a	320	0.0						
Some other race	8,411	0.8	6,107	0.6	2,304	37.7	0.2	
Two or more races ^b	20,816	2.0						
Total	1,048,319		1,003,464		44,855	4.5		

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.

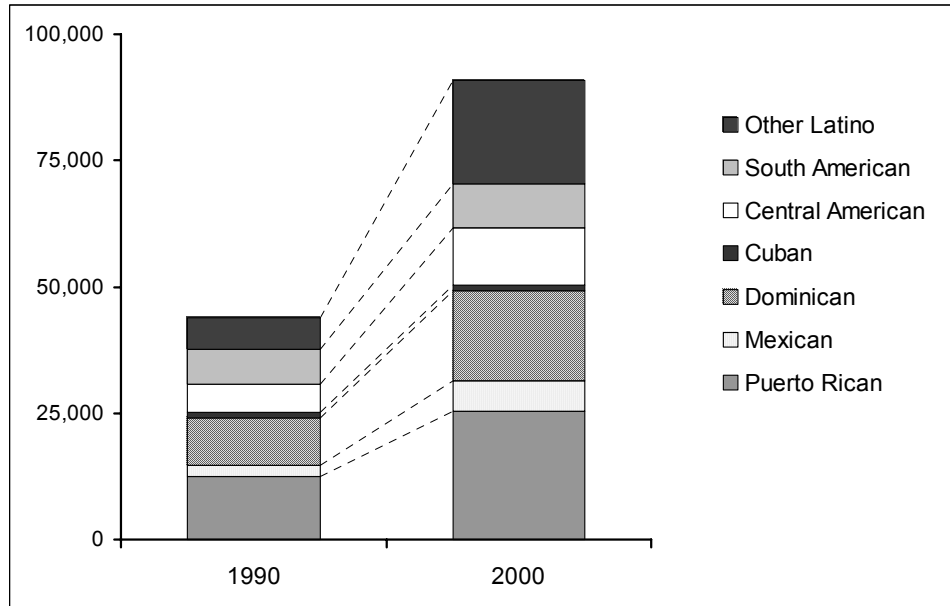
Table 2

Rhode Island - National Origin of Latinos						
	2000		1990 ^a		Growth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic or Latino	90,820		43,932		46,888	106.7
Mexican	5,881	6.5	2,267	5.2	3,614	159.4
Puerto Rican	25,422	28.0	12,494	28.4	12,928	103.5
Cuban	1,128	1.2	1,062	2.4	66	6.2
Dominican Republic	17,894	19.7	9,374	21.3	8,520	90.9
Other Central American	11,320	12.5	5,595	12.7	5,725	102.3
Other South American	8,666	9.5	6,956	15.8	1,710	24.6
Other Hispanic or Latino	20,509	22.6	6,184	14.1	14,325	231.6

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

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

Figure 1
Rhode Island - 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 Rhode Island is Mexican, at 28%, followed by “Other” Latinos and Dominicans. “Other” Latinos were the fastest-growing population, growing by 231.6%, 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

Rhode Island - Households by Tenure							
Latino Headed Households	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Households	25,110		13,092		12,018	91.8	
Owners	5,352	21.3	3,009	23.0	2,343	77.9	-1.7
Renters	19,758	78.7	10,083	77.0	9,675	96.0	

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

Latino-headed households are much more likely to rent than to own their home, 78.7% versus 21.3%, and there has been a 1.7% decrease in home ownership since 1990 (see table 3). This is much lower than the U.S. average of 68.7%. Although there has been a small growth in the proportion of non-family households, it is still true that most Latinos, 79.9%, live in family households (see table 4). Married couples with children represent 28.9% of Latino-headed households, slightly more than the U.S. average of 24.7%. Families made up of a single female with children account for 28.2% of Latino households, which is greater than the U.S. average of 8.3%, but less than it was in 1990.

Table 4

Rhode Island - Family Structure						
Latino Headed Households	2000		1990		Growth Percent	Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Families:	20,054	79.9	10,291	78.6	94.9	1.3
with related children ^a :						
Married Couple, with children	7,250	28.9	3,801	29.0	90.7	-0.2
Female Head, with children	7,078	28.2	3,192	24.4	121.7	3.8
Male Head, with children	1,301	5.2	582	4.4	123.5	0.7
without related children:						
Married Couple, no children	2,628	10.5	1,710	13.1	53.7	-2.6
Single, no children	1,797	7.2	1,006	7.7	78.6	-0.5
Non-Family Household	5,056	20.1	2,801	21.4	80.5	-1.3
Total Households	25,110		13,092		91.8	

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.

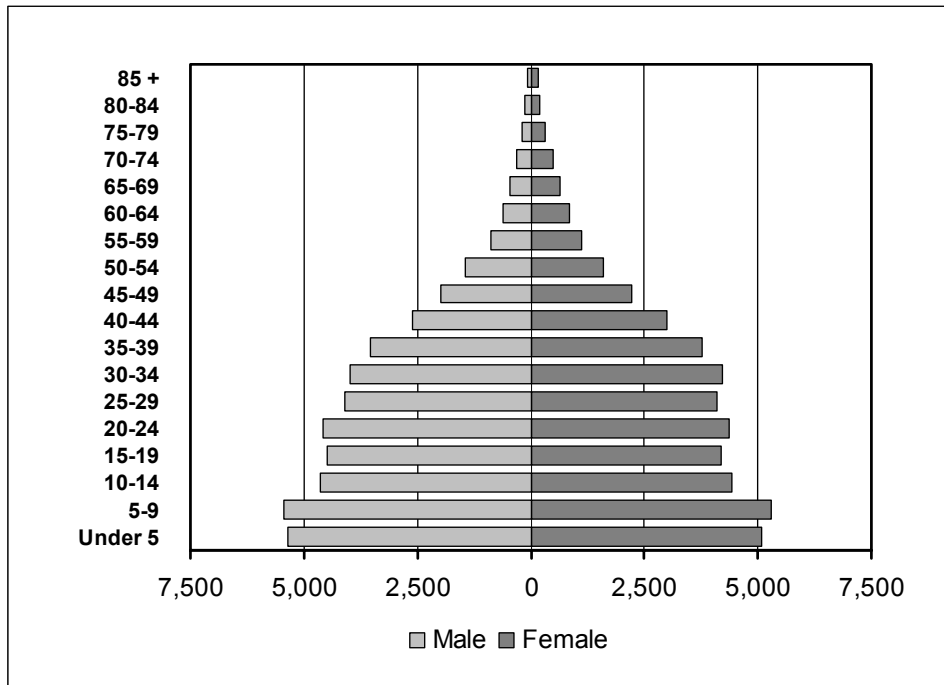
1990(b): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3 (STF3) Sample Data.

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

Notes:

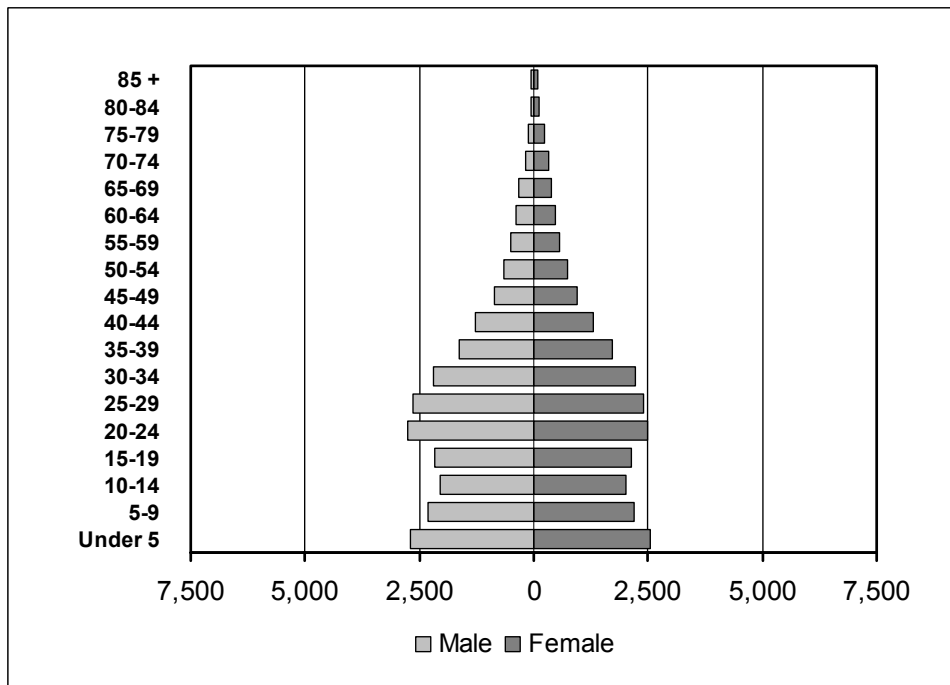
¹ Sample data from 1990 are based on the “Long Form” files. About one person or household in six receives the Long Form Census. The estimates from there do not match the enumerations in the 100% or “Short Form” data. For example there is a X.X% difference in the total number of Latinos in Connecticut.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

Figure 2
Rhode Island - Age Profile 2000



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

Figure 3
Rhode Island - Age Profile 1990



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

The age composition of Latinos in Rhode Island 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 Rhode Island and in the rest of the country remains relatively young, it is older than it was in 1990. In 2000, 42.8% of Latinos were younger than 20, just slightly more than the 39.6% in 1990 (see table 5). The Latino median age of 23.6 is much younger than the overall Rhode Island median age of 36.7. 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

Rhode Island - Latinos by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	21,165	23.3	9,760	21.3	116.9
10-19	17,720	19.5	8,361	18.3	111.9
20-29	17,167	18.9	10,259	22.4	67.3
30-39	15,522	17.1	7,803	17.1	98.9
40-49	9,819	10.8	4,400	9.6	123.2
50-59	5,014	5.5	2,449	5.4	104.7
60-69	2,542	2.8	1,543	3.4	64.7
70 and over	1,871	2.1	1,177	2.6	59.0
Total	90,820		45,752		98.5
Median Age	23.6		24.5		

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

Table 6

Rhode Island - Latino Males by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	10,794	24.1	5,010	21.9	115.4
10-19	9,125	20.4	4,205	18.4	117.0
20-29	8,670	19.4	5,378	23.5	61.2
30-39	7,510	16.8	3,846	16.8	95.3
40-49	4,585	10.2	2,159	9.4	112.4
50-59	2,304	5.1	1,142	5.0	101.8
60-69	1,066	2.4	685	3.0	55.6
70 and over	711	1.6	424	1.9	67.7
Total	44,765		22,849		95.9
Median Age	22.6		24.0		

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

Table 7

Rhode Island - Latina Females by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	10,371	22.5	4,750	20.7	118.3
10-19	8,595	18.7	4,156	18.1	106.8
20-29	8,497	18.4	4,881	21.3	74.1
30-39	8,012	17.4	3,957	17.3	102.5
40-49	5,234	11.4	2,241	9.8	133.6
50-59	2,710	5.9	1,307	5.7	107.3
60-69	1,476	3.2	858	3.7	72.0
70 and over	1,160	2.5	753	3.3	54.1
Total	46,055		22,903		101.1
Median Age	24.6		25.1		

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