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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Holyoke, Chicopee, and Easthampton

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The Mauricio Gastón Institute for
Latino Community Development
and Public Policy



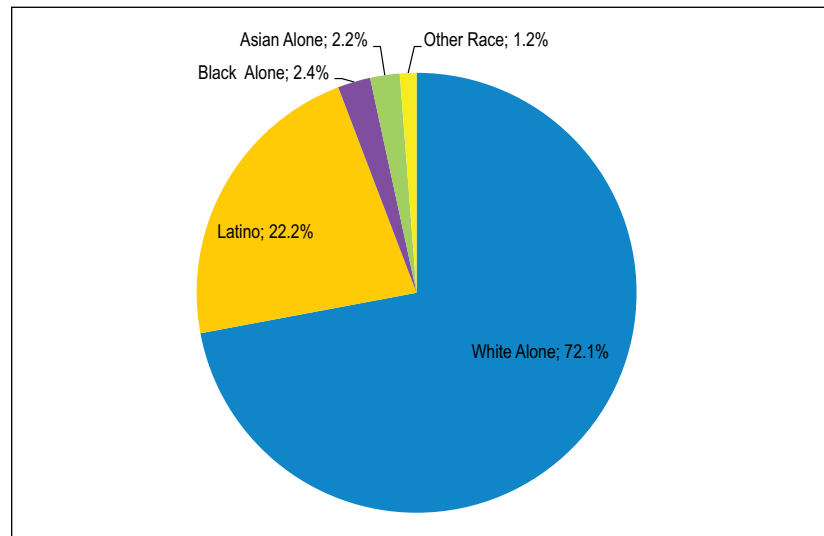
Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas Holyoke, Chicopee, and Easthampton

by Phillip Granberry, PhD and Sarah Rustan | September 17, 2010

INTRODUCTION

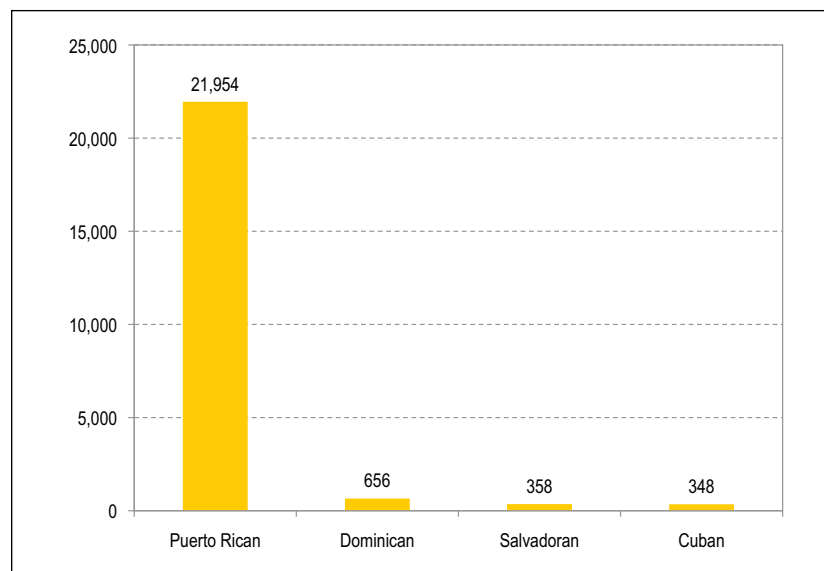
This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in the cities of Holyoke, Chicopee, and Easthampton. This report is prepared for the 2010 Statewide Latino Public Policy Conference organized by UMass Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy. It is part of a larger series that covers fourteen cities, or clusters of cities, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Each report analyzes data from the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The ACS's smallest geographic area is a Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) consisting of a minimum census population of 100,000. In the PUMA for these cities, Chicopee accounted for nearly half of its population (49.5%) in the 2000 Census, while Holyoke accounted for 36.1% and Easthampton 14.4%. The majority of the Latino population of this PUMA (76.0%) lived in Holyoke in 2000, while 22.6% lived in Chicopee and 1.3% lived in Easthampton. Thus, the Latino population in these cities will be referenced as the Holyoke-Chicopee area throughout this report, although the data referenced does include the smaller Latino population in Easthampton as well.

Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



Holyoke, Chicopee, and Easthampton are home to an estimated 24,403 Latinos, who account for 22.2% of the area's population. Whites make up a larger percentage of the total population (72.1%), while blacks represent 2.4 % and Asians represent 2.2% (Figure 1).

Figure 2: Ancestry of the Top Latino Groups in 2008



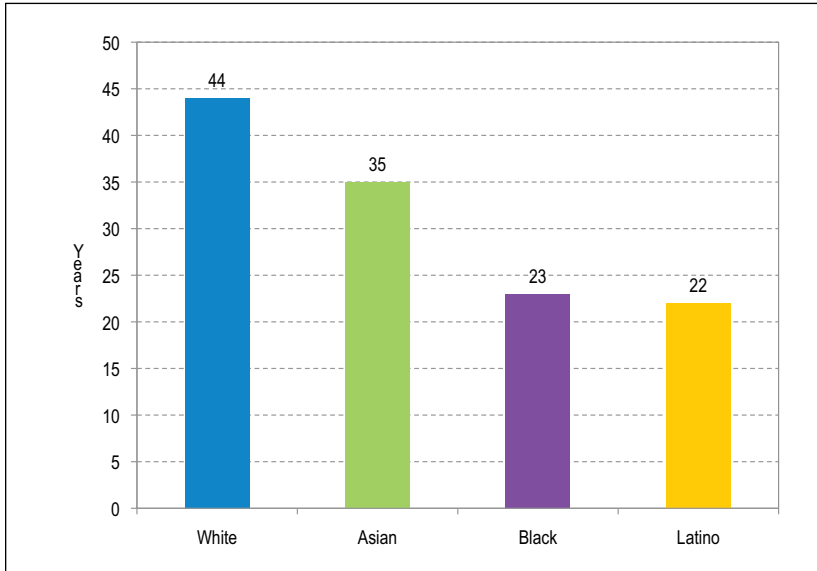
This area's Latino population is dominated by Puerto Ricans, who are U.S. citizens and whose population is estimated to be 21,594. This strong Puerto Rican presence means that Latinos do not contribute as heavily to the number of foreign-born residents as they do in other areas. The Holyoke-Chicopee area consists of only 8.1% foreign-born residents compared to 14.4% for the state as a whole.

The remainder of this report presents an overview that compares Latinos and their top subpopulations to whites, blacks, and Asians in these cities for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics ¹.

MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Figure 3 highlighting differences in median age draws attention to the importance of Latinos in Holyoke and Chicopee. Latinos have a younger median age (22 years) than any other ethno-racial group. This suggests that they have more families with younger 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 2008

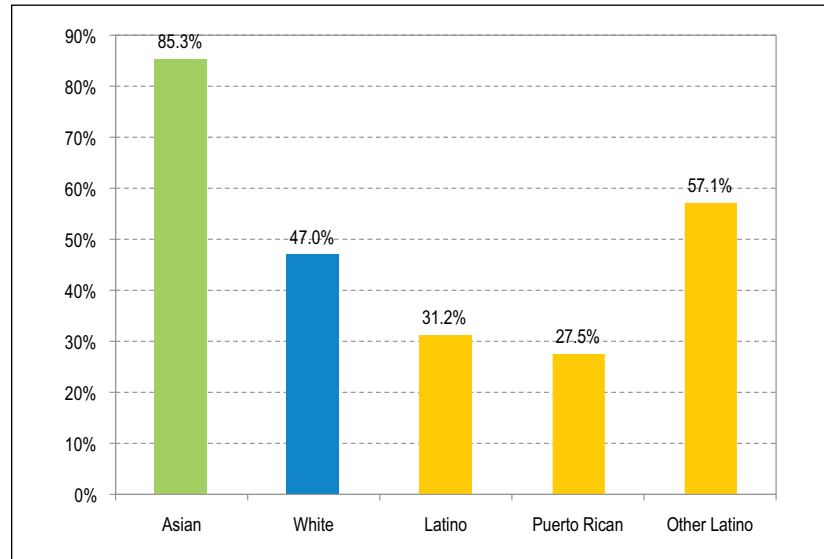


Notes

¹ Because of the smaller size of some ethno-racial groups and Latino sub-populations in the ACS data for the Holyoke, Chicopee, and Easthampton area, some demographic and labor force participation estimates have too large of a standard error and have been dropped from this analysis.

The youthfulness of these cities' Latino population may influence its marital status. Figure 4 shows that the 31.2% marriage rate for Latinos (for persons age 16 and older) is lower than for other ethno-racial groups in these cities. It is also slightly lower than the statewide Latino marriage rate of 33.6%. This variation in Latino marriage rates may be caused by a number of factors, including the differing ages of these populations.

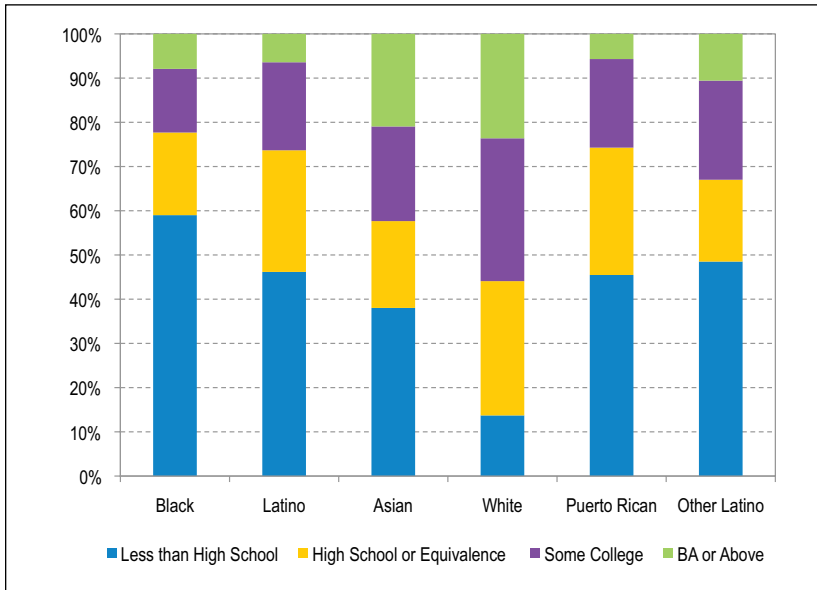
Figure 4: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



EDUCATION

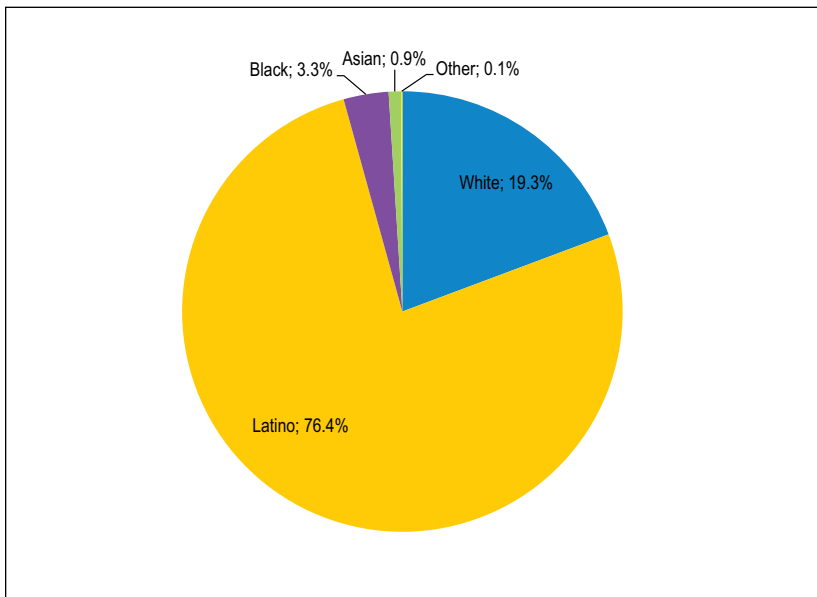
Figure 5 highlights the fact that Latinos (46.2%) and blacks (59.0%) have the highest percentage of their population without a high school diploma; the comparable figures for Asians and whites are 38.0% and 13.7% respectively. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos in these cities have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 6.4%, compared to 23.6% for whites, 20.9% for Asians, and 7.9% for blacks.

Figure 5: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008 (Adults 25 Years and Older)



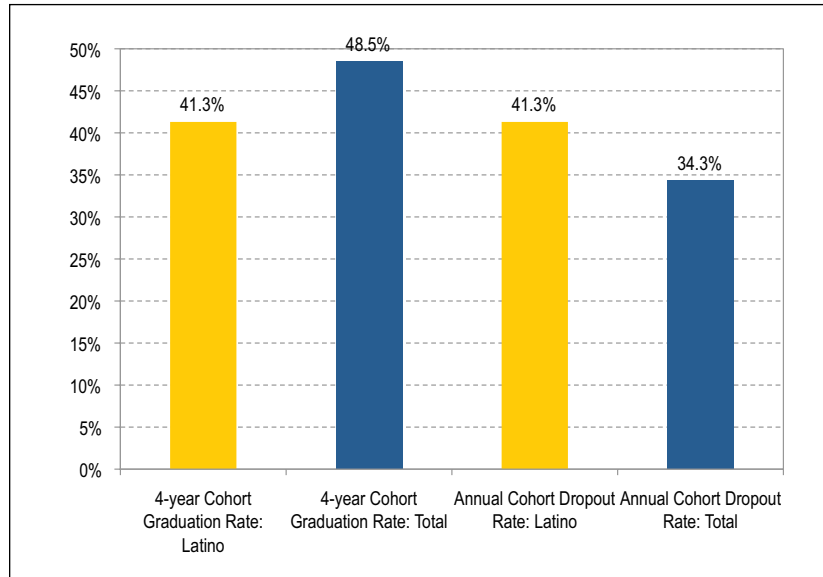
Figures 6A and 6B provide information regarding Latinos in the Holyoke Public Schools and use Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education data. After a 9.4% growth during the 2000s, they made up 76.4% of the student population in the 2008–2009 academic year.

Figure 6A: Spotlight on the Holyoke Public Schools by Ethno-Racial Group, Academic Year 2008–2009



Less than half of Latino students (41.3%) graduate in four years compared to 48.5% for the total population. Similarly, 41.3% of Latinos drop out of school compared to 34.3% for the total population.

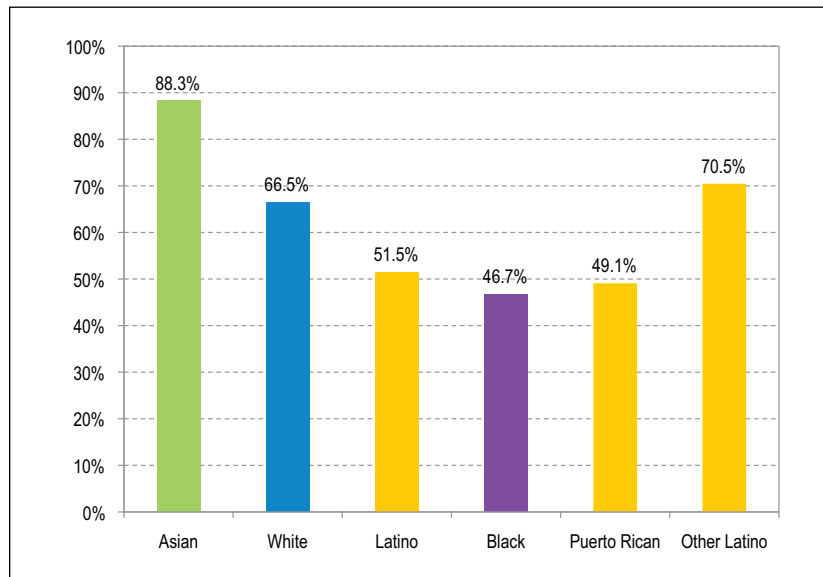
Figure 6B: Spotlight on Holyoke Public Schools by Outcomes, Academic Year 2008–2009



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

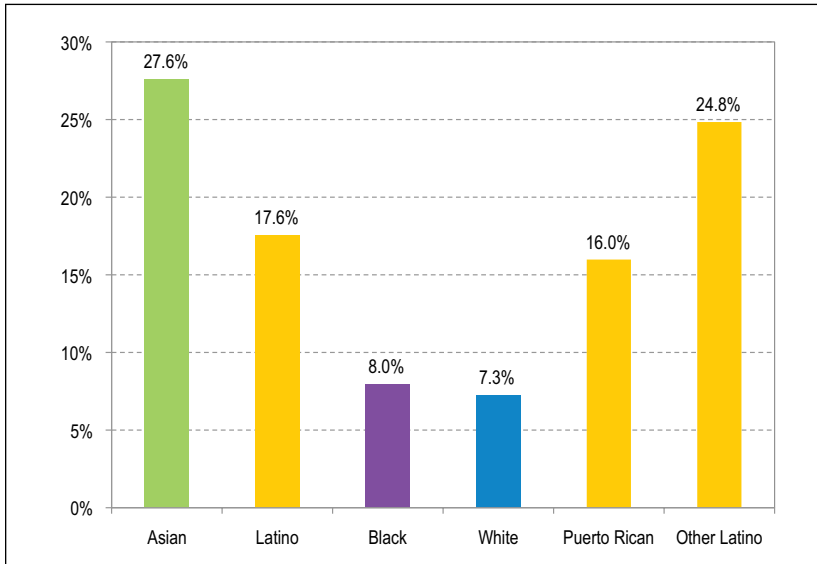
Figure 7 shows that Latinos have a labor force participation rate (51.5%) that is less than for Asians (88.3%) and whites (66.5%) but greater than for blacks (46.7%).

Figure 7: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



Even among Latinos who are in the labor force, unemployment is high. The unemployment rate among Latinos in 2008 was 17.6%, which was higher than 8.0% for blacks and 7.3% for whites but lower than 27.6% for Asians.

Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



Figures 9A and 9B suggest that Latinos serve as complements to other ethno-racial groups 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). Nearly a third of Latinos (31.8%) work in these blue-collar jobs (Figure 9B). Correspondingly, as Figure 9A shows, Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs (professional and managerial).

Figure 9A: Population Employed in Professional or Managerial Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

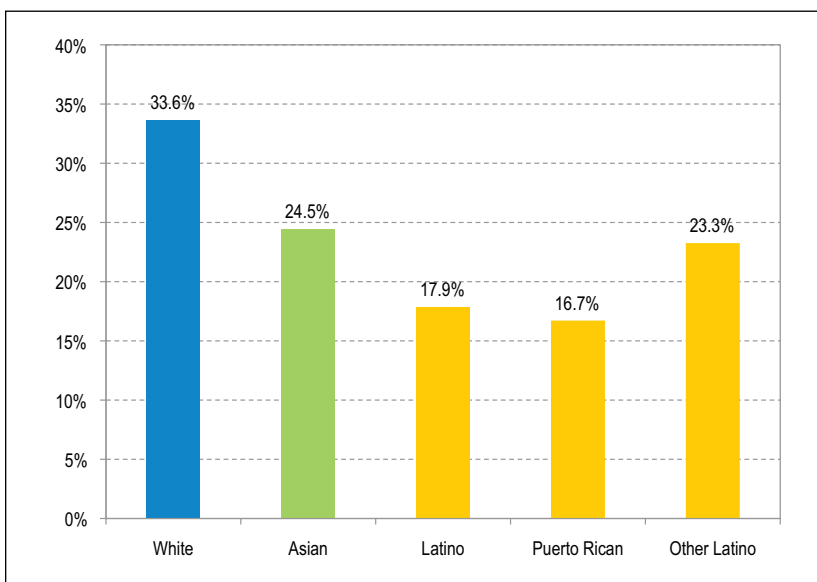
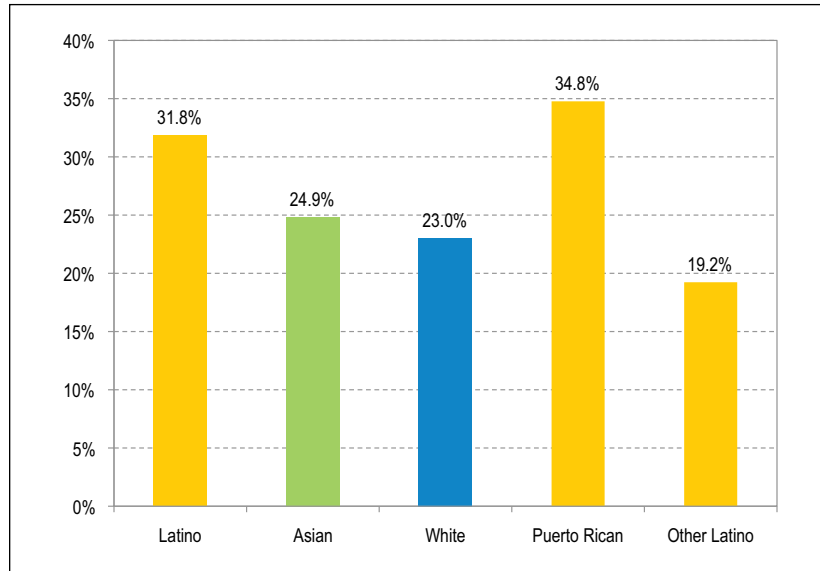


Figure 9B: Population Employed in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



EARNINGS

When examining the wage rates for these occupational categories, Latinos earn considerably less than whites, especially for their white-collar (Figure 10A) and service-sector (Figure 10B) employment. Compared to Asians, Latinos earn less for their white-collar work, but more for their blue-collar employment (Figure 10C).

Figure 10A: Hourly Wages in Professional or Managerial Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

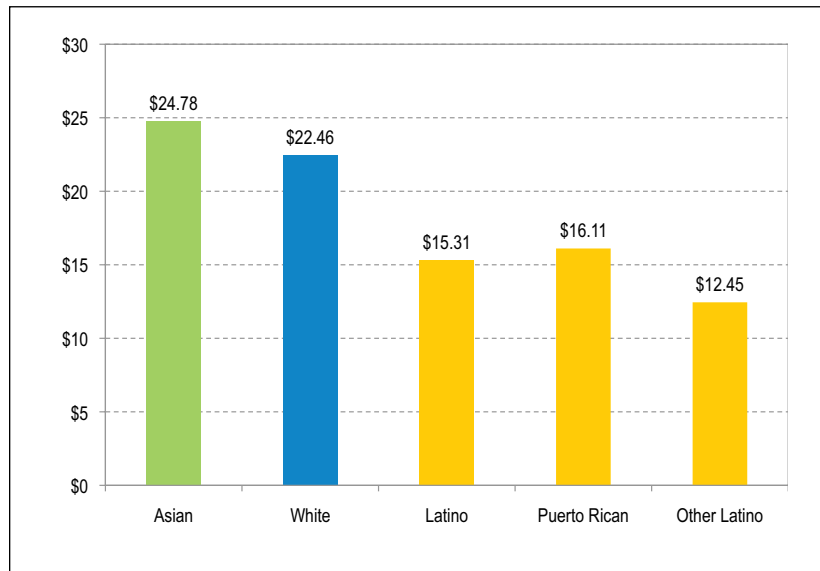


Figure 10B: Hourly Wages in Sales and Service Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

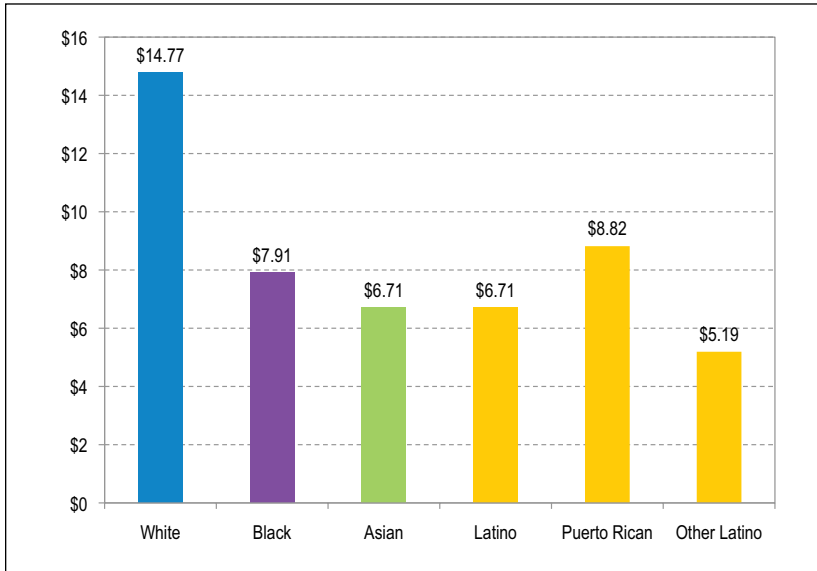
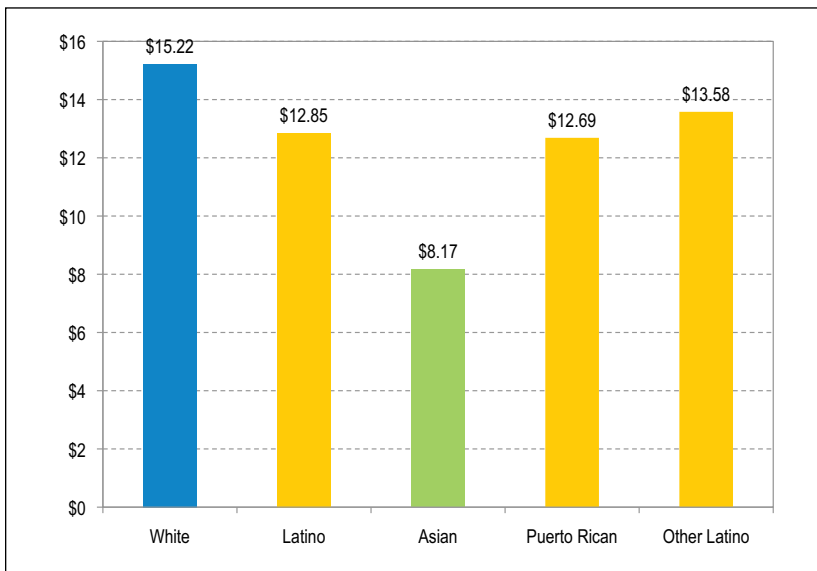


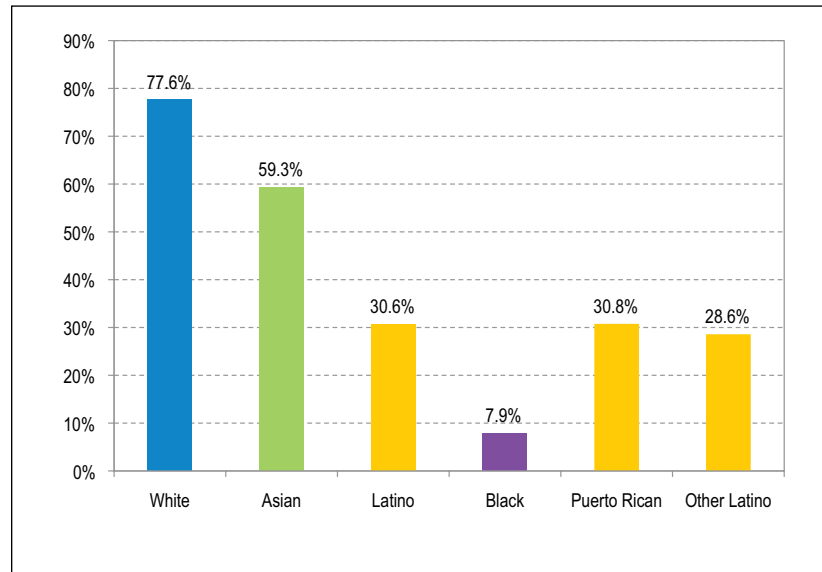
Figure 10C: Hourly Wages in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

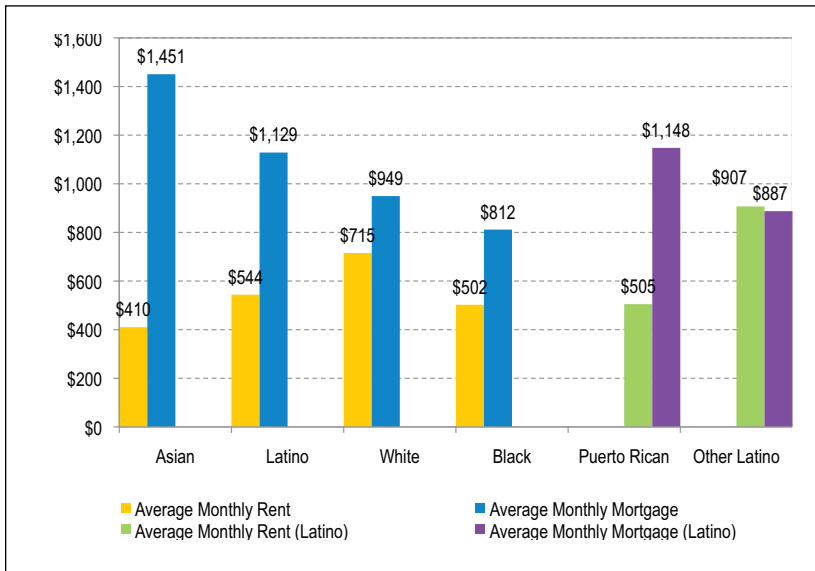
The final measures of Latino participation in the Holyoke–Chicopee area are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Latinos traditionally have low homeownership rates across the country. Figure 11 shows that this trend holds true in this area as they have the lowest homeownership level of any ethno-racial group: 30.6%, which is slightly lower than the state’s Latino average of 32.9%. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 69.4% of Latinos in the area are renters.

Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



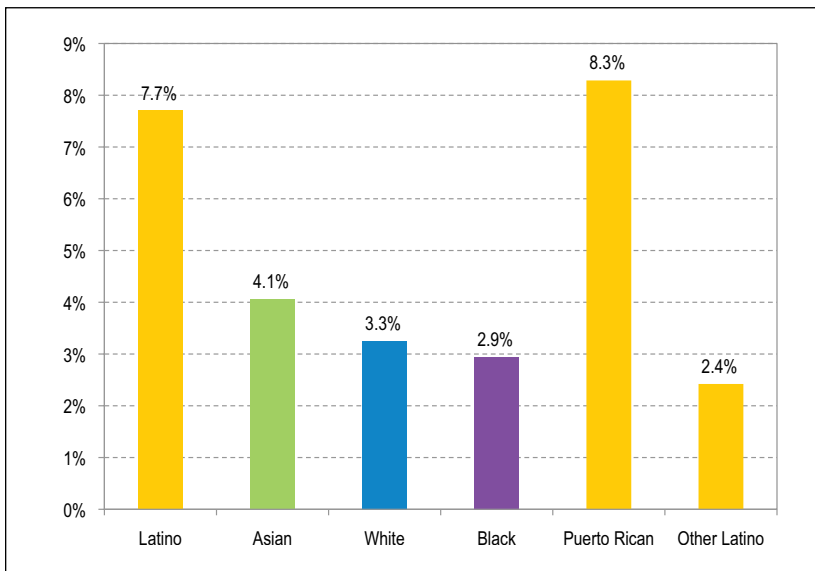
Homeownership is seen in a different light when its cost is analyzed. Having largely become homeowners during the housing bubble of the last decade, Latinos in Figure 12 on average pay \$1,129 monthly mortgages – higher than for whites and blacks. At the same time, Latino renters pay low average monthly rents, similar to those of Asians and blacks. The combination of high mortgage payments and low rents underlines the fact that Latino homebuyers were disadvantaged by the earlier housing bubble.

Figure 12: Housing Costs by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



The percentage of Latinos in this area who lack medical insurance (7.7%) is lower than the statewide average for Latinos (9.2%). Puerto Ricans, who in many other areas across the state have lower percentages of uninsured, have a surprisingly high 8.3% of their population in this area without insurance.

Figure 13: Medical Uninsurance Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008





The Mauricio Gastón Institute for
Latino Community Development
and Public Policy

The Mauricio Gastón Institute of 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 Massachusetts and selected areas based on an analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data.

The 2008 American Community Survey allowed people to choose their ethnicity and race. Ethnicity identifies a person as Latino or Hispanic. We use the term “Latino” for all of those who self-identify as Latino in response to the ethnicity question. The racial categories are assigned to those who do not identify as Latino. Technically, their designation is non-Latino white, non-Latino black, and non-Latino Asian, though they are often referenced as white, black, and Asian in these profiles.

About the Authors

Phillip Granberry is a social demographer who specializes in unauthorized migrants in the United States. He worked with various community based organizations assisting recently arrived U.S. migrants before earning a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Boston in 2007. His past research has focused on Latinos in the United States. One part of this research has addressed the formation and use of social capital among Mexican migrants in Los Angeles County, and another part of this research has addressed demographic trends of Latinos in New England. His current research focuses on Brazilian and Dominican migrants in the Metropolitan Boston area. He currently teaches in the Economics Department and is a research associate of the Gastón Institute.

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 subpopulations 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. Whenever the category “Brazilian” appears in one of the figures, it includes all Brazilians, but the category “Latino” includes only those Brazilians who self-identified as Latino.

After the dissemination of the 2010 United States Census, the Gastón Institute will be updating these demographic profiles. These updates will allow for a better analysis of the Massachusetts Latino populations. We also plan to expand this series by adding analyses of the other New England states and by covering more cities.

Sarah Rustan is a PhD candidate in Law, Policy, and Society at Northeastern University with degrees in cultural management and architecture. Her professional background includes broad experiences in the nonprofit sector, including research as well as nonprofit and cultural management. Her past research has examined diverse topics ranging from charitable giving to women in the workforce. At present she is working on a dissertation exploring the role that nonprofit organizations play in promoting the development of social capital. She currently serves as a Research Associate and Data Analyst for the Gastón Institute and as a Doctoral Fellow at Northeastern University. Sarah’s research interests include demography, community change, and public policy.

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