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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Springfield

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Recommended Citation

Granberry, Phillip and Rustan, Sarah, "Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Springfield" (2010). *Gastón Institute Publications*. 48.
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The Mauricio Gastón Institute for
Latino Community Development
and Public Policy



Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas

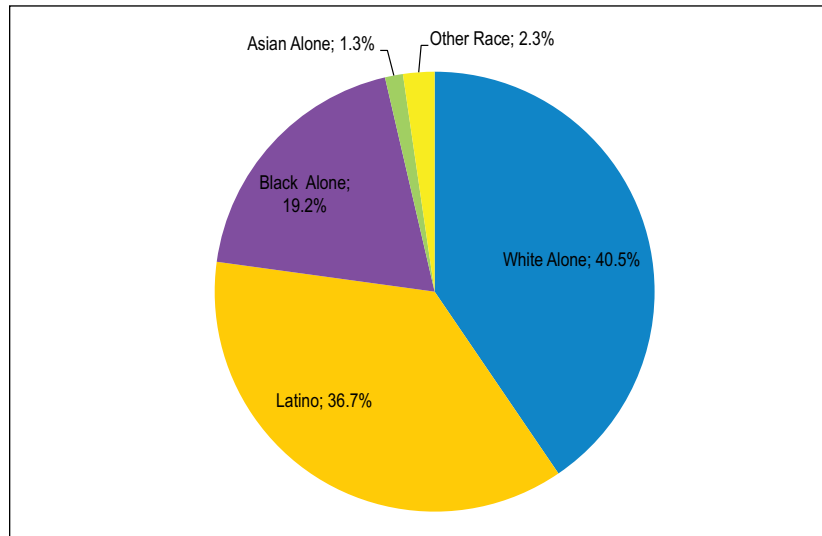
Springfield

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

INTRODUCTION

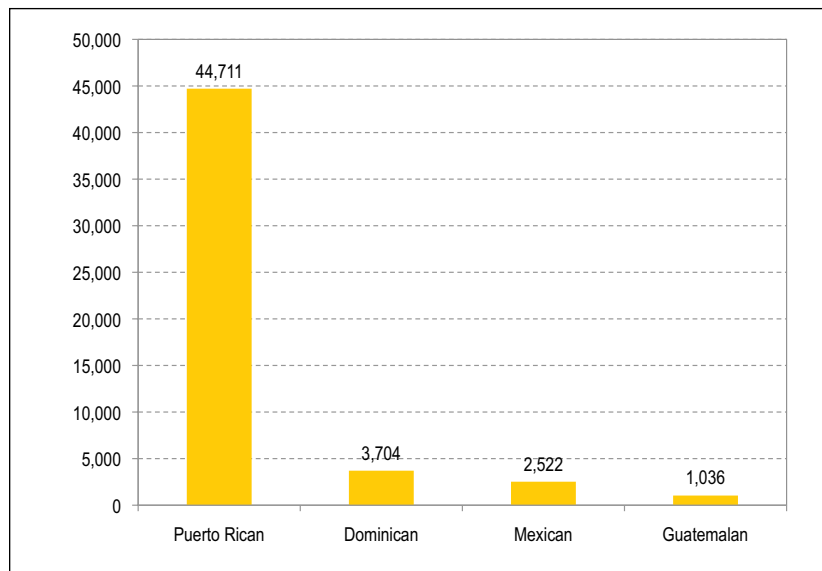
This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Springfield. This report is prepared for the 2010 Statewide Latino Public Policy Conference organized by UMass Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community 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. Springfield is a large enough city that it constitutes a PUMA by itself. The ACS thereby enables us to arrive at a demographic and economic portrait of Springfield's Latino community.

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



Springfield is the third largest city in Massachusetts and is home to an estimated 56,539 Latinos, who make up 36.7% of the city's population. Whites constitute a slightly larger percentage of the population (40.5%), while blacks account for 19.2% of the city's population (Figure 1).

Figure 2: Ancestry of the Top Latino Groups in 2008



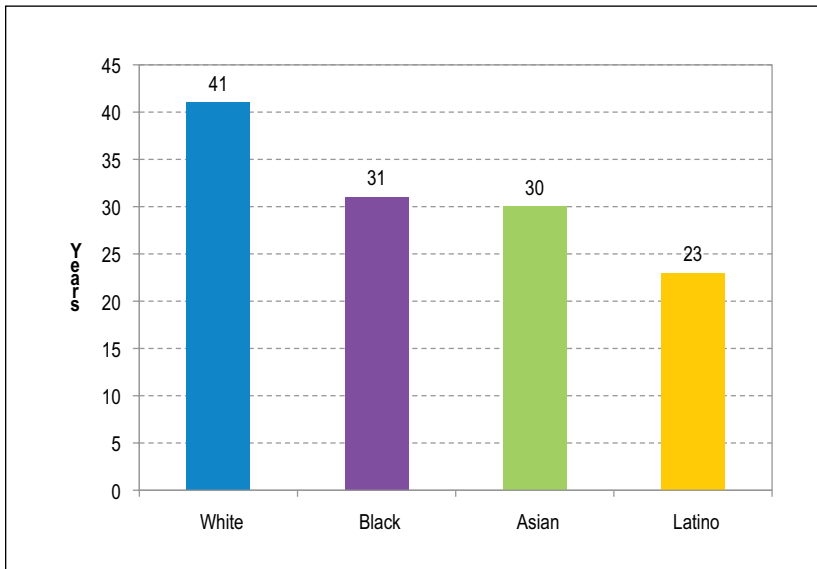
The Latino population is driven by the city's large concentration of Puerto Ricans, who number 44,711. As a result, Springfield actually has a lower percentage of foreign-born residents (9.1%) than the state as a whole (14.4%). Dominicans (3,704), Mexicans (2,522), and Guatemalans (1,036) are the other sizable Latino subpopulations.

The rest of this report presents an overview that compares Latinos and their top subpopulations to whites, blacks, and Asians in Springfield for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics¹.

MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Figure 3 highlights differences in median age draws attention to the importance of Latinos in Springfield. Latinos have a younger median age (23 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

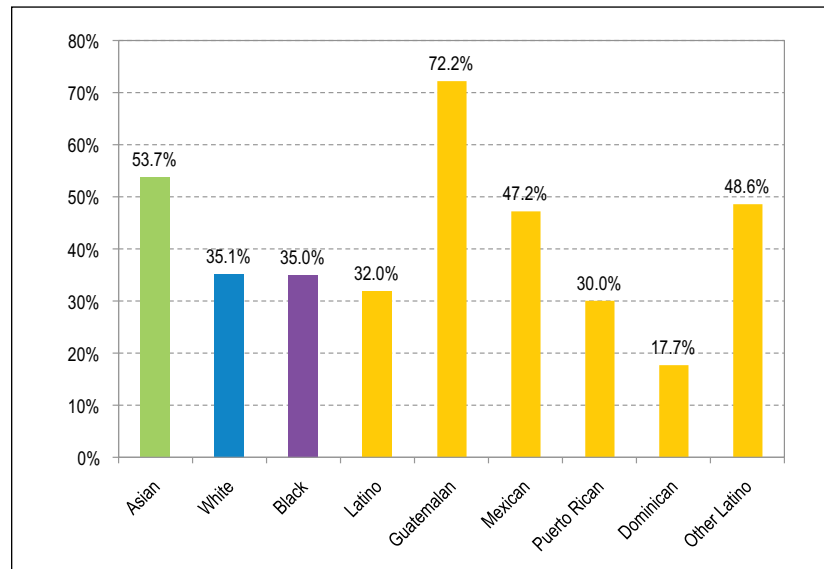


Notes

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

Springfield 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 4, covering all persons age 16 and older, are lower for most ethno-racial groups in Springfield (all except blacks) than for the same groups overall in Massachusetts. This is true for Latinos, whose marriage rate is 33.6% statewide and 32.0% in Springfield. Latino subpopulations show wide variation in their marriage rates; a number of factors, including the younger age profile of certain subpopulations, could be driving this variation.

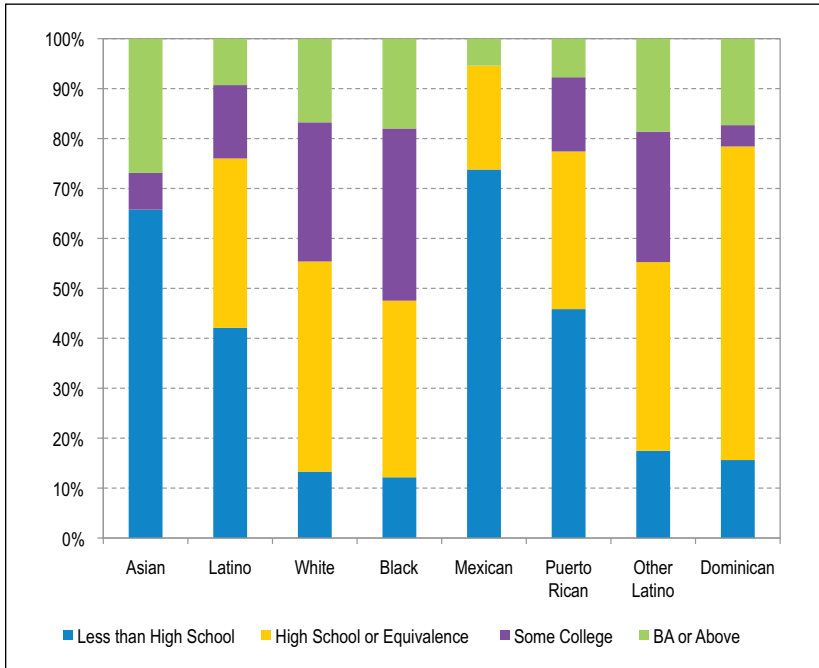
Figure 4: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



EDUCATION

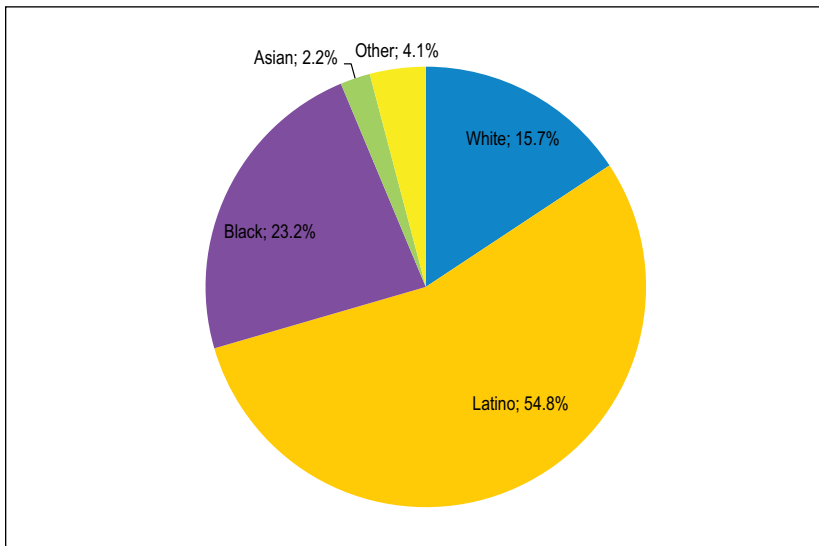
Figure 5 highlights the fact that Latinos have a high percentage of their population with less than a high school diploma: 35.4%, compared to 9.4% for whites and 21.2% for blacks (though lower than the 65.8% for Asians). At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 9.3%, compared to 26.9% for Asians, 18.0% for blacks, and 16.8% for whites.

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



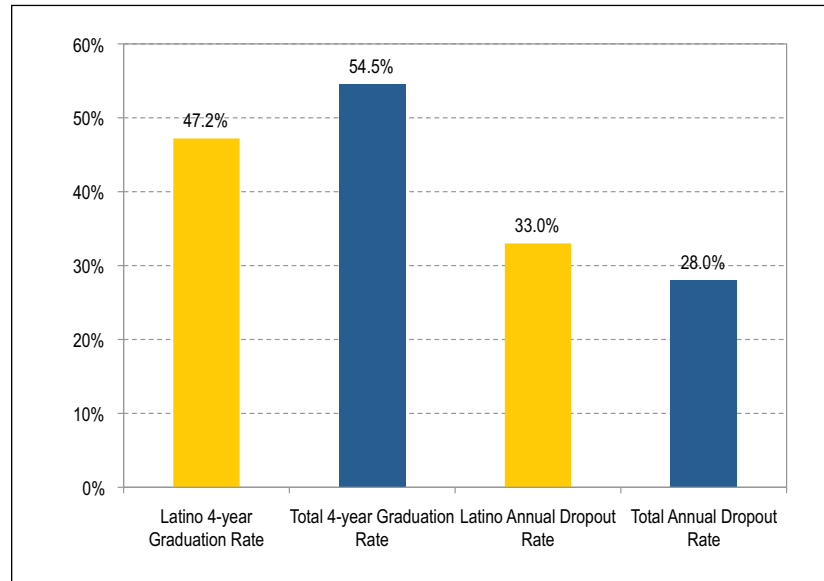
Figures 6A and 6B use data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding Latinos in the Springfield Public Schools. Latinos are by far the largest ethno-racial group. After a 26.5% growth rate since 2000, they made up 54.8% of the student population in the 2008–2009 academic year.

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



Less than half (47.2%) of Latinos graduate in four years compared to 54.5% for the total population. Similarly, a third of Latinos drop out of school compared to 28.0% for the total population.

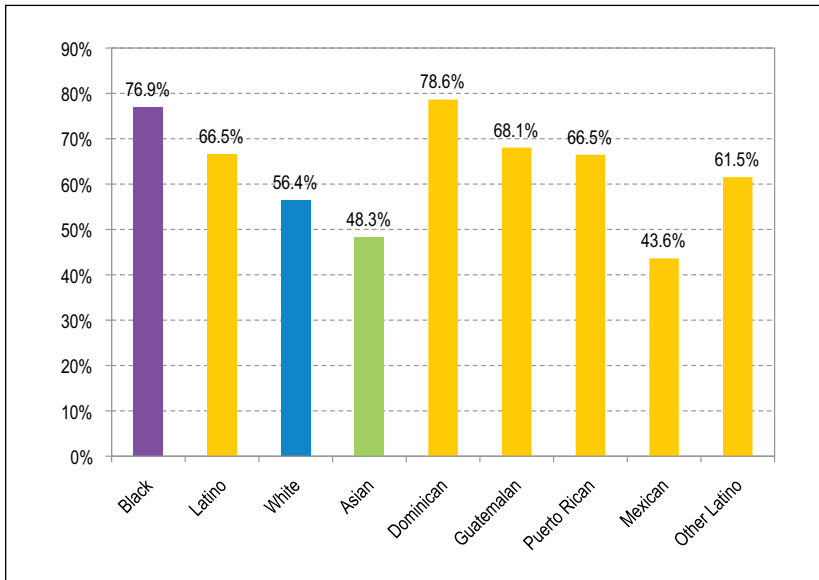
Figure 6B: Spotlight on Springfield Public Schools by Outcomes, Academic Year 2008–2009



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

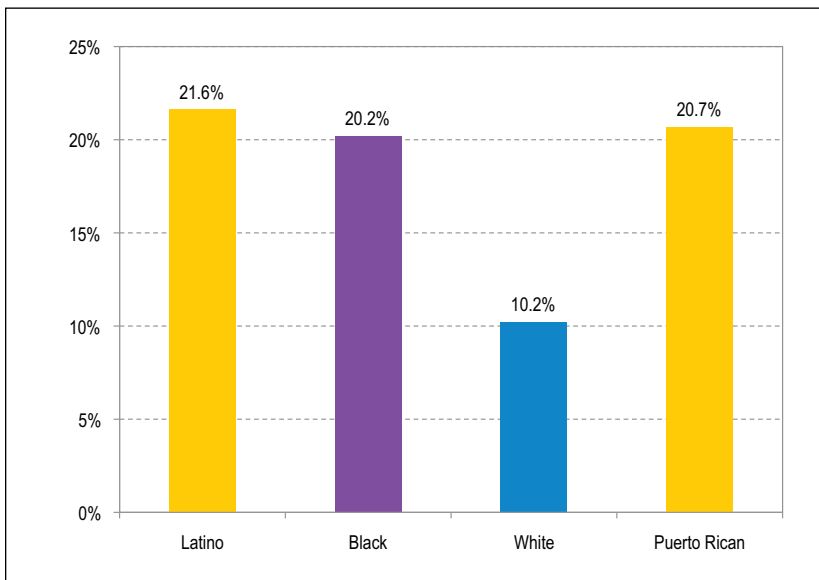
Again suggesting the importance of Latinos to Springfield’s economic and social wellbeing, Figure 7 shows that Latinos have a high labor force participation rate (66.5%), second only to the rate for blacks (76.9%). This is despite the lower median age of Latinos shown by Figure 3 which suggests they have more families with young children. Larger numbers of families with young children often result in lower labor force participation rates due to child care needs.

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



The previous labor force participation information suggests that Latinos in Springfield have a strong motivation to participate in city's economy. However, Figure 8 tells a different and less positive story. The unemployment rate among Latinos in 2008 was 21.6%, which was high for Springfield in 2008 even considering that the city's unemployment rate was 16.0%.

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 Springfield labor market whose members have higher educational attainment. Latinos are overrepresented in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs (farming, construction, production, and transportation). All Latino sub-populations except Dominicans have higher percentages than the total population (23.4%) 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). However, Mexicans have greater percentages of their population in these occupations than the total population (21.3%).

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

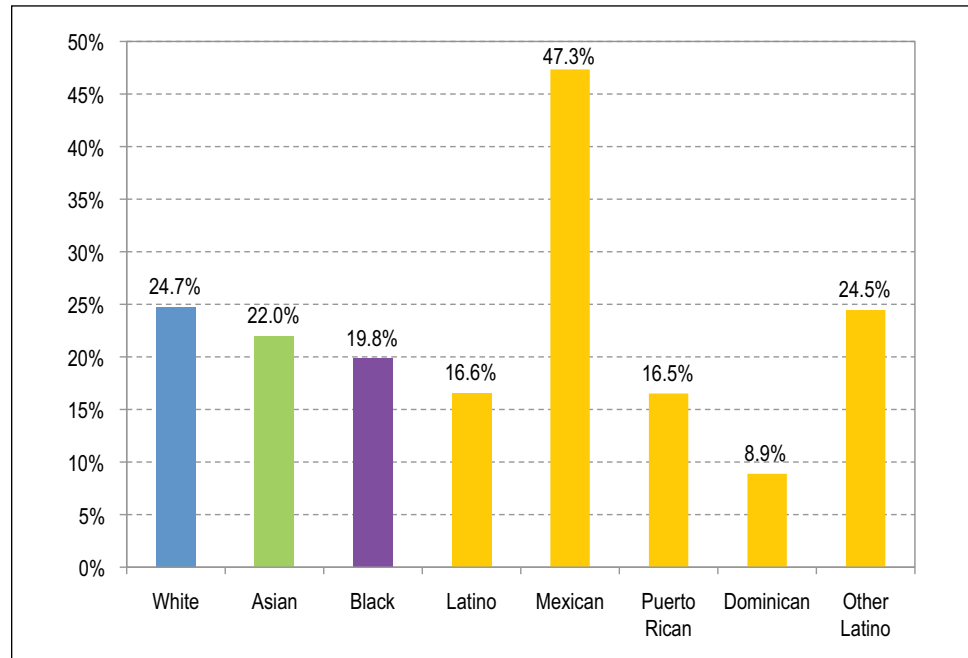
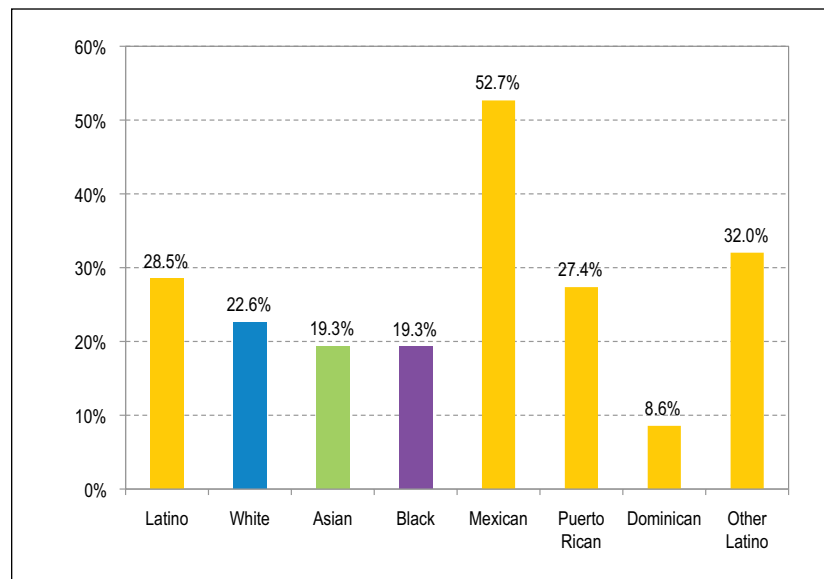


Figure 9B: Population Employed in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



EARNINGS

When examining the wage rates for these occupational categories, Latinos in Springfield appear to be receiving wages below those of other ethno-racial groups. They earn less than all other ethno-racial groups in each of the three employment sectors (Figures 10A, 10B, and 10C).

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

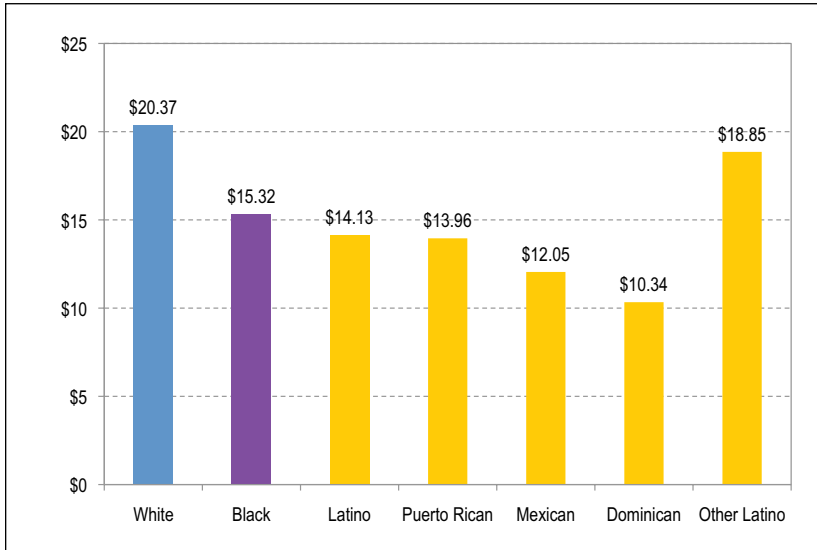


Figure 10B: Hourly Wages in Sales and Service Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

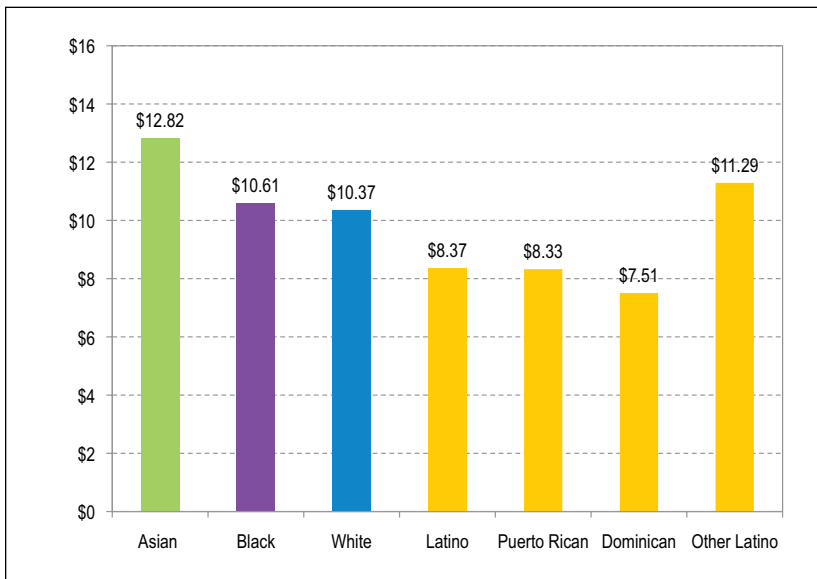
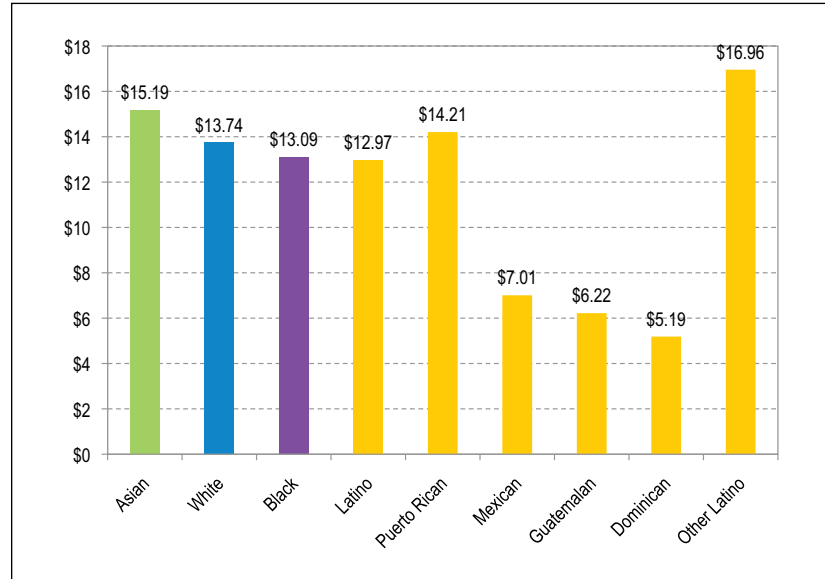


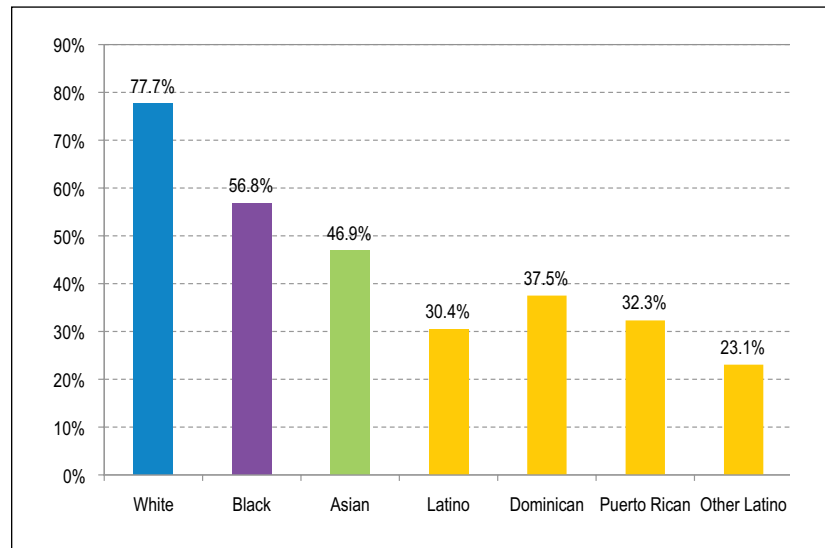
Figure 10C: Hourly Wages in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

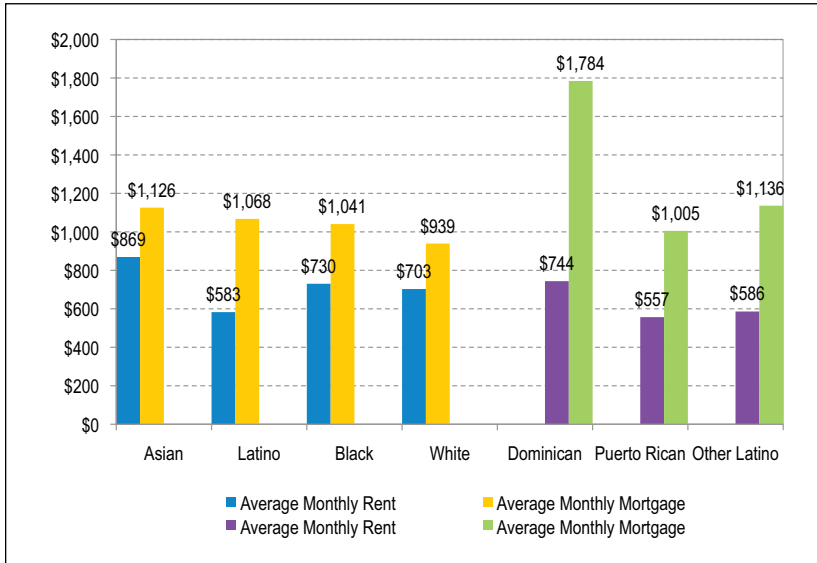
The final measures of Latino participation in Springfield are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Latinos traditionally have low homeownership rates across the country. Figure 13 shows that this trend holds true for Springfield, where Latinos have the lowest homeownership level of any ethno-racial group in the city (30.4%). As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 69.6% of Latinos in Springfield are renters.

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



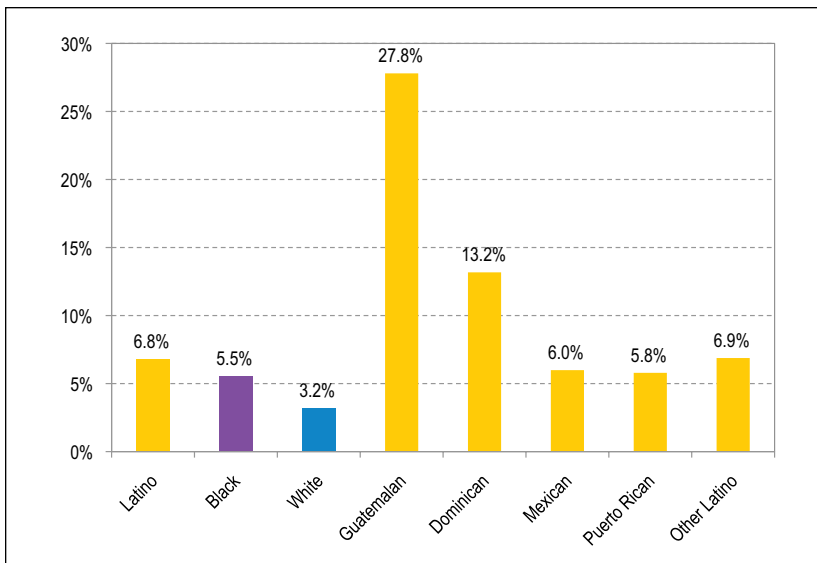
Homeownership is seen in a different light when its cost is analyzed. Having largely become homeowners during the housing bubble of the last decade, Latinos in Figure 12 on average pay \$1,068 monthly mortgages, which is a higher level than for whites or blacks (though not for Asians). At the same time, Latino renters pay the lowest average monthly rents. The combination of high mortgage payments and low rents underlines the fact that Latino homebuyers were disadvantaged by the housing bubble.

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



Similar to state-wide averages, Latinos in Springfield have the greatest percentage without medical insurance (6.8%) of any ethno-racial group (Figure 13). Puerto Ricans, who have access to public medical insurance, have the lowest rates of any Latino population without medical insurance. On the other hand, Guatemalans, who are a newly arriving subpopulation, have higher rates without medical insurance (27.8%).

Figure 13: Medical Uninsurance 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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