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The Mauricio Gastón Institute
for Latino Community Development
and Public Policy

Latinos in Providence | 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 Providence, 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 Providence increased by 8%, but its composition changed substantially. Latinos had a larger numerical growth than any other group, increasing by 27,164 or 108.7%. Latinos now represent 30% of the population, an increase of 14.5 percentage points and the largest gain of any group. Providence has the largest population of Latinos in Rhode Island and the second largest in the New England states. As a percentage of the total population, the Latino population in Providence ranks second in the state.

Table 1

Providence - Growth by Ethnicity								
	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Hispanic or Latino	52,146	30.0	24,982	15.5	27,164	108.7	14.5	
White	79,451	45.8	103,698	64.5	-24,247	-23.4	-18.8	
Black or African American	22,103	12.7	20,259	12.6	1,844	9.1	0.1	
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,446	0.8	1,226	0.8	220	17.9	0.1	
Asian ^a	10,303	5.9	9,051	5.6	1,333	14.7	0.3	
Pacific Islander ^a	81	0.0						
Some other race	1,731	1.0	1,512	0.9	219	14.5	0.1	
Two or more races ^b	20,816	12.0						
Total	173,618		160,728		12,890	8.0		

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.

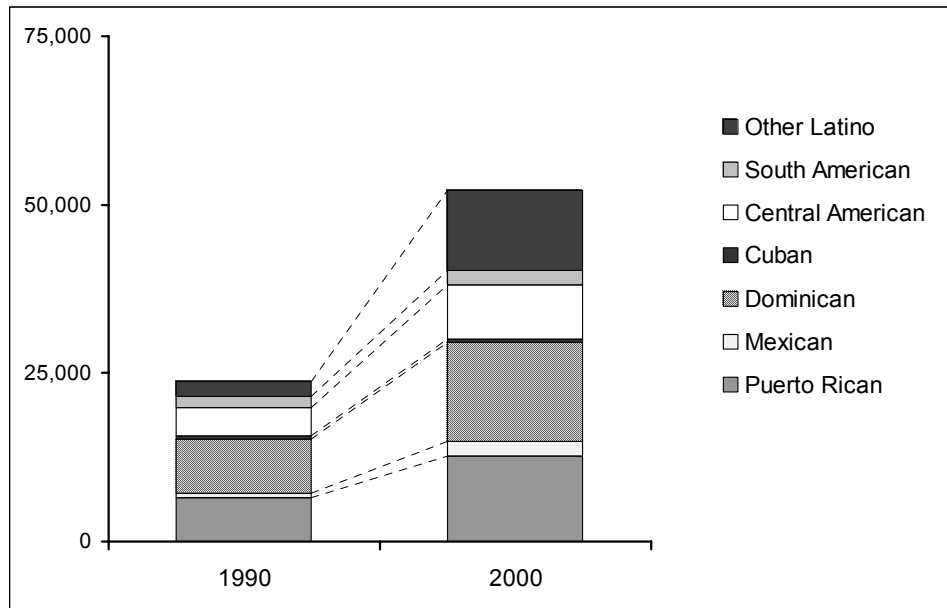
Table 2

Providence - National Origin of Latinos						
	2000		1990 ^a		Growth	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic or Latino	52,146		23,744		28,402	119.6
Mexican	2,237	4.3	738	3.1	1,499	203.1
Puerto Rican	12,712	24.4	6,479	27.3	6,233	96.2
Cuban	468	0.9	522	2.2	-54	-10.3
Dominican Republic	14,638	28.1	7,973	33.6	6,665	83.6
Other Central American	8,011	15.4	4,173	17.6	3,838	92.0
Other South American	2,241	4.3	1,682	7.1	559	33.2
Other Hispanic or Latino	11,839	22.7	2,177	9.2	9,662	443.8

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

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

Figure 1
Providence - 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 Providence is Dominican, at 28.1%, followed by Puerto Rican and “Other” Latinos. “Other” Latinos were among fastest-growing population, growing by 443.8%, 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

Providence - Households by Tenure							
Latino Headed Households	2000		1990		Growth		Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total Households	14,434		6,989		7,445	106.5	
Owners	2,862	19.8	1,192	17.1	1,670	140.1	2.8
Renters	11,572	80.2	5,797	82.9	5,775	99.6	

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

Latino-headed households are much more likely to rent than to own their home, 80.2% versus 19.8%, and there has been a 2.8% increase in home ownership since 1990 (see table 3). Still, this is much lower than the state average of 60%. Although there has been a small growth in the proportion of non-family households, it is still true that most Latinos, 80.9%, live in family households (see table 4). Married couples with children represent 28% of Latino-headed households, more than the Rhode Island average of 21.9%. Families made up of a single female with children account for 30.9% of Latino households, which is greater than the state average of 8.6%, and it remains unchanged from its 1990 level.

Table 4

Providence - Family Structure						
Latino Headed Households	2000		1990		Growth Percent	Change in Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Families:	11,683	80.9	5,564	79.6	110.0	1.3
with related children ^a :						
Married Couple, with children	4,035	28.0	1,834	26.2	120.0	1.7
Female Head, with children	4,454	30.9	2,162	30.9	106.0	-0.1
Male Head, with children	789	5.5	340	4.9	132.1	0.6
without related children:						
Married Couple, no children	1,341	9.3	681	9.7	96.9	-0.5
Single, no children	1,064	7.4	547	7.8	94.5	-0.5
Non-Family Household	2,751	19.1	1,425	20.4	93.1	-1.3
Total Households	14,434		6,989		106.5	

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.

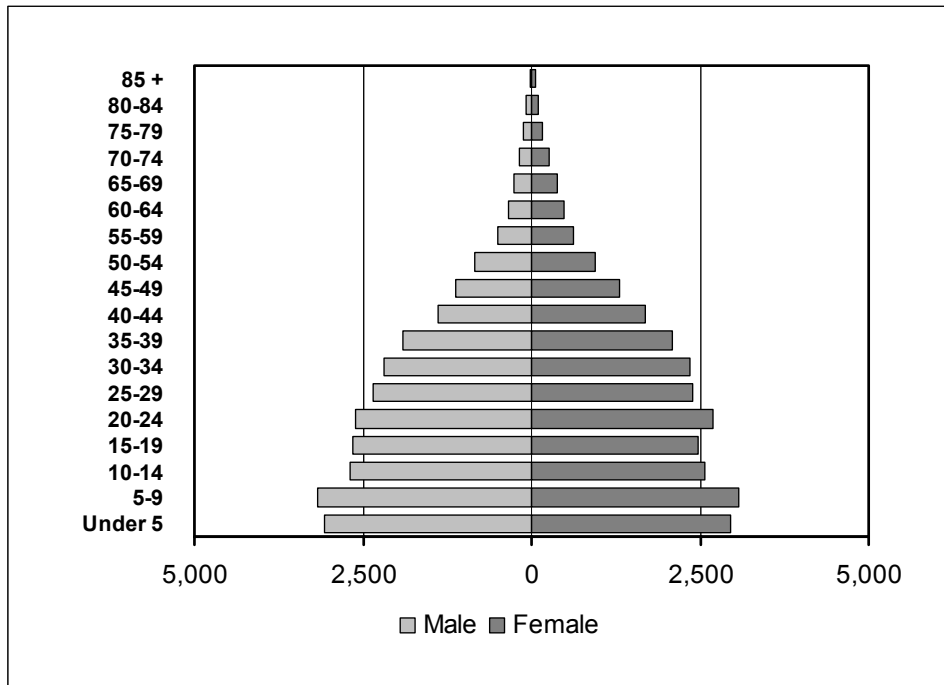
1990(b): 1990 Census Summary Tape File 3 (STF3) Sample Data.

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

Notes:

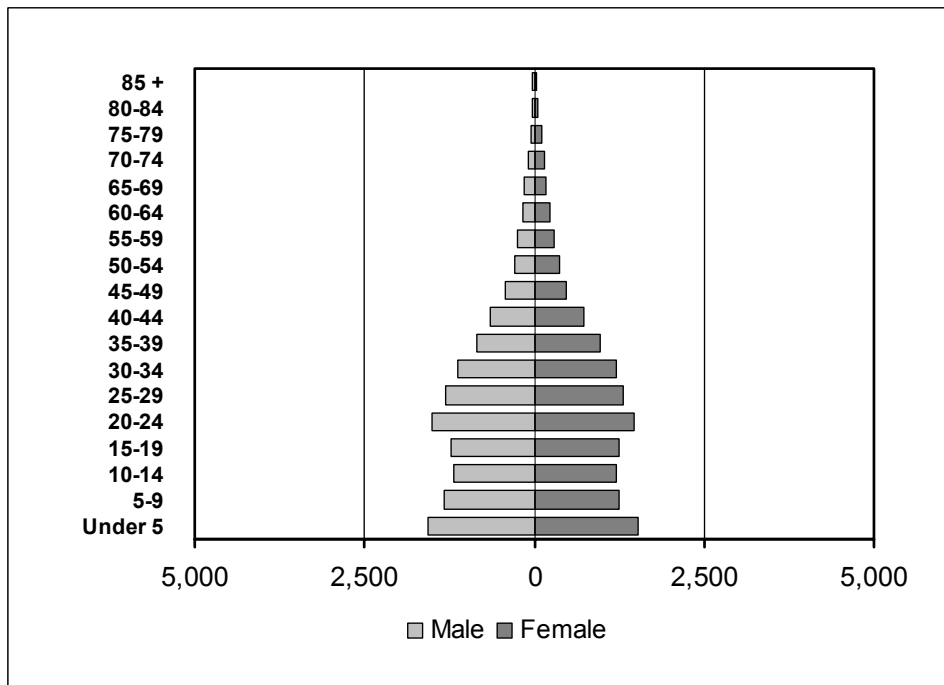
¹ Sample data from 1990 are based on the “Long Form” files. About one person or household in six receives the Long Form Census. The estimates from there do not match the enumerations in the 100% or “Short Form” data. There are sources of error in any census or survey, however the estimates here are accurate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

Figure 2
Providence - Age Profile 2000



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

Figure 3
Providence - Age Profile 1990



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

The age composition of Latinos in Providence 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 Providence and in the rest of the country remains relatively young, it is older than it was in 1990. In 2000, 45.4% of Latinos were younger than 20, just slightly greater than the 42.1% in 1990 (see table 5). The Latino median age of 23.1 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

Providence - Latinos by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	12,278	23.5	5,665	22.7	116.7
10-19	10,390	19.9	4,853	19.4	114.1
20-29	10,036	19.2	5,590	22.4	79.5
30-39	8,552	16.4	4,142	16.6	106.5
40-49	5,500	10.5	2,281	9.1	141.1
50-59	2,921	5.6	1,212	4.9	141.0
60-69	1,467	2.8	721	2.9	103.5
70 and over	1,002	1.9	518	2.1	93.4
Total	52,146		24,982		108.7
Median Age	23.1		23.3		

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

Table 6

Providence - Latino Males by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10 years	6,252	24.5	2,886	23.6	116.6
10-19	5,340	20.9	2,413	19.7	121.3
20-29	4,967	19.5	2,816	23.0	76.4
30-39	4,100	16.1	1,975	16.2	107.6
40-49	2,509	9.8	1,085	8.9	131.2
50-59	1,350	5.3	540	4.4	150.0
60-69	609	2.4	313	2.6	94.6
70 and over	409	1.6	191	1.6	114.1
Total	25,536		12,219		109.0
Median Age	22.1		22.6		

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

Table 7

Providence - Latina Females by Age					
	2000		1990		Growth
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent
Under 10 years	6,026	22.6	2,779	21.8	116.8
10-19	5,050	19.0	2,440	19.1	107.0
20-29	5,069	19.0	2,774	21.7	82.7
30-39	4,452	16.7	2,167	17.0	105.4
40-49	2,991	11.2	1,196	9.4	150.1
50-59	1,571	5.9	672	5.3	133.8
60-69	858	3.2	408	3.2	110.3
70 and over	593	2.2	327	2.6	81.3
Total	26,610		12,763		108.5
Median Age	24.1		24.0		

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