



## What the 2010 Census tells us about us: We're more diverse, but . . .

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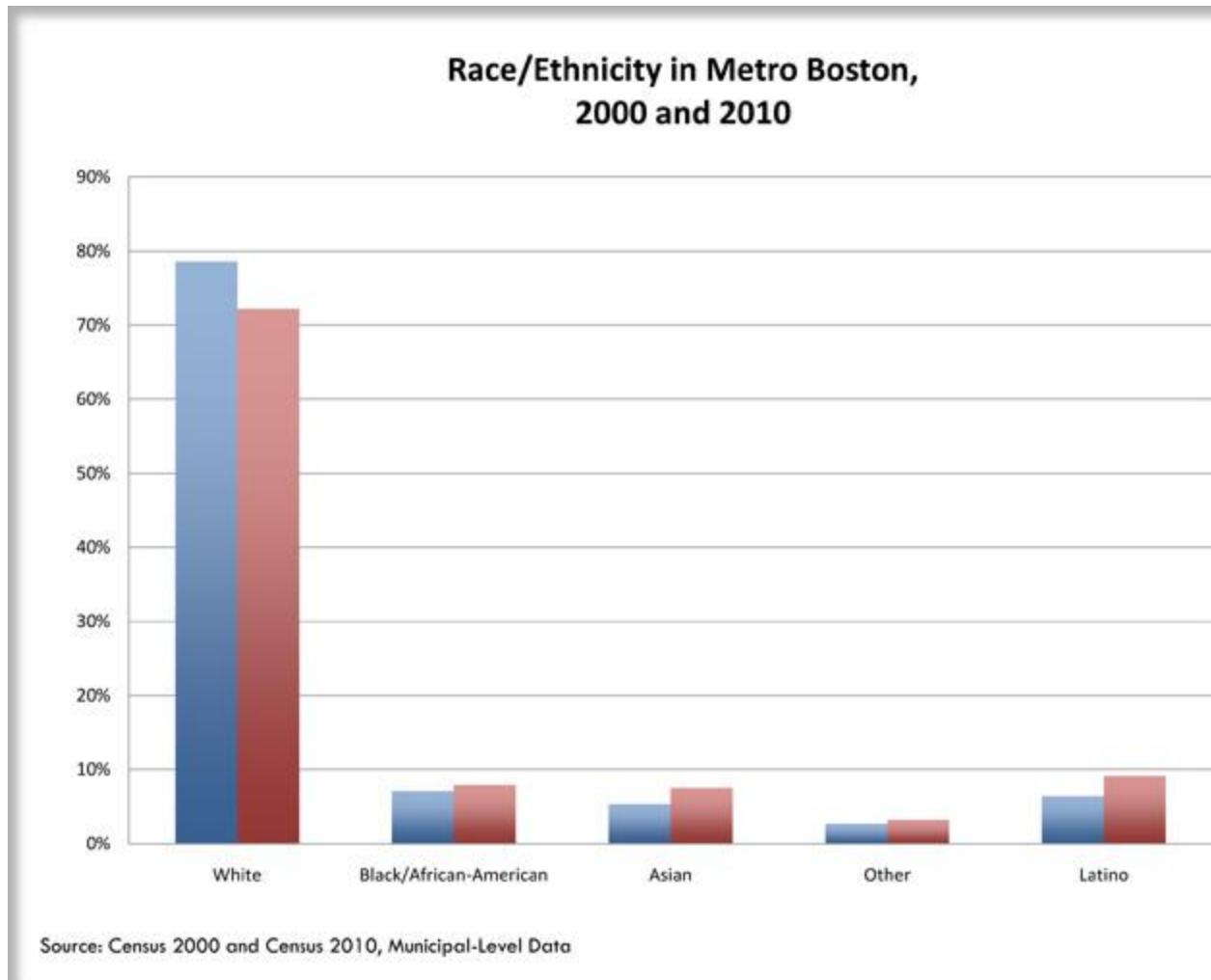
Written by Jack Curtis



The numbers are in. This past March, the U.S. Census Bureau began releasing eagerly awaited data for the 2010 Census. Since then, researchers, legislators, people in the educational and health care arenas, and leaders in the public and private sector began to ply those numbers, hoping to make sense of them so that they could make use of them. The U.S. Census is often said to provide a national portrait at a particular time; similarly, the local numbers also yield a good picture of present-day Massachusetts as well as Boston.

The run up to the April start of the 2010 Census process saw an unprecedented national and grassroots push to increase the percent of households that return their Census forms. The Massachusetts statewide participation rate of 75 percent slightly bested the national average of 74 percent. In another positive note, according to the Boston-based Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), only six census tracts in Metro Boston - the 101 cities and towns of Greater Boston - had participation rates lower than 50 percent, compared with 35 in 2000.

Prior to the 2010 Census, Bay State numbers crunchers foresaw two likely scenarios: The state might lose a Congressional seat and that immigrants, the state's fastest growing segment, would assure that Massachusetts numbers would still stay strong.



## Massachusetts by the numbers

The population of Massachusetts increased by 3.1 percent, rising to 6,547,629. The state's steady but slow growth rate was no match for the substantial population increases in the West and South, which garnered 84 percent of nation's increases. Results showed that Massachusetts would, indeed, lose one of its 10 Congressional seats. The state dodged that bullet in 2000, but not this time around.

Using the new figures, state lawmakers have through June to redraw the Bay State's House and Senate districts. Once that's done, the legislature can start redrawing the nine Congressional districts, which are expected to hold about 727,500 residents each. The new districts resulting from the 2010 federal census will take effect for 2012 state primaries, state elections and presidential primaries.

Reflecting a national trend, the state logged substantial increases in Hispanics (46 percent), Asians (47 percent), and African Americans (27 percent). Minorities now represent 6.6 percent of the state's population. Immigrants' share of the region's population went up nearly three

percent since 2000. Native and foreign born Latino and Asian populations have grown at the fastest rates in the region over the past decade. Asian populations represented the fastest growing racial group in Massachusetts between 2000 and 2010. The non-Hispanic white population dropped four percent over the decade, although the state remains overwhelmingly white.

MAPC data reveals that most racial minority residents live in the cities' inner cores, particularly Boston, and in other urbanized areas. Immigrants live basically in a dozen communities out of the region's 101 cities. The highest concentration of Black/African American residents is found in Boston. Latinos are mainly concentrated in the areas just north of Boston, such as Chelsea, Everett and Saugus. Asians are most strongly represented in areas south and west of Boston, such as Quincy and inner core suburbs, including the Newton-Brookline area.

Boston's high degree of segregation - in line with traditionally segregated cities like Detroit and Chicago - actually place it behind many parts of the country, according to Brown University sociologist John Logan, who directs US2010, a nationwide research project on changes in America society. His findings show that as diversity in the nation grows, progress toward integrating neighborhoods appears to have stopped in the past decade.

"This development comes with negative consequences," said Brown, "as many minorities have less access to resources and opportunities. There's a strong pull that's making many communities separate but unequal."

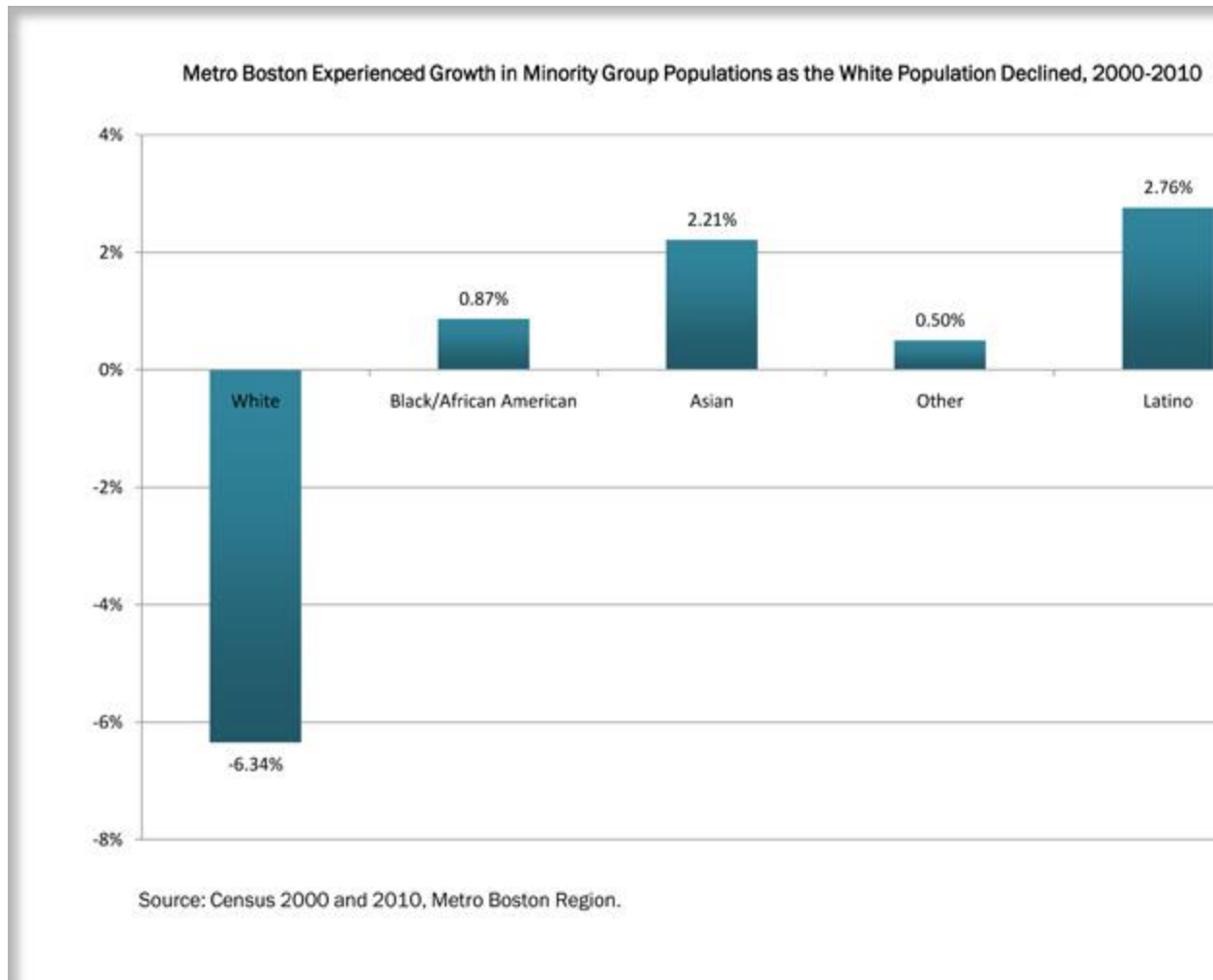
"Massachusetts, on the whole, is more diverse, but many areas are largely homogeneous," said MAPC executive director March Draisen. "There have been some advances in integration in some, not most, cities and towns. We're still a state that's highly segregated by race and income. We're still dealing with issues of inequality in greater Boston."

"The good news though is that up and down the line, leaders and communities are eager to embrace diversity. They are developing 'the right attitude' and addressing the challenge of becoming more inclusive."

### **Boston by the numbers**

The City of Boston's total population for 2010 is 617,594, an increase of 28,453, or 4.8 percent rise since 2000. Comparatively, Boston's population grew by 14,858 between 1990 and 2000, or 2.6 percent. Boston's population decreased steadily between 1950 and 1980, going from 800,000 to 563,000. The total population of Boston has been increasing since the 1980s. This marks the first time since 1970 that Boston's Census population is more than 600,000.

"I am proud to see Boston's population continue to grow," said Mayor Thomas Menino. "Our city continues to be a vibrant and attractive place live, work and raise a family. As we continue to innovate and bring new jobs to our city and work to provide opportunities for families, I am confident Boston will continue to grow and thrive."



In 2000, Boston officially became a majority-minority city, with just over half of its residents (50 percent) identifying as a race/ethnicity other than non-Hispanic White. This trend continued in 2010 with Boston increasing its share of minorities to 53 percent, solidifying its majority-minority status. Chelsea (at 75 percent), Lynn (52 percent), and Randolph (61 percent) are also majority-minority cities in the Metro Boston region.

Whites comprise the overwhelming majority of the region's population in both 2000 and 2010, although Metro Boston has become increasingly diverse with minority populations increasing between 2000 and 2010, up 6.3 percentage points. The Latino and Asian populations grew by the greatest percentages (3 percent and 2 percent respectively), the percentage of Blacks/African Americans increased slightly, and Whites decreased as a share of the total population. White residents of Metro Boston live in neighborhoods that are, on average, 83 percent white and only four percent African American. African American residents, by contrast, live in neighborhoods that average 43 percent white and 31 percent African American. Likewise, Latino residents in Metro Boston live in neighborhoods that are about 31 percent Hispanic, while white

residents live in areas that were roughly 6 percent Hispanic.

### **Advances and challenges**

"While still heavily segregated, Boston has done a good job of becoming a more welcoming, inclusive city," Draisen said. "We've seen many positive developments. But for the metro region to reflect the state's diversity as a whole, cities and towns must address the issues of zoning, transit openness, and affordable housing. They have a long way to go, but I see a willingness there that didn't exist ten years ago."

The census numbers tell many stories and yield a picture of Boston and Massachusetts that is both promising and challenging. As communities, government, nonprofit agencies and business respond to the data, these same numbers can also drive positive change.