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### Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Boston

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# **Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas**

## **Boston**

by Phillip Granberry, PhD, Sarah Rustan, MA, and Faye Karp, MS

**January, 2013**

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**THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE  
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND PUBLIC POLICY**

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# Boston

This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Boston. It reflects a commitment by UMass Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy to provide periodic updates on the growing Latino population in Massachusetts.

The report on Boston is part of a larger series that covers fourteen other cities, or clusters of cities, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Each report analyzes data from the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data are analyzed by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), which consists of a minimum population of 100,000 and is the smallest geographic area publically available for individual-level analysis. The city of Boston comprises five PUMAs. By aggregating them for this report, we are able to arrive at a demographic and economic portrait of Boston's Latino community.

Since ACS data are collected from a sample of the population, there is some variation associated with each population estimate. In the bar graphs in this report, the 'I' that accompanies each bar represents the confidence interval for that estimate; we expect that another sample would generate an estimate within this interval 95% of the time.

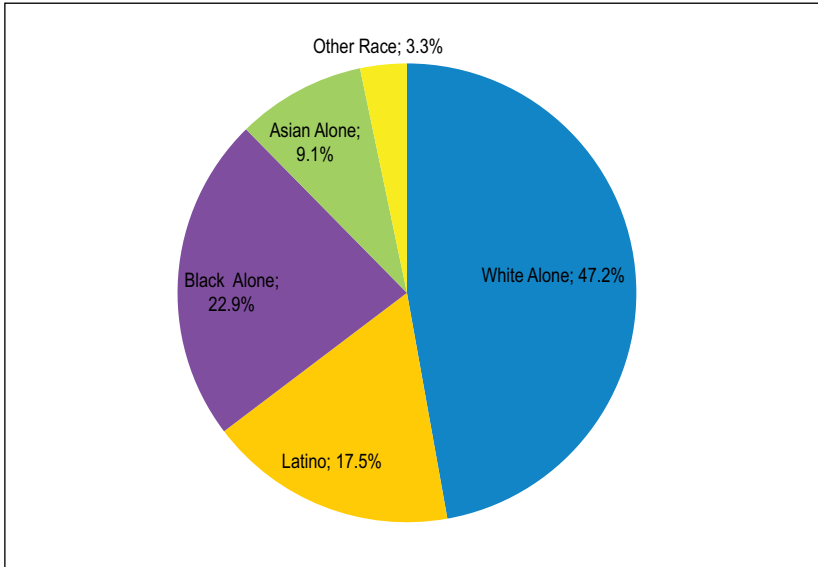
In this report, Latinos<sup>1</sup> are compared to non-Latino whites, non-Latino blacks, and Asians for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics. The number of ethno-racial groups included in a particular analysis may vary; each ethno-racial group is included in the analysis only when the observed sample size is large enough to produce reliable population estimates.

As the largest city in the Commonwealth, Boston is home to an estimated 109,115 Latinos. This represents the largest Latino population in the state, though several other cities have greater concentrations of Latinos. They represent about one-sixth (17.5%) of the city's population, a smaller share than for whites and blacks but greater than for Asians (Figure 1).

## Notes

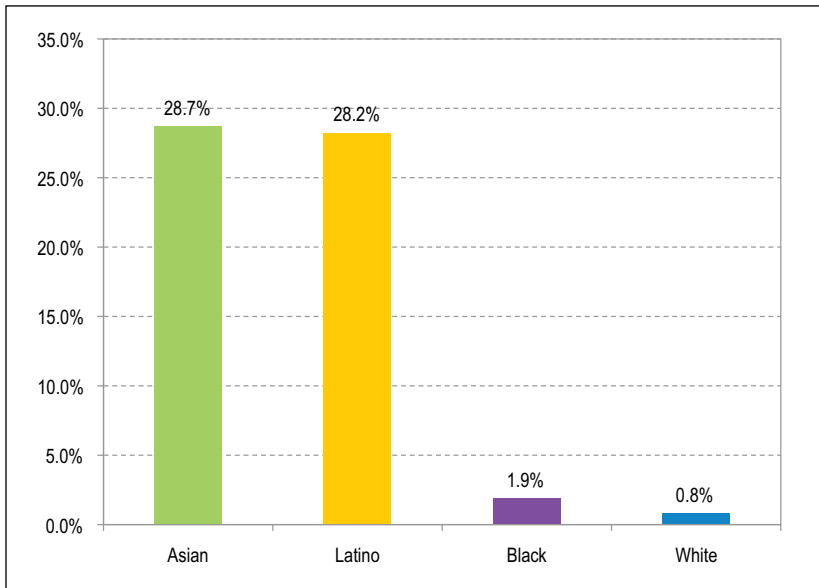
<sup>1</sup> This report uses the census designations of Hispanic or Latino origin and ancestry based on migration from Latin America to estimate the number of Latinos. Thus, Brazilians are included in the category "Latino," though most Brazilians self-report in the ACS using a racial category (e.g., white, black), rather than identifying with the term "Latino."

**Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in Boston in 2010**



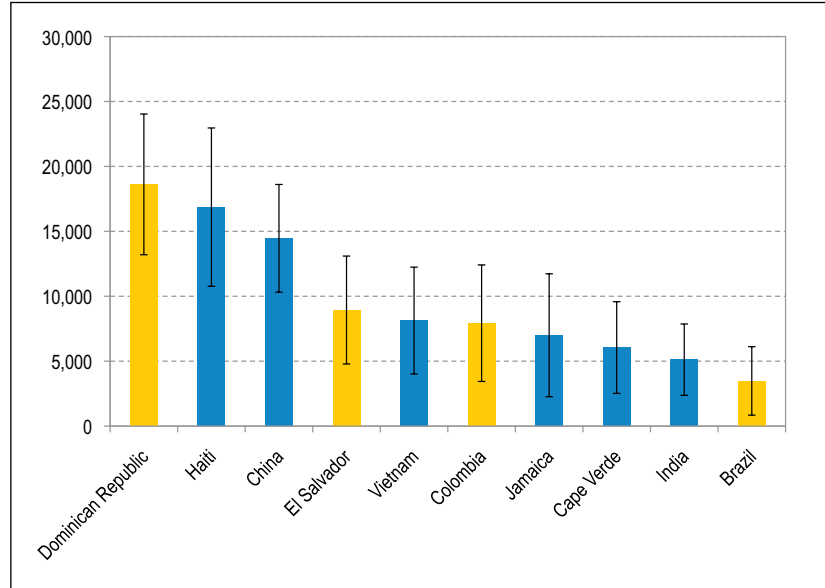
A striking feature of Boston's Latino population is its recent growth. From 2000 to 2010, Latinos and Asians experienced the fastest population growth in the city, while blacks and whites experienced limited population growth.

**Figure 2: Population Growth by Ethno-Racial Group in Boston from 2000 to 2010**



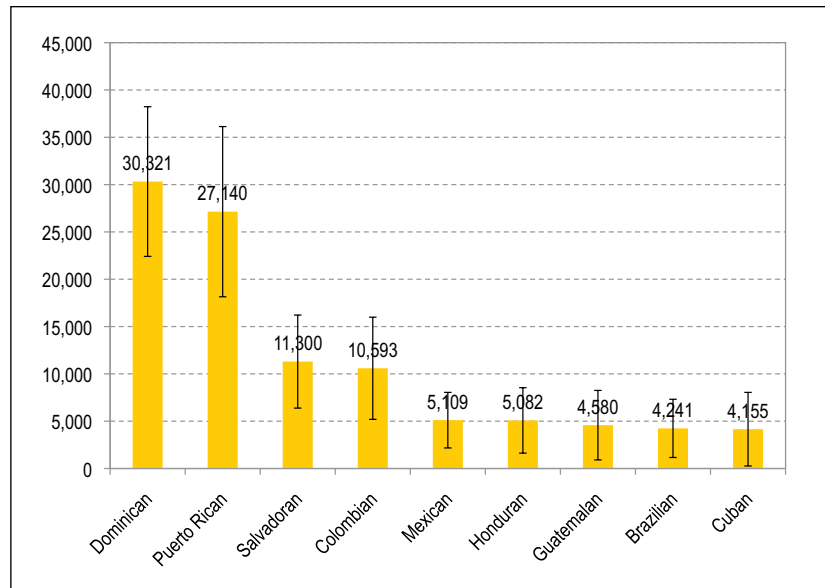
One of the explanations of this population growth is international migration. Boston has long been a destination for international migrants, and today it has a greater concentration of foreign-born (26.6%) than the Commonwealth as a whole (14.9%). Dominicans represent the largest foreign-born population in the city, and Latino countries account for four of the top ten sending countries to the city (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Top 10 Sending Countries to Boston in 2010**



When examining the ancestry of Latinos in the city, it is important to note that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens; they are included in Figure 4 but not in Figure 3, which represents the foreign-born population. Puerto Ricans, with a population of 27,140, constitute the second largest Latino subpopulation in the city, surpassed only by Dominicans with 30,321.

**Figure 4: Ancestry of the Top 10 Latino Groups in Boston in 2010**

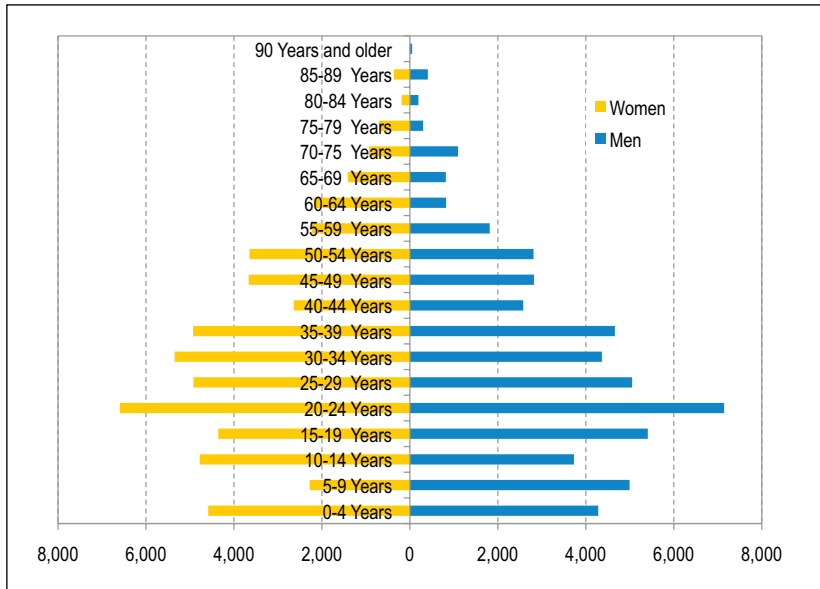


## AGE DISTRIBUTION AND MARITAL STATUS

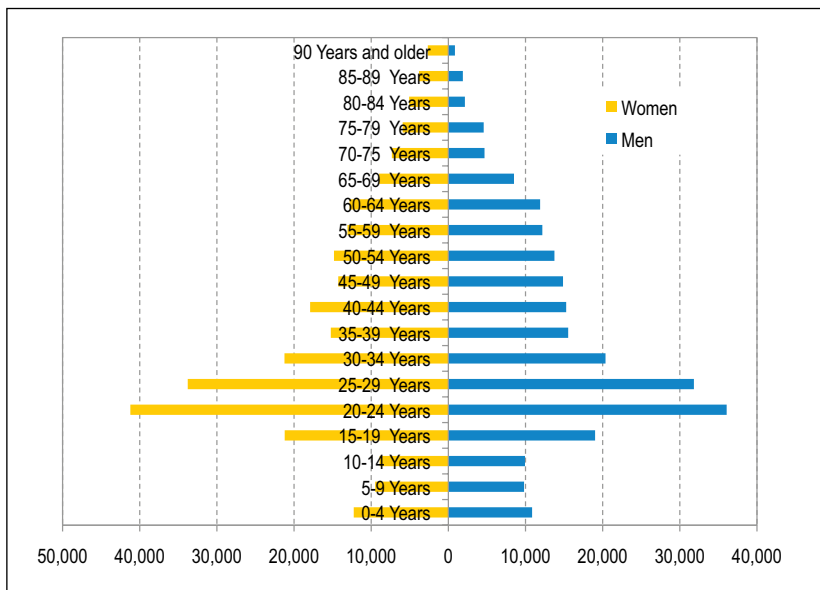
Figures 5A and 5B highlight Latino and non-Latino age distributions, drawing attention to the important contributions that Latinos are making in Boston. With the majority of their population at the younger levels of Figure 5A, Latinos will

require an investment in education of their youth. Latino young people will contribute economically, socially, and politically in later years as the middle bulge of the non-Latino population in Figure 5B grows older and the city's population age becomes more top-heavy. An older population will require younger residents to keep the city's neighborhoods vibrant and maintain a productive workforce, and Latinos are poised to make this contribution.

**Figure 5A: Age Distribution of the Latino Population in Boston in 2010**



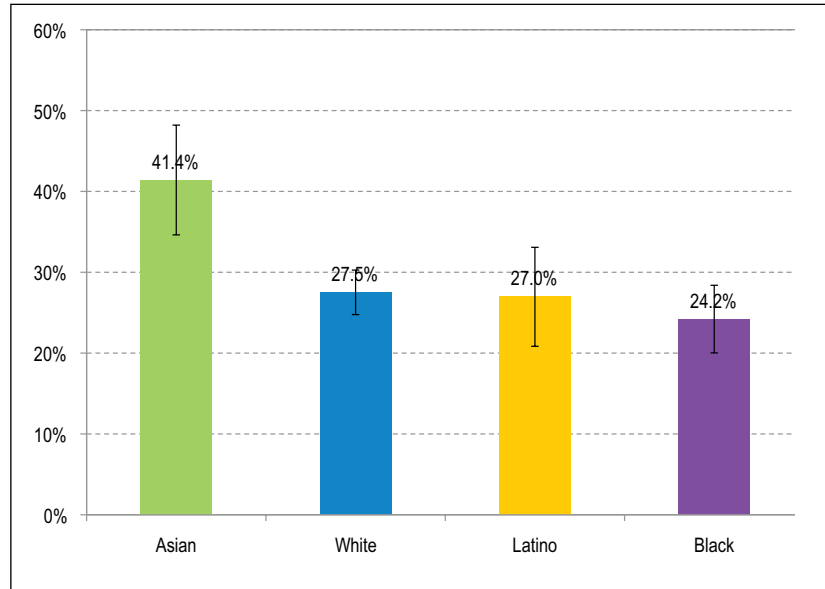
**Figure 5B: Age Distribution of the Non-Latino Population in Boston in 2010**



Boston has a younger and possibly more transitory population than the state as a whole, and the marital status of its residents reflects these characteristics. The marriage rates shown in Figure 6 (for persons age 16 and older) are lower for all ethno-racial groups in Boston than for the same groups overall in Massachusetts. This is true for Latinos, whose marriage rate is 35.4% statewide and 27.0% in

Boston. A number of issues, including the age of these populations, could be driving this variation.

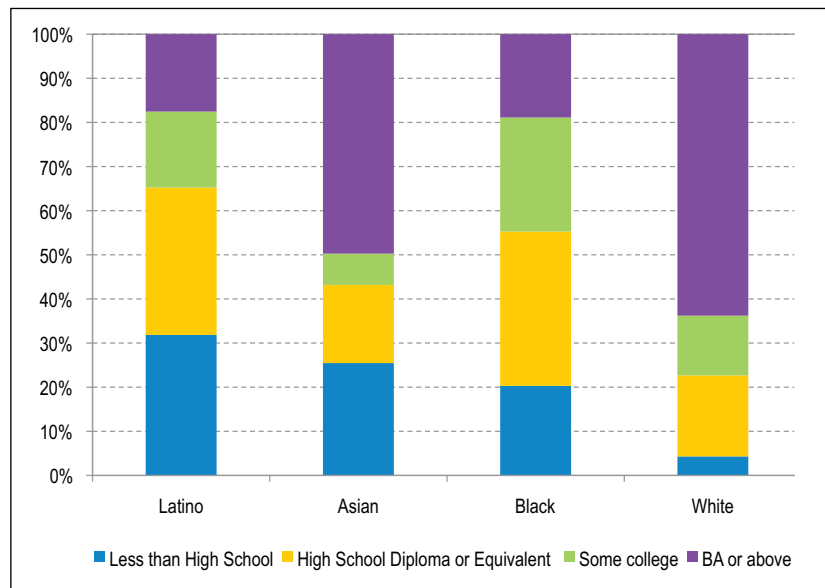
**Figure 6: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



## EDUCATION

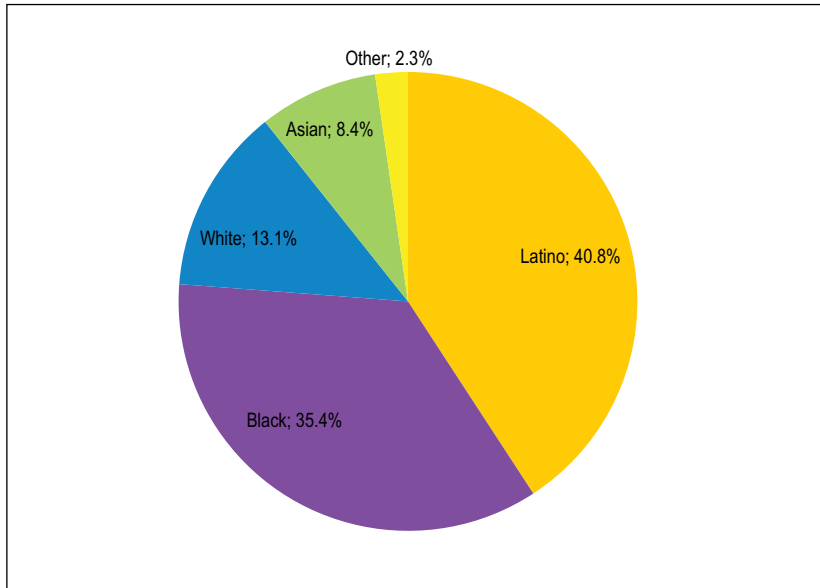
Figure 7 highlights the fact that Latinos have the highest percentage of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 31.9%, compared to 25.5% for Asians, 20.3% for blacks, and 4.3% for whites. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 17.5%, compared to 63.8% for whites, 49.7% for Asians, and 18.9% for blacks.

**Figure 7: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010 (Adults 25 Years and Older)**



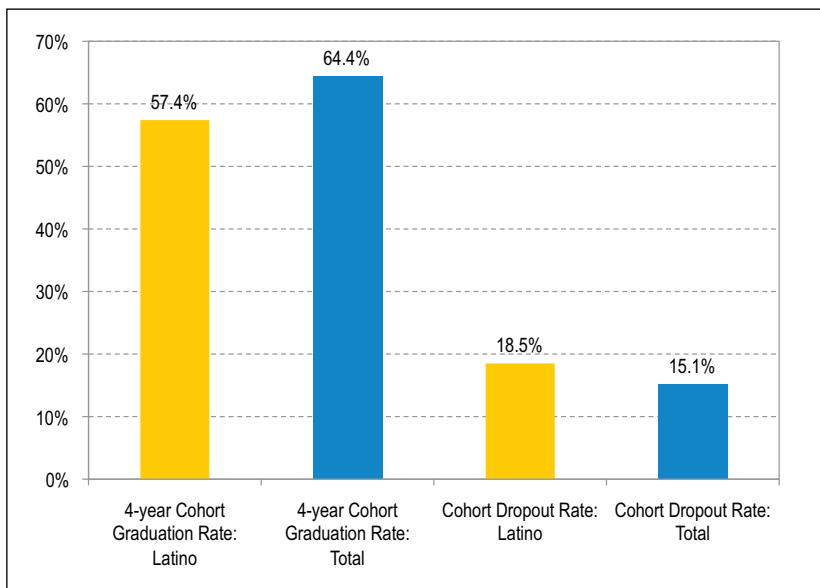
Figures 8A and 8B provide information on Latinos in Boston Public Schools, using data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Latinos, representing 40.8% of total student enrollment in the 2010–2011 school year, are the largest ethno-racial group in the district. Over the past decade, as total student enrollment has declined, the number of Latinos and their share of total student enrollment have increased.

**Figure 8A: Spotlight on Boston Public Schools by Ethno-Racial Group, Academic Year 2010–2011**



Latinos in Boston Public Schools lag behind the total population in academic success. Barely half of Latino students (57.4%) graduated from high school in four years, compared to 64.4% for the total student population. Similarly, 18.5% of Latinos who entered their freshman year in the 2006–2007 school year dropped out of high school and did not return or get a GED, compared to 15.1% of the total student population.

**Figure 8B: Spotlight on Boston Public Schools by Outcomes, Academic Year 2010–2011**

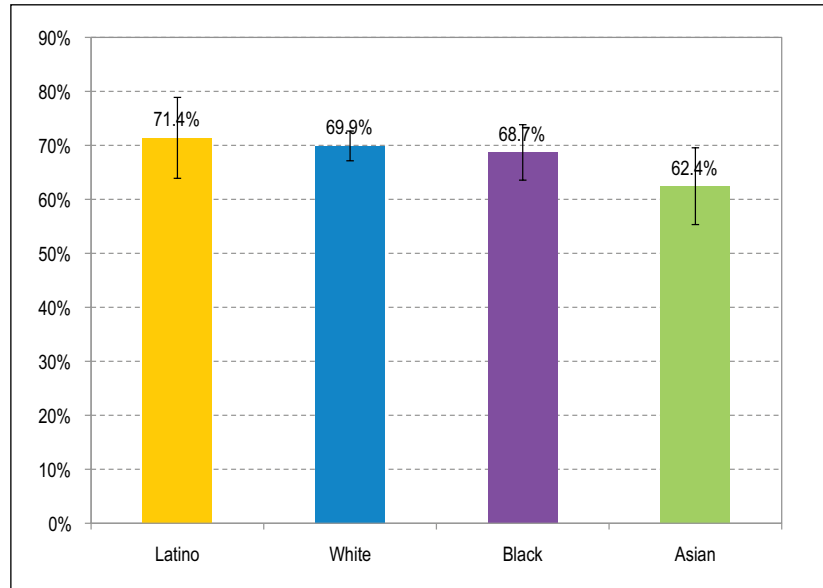




## LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Again suggesting the importance of Latinos to Boston's economic and social well-being, Figure 9 identifies Latinos as having the highest labor force participation rate (71.4%) of any ethno-racial group in the city. This is despite the large proportion of their population under age 25 (Figure 5A), an age when individuals are expected to have completed their education and have fully entered the labor force.

**Figure 9: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



The previous labor force participation information suggests that Latinos in Boston have a strong motivation to participate in Boston's economy. However, Figure 10 tells a less positive story. The unemployment rate among Latinos in 2010 was 21.8%, which was higher than the statewide average of 15.2%. This is a striking discrepancy, given that Boston's overall unemployment rate is lower than in other parts of the state. Boston Latinos have suffered a disproportionate effect from the present economic downturn.

**Figure 10: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**

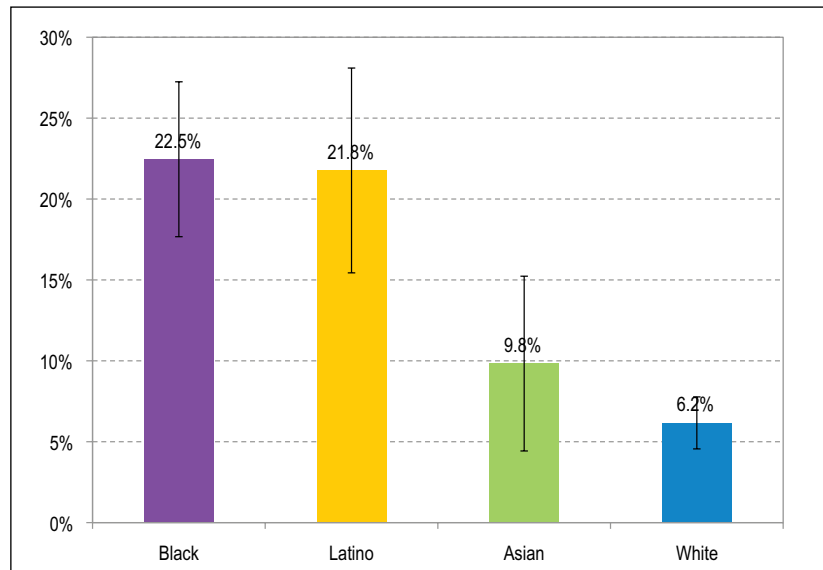
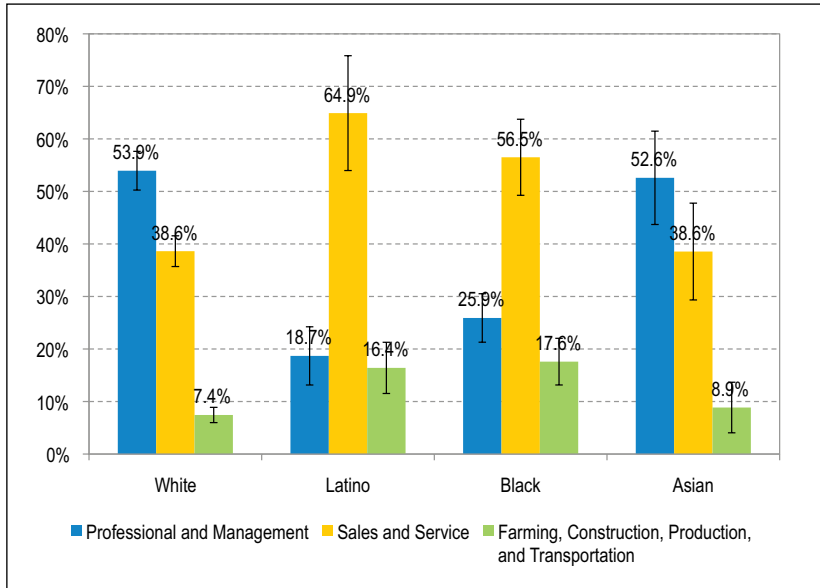


Figure 11 suggests that Latinos serve as complements to other ethno-racial groups in the Boston labor market whose members have higher educational attainment. As Figure 11 shows, Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs (professional and managerial) but overrepresented in service-sector and what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs (farming, construction, production, and transportation).

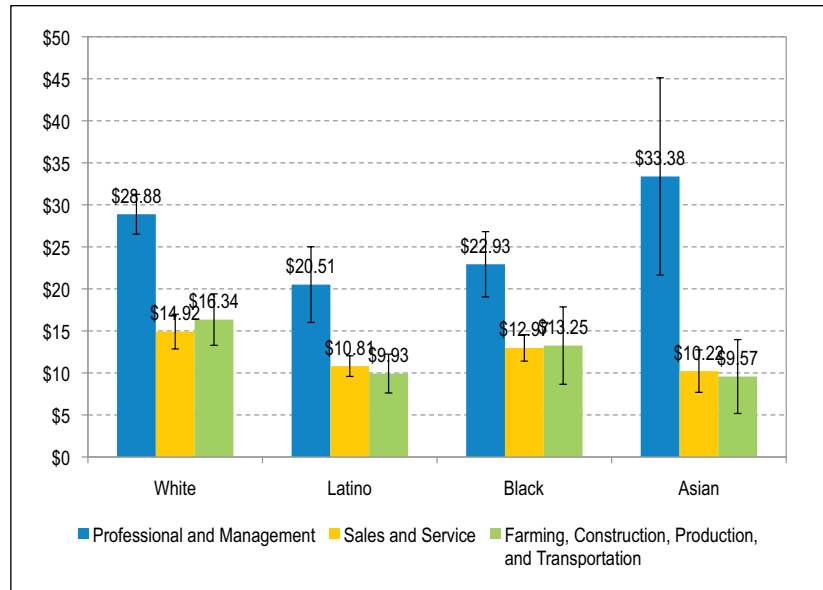
**Figure 11: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



## EARNINGS

When examining the wage rates for these occupational categories, we see that Latinos in Boston appear to be receiving wages below those of other ethno-racial groups. As shown in Figure 12, they earn lower wages for their white-collar employment than all other ethno-racial groups, and lower than all ethno-racial groups but Asians for their service-sector and blue-collar employment.

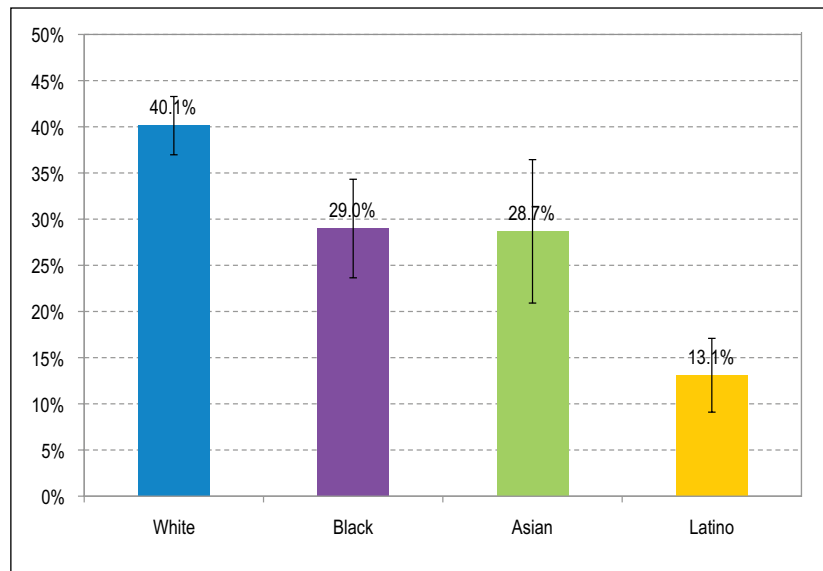
**Figure 12: Hourly Wages by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



## HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

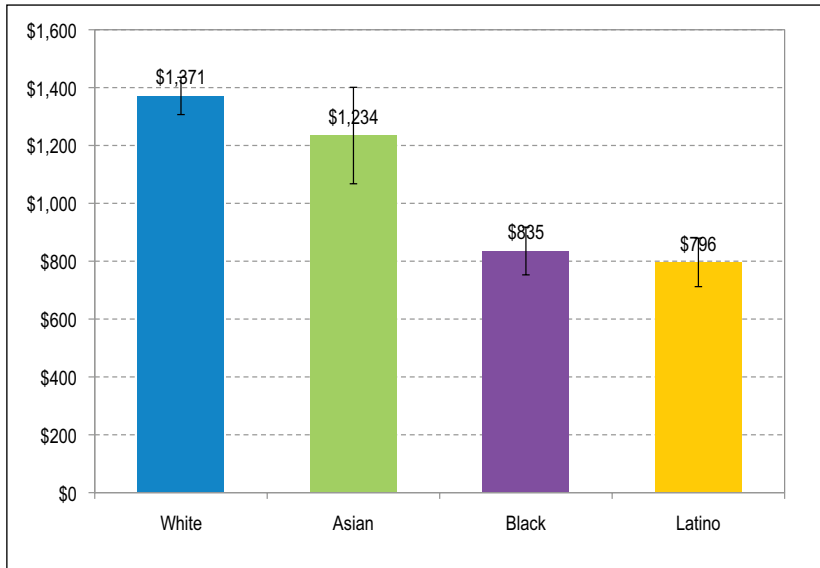
The final measures of Latino participation in Boston are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Boston traditionally has lower homeownership rates than the state as a whole, and Latinos in Figure 13 have by far the lowest homeownership level of any ethno-racial group in the city at 13.1%. In comparison, 25.6% of Latinos statewide are homeowners. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 13, it is evident that 86.9% of Latinos in Boston are renters.

**Figure 13: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group**



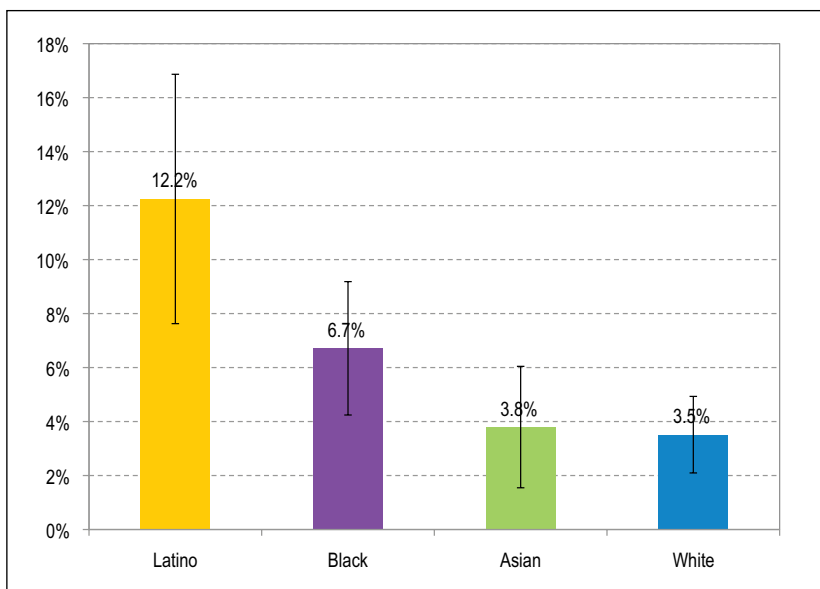
With low levels of homeownership, Latinos in Boston are more dependent on the local rental markets. Monthly rents paid by Latino renters (\$796) are lower than for any other ethno-racial group.

**Figure 14: Rental Costs by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



Similar to statewide averages, Latinos in Boston have the highest percentage without medical insurance (12.2%) of any ethno-racial group (Figure 15). This is higher than the statewide Latino uninsurance rate of 11.6%; the higher Latino uninsurance rate may be related to the greater percentage of Boston Latinos who are foreign-born in comparison to statewide.

**Figure 15: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



The **Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston** conducts research on and for the Latino population in New England. Our goal is to generate the information and analysis necessary to develop more inclusive 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 this series of demographic profiles for selected Massachusetts areas based on an analysis of 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) data.

Our descriptive analysis uses both household- and individual-level ACS data to estimate population size and characteristics in order to compare Latinos to other ethno-racial groups. Technically, these groups are designated as non-Latino whites, non-Latino blacks, and non-Latino Asians though they are often referenced simply as “white,” “black,” and

“Asian” in these profiles. Although many Brazilians do not self-identify as Latino or Hispanic, the ‘Latino’ category does include the Brazilian population in this report series.

The Gastón Institute plans to update this series of demographic profiles for selected Massachusetts areas every five years upon release of American Community Survey data. A similar report series examining Latino populations at the city level is planned for the 2015 Gastón Institute public policy conference. In addition, demographic profiles highlighting Latino sub-groups will be produced on an ongoing basis.

One of the goals of the Gastón Institute is to be responsive to the needs of the Latino and policy communities through the research we undertake. Please feel free to contact us with suggestions or requests for specific information.

## About the Authors

**Phillip Granberry** is a social demographer who specializes in immigrants in the US. He worked with various community-based organizations assisting recently arrived U.S. immigrants before earning a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Boston. He has published several articles on the accumulation and use of social capital among Mexican migrants and the impact of welfare and immigration policy reform on Latinos in Massachusetts. Currently a Research Associate for the Gastón Institute, he also teaches courses on international migration and urban affairs for the UMass Boston Economics Department.

**Faye Karp** specializes in conducting research that helps organizations improve programs serving low-income, Latino, and English Language Learner youth. She holds an MS in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Boston. As a Research Associate and Project Manager at the Gastón Institute, she worked with the Boston Public Schools Office of English Language Learners to develop policy guidelines for the district’s Two-Way Bilingual programs.

**Sarah Rustan** is a PhD candidate in Law and Public Policy at Northeastern University, with previous degrees in architecture (BA) and cultural management (MA). Her professional background includes broad experience in the nonprofit sector including research, development, and management, and her dissertation explores the role that nonprofit arts organizations play in community development and social organization. She currently serves as a Research Associate and Data Analyst for the Gastón Institute.

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