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# Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Boston

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# **Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas**

## **Boston**

**by Phillip Granberry**

**June, 2015**

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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, 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 eight other cities, or towns, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 2013. This report analyzes data from the 2013 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.

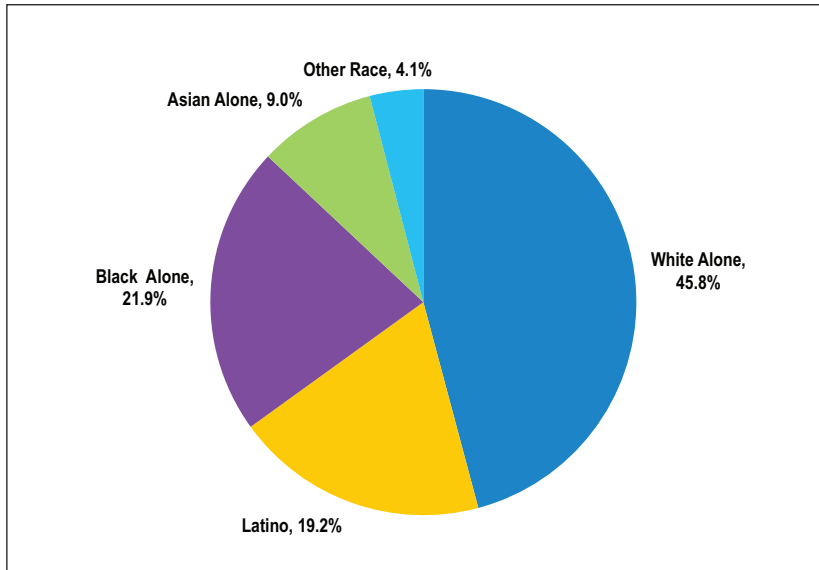
In this report, Latinos<sup>1</sup> are compared to non-Latino whites, blacks, and Asians for selected characteristics. This report uses the designation of Latino for the universe of people whom the Census identified as Hispanic or Latino. (The US Census first identified individuals with an ethnicity category of "Hispanic or Latino" or "Not Hispanic or Latino." Then, the US Census allowed individuals to select a race.) This analysis uses the term "Latino" to identify those who selected an ethnicity and are Brazilian born or have Brazilian ancestry. The Census designation of "Black or African American Alone" is referenced as black. The category of "Asian Alone" is referenced as Asian. A smaller "Other" ethno-racial category is identified for the initial population estimate of Boston and this consists those who identified with multiple race categories or some other race (including the category of "American Indian and Alaska Native Alone").

<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."

## THE LATINO POPULATION

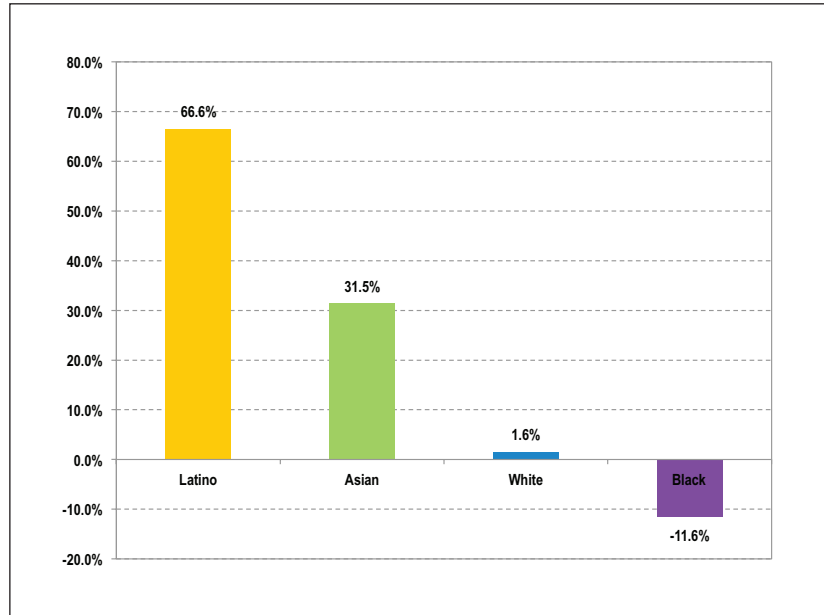
As the largest city in the Commonwealth, Boston is home to an estimated 124,061 Latinos. This represents the largest Latino population in the state, though several other cities have greater concentrations of Latinos. They represent about one-fifth (19.2%) of the city's population, a smaller share than for whites and blacks but greater than for Asians (Figure 1).

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



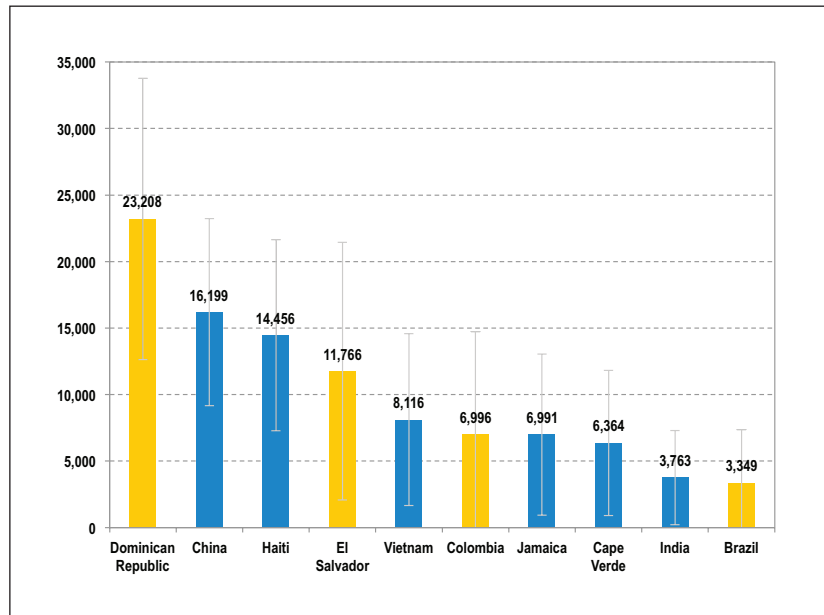
A striking feature of Boston's Latino population is its recent growth. From 2000 to 2013, Latinos (66.6%) and Asians (31.5%) experienced the fastest population growth in the city. Whites experienced a small increase, while blacks experienced a population decline.

Figure 2: Population Growth by Ethno-Racial Group in Boston from 2000 to 2013



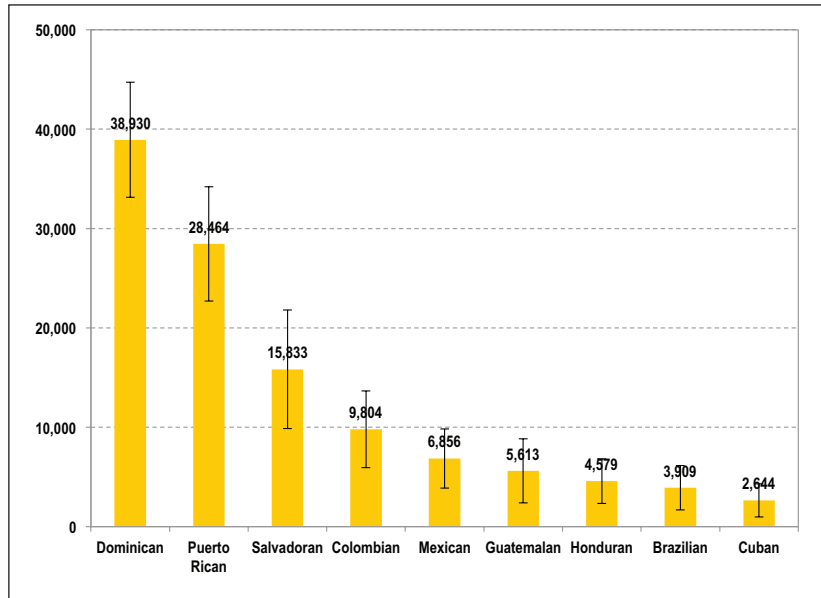
One of the explanations of this population growth is international migration. Boston has long been a destination for international migrants, and today it has a greater concentration of foreign born (27.3%) than the Commonwealth as a whole (15.0%). Dominicans represent the largest foreign-born population in the city, and Latin American countries account for four of the top ten sending countries to the city (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Top 10 Sending Countries to Boston in 2013



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 28,464, constitute the second largest Latino subpopulation in the city, surpassed only by Dominicans with 38,930.

Figure 4: Ancestry of the Top 10 Latino Groups in Boston in 2013



## 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 a larger percentage of their population at the younger levels of Figure 5A compared to the remainder of the city (Figure 5B), Latinos will require an investment in the education of their youth. However, these young Latinos will contribute economically, socially, and politically in later years as the city's overall population grows older. 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 2013

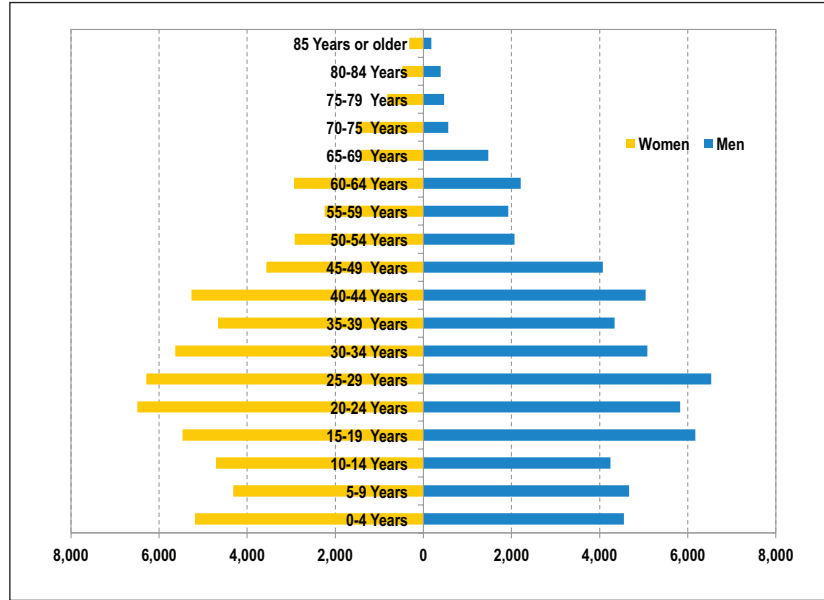
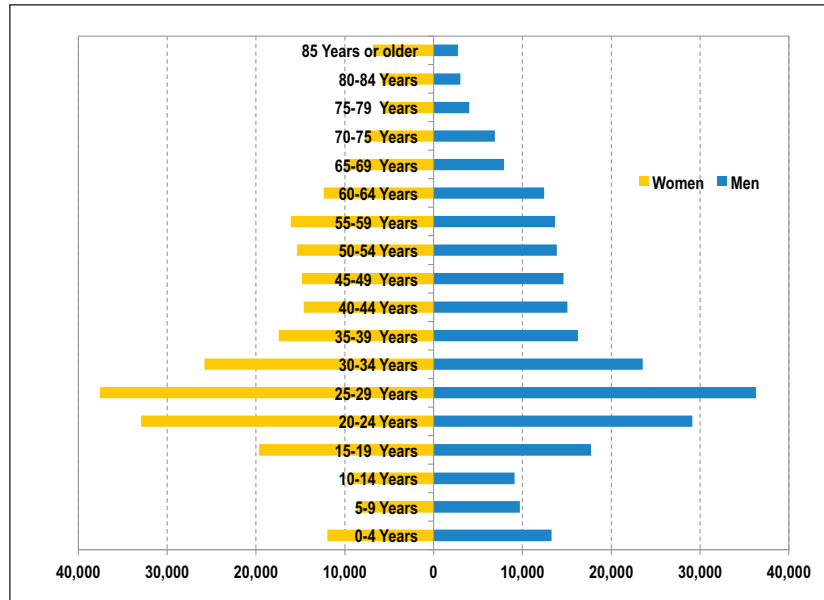
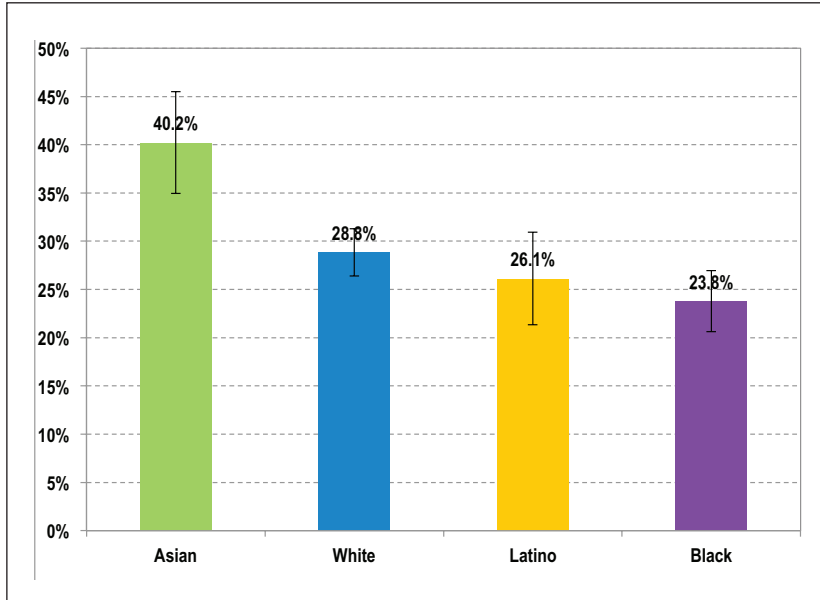


Figure 5B: Age Distribution of the Non-Latino Population in Boston in 2013



Boston, with an overall marriage rate of 28.4%, possibly reflects its younger and more transitory population than the state as a whole, which has a marriage rate of 46.8%. Boston's Latino marriage rate of 26.1% shown in Figure 6 (for persons age 16 and older) is higher than for blacks in Boston but lower than for Asians and whites. It is also lower than for Latinos statewide (35.8%). A number of issues, including the age of these populations, could help explain this variation.

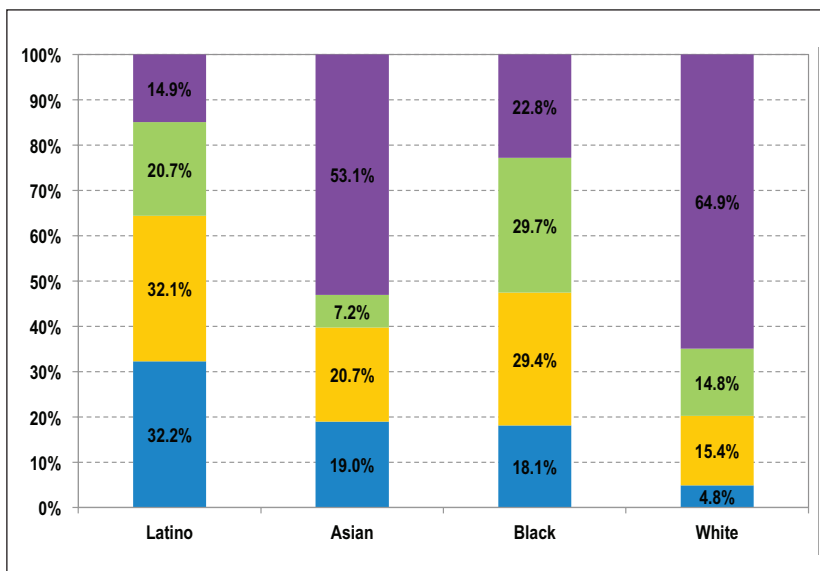
Figure 6: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2013



## EDUCATION

Figure 7 highlights the fact that Latinos have the highest percentage of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 32.2%, compared to 19.0% for Asians, 18.1% for blacks, and 4.8% 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: 14.9%, compared to 64.9% for whites, 53.1% for Asians, and 22.8% for blacks.

Figure 7: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group in 2013 (Adults 25 Years and Older)

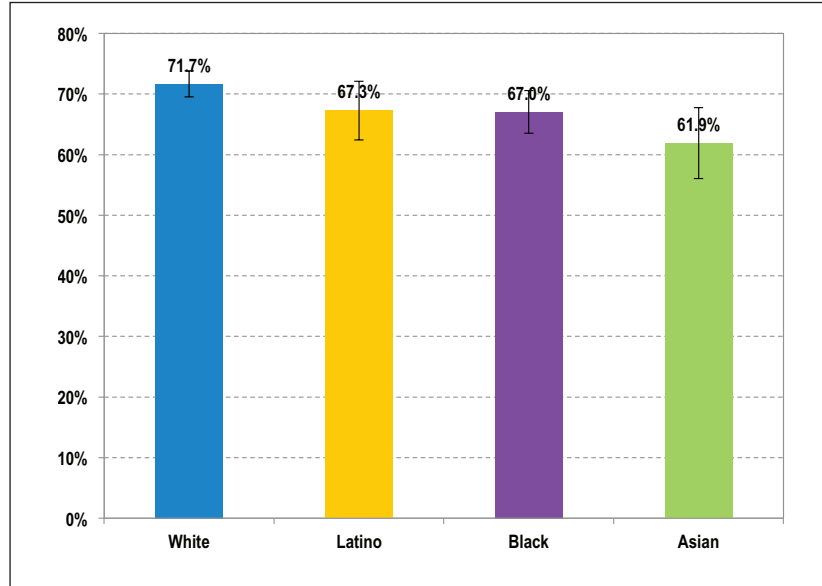




## LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Again suggesting the importance of Latinos to Boston's economic and social well-being, Figure 8 identifies Latinos as having a high labor force participation rate (67.3%), with only whites having a higher rate.

Figure 8: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group in 2013



The previous labor force participation information suggests that Latinos in Boston have a strong motivation to participate in Boston's economy. However, Figure 9 tells a less positive story. In 2013 the unemployment rate in Boston was 8.2%. Latinos had the highest unemployment rate (12.2%) of any ethno-racial group in the city (more than twice the rates for whites) and higher than for Latinos statewide (11.6%). This latter discrepancy is striking, given that Boston's overall unemployment rate is lower than in other parts of the state.

Figure 9: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2013

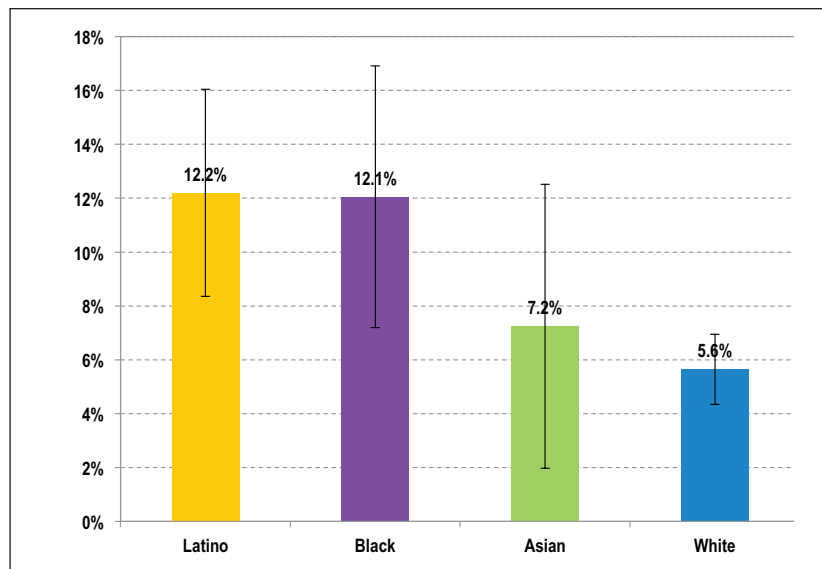
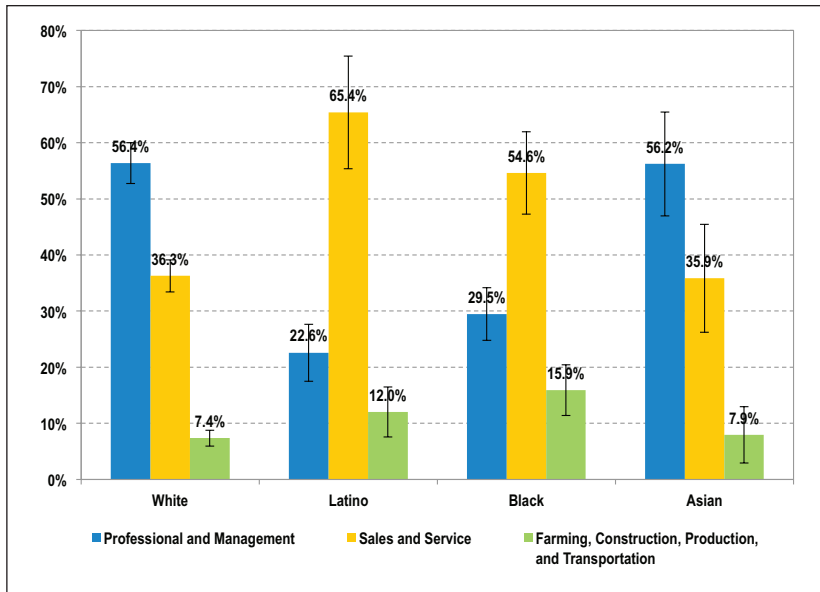


Figure 10 provides further indication that Latinos serve as complements to other ethno-racial groups in the Boston labor market whose members have higher educational attainment. Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs (professional and managerial) but overrepresented in the service-sector and in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs (e.g., construction, production, and transportation).

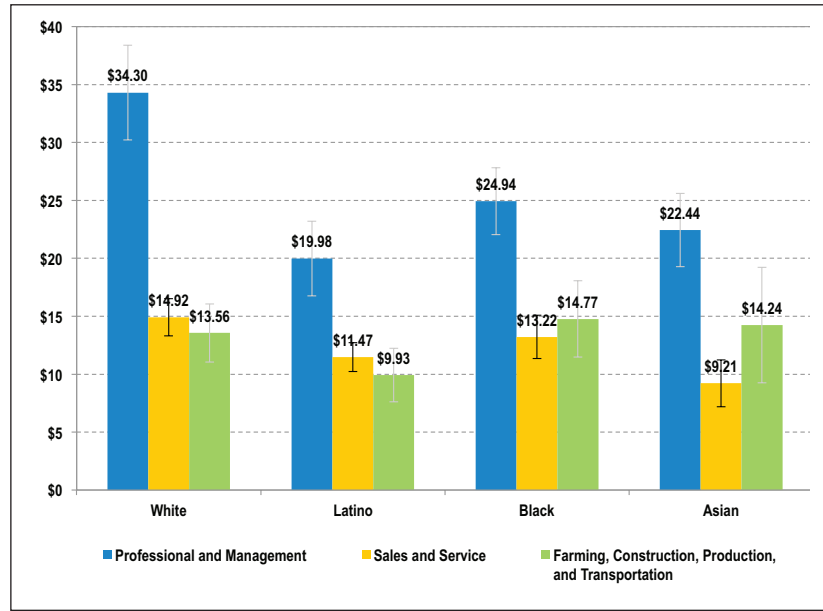
**Figure 10: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2013**



## 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 11, they earn lower wages for their white- and blue-collar employment than all other ethno-racial groups, and lower than all ethno-racial groups but Asians for their service-sector employment.

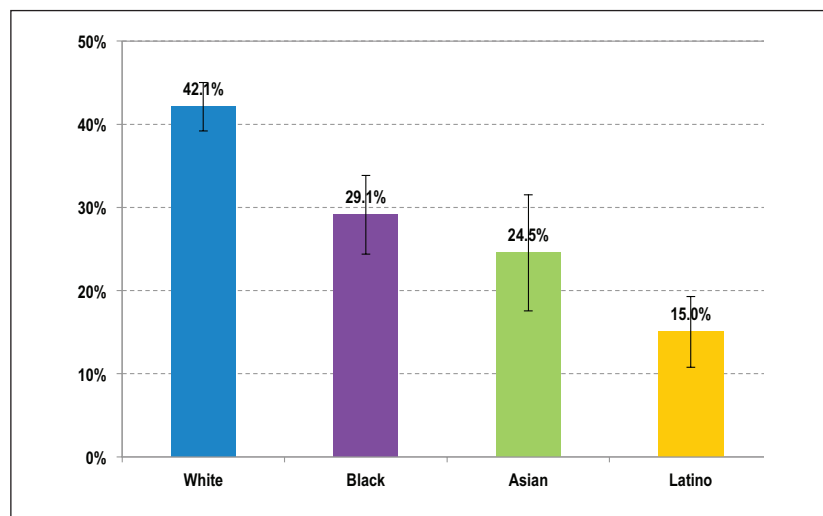
Figure 11: Hourly Wages by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2013



## HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

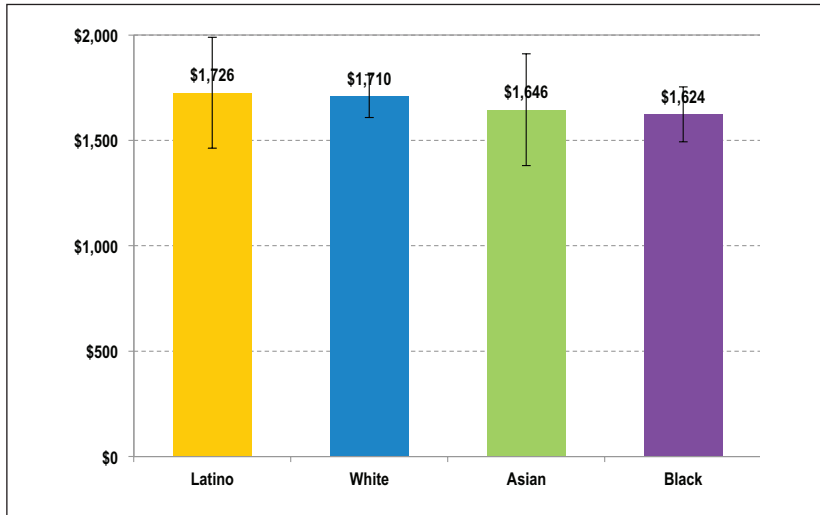
The final measures of Latino participation in Boston are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Boston traditionally has lower homeownership rates than the state as a whole, and Latinos in Figure 12, at 15%, have by far the lowest homeownership level of any ethno-racial group in the city. In comparison, 27.7% of Latinos statewide are homeowners. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 13, it is evident that 85% of Latinos in Boston are renters.

Figure 12: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group

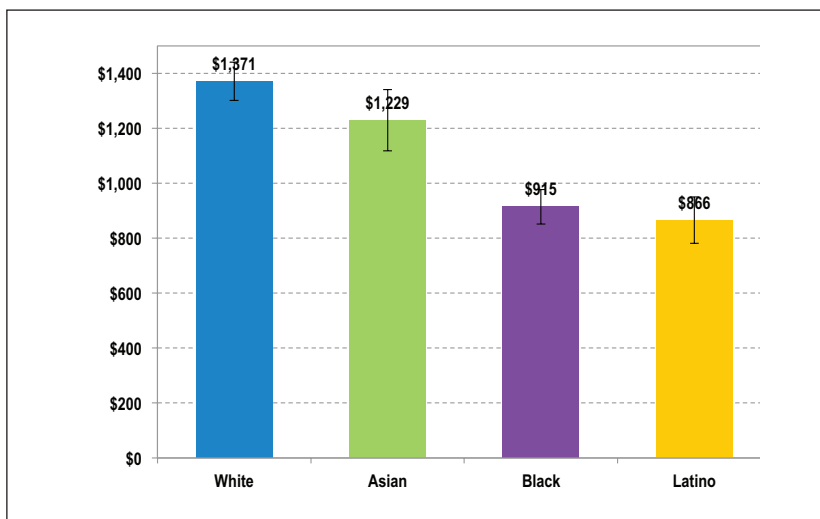


Housing costs highlights one of the challenges that Latinos face as their population continues to grow in Boston. Because of their low-levels of homeownership, they are faced with the daunting prospect of seeking to purchase homes in a city that is experiencing a rejuvenated housing market with rapidly increasing prices. This dilemma is demonstrated by Figure 13A, which shows Latinos paying the highest average monthly mortgage (\$1,726) of any other ethno-racial group in the city. In contrast, Figure 13B shows that they are paying the lowest monthly rent (\$866).

**Figure 13A: Housing Costs (Mortgage) by Ethno-Racial Group in 2013**

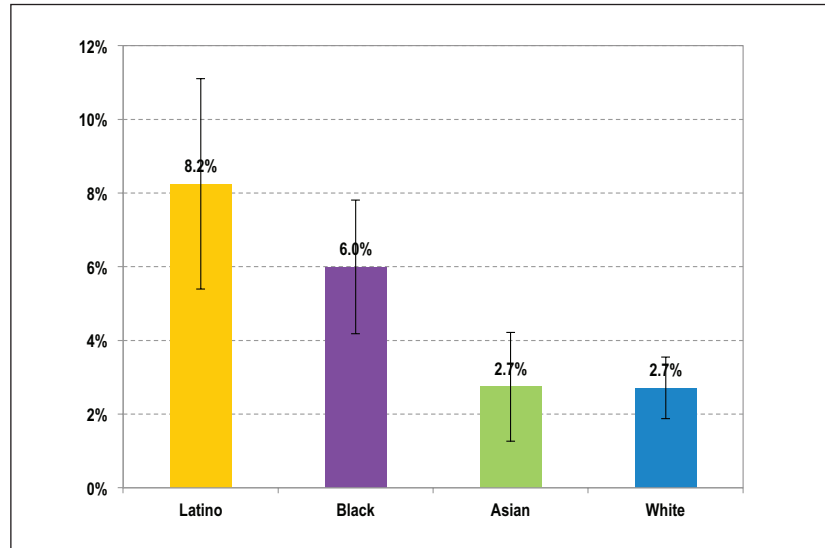


**Figure 13: Housing Costs (Rent) by Ethno-Racial Group in 2013**



The medical uninsurance rate in Boston in 2013 was 4.6%. Similar to statewide averages, Latinos in Boston have the highest percentage without medical insurance (8.2%) of any ethno-racial group (Figure 14). At least the Boston rate is slightly lower than the statewide Latino uninsurance rate of 8.8%.

Figure 14: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group in 2013



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 American Community Survey (ACS) data.

Our descriptive analysis uses 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.

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 2020 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 Author

**Phillip Granberry** is a social demographer who specializes in unauthorized immigration in the United States. He worked with various community-based organizations assisting recently arrived U.S. immigrants before earning a Ph.D. 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. In addition to his teaching in the Economics Department, he is also an investigator for *Por Ahí Dicen*, a research project of the Center for Health Equity Intervention Research (CHEIR) that is evaluating the effectiveness of a Spanish language multi-media campaign in Springfield designed to increase Puerto Rican mother-child communication about sexuality and sexual health.

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