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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Somerville and Everett

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The Mauricio Gastón Institute for
Latino Community Development
and Public Policy



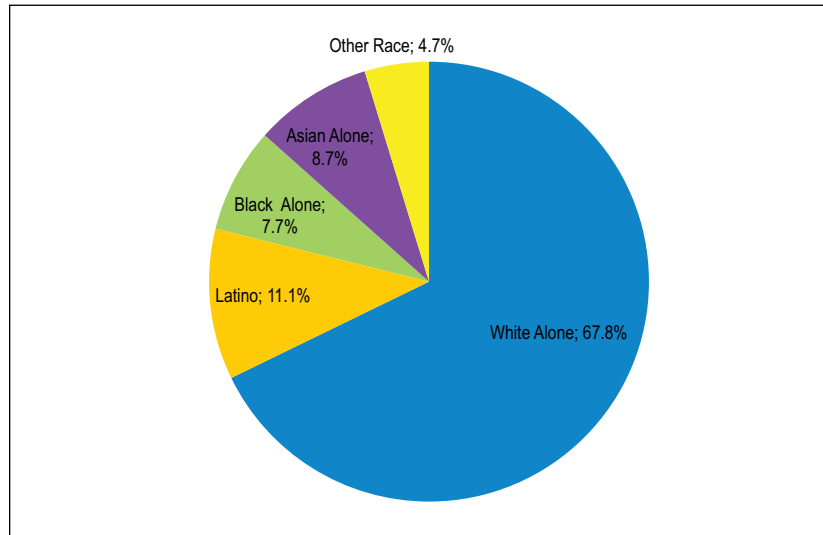
Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas Somerville and Everett

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

INTRODUCTION

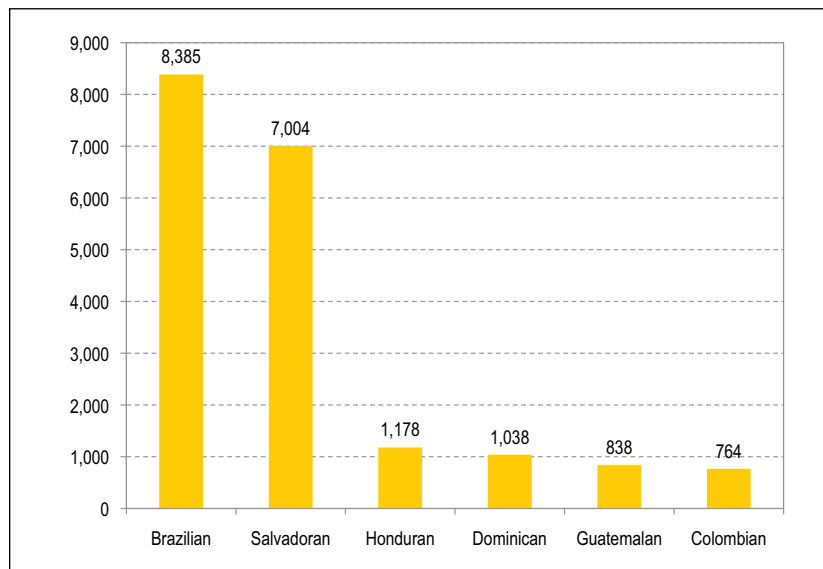
This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in the cities of Somerville and Everett. This report is prepared for the 2010 Statewide Latino Public Policy Conference organized by UMass Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy. It is part of a larger series that covers fourteen other 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, Somerville accounted for the majority of its population (67.1%) in the 2000 Census, while Everett accounted for 32.9%. The majority of the Latino population of this PUMA (64.6%) lived in Somerville in 2000, while 35.4% lived in Everett.

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



Somerville and Everett are home to an estimated 13,049 Latinos, who make up 11.1% of the cities' combined population. Whites constitute the largest ethno-racial group (67.8%), while Asians account for 8.7% and blacks 7.7% (Figure 1).

Figure 2: Ancestry of the Top Latino Groups in 2008



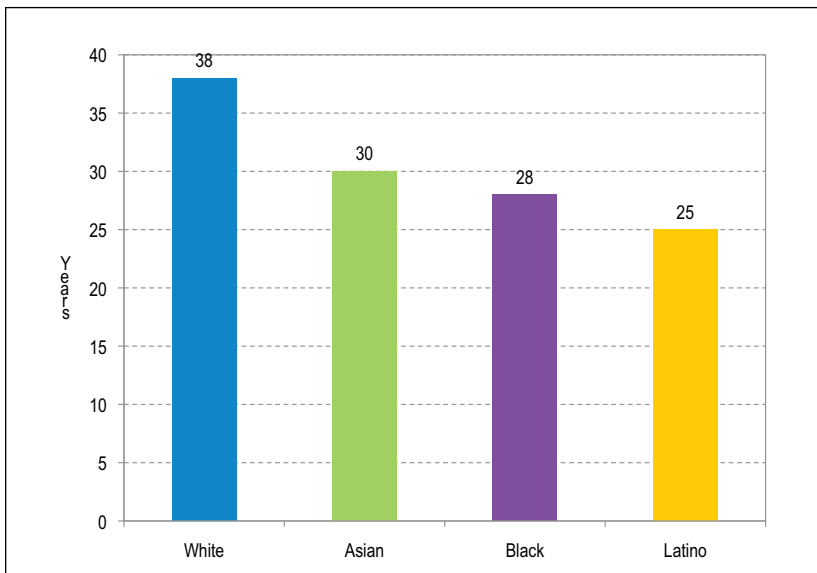
The Latino population in Somerville and Everett is dominated by Brazilians,¹ who number 8,385, and Salvadorans, who number 7,004. Hondurans (1,178), Dominicans (1,038), Guatemalans (838), and Colombians (764) are the other sizable Latino subpopulations. Latinos help give Somerville and Everett a proportionately greater foreign-born population (28.4%) than the state as a whole (14.4%).

The remainder of this report presents an overview that compares Latinos and their top subpopulations to whites, blacks, and Asians in Somerville and Everett for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics².

MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Figure 3 highlights differences in median age to draw attention to the importance of Latinos in Somerville and Everett. Latinos have a younger median age (25 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



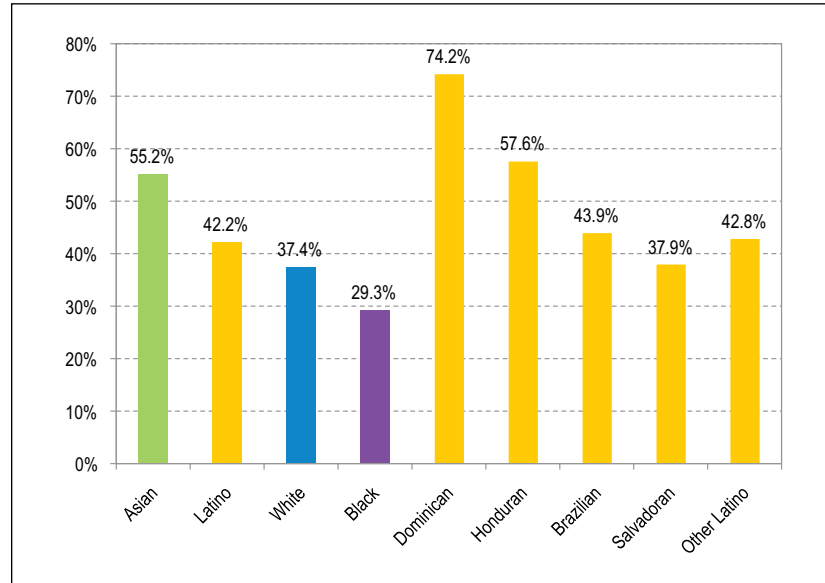
Notes

¹ Most Brazilians in the survey did not identify themselves as Latino. 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.

² Because of the smaller size of some ethno-racial groups and Latino subpopulations in the ACS data for Somerville and Everett, some demographic and labor force participation estimates have too large of a standard error and have been dropped from this analysis.

Figure 4 shows that the 42.2% marriage rate for Latinos (for persons age 16 and older) is greater than for whites and blacks but lower than for Asians. It is also greater than the statewide Latino marriage rate of 33.6%. Latino subpopulations show wide variation in their marriage rates; a number of factors, including the differing ages of these populations, could be driving this variation.

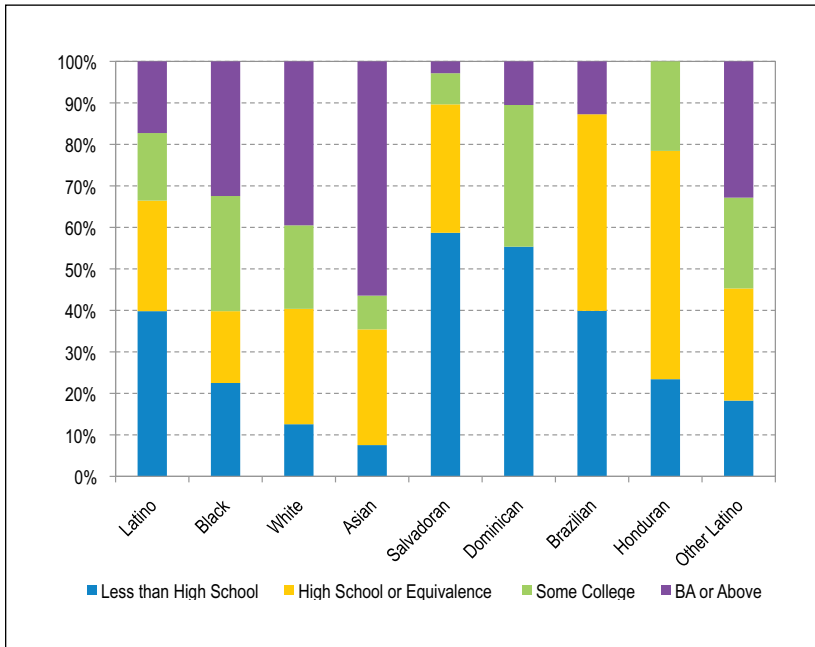
Figure 4: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



EDUCATION

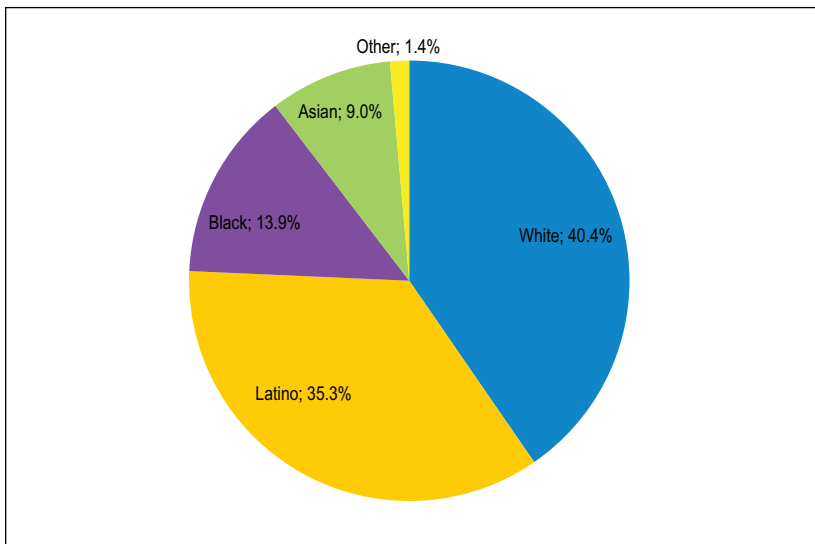
Figure 5 highlights the fact that Latinos have the highest percentage of their population who lack a high school diploma: 39.8%, compared to 22.5% for blacks, 12.6% for whites, and 7.5 % for Asians. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos in Somerville and Everett have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 17.3%, compared to 56.4% for Asians, 39.5% for whites, and 32.4% for blacks.

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



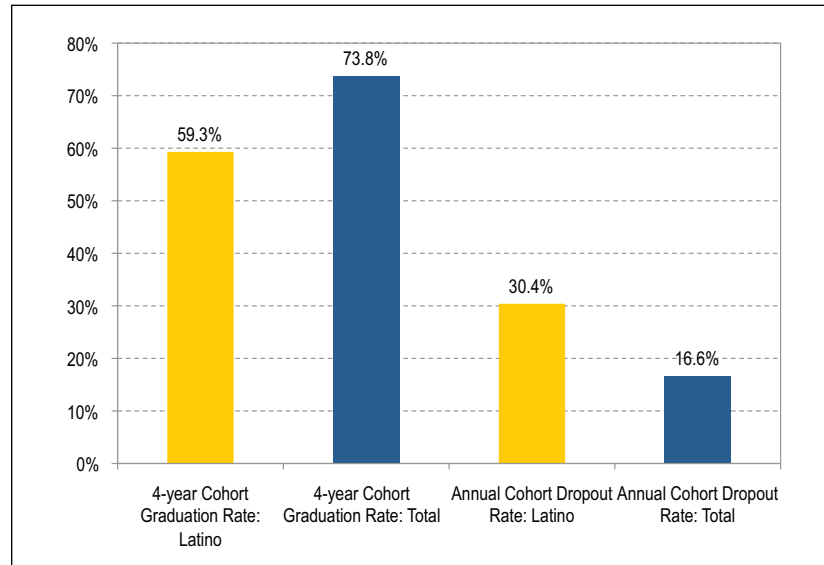
Figures 6A and 6B provide information regarding Latinos in the Somerville Public Schools, based on data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. After a 17.0% increase in the Latino student population during 2000s, they made up 35.3% of the student population in the 2008-2009 academic year, which is greater than any of the other ethno-racial groups except whites.

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



Latino students are less likely to graduate in four years (59.3%, compared to 73.8% for the total population). Similarly, 30.4% of Latinos drop out of school compared to only 16.6% for the total population.

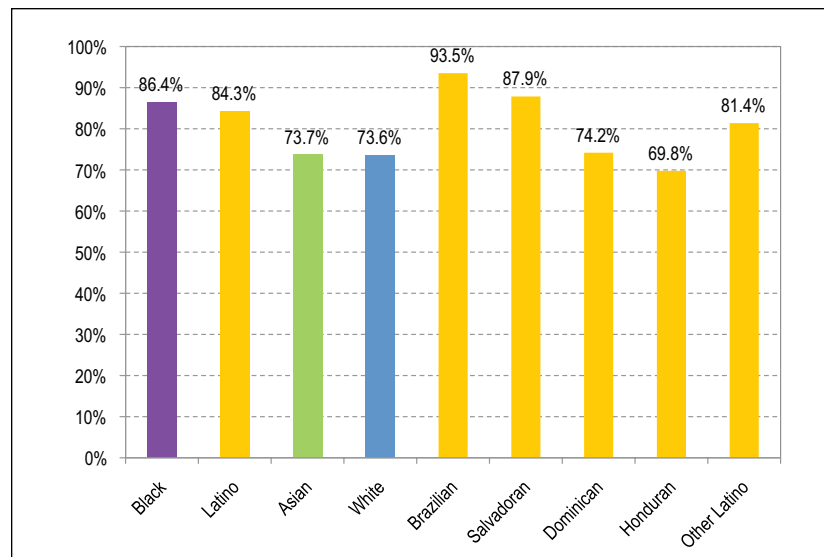
Figure 6B: Spotlight on Somerville Public Schools by Outcomes, Academic Year 2008–2009



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

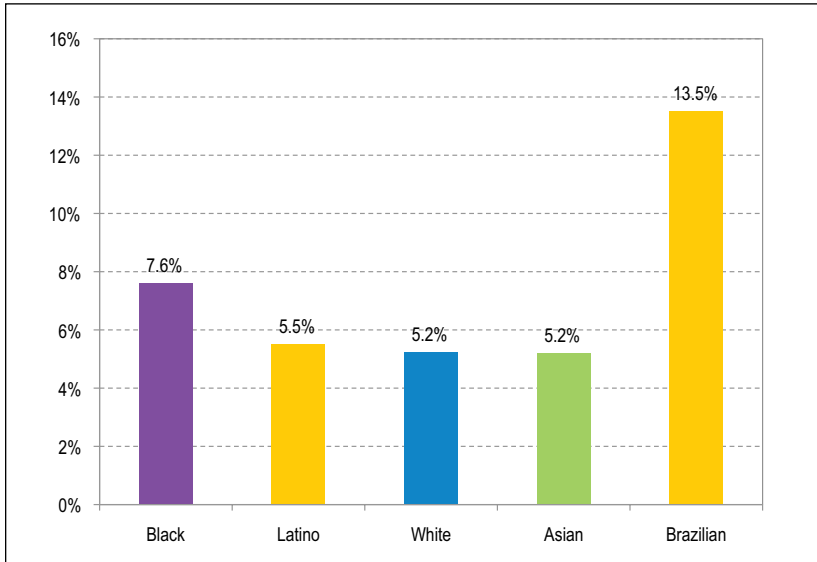
Figure 7 shows that Latinos have a labor force participation rate (84.3%) that is less than for blacks (86.4%), but greater than for Asians (73.7%) and whites (73.6%). The Latino labor force participation rate for Somerville and Everett is significantly higher than among Latinos across the state, whose overall participation rate is 68.6%. This labor force participation is closely related to the median age shown by Figure 3. In particular, Brazilians (93.5%) and Salvadorans (87.9%) have high labor force participation rates.

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



The high labor force participation of Latinos carries over to their employment. Figure 8 tells an even more positive story. The unemployment rate among Latinos in 2008 was 5.5%, which was lower than for blacks (7.6%), but slightly higher than for both whites and Asians (5.2%). However, Brazilians, who had high labor force participation, also experienced a high unemployment rate (13.5%).

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



Figures 9A and 9B suggest that Latinos in Somerville and Everett’s labor market serve as complements to other ethno-racial groups whose members have higher educational attainment. Latinos are overrepresented in sales and service occupations. Salvadoran and Brazilian workers are concentrated in these occupations (Figure 9B). Figure 9A shows that 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

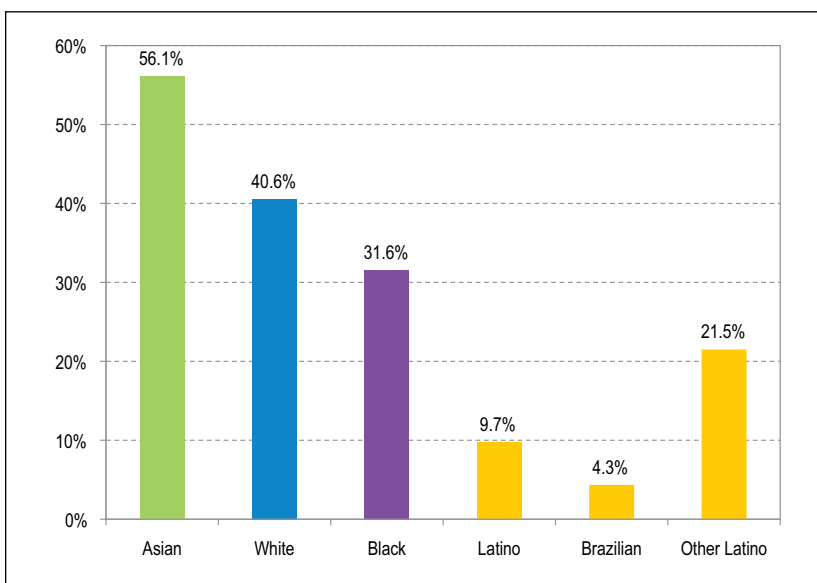
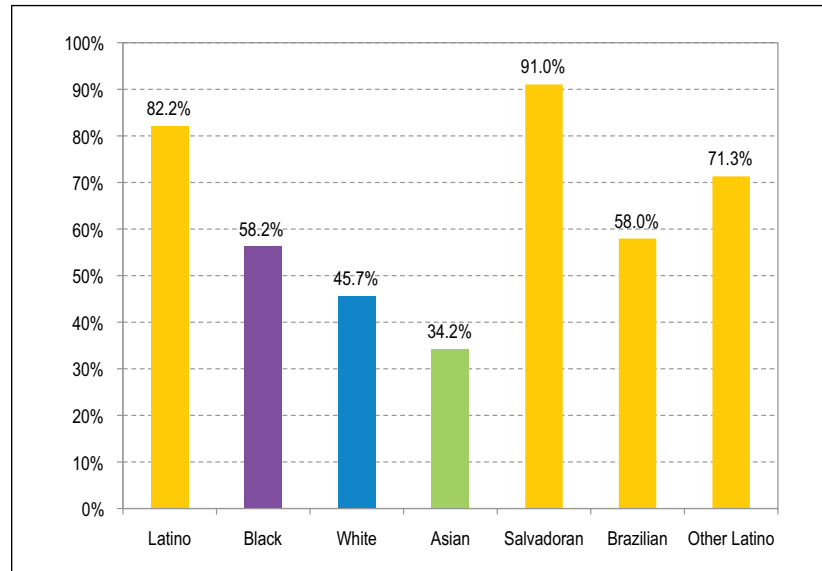


Figure 9B: Population Employed in Sales and Service Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



EARNINGS

When examining the wage rates for these occupational categories, Latinos appear to be receiving lower wages than those of other ethno-racial groups for most occupational categories. They earn “comparable”, just marginally lower than whites and blacks wages for their white-collar and service-sector employment than whites and blacks, but not Asians (Figures 10A and 10B). They earn less than all other ethno-racial groups for their blue-collar employment (Figure 10C). It should be noted that in the blue-collar jobs, Latinos earn a hourly rate 50% less than for whites.

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

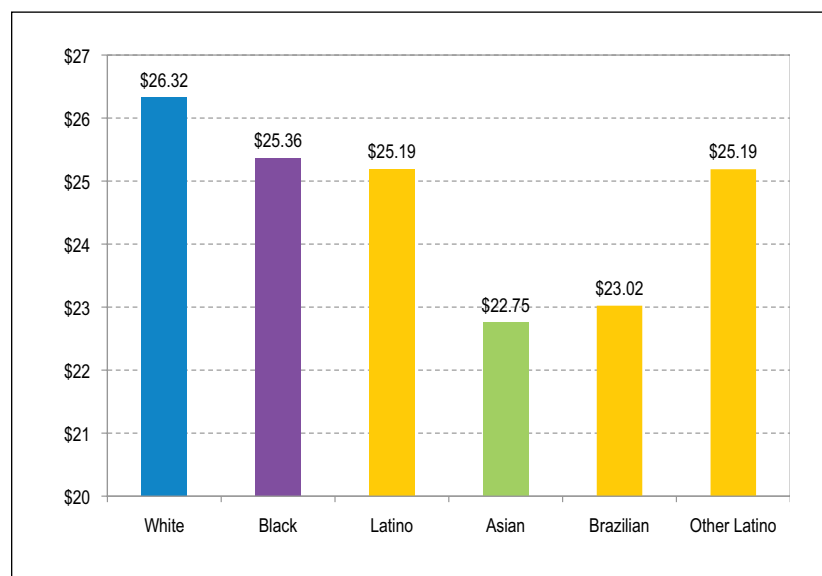


Figure 10B: Hourly Wages in Sales and Service Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

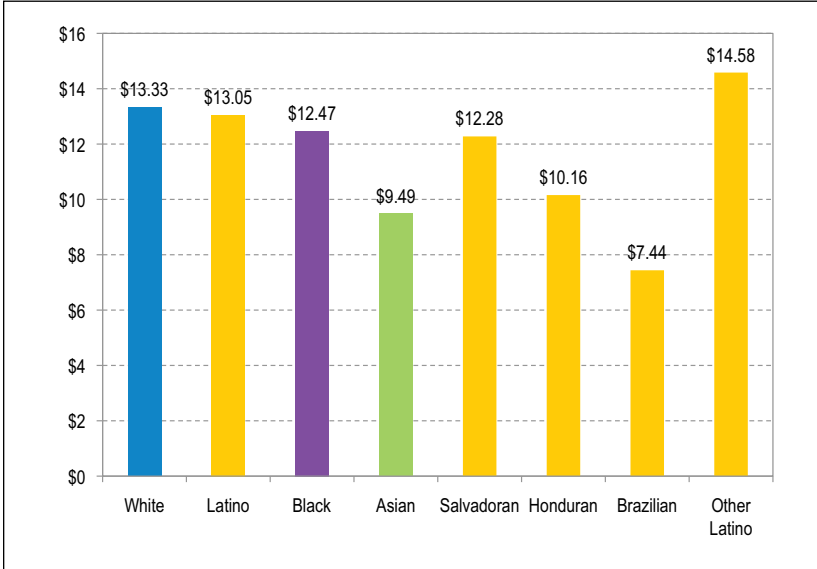
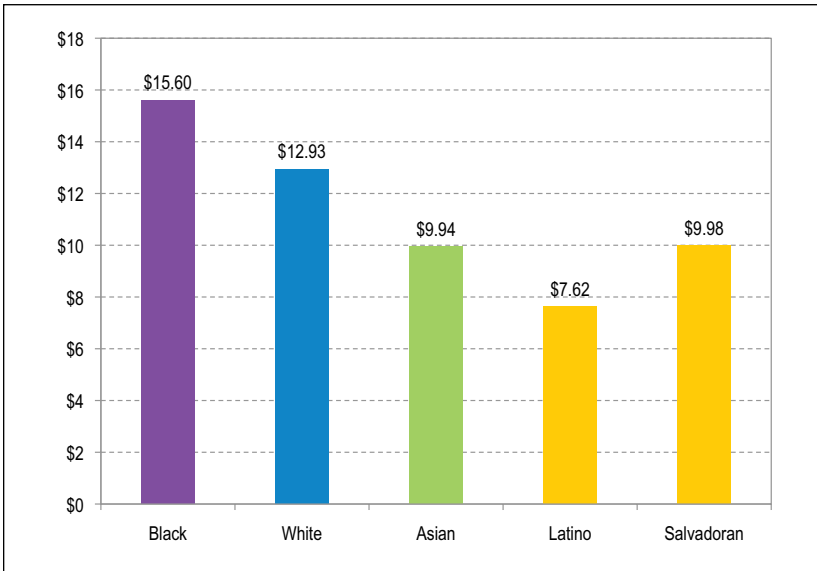


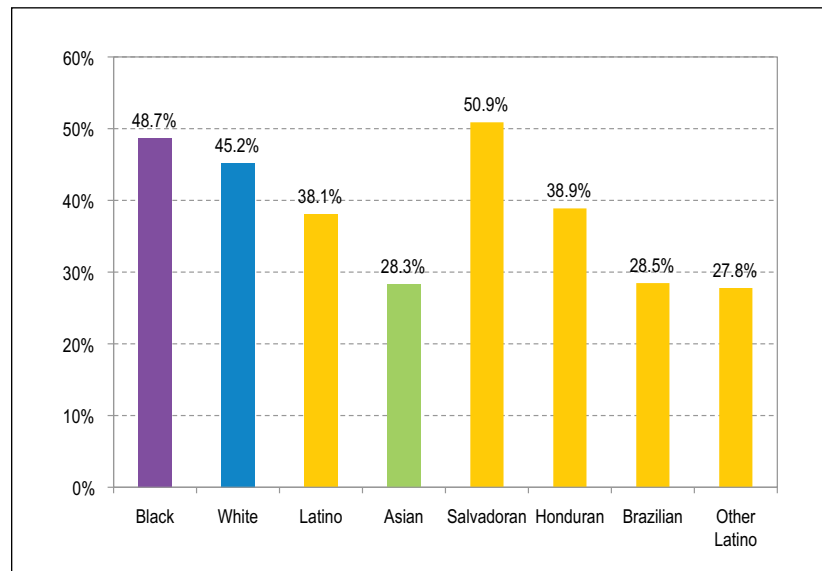
Figure 10C: Hourly Wages in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

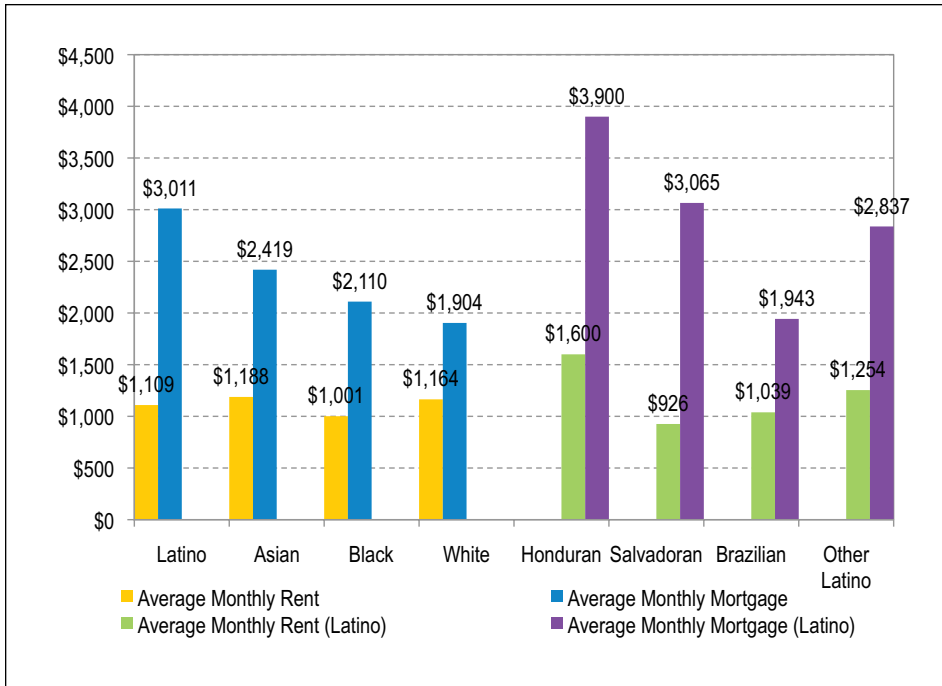
The final measures of Latino participation in Somerville and Everett are intended to identify how well Latinos in these two cities are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Latinos traditionally have low homeownership rates across the country. Figure 11 shows that this trend holds true in these cities: the 38.1% Latino homeownership rate is lower than for all other ethno-racial groups but Asians. However, this ownership rate (38.1%) is higher than the rate for the ethnic population in Massachusetts (32.9%), but closer to the overall rate for these two cities (42.2%), which is significantly lower than the statewide average (70.1%). As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 61.9% of Latinos in Somerville and Everett are renters.

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



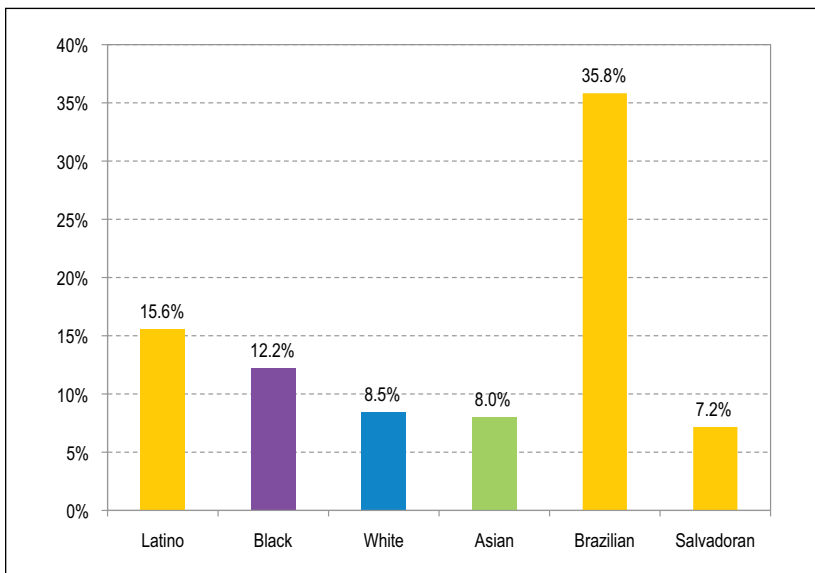
Homeownership is seen in a different light when its cost is analyzed. Having largely become homeowners during the housing bubble of the last decade, Latinos pay the highest average monthly mortgages at \$3,011 (Figure 12). At the same time, Latinos pay rents that are comparable to those of other ethno-racial groups. The combination of high mortgage payments and comparable 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 Somerville and Everett who lack medical insurance (15.6%) is significantly higher than the statewide average for Latinos (9.2%). Brazilians, who are a newly arriving subpopulation, have the highest uninsurance rate of 35.8%, even higher than their statewide rate of 31.2%.

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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