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## Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Lawrence and Methuen

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# **Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas**

## **Lawrence and Methuen**

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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# Lawrence and Methuen

This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in the cities of Lawrence and Methuen. 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 Lawrence and Methuen 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. In the PUMA that includes Lawrence and Methuen, these two cities account for nearly four-fifths of the total population and the vast majority of the area's Latinos.

Since ACS data is collected from a sample of the population, there is potential error 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.

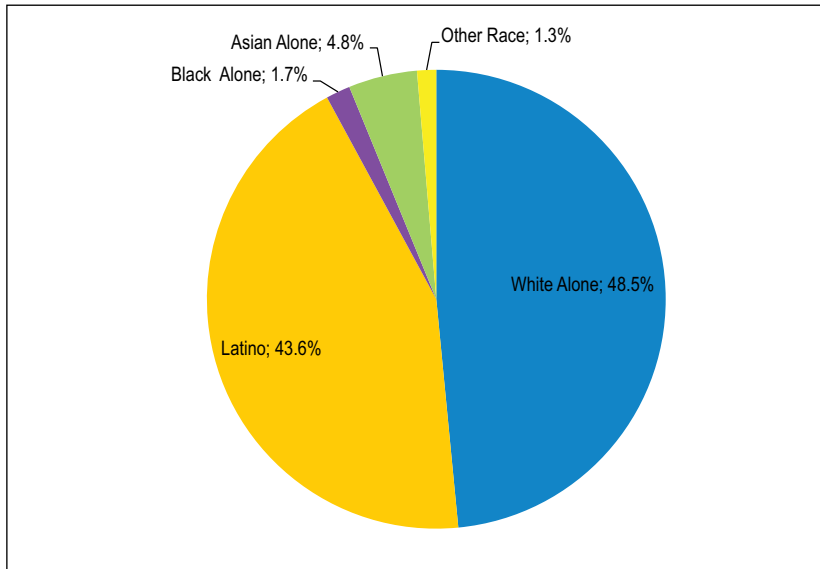
In this report, Latinos are compared to non-Latino whites, non-Latino blacks, and Asians for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics. The number of ethno-racial groups included in a particular analysis may vary; each ethno-racial group is included in the analysis only when the observed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

The Lawrence-Methuen area is home to an estimated 68,575 Latinos, who account for 43.6% of the area's population. This represents the highest concentration of Latinos in the state. Whites make up a larger percentage of the population (48.5%), while Asians represent 4.8% and blacks represent 1.7 % of the area's population (Figure 1).

## Notes

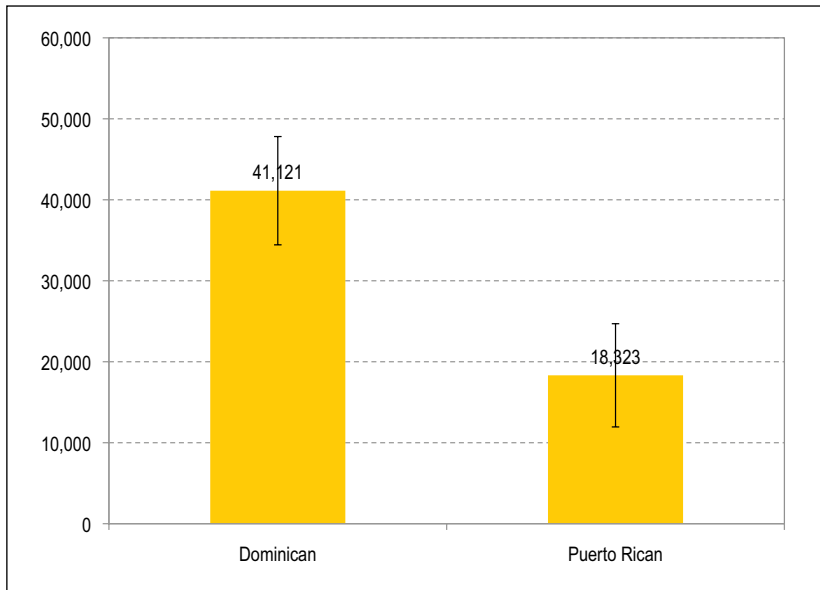
<sup>1</sup> This report uses the census designations of Hispanic or Latino origin and ancestry based on migration from Latin America to estimate the number of Latinos. Thus, Brazilians are included in the category "Latino," though most Brazilians self-report in the ACS using a racial category (e.g.,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

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



This area's Latino population, centered mainly in Lawrence, is home to the state's largest concentration of Dominicans, whose population is estimated to be 41,121. This strong Dominican presence is shaped by international migration, as this area has a higher percentage of foreign-born residents (26.9%) than the state as a whole (14.9%). Puerto Ricans (18,323) are the other sizable Latino subpopulation in the area. These two groups account for an estimated 86.7% of the area's Latinos.

**Figure 2: Ancestry of the Top Latino Groups in 2010**

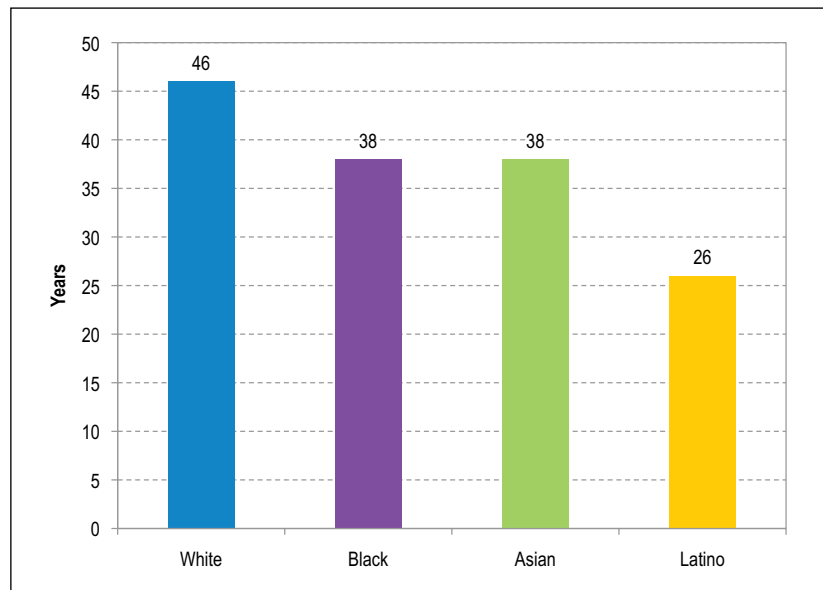


The rest of this report presents an overview that compares Latinos to whites, blacks, and Asians in these cities for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics.

## MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

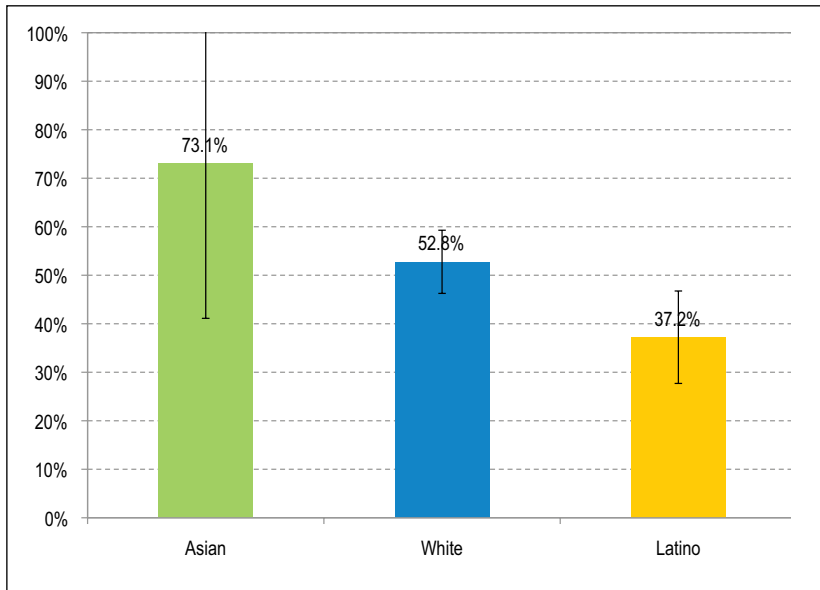
Figure 3 draws attention to the importance of Latinos in Lawrence and Methuen. Latinos in Lawrence have a median age that is slightly younger than for Latinos statewide (26 years compared to 27 years statewide) but strikingly younger than for other ethno-racial groups in Lawrence: 46 years for whites and 38 years for both blacks and Asians. This suggests that Latinos have more families with young children and will require an investment in education of their youth; however, these younger Latinos will contribute economically, socially, and politically in later years as an older white population ages and retires. This older population will require younger residents to keep these cities' neighborhoods vibrant and maintain a productive workforce, and Latinos are poised to make this contribution.

**Figure 3: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



The larger and more established Latino population in this area may influence Latinos' marital status. The marriage rates shown in Figure 4, covering all persons age 16 and older, are lower than for whites and Asians in Lawrence and Methuen. However, the Latino marriage rate of 37.2% is higher than the statewide rate of 35.4%.

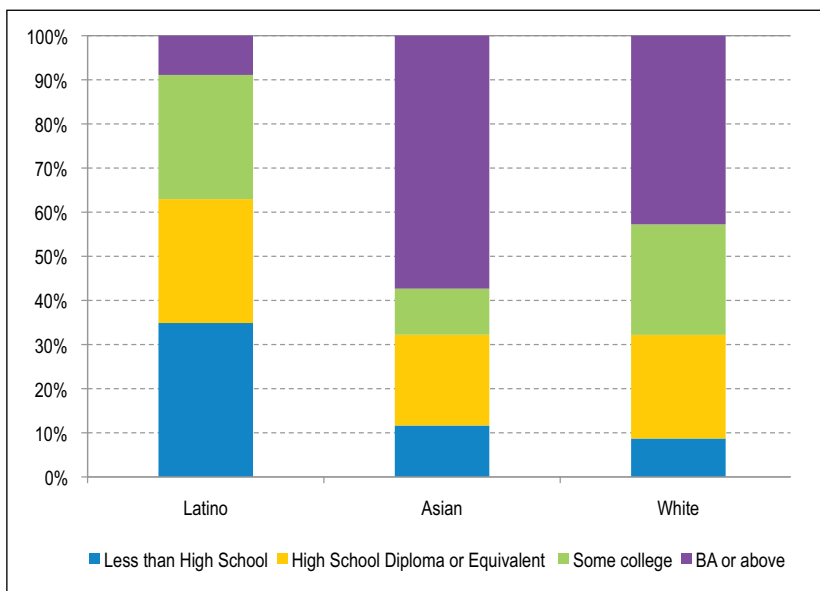
**Figure 4: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



## EDUCATION

Figure 5 highlights the fact that Latinos have the highest percentage of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 34.9%, compared to 8.7% for whites and 11.7% for Asians. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos in the Lawrence area have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 8.9%, compared to 57.3% for Asians and 42.8% for whites.

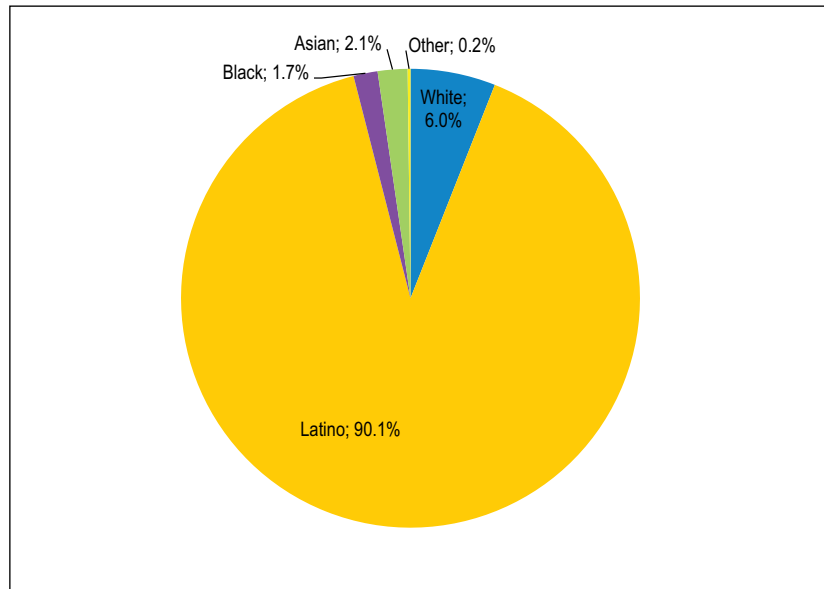
**Figure 5: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010 (Adults 25 Years and Older)**



Figures 6A and 6B, unlike the other figures in this report, are specific to the city of Lawrence. They provide information on Latinos in Lawrence Public Schools, using data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary

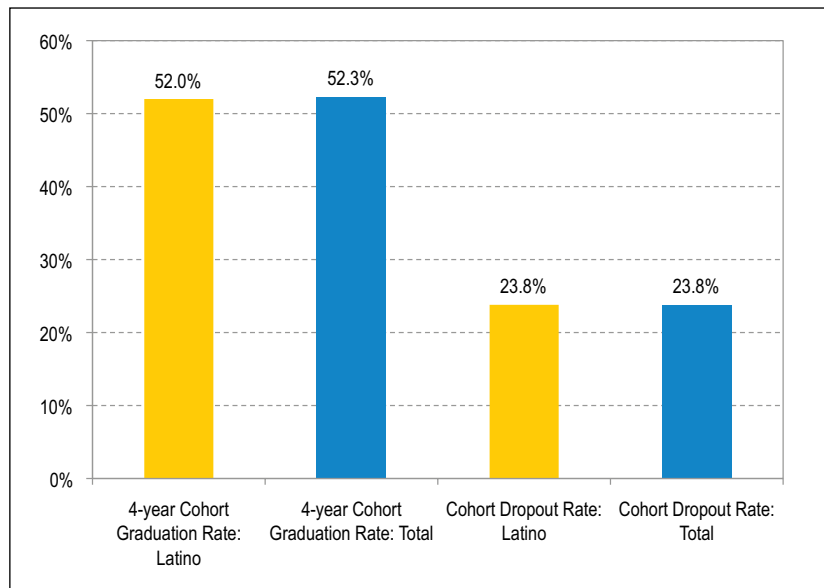
Education. Lawrence Public schools, where 90.1% of students in the 2010–2011 school year were Latino, had the highest concentration of Latinos of any district in Massachusetts.

**Figure 6A: Snapshot of Lawrence Public Schools by Ethno-Racial Group, School Year 2010–2011**



This growing Latino student population in Lawrence is experiencing difficulty succeeding in school. Fewer than half of Latino students (47.6%) graduate in four years and more than a quarter (29.7%) drop out of school. Because the public school population of Lawrence is overwhelmingly Latino, the overall statistics (48.1% four-year graduation rate, 29.9% dropout rate) are very close to the figures for Latinos.

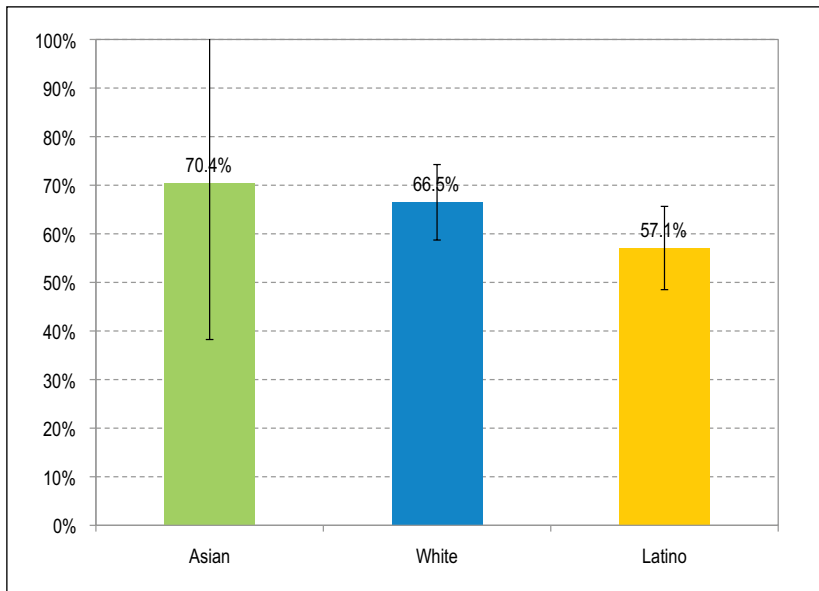
**Figure 6B: Snapshot of Lawrence Public Schools by Outcomes, School Year 2010–2011**



## LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Figure 7 shows that Latinos have a labor force participation rate (57.1%) that is less than for Asians (70.4%) and whites (66.5%). It is also lower than Latinos' statewide rate of 68.1%. This low labor force participation in the Lawrence-Methuen area could be related to the youthful Latino population (Figure 3), suggesting they have more families with young children, which typically aligns with lower labor force participation rates due to caretaking needs.

**Figure 7: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



The previous labor force participation information suggests that Latinos in Lawrence and Methuen lack participation in the area's economy. However, Figure 8 tells a more positive story for those Latinos that are in the labor force. The unemployment rate among Latinos in 2010 was 9.7%, which was higher than 6.7% for whites, but lower than the statewide Latino rate of 15.2% in 2010.

**Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**

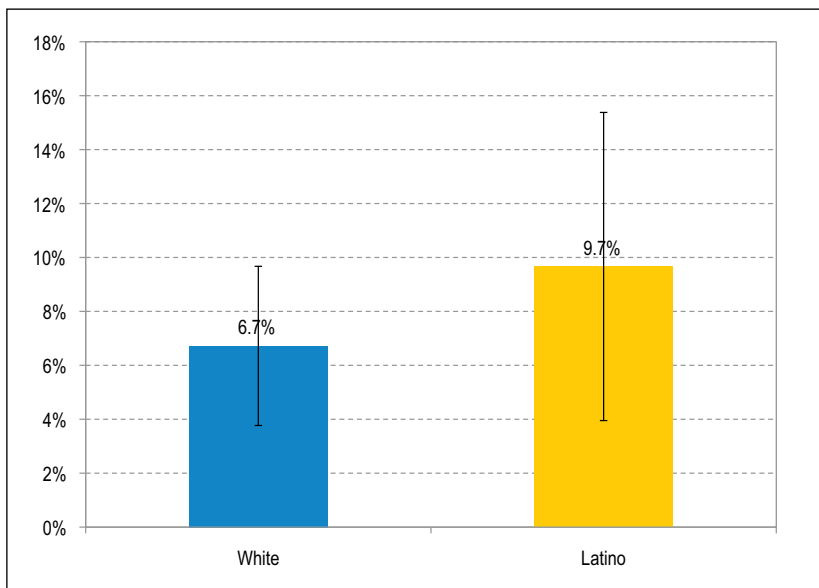
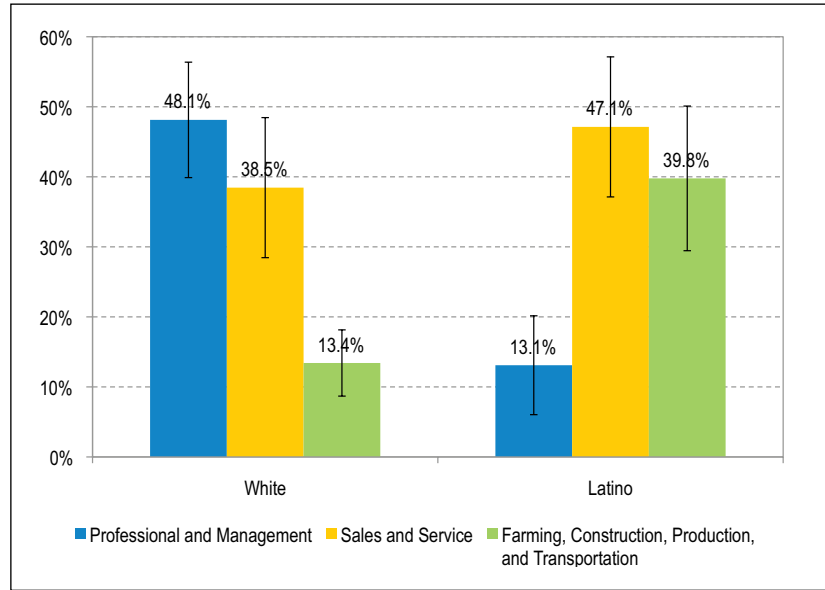




Figure 9 suggests that Latinos serve as complements to whites in the area's labor market whose members have higher educational attainment. Latinos are overrepresented in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs (farming, construction, production, and transportation). Correspondingly, Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs (professional and managerial).

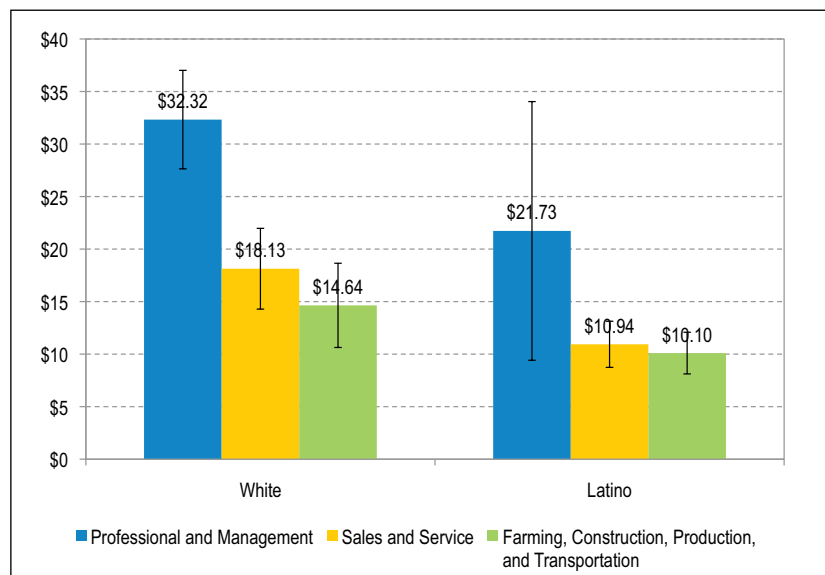
**Figure 9: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



## EARNINGS

When examining the wage rates for these occupational categories, we see that Latinos appear to be receiving wages below those of whites. As shown in Figure 10, they earn \$10.59 less for their white-collar employment, \$7.19 less for their service-sector employment, and \$4.54 less for their blue-collar employment.

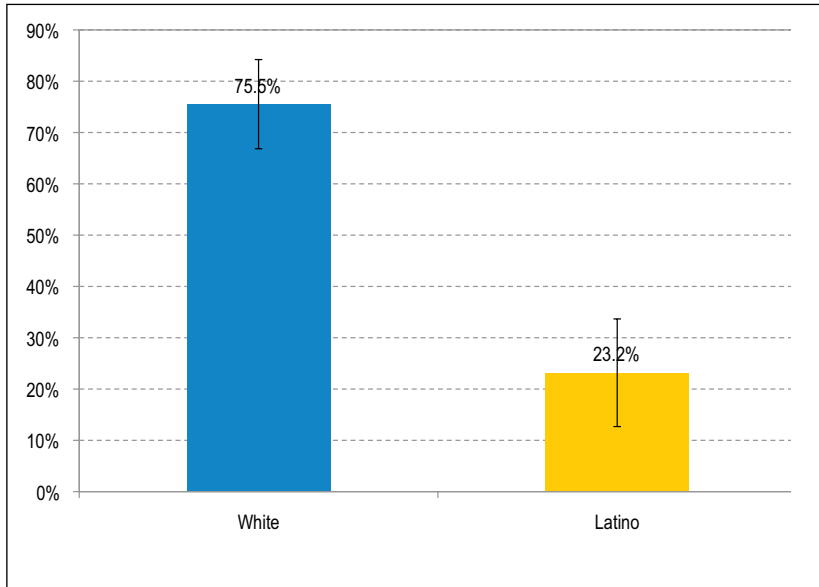
**Figure 10: Hourly Wages by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



## HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

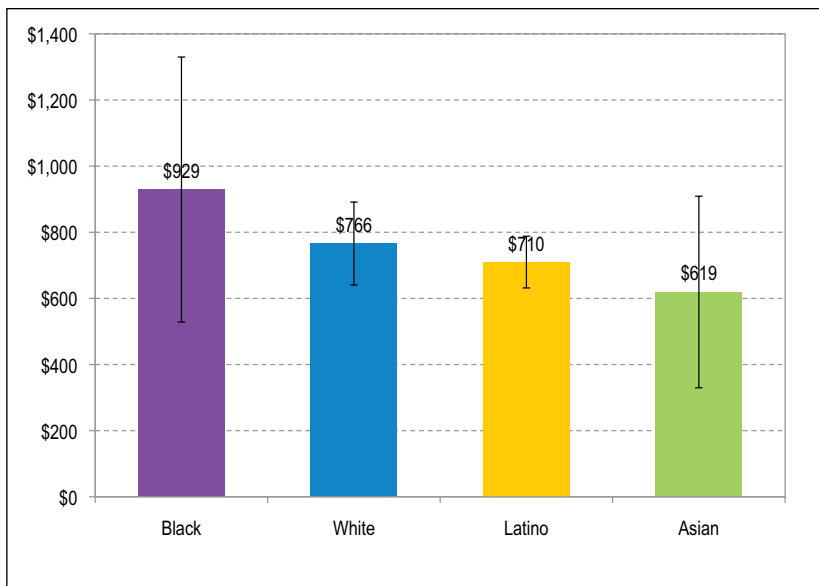
The final measures of Latino participation in Lawrence and surrounding area are intended to identify how well Latinos in the area are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Latinos traditionally have low homeownership rates across the country. Figure 11 shows that this trend holds true in the Lawrence area, where the Latino homeownership rate of 23.2% is even lower than the state's Latino average of 25.7%. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 76.8% of Latinos in the area are renters.

**Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



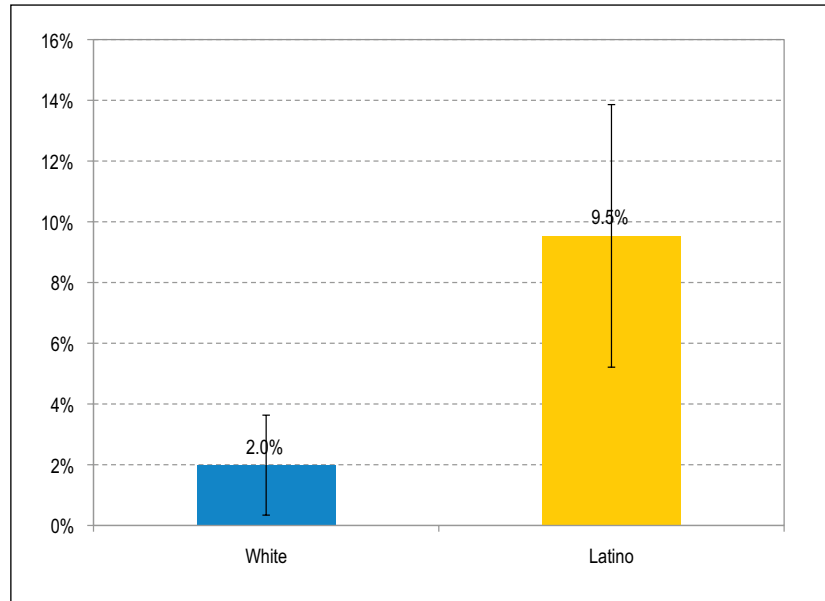
With low levels of homeownership, Latinos in Lawrence and Methuen are more dependent on the local rental markets. Monthly rents paid by Latino renters (\$710) are lower than those of all other ethno-racial groups except Asians.

**Figure 12: Rental Costs by Ethno-Racial Group in 2010**



The percentage of Latinos in this area who lack medical insurance (9.5%) is lower than the statewide Latino uninsurance rate of 11.6% but much higher than the percentage of uninsured whites (2.0%).

**Figure 13: 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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