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The Growing Latino Population of Massachusetts: A Demographic and Economic Portrait

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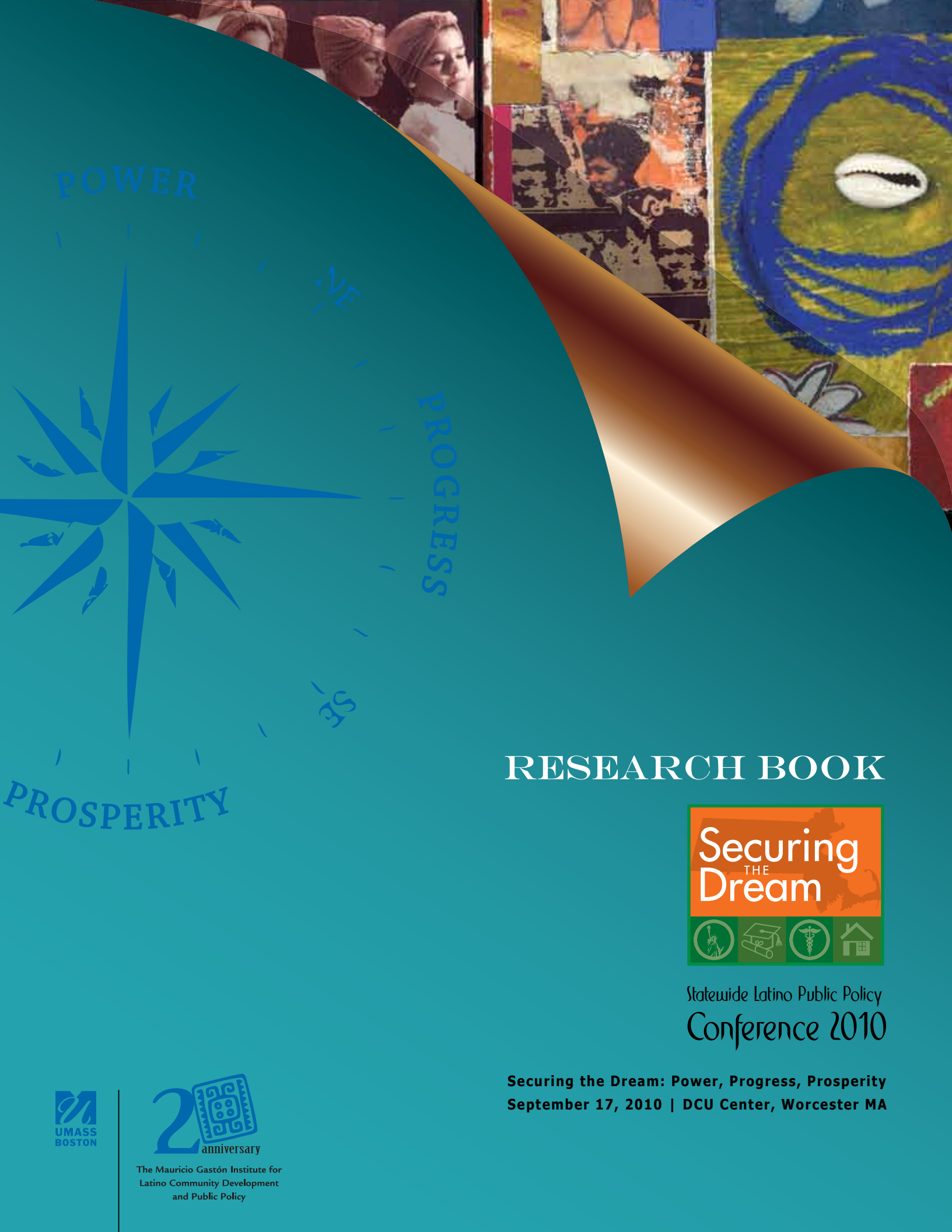


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RESEARCH BOOK



Statewide Latino Public Policy
Conference 2010

Securing the Dream: Power, Progress, Prosperity
September 17, 2010 | DCU Center, Worcester MA



The Mauricio Gastón Institute for
Latino Community Development
and Public Policy



Statewide Latino Public Policy
Conference 2010

CHAPTER 1

The Growing Latino Population of Massachusetts: A Demographic and Economic Portrait

By Phillip Granberry, PhD and Maria Idali Torres, PhD

POWER



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This report highlights the growing number, and increasing diversity, of Latinos in Massachusetts. In this state, as well as nationally, Latinos' share of the population continues to increase, in contrast to the aging non-Latino white population. If Massachusetts were to keep all its congressional seats in the reapportionment that will follow the 2010 Census, it would be chiefly due to the growth in its Latino and Asian population. The Latino population is young, with a high rate of dependent children and a very low rate of dependent elders. Its workforce composition remains stable: Latinos continue to be over-represented in blue-collar and service-sector jobs and under-represented in white-collar jobs. Across all occupational sectors (including white-collar jobs), Latino workers earn less on average than those of other ethno-racial groups. Latinos also lag in regard to private medical insurance coverage and homeownership. Owning a home is a tangible mechanism for prosperity in many families and communities, a foundation to securing the dream.

The central policy question is how the growth of the Latino population affects the economic and sociopolitical fabric of Massachusetts.

Introduction

The Growing Latino Population of Massachusetts: A Demographic and Economic Portrait is based on the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS), a yearly nationwide survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau to document ongoing changes in states and communities over time. Unlike the decennial Census, the ACS is based on a sample of the population. Our descriptive analysis uses both household- and individual-level ACS data to estimate population size and percentages, to compare Latinos to other ethno-racial groups (e.g., whites, blacks, and Asians), and to compare the top ten Latino sub-populations in Massachusetts by ancestry. These are Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Brazilians, Salvadorans, Mexicans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Hondurans, Peruvians, and Cubans. We use ancestry, based on migration from Latin America, rather than language: a self-identified Latino born in Massachusetts may have ancestors from a Latin American country but speak only English only (Hayes-Bautista & Chapa, 1987). For purposes of this report, Brazilians are included in the category "Latino," though most Brazilians self-report using a racial category – white or black – rather than identifying with the term "Latino."

This socio-demographic and economic portrait of the growing Latino Massachusetts is divided into three sections: socio-demographic characteristics (population growth, ancestry, age, gender, marital status); socioeconomic characteristics (education, jobs, wages, housing, medical insurance); and policy implications.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Population Composition and Growth

Latinos comprise the second largest ethno-racial group in Massachusetts, making up 8.5% of the population, and their population increased by nearly 30% since 2000. As illustrated in Figure 1, even though non-Latino whites made up the vast majority of the population in the state in 2008 (78.6%), their population had declined by 4.8% during the 2000s (Figure 2). Non-Latino blacks are the third largest ethno-racial group, and their population increased, but at the lower rate of 9.3%. Asians are the only ethno-racial group that increased at a faster rate than Latinos (33.6%), but they are the smallest of the four major ethno-racial groups and make up only 4.9% of the state's population.¹

Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in Massachusetts

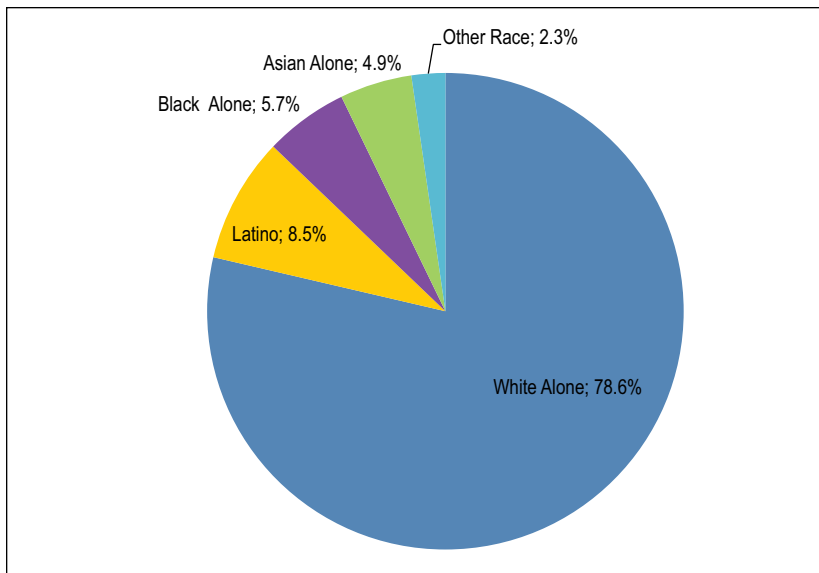
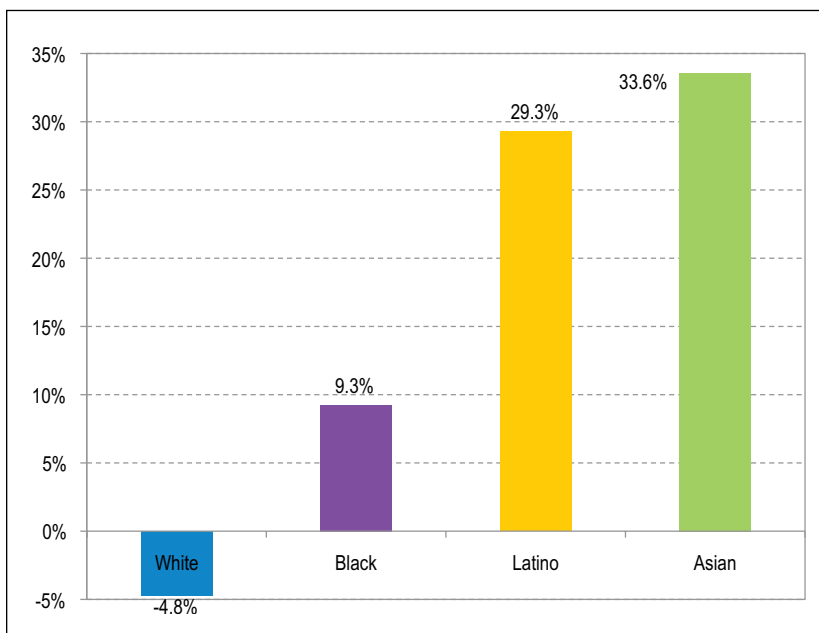


Figure 2: Population Growth by Latinos and Other Ethno-Racial Groups in Massachusetts from 2000 to 2008



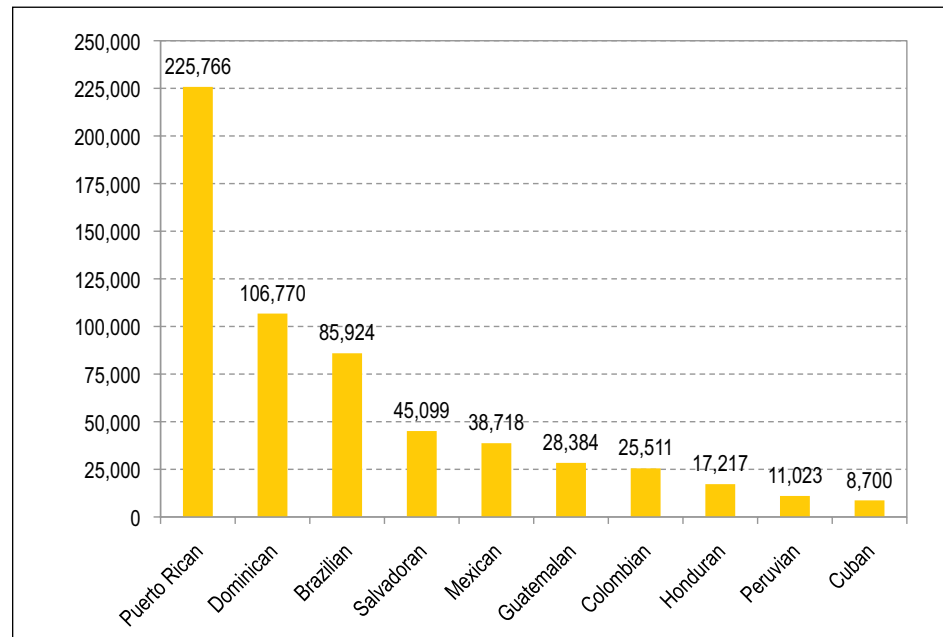
Ancestry and Nativity of Latinos in Massachusetts

Table 1 shows the growth of all Latino sub-populations during the 2000s. While Puerto Ricans remained the primary Latino sub-population, other groups including Dominicans and Brazilians have increased at a faster rate during the past decade. The other top Latino ancestry groups in descending order are Salvadorans, Mexicans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Hondurans, Peruvians, and Cubans.

Table 1: Change in Ancestry of Latino Population in Massachusetts, 2000 – 2004 – 2008

	2000	2004	2008	Change 2000-2004	Change 2004-2008	Change 2000-2008
Total Population	6,349,097	6,201,416	6,497,967	-2.3%	4.8%	2.3%
Latino	427,340	478,929	552,533	12.1%	15.4%	29.3%
Puerto Rican	200,001	218,763	225,766	9.4%	3.2%	12.9%
Dominican	53,350	74,499	106,770	39.6%	43.3%	100.1%
Brazilian	28,921	55,554	85,924	92.1%	54.7%	197.1%
Salvadoran	17,235	28,585	45,099	65.9%	57.8%	161.7%
Mexican	21,201	18,614	38,718	-12.2%	108.0%	82.6%
Guatemalan	12,020	31,171	28,384	159.3%	-8.9%	136.1%
Colombian	14,157	27,685	25,511	95.6%	-7.9%	80.2%
Honduran	5,689	13,365	17,217	134.9%	28.8%	202.6%
Peruvian	4,378	5,591	11,023	27.7%	97.2%	151.8%
Cuban	8,551	6,198	8,700	-27.5%	40.4%	1.7%

Figure 3: Ancestry of the Top 10 Latino Groups in Massachusetts in 2008



Geographical Distribution

In addition to this state-wide demographic report, the Gaston Institute is also producing demographic profiles of 14 urban areas in the state.² Table 2 reports the concentration of Latinos in cities in Massachusetts. Latinos are most concentrated in the Lawrence-Methuen-Andover area, where they comprise 39.0% of the population, and the city of Springfield, where they comprise 36.7% of the population. In Boston, which is home to nearly 20% of the state's Latino population, Latinos account for 16.3% of the city's population.

Table 2: Ethno-Racial Breakdown of the Population in Percentages of Selected Geographic Areas in 2008

	Latino	White	Black	Asian	Other Race
Lawrence, Methuen, & Andover	39.0%	55.0%	1.3%	3.7%	1.0%
Springfield	36.7%	40.5%	19.2%	1.3%	2.3%
Worcester	22.3%	63.8%	7.8%	3.9%	2.2%
Chelsea, Revere, & Winthrop	28.6%	58.1%	6.1%	4.3%	2.8%
Chicopee, Holyoke, & East-hampton	22.2%	72.1%	2.4%	2.2%	1.2%
Lynn, Nahant, & Saugus	16.5%	66.7%	8.5%	6.0%	2.2%
Boston	16.3%	51.1%	20.9%	8.1%	3.5%
Somerville & Everett	11.1%	67.8%	7.7%	8.7%	4.7%
Lowell	11.7%	57.0%	8.9%	20.4%	2.0%
Framingham & Cochituate	10.7%	74.3%	4.8%	7.6%	2.6%
Malden & Medford	8.3%	64.3%	12.9%	11.9%	2.7%
Brockton & Abington	7.6%	58.7%	26.6%	1.5%	5.7%
Cambridge	7.6%	68.3%	8.6%	10.8%	4.7%
Salem, Beverly, Marblehead, & Swampscott	5.9%	87.6%	3.0%	1.7%	1.9%

Age and Gender Distribution

The median age for Latinos is 26 years, compared to 38 years for the total population in Massachusetts. Figures 4A and 4B offer a study in contrasting age profiles, with younger ages much more heavily represented in the Latino chart. The Latino population has greatest concentration in ages 34 and below, while the overall population has the greatest concentration in the age categories from 40 to 54.

Figure 4A: Age Distribution of the Latino Population

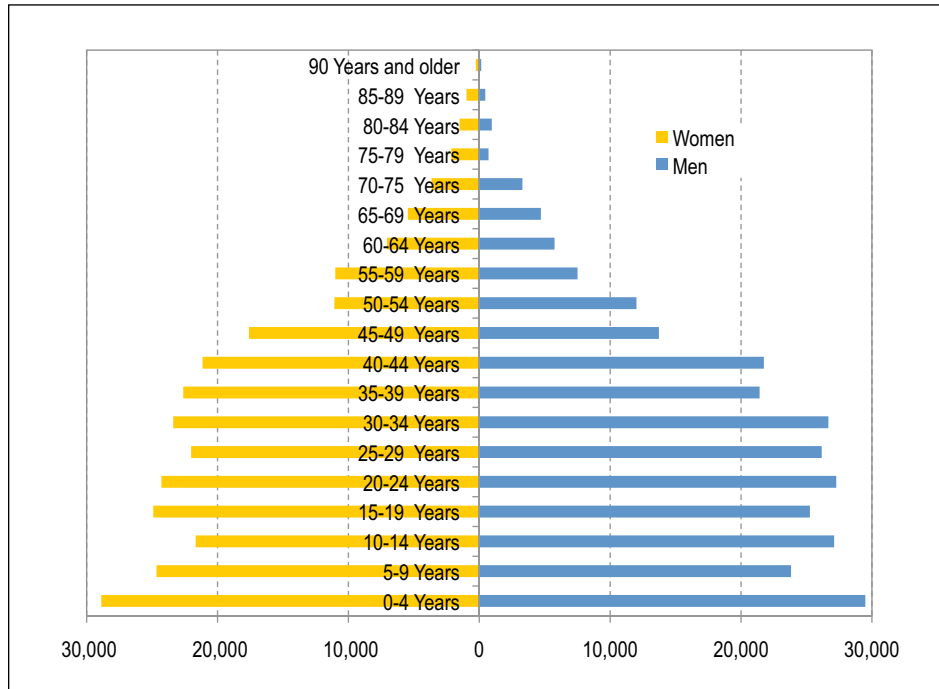
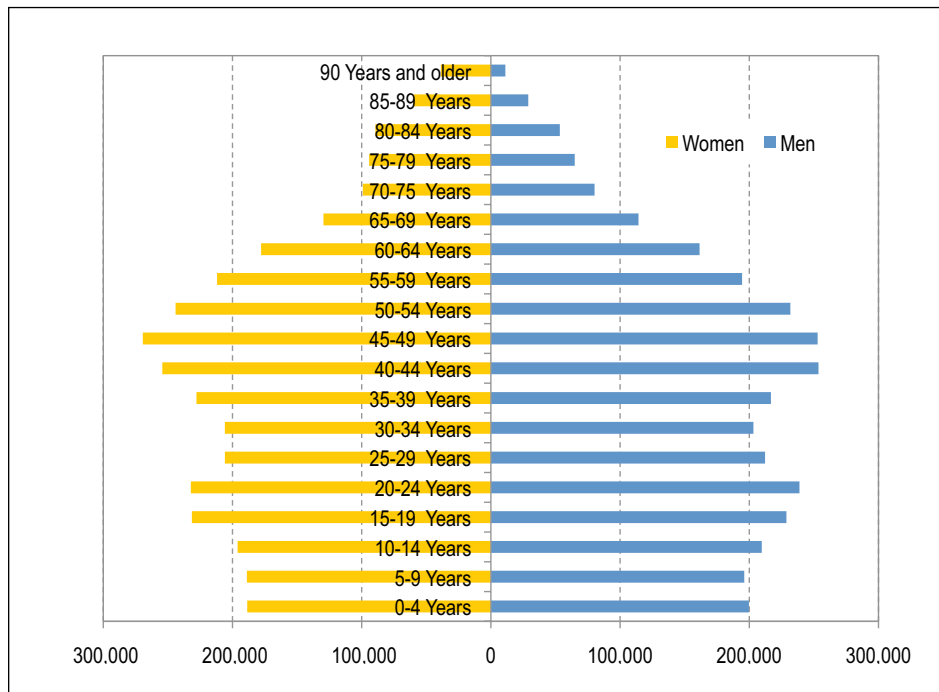
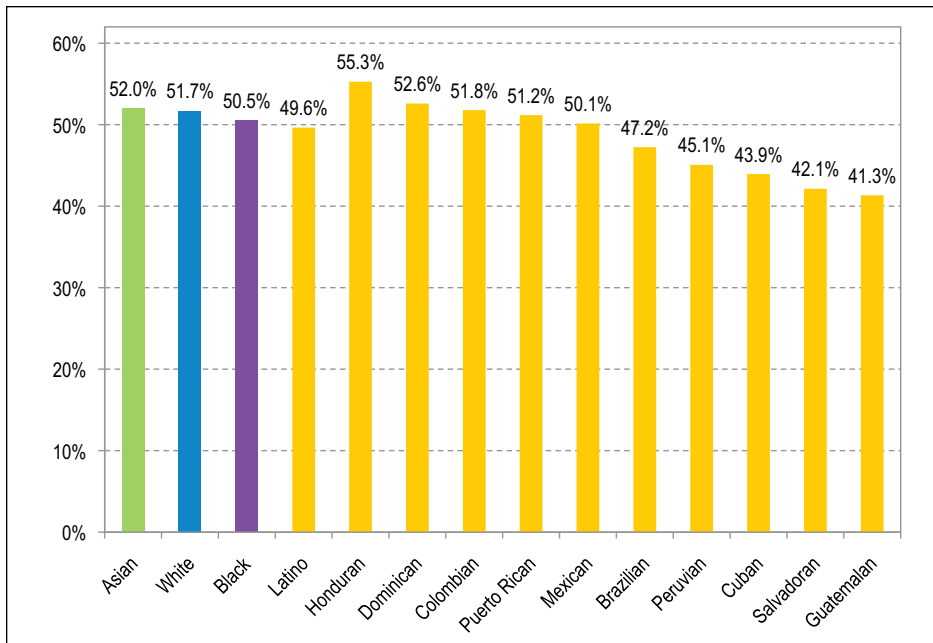


Figure 4B: Age Distribution of the Total Population



The gender dimension of Figure 4 is further delineated in Figure 5. Latinos, with 49.6% of their population female, are the only ethno-racial group that has more males than females. While 55.3% of Hondurans and 52.6% of Dominicans are female, only 42.1% of Salvadorans and 41.3% of Guatemalans are female.

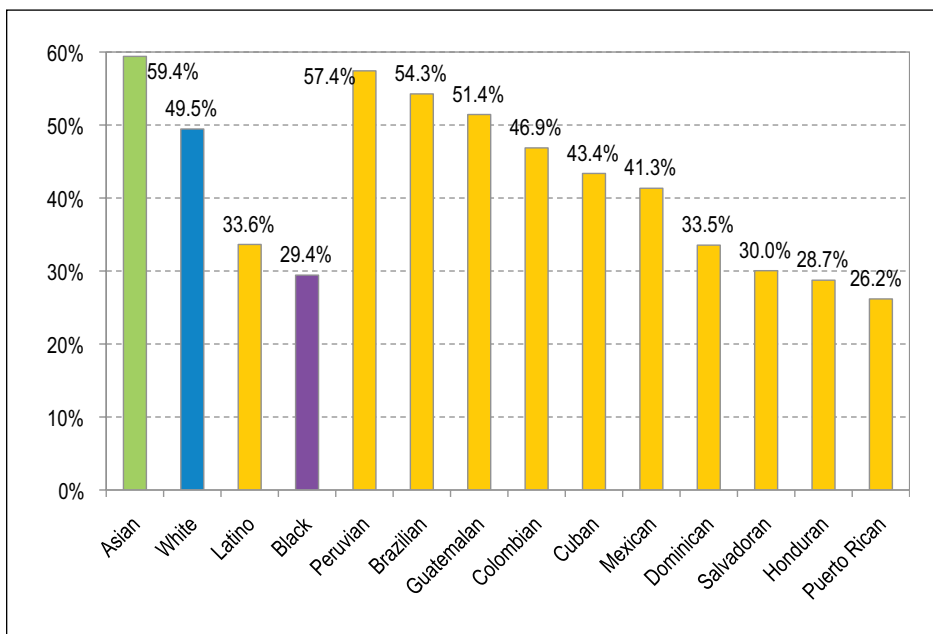
Figure 5: Percentage of the Population Female by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



Marital Status

Even though Figure 6 suggests that Latinos have lower marriage rates (33.6%) compared to Asians (59.4%) and whites (49.5%), there is wide variation in these marriage rates among Latino sub-populations. Peruvians, Brazilians, and Guatemalans have marriage rates higher than whites. The relatively low rates among Latinos may partly reflect the age distribution and sex breakdown presented above. There are fewer Latino women than men in the state, especially for the young-adult age categories. In addition, marriage statistics start at age 16, and Latinos have relatively much higher proportions of adults in the 16 to 29 age group compared to the total population. This age group is delaying marriage and family formation across all ethno-racial groups and may thus be influencing Latinos' lower marriage rate.

Figure 6: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

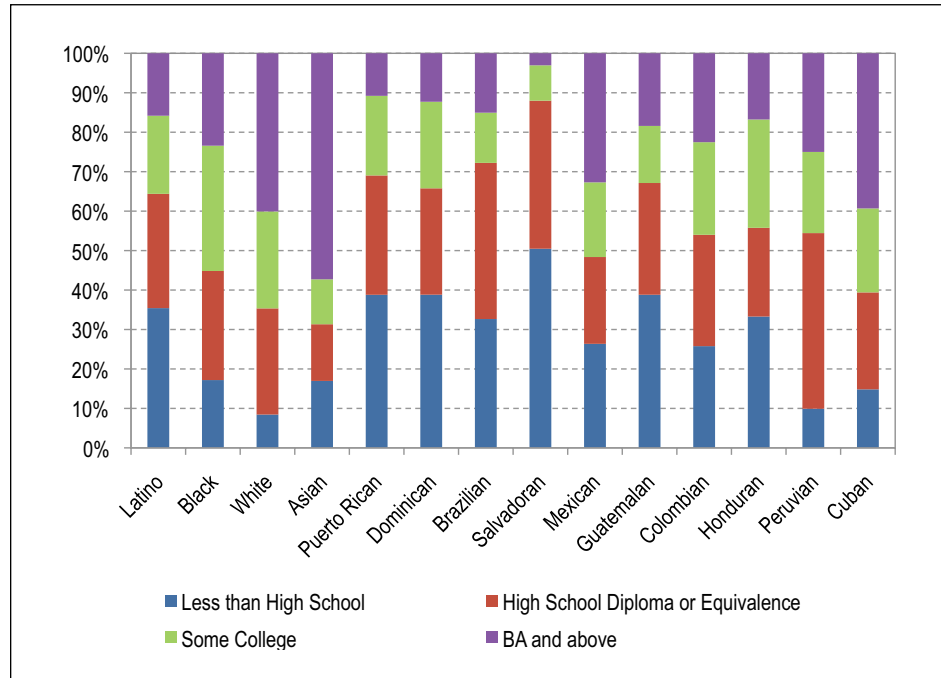


Socio-Economic Characteristics

Educational Attainment

Figure 7 highlights the fact that Latinos have the highest percentages of their population with less than a high school diploma: 35.4%, compared to 8.4% for whites, 17.2% for blacks, and 17.0% for Asians. Although only 9.9% of Peruvian and 14.8% of Cuban adults lack high school diplomas, fully half of Salvadoran adults (50.5%) lack these diplomas, along with and 38.8% of Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Guatemalan adults.

Figure 7A: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



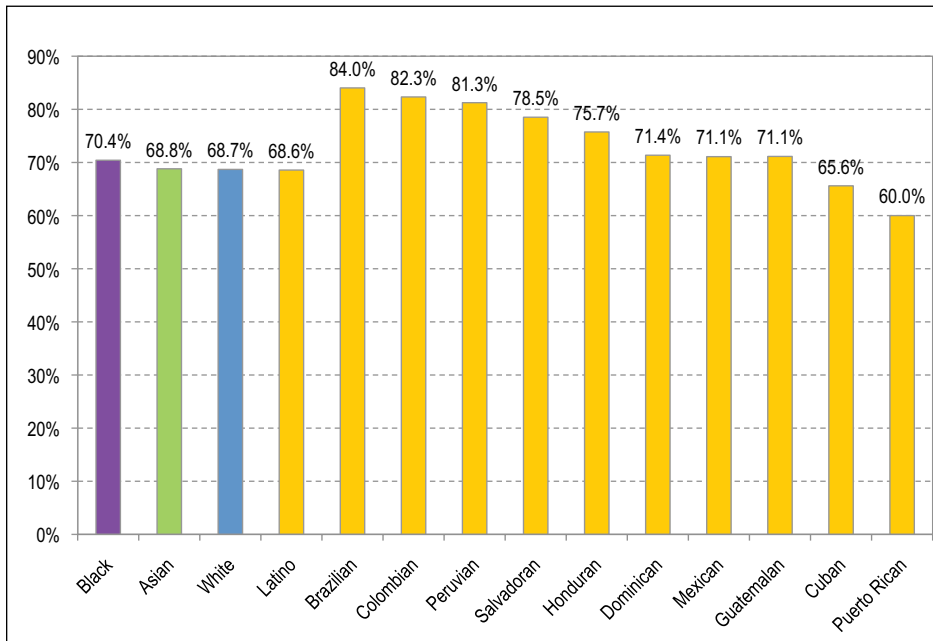
At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 15.8%, compared to Asians (57.3%), whites (40.1%), and blacks (23.4%). Cubans (39.3%) and Mexicans (32.7%) have greater percentages of their population with at least a bachelor's degree, while Puerto Ricans (10.8%) and Salvadorans (3.0%) have the lowest percentages with a college degree.

It is important to note that educational attainment of the population does not necessarily reflect schooling in Massachusetts. Many people migrate to the area, either from their home countries or from other parts of the U.S. Another section of this conference research book examines selected indicators of K-12 educational outcomes for Latino children and adolescents and provides a picture of the quality of our educational systems.

Labor Force Participation and Employment

On average, 68.6% Latino residents aged 16 and over who are not in school are in the labor force: either employed or officially unemployed (do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the prior 4 weeks, and are currently available for work). Figure 8 shows that Latinos participate in the labor force at similar rates to those other ethno-racial groups; the rates for blacks (70.4%), Asians (68.8%), and whites (68.7%) are only slightly higher. Brazilians (84.0%) and Colombians (82.3%) have the highest labor force participation rates among Latinos, while Cubans (65.6%) and Puerto Ricans (60.0%) have the lowest.

Figure 8: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



At 9.9%, Latinos experienced relatively high unemployment in 2008 (Figure 9), but there is a great variation in the unemployment rate among sub-populations. Puerto Ricans had the highest rate of unemployment (15.0%), followed by Dominicans and Guatemalans (11.2%). These three groups surpassed the rate for blacks (11.0%). In contrast, Peruvians (5.2%), Brazilians (5.1%), Mexicans (4.6%), and Salvadorans (2.9%) had unemployment rates similar to, or lower than, unemployment rates for Asians (5.4%) and whites (5.2%).

Figure 9: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

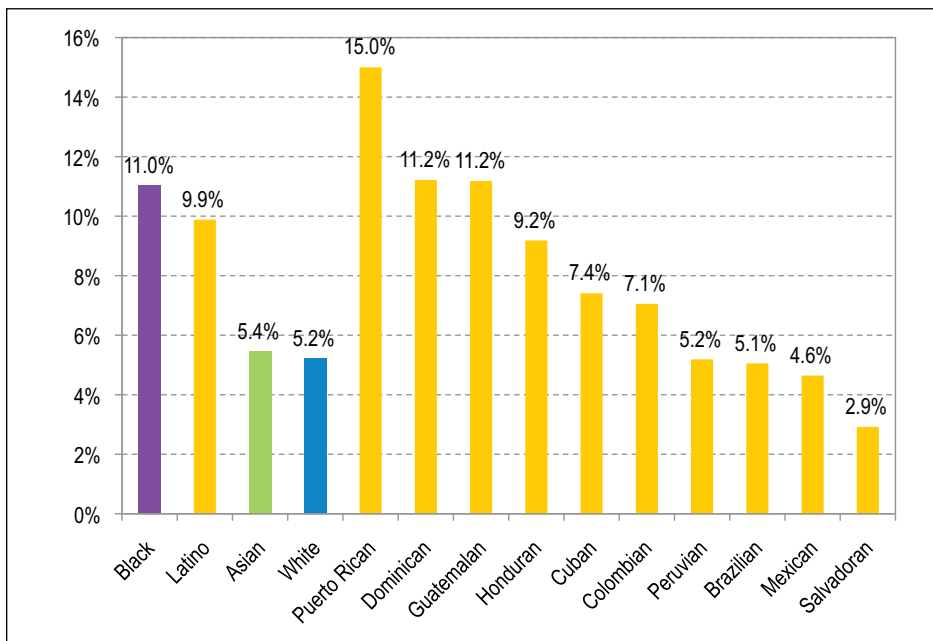
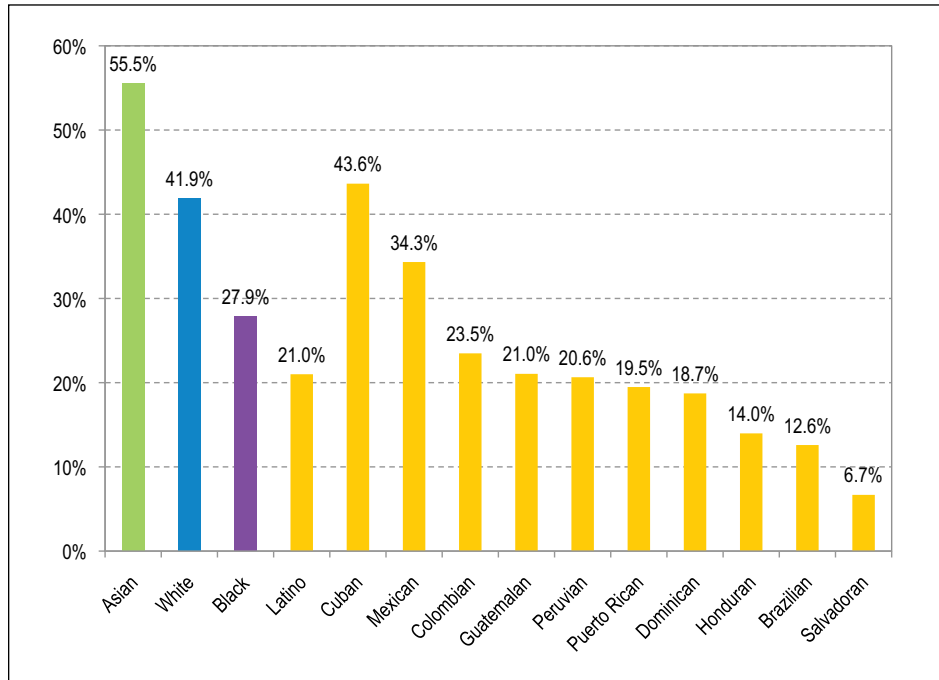


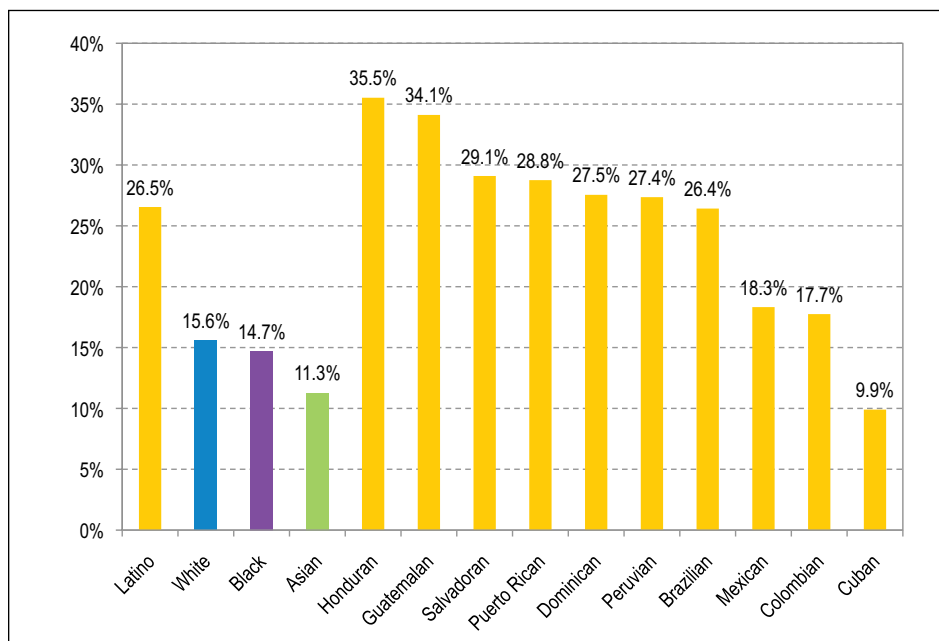
Figure 10A shows that Latinos are under-represented in Professional and Managerial Occupations (21.0%) compared to other ethno-racial groups, with Asians (55.5%) having over twice as many people employed in these occupations. Cubans (43.6%) and Mexicans (34.3%) are the Latino sub-populations with the greatest percentages in these occupations, while Salvadorans (6.7%) have the smallest percentages of these generally considered white-collar jobs.

Figure 10A: Population Employed in Professional or Managerial Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



In contrast to white-collar occupations, Latinos in Figure 10B are heavily concentrated in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations, which are generally considered blue-collar occupations. Over a quarter of Latinos (26.5%) are employed in blue-collar jobs. In contrast, only 14.7% of blacks, who are traditionally considered to be competing with Latinos for these jobs, are employed in blue-collar jobs. Over a third of Hondurans (35.5%) and Guatemalans (34.1%) work blue-collar jobs, while only 9.9% of Cubans do.

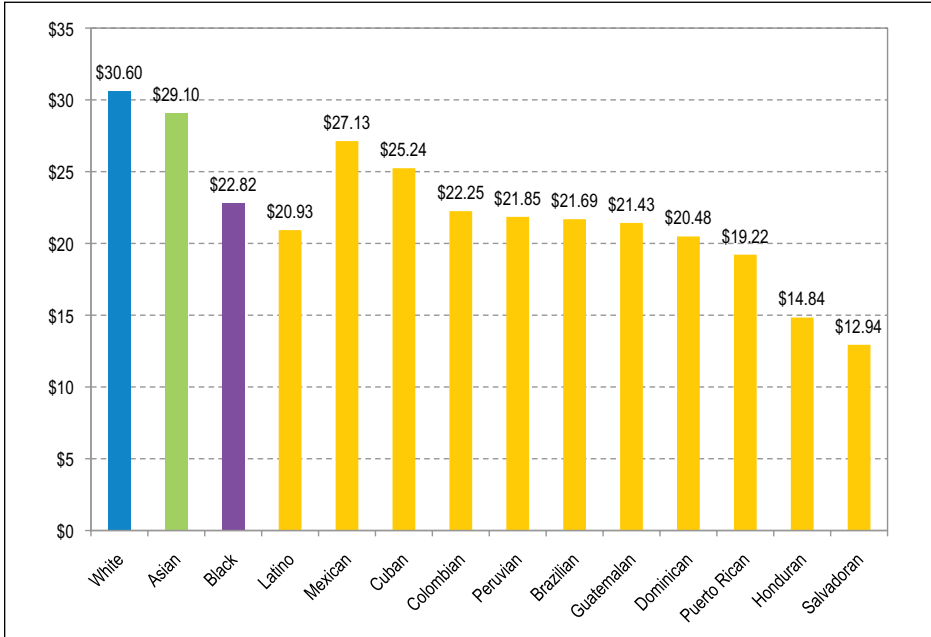
Figure 10B: Population Employed in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



Hourly Earnings

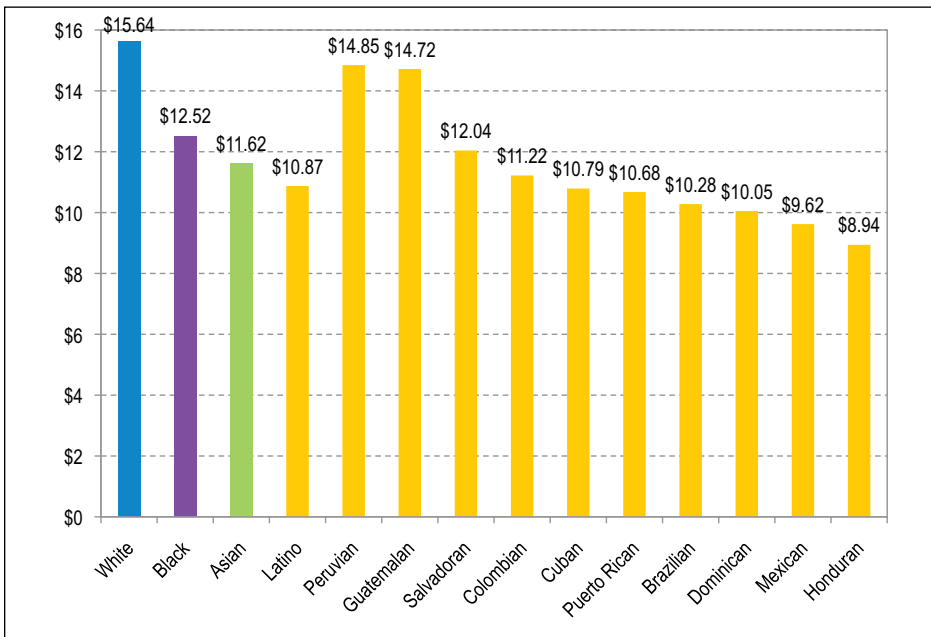
As Figure 11 highlights, Latinos earn the lowest average hourly wages across the three occupational categories. Latinos in Figure 11A earn an average wage of \$20.93, less than their ethno-racial counterparts (whites \$30.60, Asians \$29.10, and blacks \$22.82), and not one Latino subpopulation earns white-collar wages similar to whites. Mexicans earn the highest average white-collar wages (\$27.13), while Salvadorans (\$12.94) earn the lowest.

Figure 11A: Hourly Wages in Professional or Managerial Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



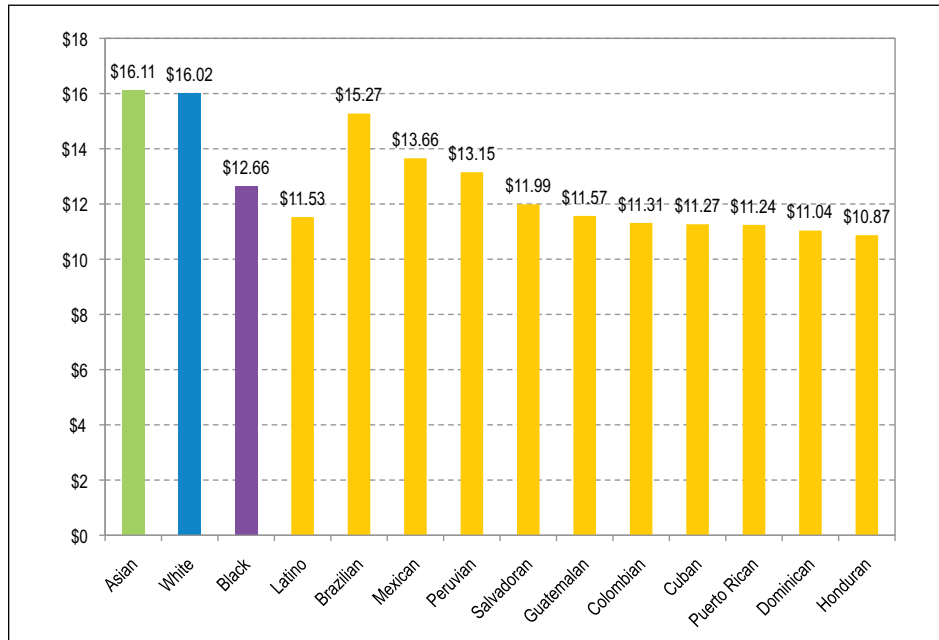
Latinos in Figure 11B earn an average hourly wage of \$10.87, less than their ethno-racial counterparts (whites \$15.64, blacks \$12.52, and Asians \$11.62) in sales and service occupations. Peruvians (\$14.85) and Guatemalans (\$14.72) earn the highest wages of any Latino subpopulation in these occupations, while Hondurans (\$8.94) earn the lowest average hourly wage.

Figure 11B: Hourly Wages in Sales and Service Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



Latinos in Figure 11C earn an average hourly wage of \$11.53 for working in occupations that are traditionally considered blue-collar. This is a lower average than for Asians (\$16.11), whites (\$16.02), and blacks (\$12.66). Brazilians (\$15.27) earn the highest blue-collar wages of any Latino subpopulation, while Hondurans earn the lowest (\$10.87)

Figure 11C: Hourly Wages in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



Housing

Consistent with the finding that Latino workers earn less than others in Massachusetts across all occupational categories, Latinos (32.9%) are significantly less likely than whites (77.2%) to own a home (Figure 12). Dominicans (24.4%) and Puerto Ricans (28.3%) are the least likely to own their homes, while over half of Cubans (55.5%) and Colombians (51.5%) do. As a complement to these figures, it is evident that 75.6% of Dominicans, 71.7% of Puerto Ricans, 44.5% of Cubans, and 48.5% of Colombians are renters, as are 67.1% of Latinos overall.

Figure 12: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

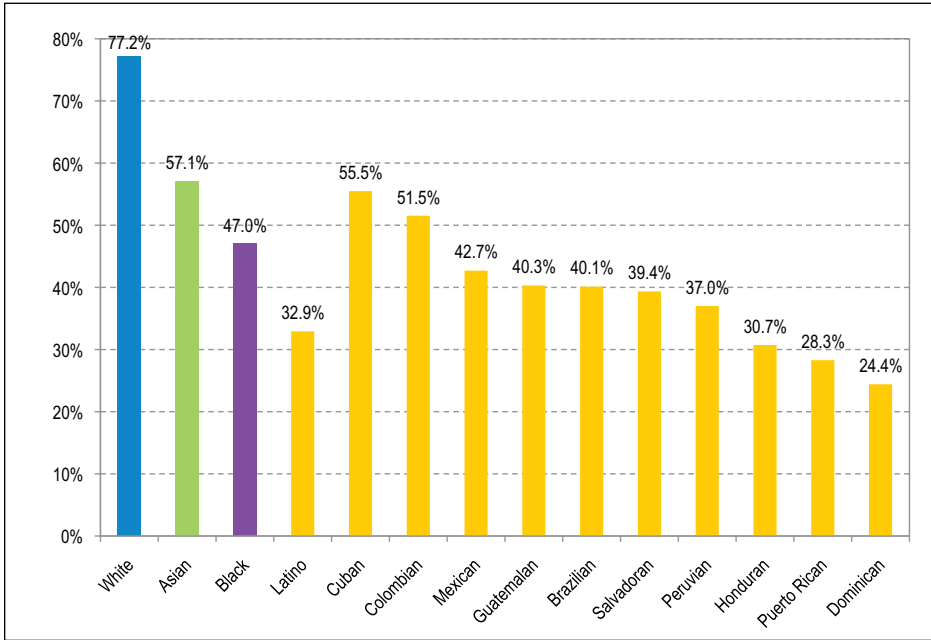
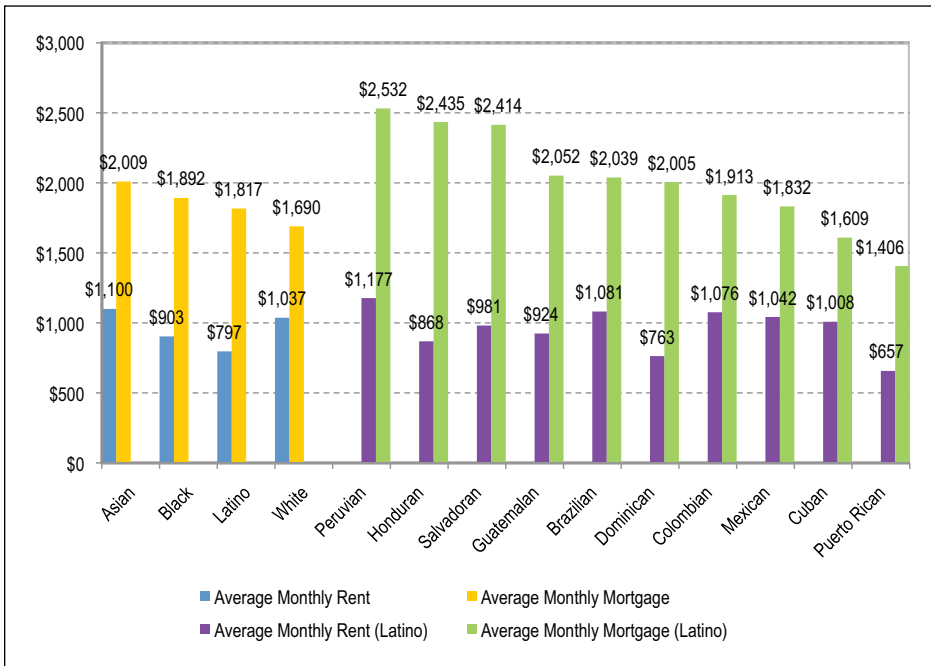


Figure 13 tells two stories about housing costs. Latinos pay the lowest rents (\$797) of any ethno-racial group. Puerto Ricans pay the lowest average monthly rent at \$657, while Peruvians pay the highest at \$1,177. For Latino homeowners, their average monthly mortgage (\$1,817) is more than for whites (\$1,690) but less than for Asians (\$2,009) and blacks (\$1,892). Peruvians pay the highest monthly mortgage of \$2,532, while Puerto Ricans have the lowest monthly mortgage (\$1,406).

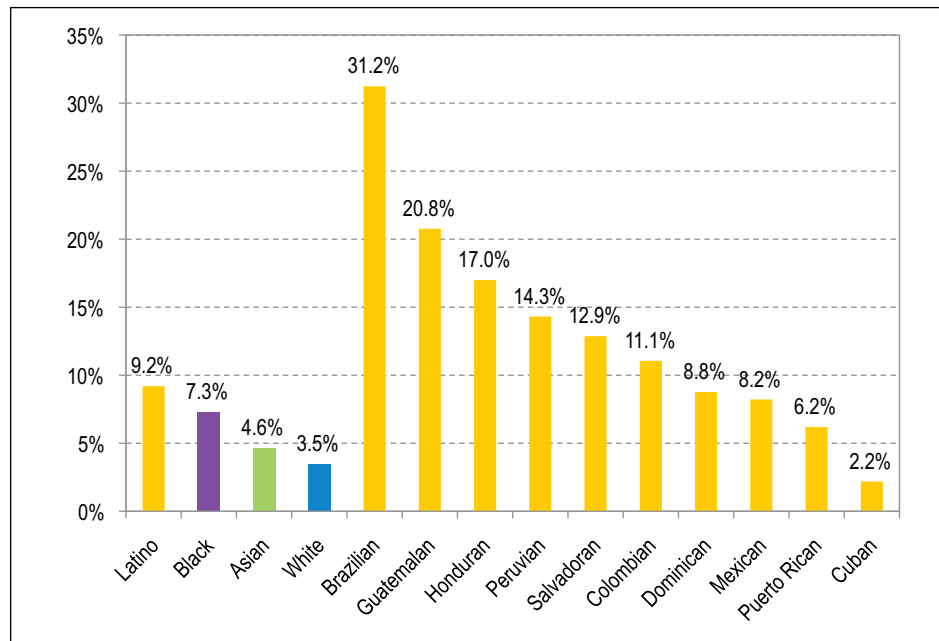
Figure 13: Housing Costs by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



Medical Insurance

Overall, as Figure 14 shows, Latinos are the ethno-racial group with the highest percentages of individuals without access to medical insurance (9.2% compared to 7.3% for blacks, 4.6% for Asians, and 3.5% for whites). The 2006 Massachusetts Health Care Reform Law envisioned an expansion of medical insurance coverage, but the record is mixed for Latino sub-populations. Newer-arriving populations to Massachusetts – Brazilians (31.2%), Guatemalans (20.8%) Hondurans (17.0%), Peruvians (14.3%), Salvadorans (12.9%), and Colombians (11.1%) – have greater percentages of their population without medical insurance. Sub-populations with longer tenure in Massachusetts, who are more likely to be integrated into the formal labor market, have smaller percentages without medical insurance; these include Dominicans (8.8%), Mexicans (8.2%), Puerto Ricans (6.2%), and Cubans (2.2%).

Figure 14: Medical Uninsurance Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



Discussion: Implications for Policy and Organizational Change

This report highlights the growing number, and increasing diversity, of Latinos in Massachusetts. In this state, as well as nationally, Latinos' share of the population continues to increase, at the expense principally of the aging non-Latino white population (Dey, 1996; Marcelli & Granberry, 2006). This trend is expected to continue due to increased migration of Latin Americans and their higher birth rates (Singer, 2004).

Massachusetts has always attracted international migrants; 14.4% of the state's 2008 population was foreign-born compared to 12.5% nationwide. Of the top ten countries identified as point of departure by immigrants who came to Massachusetts, Brazil and the Dominican Republic ranked first and second and El Salvador ranked eighth. Indeed, the Latino population in Massachusetts has diversified and dispersed beyond Puerto Ricans living in metropolitan areas. It now includes growing numbers of Dominicans, Brazilians, Salvadorans, Mexican, Guatemalans, and Colombians. This emerging diversification in birthplace and ancestry of the Latino population in the Commonwealth is relatively new (Shea & Jones, 2006). It has become especially noticeable as the numbers of Dominicans and Brazilians continue to increase in number and disperse throughout the entire state.

The central policy question is how the growth of the Latino population affects economic well-being and the socio-political fabric of Massachusetts. Latinos in Massachusetts have very low elderly dependency ratios and relatively high but declining child dependency ratios. Given how the effects of population growth on economic well-being have traditionally been estimated (Easterlin, 1968; Myrdal, 1962), the relatively young age profile of Latinos is likely to benefit the state's (and the nation's) economy in both the near and far term. On the supply side, younger adults are likely to be employed and therefore contribute to production; on the demand side, marriage and family formation are highly correlated with higher levels of consumption. Not only are younger workers needed to contribute to the economic and social welfare of an aging population, but young families will also provide a boost to the economy. Investment in the education and training of younger generations of Latinos will be a kind of bank account that will pay long-term dividends, as their participation in the workforce will be likely to support older generations of residents of the state in the near future.

Latinos are over-represented in blue-collar and service-sector jobs and under-represented in white-collar jobs. Moreover, across all occupational sectors in 2008, Latino workers earned less on average than those of other ethno-racial groups. Latino workers are thus an important component of a state's economy that is continually being restructured, but their contributions to the state's economy have not brought the same rewards that other ethno-racial groups have experienced. While the current uncertainties and expansion of new sectors may produce fear of competition for limited opportunities in the labor market, Latinos, especially foreign-born Dominicans and Brazilians, are playing a vital role in regional production, in serving an increasingly aging white population (Marcelli & Granberry, 2006; Marcelli et al., 2009a, 2009b), and in meeting the child care needs of many working families. Latinos are contributing to the present economic recovery, and states that welcome them now are positioned to receive the benefits of their labor force participation in the near future.

Latinos in Massachusetts appear to have benefited somewhat from the 2006 health care reform policies and subsequent changes in practices, as uninsured medical rates dropped more for Latino adults than for any other ethno-racial group (Long, 2008). However, by 2008, the rate of medical insurance coverage for Latinos in Massachusetts (9.2%) was higher than for any other ethno-racial group in the state. In contrast, we find evidence suggesting that Latinos have not benefited from homeownership as much as other ethno-racial groups. Latinos have the lowest rates of homeownership, and for those who do own homes their average monthly mortgage payment is greater than whites, and is more closely related to blacks and Asians. Owning a home is considered a foundation of the American Dream and is a vehicle for many individuals, groups and communities to acquire wealth over a lifetime. Latinos who rent have the lowest average monthly rent of any ethno-racial group in the state.

Notes

¹ Non-Latino whites, non-Latino blacks, and non-Latino Asians will be referenced as whites, blacks, and Asians for the remainder of the report.

² The ACS reports data in a PUMA (Public Use Microdata Area) that consists of a population of 100,000 or more. Some PUMAs coordinate with a city's geographic boundaries. Other PUMAs consist of more than one city, but provide information regarding a city where many Latinos reside.

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