

Teen pregnancy and neighborhood norms: Connecting ethnic isolation and teen birth rates among Massachusetts Latinas

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Presenter Disclosures

Sarah Rustan

(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

“No relationships to disclose”

Latinas and Teen Birth

- ▶ Latinas demonstrate high teen birth rates (MDPH 2012)
 - ▶ Latina teens aged 15-19
 - ▶ 49 per 1,000 Latina teens in Massachusetts
 - ▶ 44% decrease since 2000, but still higher than other racial/ethnic groups
 - ▶ Puerto Ricans, the largest Latino group in the Northeast, have particularly high teen birth rates
- ▶ Contributing cultural norms
 - ▶ Significance of motherhood (Torres & Cernada 2003)
 - ▶ Role of religion (Villarruel 1998)

Neighborhood Context

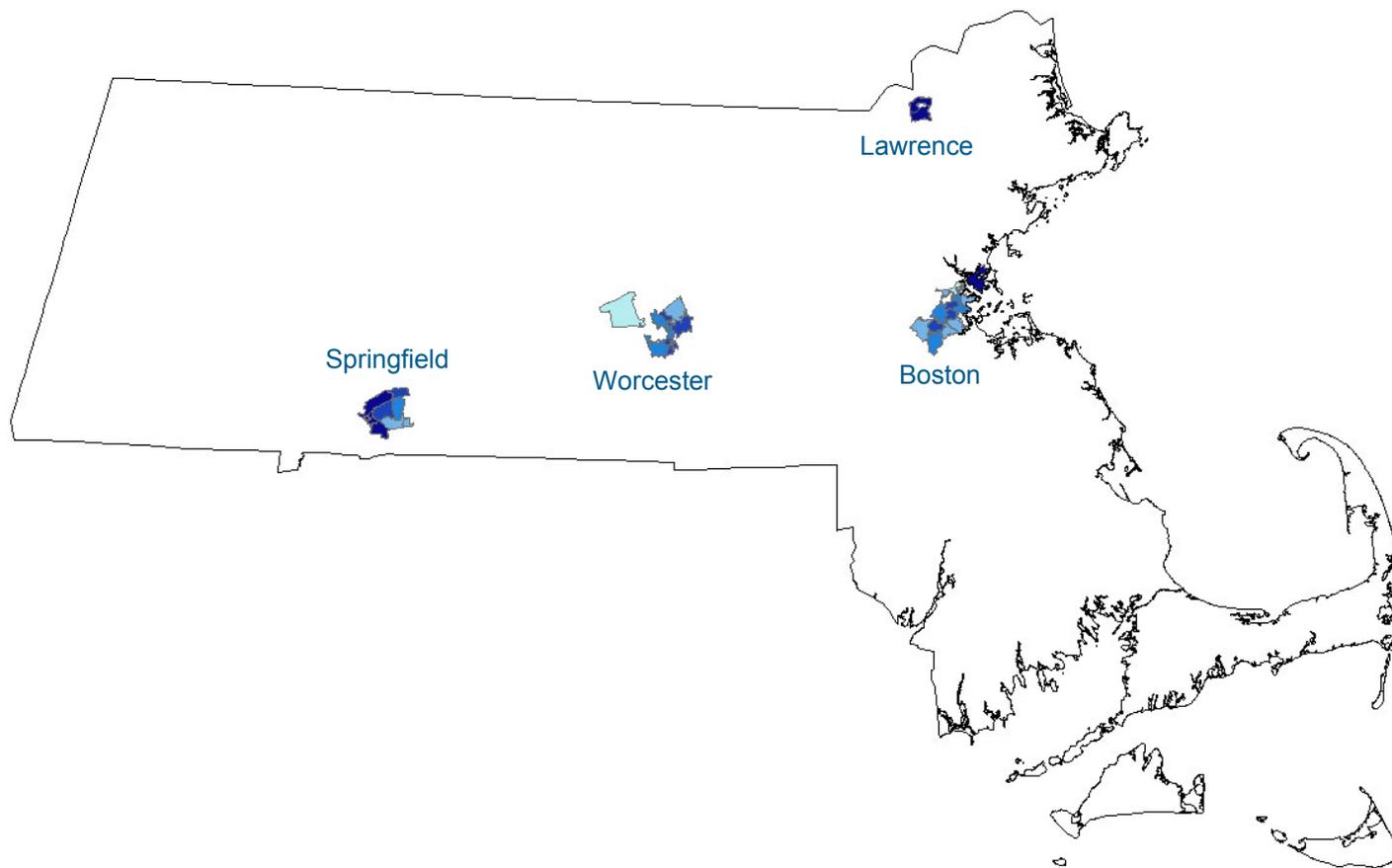
- ▶ Ethnic concentration: The proportion of each census tract that is Latino
 - ▶ Ethnically concentrated neighborhoods linked to health outcomes, both positive and negative (Baker & Hellerstedt 2006)
- ▶ Ethnic isolation: The likelihood that minority members only regularly interact with one another is measured using Massey and Denton's isolation index
 - ▶ Cultural health behavior norms more likely to persist in ethnically isolated neighborhoods (Macintyre et al. 2002; Roy et al. 2013)

Research Hypotheses

- ▶ Hypothesis 1: Latina teen birth rates will be higher in areas where the Latino population experiences higher rates of ethnic concentration or ethnic isolation.
- ▶ Hypothesis 2: There will be a stronger relationship between ethnic isolation and increases in Latina teen birth rates than between ethnic concentration and Latina teen birth rates.

Geography

- ▶ Massachusetts focus: Boston, Lawrence, Worcester, Springfield



Research Methods

- ▶ Birth Certificate Data from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health
 - ▶ Teen birth rate
 - ▶ Latina teen birth rate
- ▶ U.S. Census Data from the 2010 Decennial Census
 - ▶ Ethnic concentration
 - ▶ Ethnic isolation
- ▶ Primary data from *Por Ahí Dicen*
 - ▶ Puerto Rican mothers in Springfield, MA
 - ▶ Preliminary data, $N = 170$

Ethnic Concentration and Latina Teen Birth Rates

Simple Regression Results

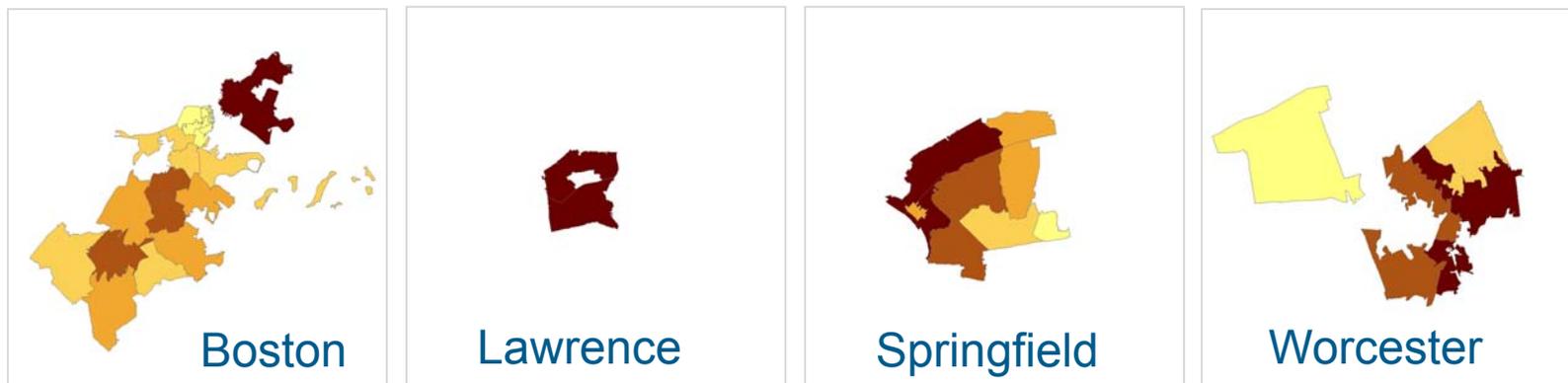
- ▶ Ethnic concentration significantly predicted Latina teen birth rates, $\beta = 148.3$, $p < .001$
- ▶ Ethnic concentration explained a significant proportion of the variance in Latina teen birth rates, $R^2 = .584$



Ethnic Isolation and Latina Teen Birth Rates

Simple Regression Results

- ▶ Ethnic isolation significantly predicted Latina teen birth rates, $\beta = 133.9, p < .05$
- ▶ Ethnic isolation explained a significant proportion of the variance in Latina teen birth rates, $R^2 = .127$
- ▶ Ethnic concentration explained more variance in Latina teen birth rates than ethnic isolation



Preliminary Results from *Por Ahí Dicen*

- ▶ High incidence of teen pregnancy among respondents' families
 - ▶ 67% of respondents were teen mothers
 - ▶ 66% were born to teen mothers
- ▶ Respondents tended to have family-centric social networks
 - ▶ 34% of respondents listed only family members in their primary social network

Discussion

- ▶ There are statistically significant relationships with both ethnic concentration and ethnic isolation and increased teen birth rates among Latinas in Massachusetts
 - ▶ Ethnic concentration is a better predictor of Latina teen birth rates than ethnic isolation
- ▶ Among Latinos, the strong focus on family known as *familismo* may exacerbate the effects of ethnic concentration by further limiting exposure to extra-familial behavioral health norms
- ▶ Teen pregnancy prevention programs need to address local cultural and contextual factors that influence behavioral health norms at multiple levels
 - ▶ Individual, familial, neighborhood

Next Steps

- ▶ Examine relationship at a smaller geographic area
 - ▶ Census tracts
- ▶ Incorporate other tract-level predictors from census
 - ▶ E.g. % high school graduate or less, % poverty
- ▶ Analyze final data from *Por Ahí Dicen*

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