

# Boston's Population - 2000

## 6. Population Changes in Boston's Asian and Hispanic Ethnic Groups: 1990 – 2000.

[Summary File 1 (SF1) Census Data Released June 2001.]



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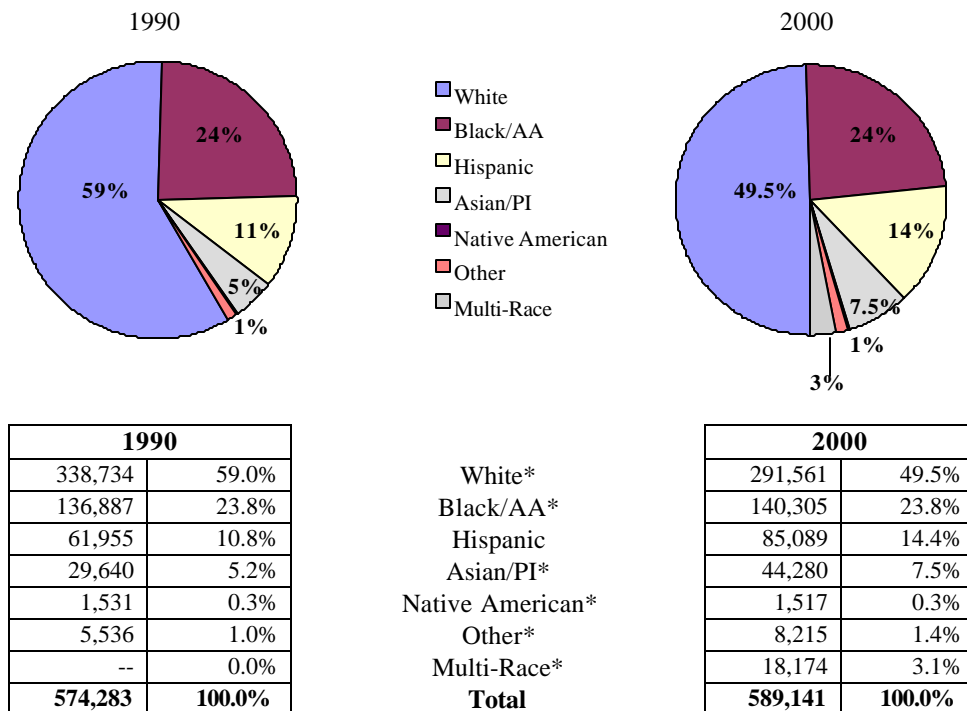
## Population Changes in Boston's Asian and Hispanic Ethnic Groups: 1990 and 2000

### Introduction

Between 1990 and 2000, according to the 2000 Census, the City of Boston experienced its largest population gain since the 1940s, growing from 574,283 to 589,141, an increase of 2.6%. In addition to the population growth, the data reveal some significant demographic changes that have occurred in the city throughout the 1990s. For the first time in the city's history, Boston's "minority" population has become a "majority" now representing 50.5% of the city's total population. In addition, Boston continues to fulfill its role as a gateway city to America, offering new opportunities for immigrants from around the world.

The most significant growth in Boston's minority population occurred in the Asian and Hispanic populations, which grew 47% and 37%, respectively<sup>1</sup>. Boston's African American population, on the other hand, grew by only 2.4%, but remained the city's largest minority group with 23.8% of the population. In contrast to the growth among various minority groups, - Boston's White population decreased by 11%.<sup>2</sup>

### Change in Boston's Race/Ethnicity, 1990-2000



\*Non-Hispanic

<sup>1</sup> Hispanic population includes people of all races who identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino on the 2000 Census form.

<sup>2</sup> These census data differ only slightly from the initial release data of March 2001 presented in BRA Report #541 because they are based upon SF1 data released by the US Census in June 2001.

Boston's Hispanic population grew by 23,134, and Hispanics remained as the city's second largest minority group, growing from 10.8% of the city's population in 1990 to 14.4% in 2000. Asians grew faster, as noted above, but their numbers were smaller, gaining 14,640 and increasing from 5.2% of the city's population to 7.5% during the decade, while remaining as the city's third largest minority group.

This report, based on the Census Bureau data from the 2000 Summary File 1 for Massachusetts, focuses only on the growth of Asian and Hispanic ethnic groups. Data for African American and White ethnic groups are not scheduled to be released until the Summer of 2002.

### **The Largest and Fastest Growing Groups Among Asians and Hispanics**

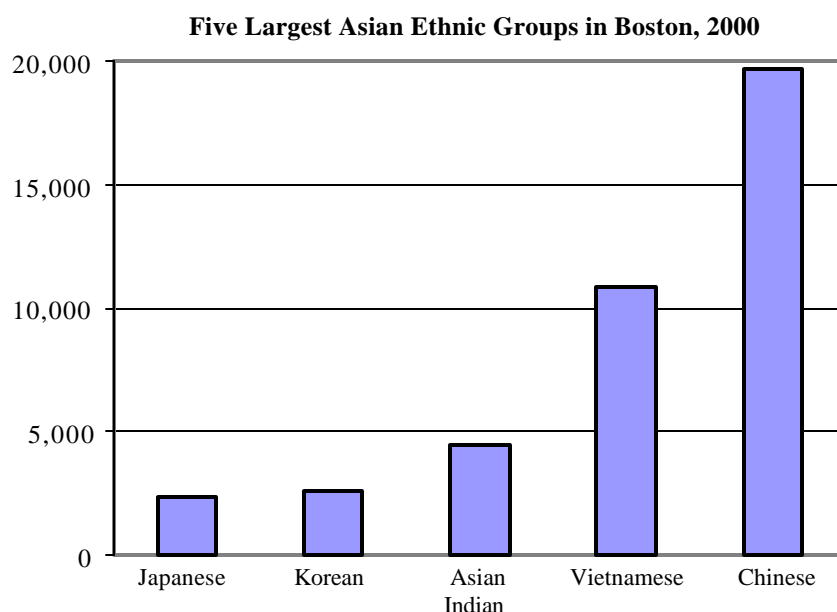
The growth in Boston's Asian population and Hispanic populations is anchored by a number of key ethnic groups. Vietnamese, Chinese, Asian Indian, and Korean ethnic groups have led the Asian growth while Mexicans, Colombians, Salvadorans, and Dominicans have led the Hispanic growth.

| <b>Boston's Largest and Fastest Growing Asian and Hispanic Ethnic Groups</b> |        |                                       |        |
|--|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Largest Ethnic Groups</b>   |        | <b>Fastest Growing Ethnic Groups*</b> |        |
| Puerto Rican   | 27,442 | Vietnamese                            | 127.6% |
| Chinese  | 19,638 | Asian Indian                          | 126.4% |
| Dominican  | 12,981 | Korean                                | 123.7% |
| Vietnamese   | 10,818 | Mexican                               | 89.4%  |
| Salvadoran   | 5,333  | Colombian                             | 71.2%  |
| *Only includes groups numbering over 500                                     |        |                                       |        |

The city's largest Asian and Hispanic ethnic groups are not necessarily the city's fastest growing. In fact, Boston's two largest Asian and Hispanic ethnic groups, Puerto Ricans and Chinese, both experienced growth under 20%. But Boston's Asian population, which grew greater than the Hispanics or any other racial group between 1990 and 2000, was bolstered by surges from the three fastest growing ethnic groups - Vietnamese, Asian Indians, and Koreans.

## Changes in Boston's Asian Population

Census 2000 data show that the Chinese remain the largest Asian ethnic group in Boston, accounting for about 44% of the city's total Asian population, down from 55% in 1990. Boston's Vietnamese community, which grew faster than any other Asian ethnic group between 1990 and 2000, continued as Boston's second largest Asian ethnic group, accounting for 24% of the total Asian population, up from 16% in 1990. During this time period, Boston's Vietnamese population more than doubled, growing by almost 128%.



| <b>Boston's Asian Population, 1990-2000: Ethnic Groups as Percent of Total<sup>3</sup></b> |             |                         |             |                         |
|--|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Ethnicity</b>   | <b>2000</b> | <b>Percent of Total</b> | <b>1990</b> | <b>Percent of Total</b> |
| Chinese  | 19,638      | 44.3%                   | 16,701      | 55.3%                   |
| Vietnamese   | 10,818      | 24.4%                   | 4,754       | 15.8%                   |
| Asian Indian   | 4,442       | 10.0%                   | 1,962       | 6.5%                    |
| Korean   | 2,564       | 5.8%                    | 1,146       | 3.8%                    |
| Japanese   | 2,384       | 5.4%                    | 1,784       | 5.9%                    |
| Filipino   | 1,405       | 3.2%                    | 1,025       | 3.4%                    |
| Cambodian  | 528         | 1.2%                    | 1,002       | 3.3%                    |
| Thai   | 378         | 0.9%                    | 293         | 1.0%                    |
| Laotian  | 114         | 0.3%                    | 287         | 1.0%                    |
| Hmong  | 10          | 0.0%                    | 2           | 0.0%                    |
| Other Asian*   | 1,377       | 3.1%                    | 1,225       | 4.1%                    |
| Two or More Asian Ethnicity  | 626         | 1.4%                    | NA**        | --                      |

\*Includes a host of Asian ethnic groups such as Pakistani (267), Indonesian (198), Bangladeshi (63), Sri Lankan (60), and Malaysian (55) among others which were not specified in detail in 1990 or 2000.

\*\*Not counted in 1990.

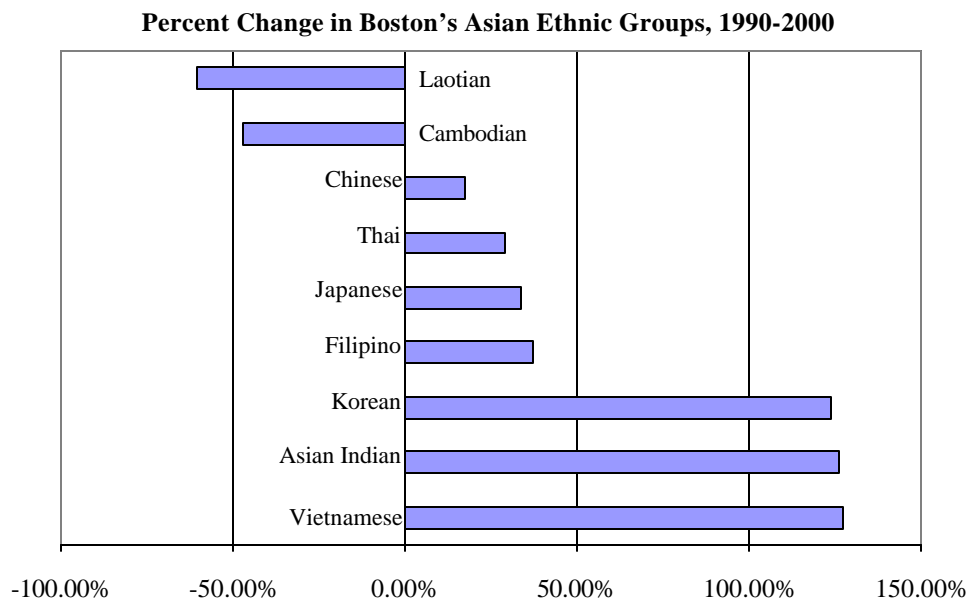
<sup>3</sup> The total number of Asians in this table differs somewhat from the total shown in the 2000 population summary on page 1 of this report because this table's data include Asians who claim Hispanic origin as well. In addition, these data do not include Pacific Islanders, while the summary on page 1 does. These differences arise from the different reporting formats of the U.S. Census early release of PL 174 data in March 2000 and SF1 data in June 2000. Despite these differences, these data currently represent the most up-to-date reporting of ethnicity among the 2000 Asian population.

Asian Indians and Koreans, Boston's third and fourth largest Asian ethnic groups, also more than doubled their population between 1990 and 2000, growing by 126% to 4,442 and 124% to 2,564 respectively.

| <b>Boston's Asian Population 1990-2000:<br/>Changes in Number and Percent*</b> |                             |                              |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Ethnicity</b>   | <b>Change in<br/>Number</b> | <b>Change in<br/>Percent</b> |
| Vietnamese   | 6,064                       | 127.6%                       |
| Chinese  | 2,937                       | 17.6%                        |
| Asian Indian   | 2,480                       | 126.4%                       |
| Korean   | 1,418                       | 123.7%                       |
| Japanese   | 600                         | 33.6%                        |
| Filipino   | 380                         | 37.1%                        |
| Thai   | 85                          | 29.0%                        |
| Hmong  | 8                           | 400.0%                       |
| Laotian  | -173                        | -60.3%                       |
| Cambodian  | -474                        | -47.3%                       |

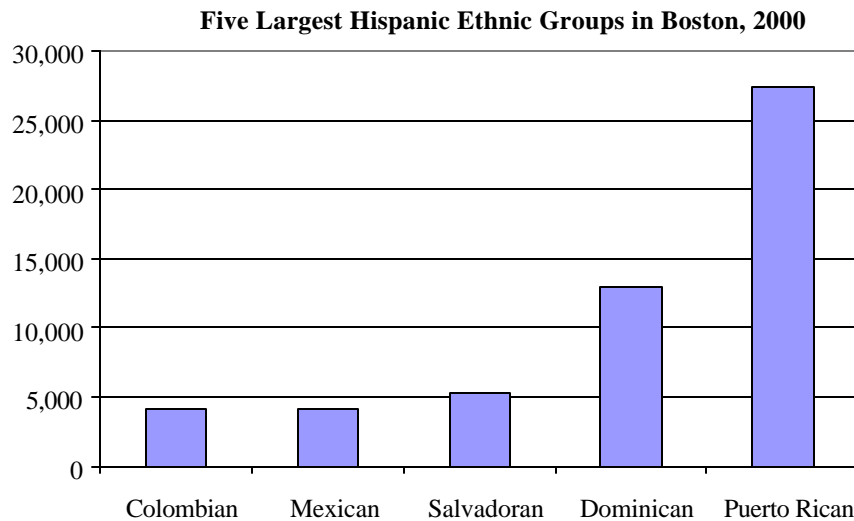
\* Not included are Pakistani, Indonesian, Sri Lankan, Malaysian, Bangladeshi, or Asians declaring other or multiple ethnic groups because such data were not available for 1990.

The "Other Asian" ethnic category consisting of small numbers of Pakistani, Indonesian, Sri Lankan, and Malaysian were not specified in 1990 in detail. Their number rose from 1,225 to 1,377 – a small increase. Also, in 2000 the Census counted 626 persons who specified two or more Asian categories – a number not determined in 1990. The Southeast Asian populations of Laotian and Cambodian both experienced significant declines in their populations, falling 60% and 47% respectively.



## Changes in Boston's Hispanic Population

Puerto Ricans remained the largest Hispanic group in Boston in 2000, numbering over 27,000 and making up 32% of all Hispanics in the city, down from about 42% in 1990. Dominicans, the second largest Hispanic ethnic group, grew more numerically than any other Hispanic ethnic group, adding over 5,000 people. Mexicans, Colombians, and Salvadorans all grew at rates above 65% between 1990 and 2000.



| <b>Boston's Hispanic Population, 1990-2000: Ethnic Groups as Percent of Total</b> |               |                         |               |                         |
|---|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Ethnicity</b>  | <b>2000</b>   | <b>Percent of Total</b> | <b>1990</b>   | <b>Percent of Total</b> |
| Puerto Rican  | 27,442        | 32.3%                   | 25,767        | 41.6%                   |
| Dominican*  | 12,981        | 15.3%                   | 7,938         | 12.8%                   |
| Salvadoran  | 5,333         | 6.3%                    | 3,178         | 5.1%                    |
| Mexican   | 4,126         | 4.8%                    | 2,179         | 3.5%                    |
| Colombian   | 4,065         | 4.8%                    | 2,374         | 3.8%                    |
| Guatemalan  | 2,554         | 3.0%                    | 2,501         | 4.0%                    |
| Cuban   | 2,221         | 2.6%                    | 2,483         | 4.0%                    |
| Honduran  | 1,822         | 2.1%                    | 1,663         | 2.7%                    |
| Peruvian  | 759           | 0.9%                    | 879           | 1.4%                    |
| Venezuelan  | 638           | 0.7%                    | NA**          | --                      |
| Panamanian  | 527           | 0.6%                    | 531           | 0.9%                    |
| Costa Rican   | 437           | 0.6%                    | NA            | --                      |
| Argentinean   | 421           | 0.5%                    | NA            | --                      |
| Ecuadorian  | 385           | 0.5%                    | 353           | 0.6%                    |
| Chilean   | 315           | 0.4%                    | NA            | --                      |
| Nicaraguan  | 247           | 0.3%                    | 218           | 0.4%                    |
| Bolivian  | 115           | 0.1%                    | NA            | --                      |
| Uruguayan   | 54            | 0.1%                    | NA            | --                      |
| Paraguayan  | 24            | 0.0%                    | NA            | --                      |
| Other Central American  | 612           | 0.7%                    | 465           | 0.8%                    |
| All Other South American  | 228           | 0.3%                    | NA**          | --                      |
| Other Hispanic***   | 19,783        | 23.2%                   | 7,852         | 12.7%                   |
| <b>Hispanic Total</b>   | <b>85,089</b> | <b>100.0%</b>           | <b>61,955</b> | <b>100.0%</b>           |

\*1990 Numbers for Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans are from Summary Tape File (STF)3 and not STF1 data, so totals may not be exact.

\*\*Not Counted in 1990.

\*\*\*Consists of two sub-categories: Spanish, Spaniard, or Spanish American (3,003), which were not counted in 1990, and Not Specified (16,780).

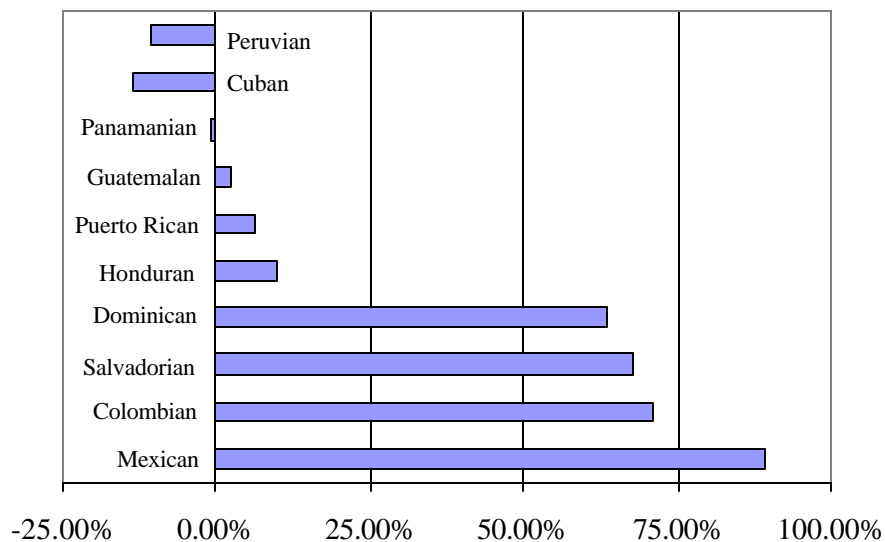
Those who were counted only as “Other Hispanic” accounted for over 50% of the overall Hispanic growth, growing from 7,852 in 1990 to 19,783 in 2000. As noted at the bottom of the previous table, this category consisted of 3,003 persons who, for the first time in 2000, identified themselves as Spanish, Spaniard, or Spanish American, while the remaining 16,780 did not specify any ethnic group. While the Other Hispanic total grew by 12.7% between 1990 and 2000, it was actually the Not Specified category which accounted for the entire change by growing 114% from 7,852 in 1990 to 16,780 in 2000.<sup>4</sup>

Among those Hispanic groups that declined in population over the last decade are Cubans, Peruvians, and Panamanians.

| <b>Boston's Hispanic Population 1990-2000:<br/>Changes in Number and Percent*</b> |                         |                          |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Ethnicity</b>  | <b>Change in Number</b> | <b>Change in Percent</b> |
| Dominican*  | 5,043                   | 63.5%                    |
| Salvadoran  | 2,155                   | 67.8%                    |
| Mexican   | 1,947                   | 89.4%                    |
| Colombian   | 1,691                   | 71.2%                    |
| Puerto Rican  | 1,675                   | 6.5%                     |
| Honduran  | 159                     | 9.6%                     |
| Guatemalan  | 53                      | 2.1%                     |
| Panamanian  | -4                      | -0.8%                    |
| Peruvian  | -120                    | -13.7%                   |
| Cuban   | -262                    | -10.6%                   |
| Hispanic Total  | 23,134                  | 37.3%                    |

\*A number of smaller Hispanic ethnic groups such as Venezuelan, Argentinean, and Bolivian are not included in this chart because such data were not available in 1990.

**Percent Change in Boston's Hispanic Ethnic Groups, 1990-2000**



<sup>4</sup> The identification of Hispanic ethnic groups became more complex in 2000 than it was in 1990 because of changes in the US Census Bureau's questionnaire. A discussion of these changes and ensuing complexities is found in the Appendix.



## Appendix

### Racial and Ethnic Categories Used in the 2000 Census

Over the years, the U.S. Census Bureau has changed the description of and increased the number of its *racial* categories to accommodate the way respondents identify themselves. By 2000, the number of racial categories had increased to 63, as the Census Bureau, for the first time, permitted respondents to classify themselves in more than one category. The Bureau then collapsed the 63 categories into eight major categories. (In 1990, there were only six categories.) Meanwhile, the Census Bureau has continued to divide persons in all racial groups into one of two *ethnic* categories: either *Hispanic or Latino* or *Not Hispanic or Latino*, for a total of 126 racial-ethnic categories.

This report is based on the U.S. Census Bureau's initial release in March of 2001 of PL 94-171 data for the year 2000. In order to compare the 2000 Census results with those of past years and to track changes in Boston's racial and ethnic diversity, it has been necessary to reduce the Census Bureau's eight categories to seven categories as shown in the following chart. These categories permit the tracking of demographic changes in Boston over the past 20 years.

| <b>Census Bureau Categories</b>  | <b>BRA Categories</b>               |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. White (Non-Hispanic)  | <b>1. White*</b>                    |
| 2. Black or African American (Non-Hispanic )   | <b>2. Black/African American*</b>   |
| 3. Hispanic or Latino (across all racial categories including Multi-Racial)            | <b>3. Hispanic<sup>5</sup></b>      |
| 4. Asian (Non-Hispanic )<br>5. Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander (Non-Hispanic) | <b>4. Asian/Pacific Islander*</b>   |
| 6. American Indian or Alaskan Native (Non-Hispanic)                                    | <b>5. Native American*</b>          |
| 7. Other Races (Non-Hispanic)  | <b>6. Other Single Race*</b>        |
| 8. Multi-Racial (Bi-Racial and Multi-Racial, Non-Hispanic)                             | <b>7. Multi-Racial*<sup>1</sup></b> |

\* Non-Hispanic

Using these racial and ethnic categories, the charts, tables, and maps which follow present an overview of the changes in Boston's population which occurred between 1980 and 2000 in the city as a whole as well as its neighborhoods. A more detailed analysis of race and ethnicity using all of the Census Bureau's new racial and ethnic definitions will be available at a later date.

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<sup>5</sup> Note: The distribution of the races of persons classifying themselves as Hispanic as well as the distribution of persons classifying themselves as being of more than one race (Bi-Racial or Multi-Racial) appear in a table at the end of this presentation.

### Discussion of the “Other Hispanic/Latino” Category

In addition to the specified categories of Hispanic/Latinos there are considerable numbers of people in the “Other Hispanic/Latino” category.<sup>6</sup> Overall this total went from 7,852 in 1990 to 19,783 in 2000. This increase does not reflect the proliferation of persons in other categories of origin in addition to the ones already specified. There are several reasons for the large numbers in this category.

First, we can separate out the 3,003 persons who answered “Spanish,” “Spaniard,” or “Spanish American.” These persons are either expressing possible European Spanish origin (Spaniard) or are indicating a general preference to be known as having Hispanic/Latino heritage but are not identifying with one particular category. This may be because they have more than one possible categorical identification, because they are not sure of their actual ancestry, or because they did not want to indicate a preference. These exact definitions were not similarly spelled out in 1990 so one cannot see the changes over the decade.

Second, the remainder of the “Other Hispanic/Latino” category includes all of those who identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino but did not, for whatever reasons, indicate a particular category. This grouping is included in the table note as “Not Specified” and shows an increase from 1990 at 7,852 to 16,780 in the year 2000. While it is possible that some of these respondents were intentionally leaving the open-ended response blank and thereby not declaring a preference, it is more likely that most just forgot to write down their more narrowly defined selection. The Census Bureau changed the questionnaire in 2000 to include fewer categories to check and leaving it up to the respondent to choose to write in their particular ethnic category. The result was that more people left the open-ended response blank after they had checked the Hispanic/Latino preference.

Because of these reasons, the prevalence of a large “Other Hispanic/Latino” category most likely results in one or more of the following three outcomes. The first is that by not indicating specific categories, the checked and reported specific ethnic groups are more than likely undercounted, and categories such as Puerto Rican, Dominican, Salvadoran, and so on are probably smaller than they actually should be. The second is that some Hispanic/Latino respondents probably either did not know their ancestry or wanted to indicate two, three, or more categories. The third is that some Hispanic/Latinos may want to identify with the larger group but did not wish to identify with a particular narrowly-defined heritage.

The redesign of the questionnaire in 2000 placed the Hispanic/Latino question physically before the racial question which probably resulted in a better enumeration of the total Hispanic/Latino group. By reducing the actual list of categories to check, however, and resorting to more open-ended responses, some of the detailed ethnic descriptions were lost. In Boston the effect does not seem to result in any serious distortions, since most of the groups have increased. In contrast, the count in New York City, for example, is suspect because some of the larger groups actually declined in number between 1990 and 2000, presumably because of the change in the questionnaire. (See “A Census Query Is Said to Skew Data on Latinos,” *The New York Times*, June 27, 2001.)

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<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau uses Hispanic/Latino as the category name. In this report we have referred to the category as Hispanic, for the most part.

