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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Fall River

by Phillip Granberry, PhD, and Trevor Mattos

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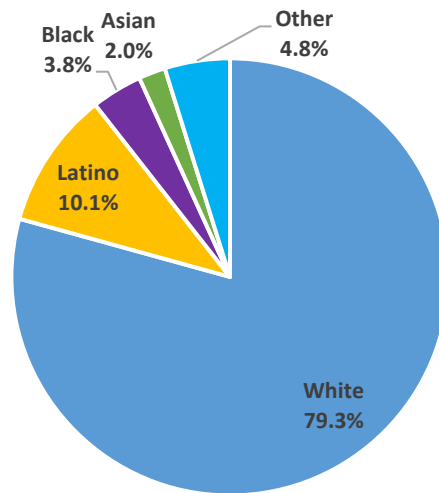
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Fall River Overview

The Latino Population

The city of Fall River, Massachusetts is home to 88,902 residents, of whom 9,015 are Latino, according to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey. The city is majority non-Latino white (79%), though Latinos make up the second largest ethno-racial group (10%). This share of Latinos is slightly lower than the statewide population, which is 11%. Fall River is geographically located in the SouthCoast region, which has a relatively small share of Latinos (7%). Blacks make up 4% and Asians 2% of the city's population (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in Fall River

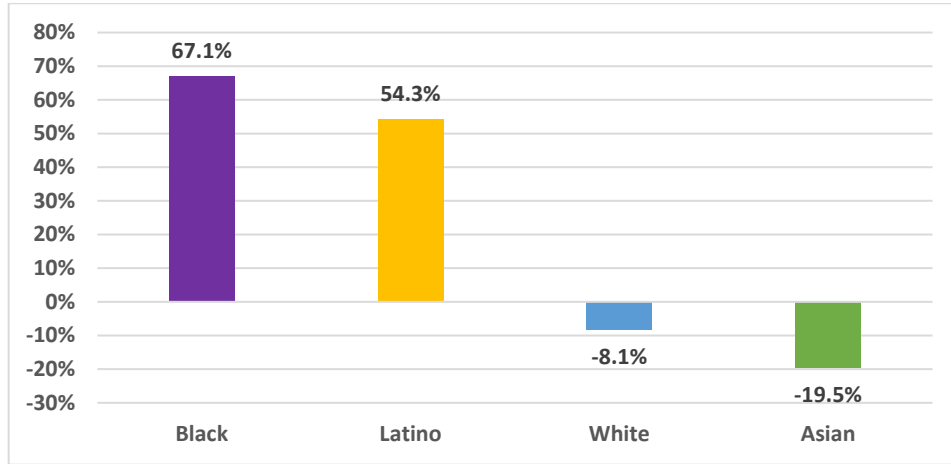


Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates - B03002

Between 2010 and 2016, Fall River saw an increase in the size of the Latino population, from 5,842 to 9,015, representing a 54% increase. Statewide, the Latino population grew by 25%. The black population of Fall River grew by 67%, while the city's white population declined by 8%, and its Asian population declined by 20% (Figure 2).

Fall River has a larger share of its population that is foreign-born than does the Commonwealth. Fall River is 18.4% foreign born, while Massachusetts is 15.7% foreign born. Figure 3, which breaks down the Latino population into national origins subgroups, however, includes both native-born and foreign-born Latino residents of Fall River.

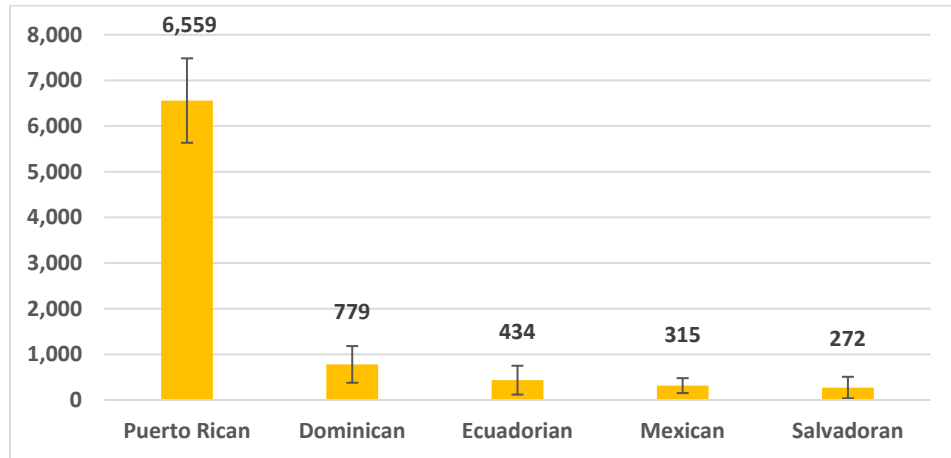
Figure 2: Population Change by Ethno-Racial Group from 2010 to 2016



Source: 2012-2016 & 2006-2010, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B03002

Fall River like much of the SouthCoast region has a larger Puerto Rican population. The city is home to 6,559 Puerto Ricans (Figure 3). Dominicans, Ecuadorians, Mexicans, and Salvadorans are the next largest Latino groups. Statewide, Puerto Ricans are the largest Latino subpopulation, followed by Dominicans, Salvadorans, Mexicans, and Guatemalans.

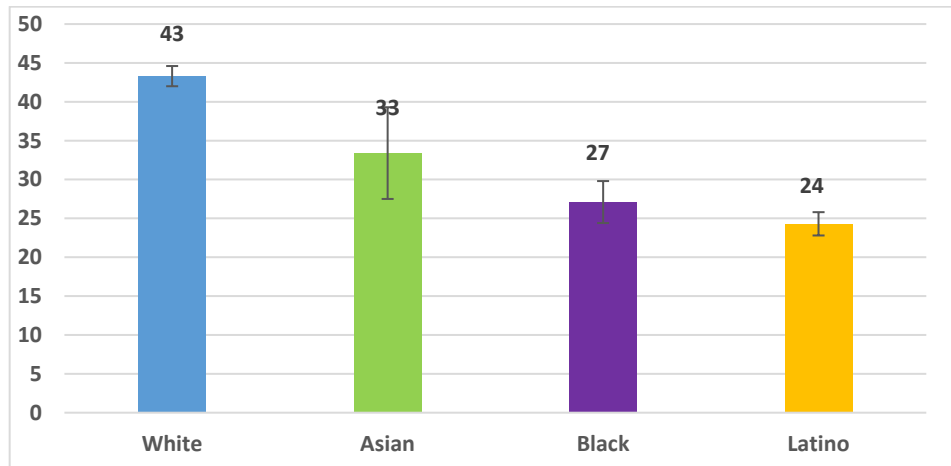
Figure 3: Origin of the Top Latino or Latino Subpopulations



Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year ACS Estimates – B03001

Median Age and Marital Status

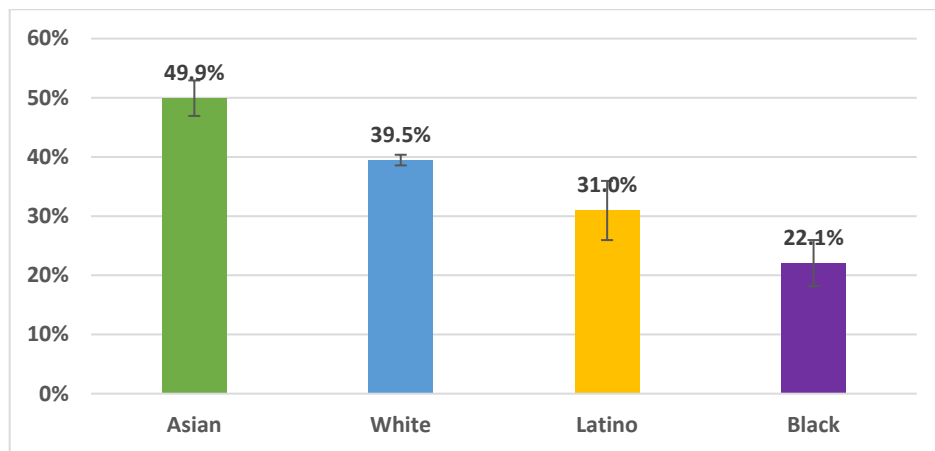
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year ACS Estimates – B01002

The age demographics vary significantly across these ethno-racial groups. Whites are the oldest population both statewide and in Fall River. The median age for whites is 43 years, while that of Latinos, the youngest group, is 24 years. Across the state, the median age for Latinos is older than Fall River, at 27 years. Blacks and Asians fall between the median ages of the whites and Latinos (Figure 4).

Figure 5: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group (Ages 15 and older)



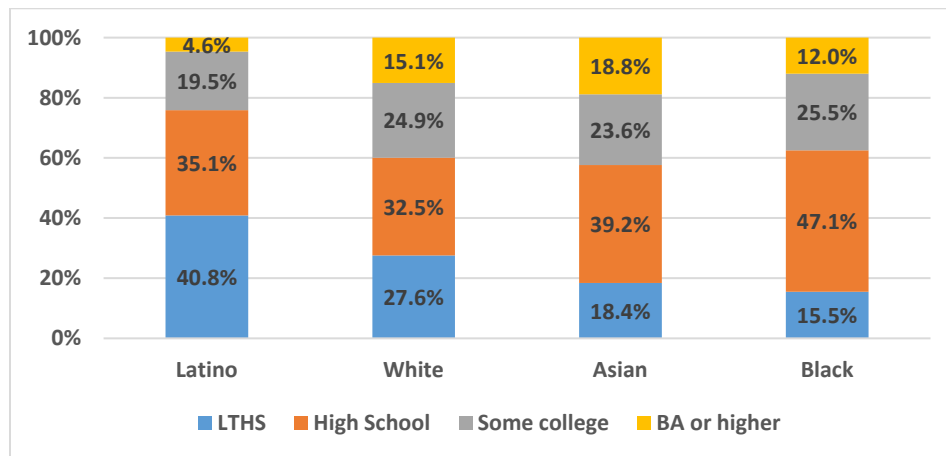
Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B12002

Marriage rates are highest among Asians and lowest among blacks in Fall River. The marriage rate for Latinos is 31%, which is slightly lower than their statewide marriage rate of 32%. All of these populations have a marriage rate lower than the Massachusetts marriage rate of 52% (Figure 5).

Education

Similar to other populations across the Commonwealth, Latinos in Fall River have lower levels of educational attainment. Nearly 41% of Latinos have not completed high school (LTHS) compared to 31% of Latinos statewide. On the opposite end of the spectrum, only 5% of Latinos have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 18% of Latinos statewide. Asians have a larger share of their population with a Bachelor's degree or higher in Fall River, while both whites and blacks have smaller shares of their population with a Bachelor's degree or higher than they do statewide.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group (Adults 25 Years and Older)

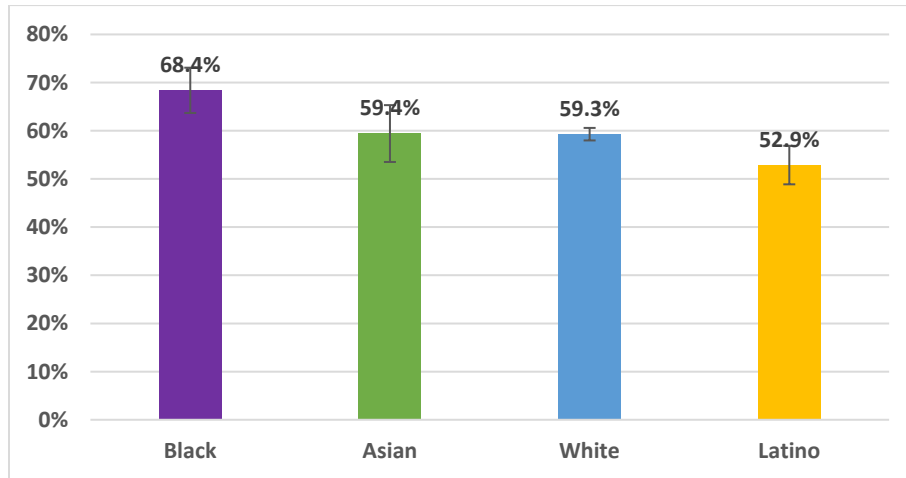


Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C15002

Labor Force Participation

Labor force participation in Fall River (59%) is lower than that for all of Massachusetts (67%). It is highest among blacks (68%), and lowest among Latinos (53%). Latino labor force participation (Figure 7) is lower in Fall River than for Latinos statewide (67%).

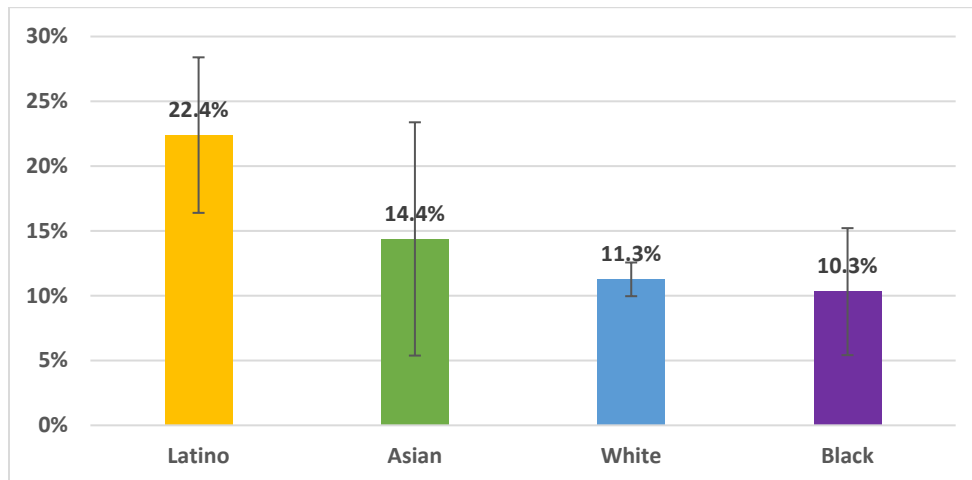
Figure 7: Labor Force Participation among Individuals 16 Years and Older by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C23002

The unemployment rate in Fall River, much as in other parts of Massachusetts, is higher among Latinos (Figure 8). Their unemployment was 22%, which is nearly double the statewide Latino rate of 11.5%. Fall River is a Gateway City that is noted for high unemployment, which was 12.3%. Statewide in Massachusetts during this period, unemployment was 6.8%.

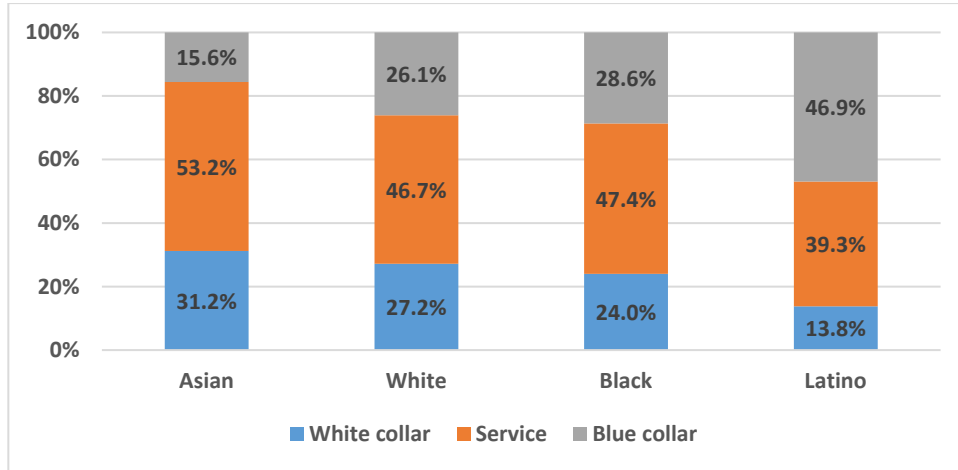
Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16+)



Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C23002

Latino residents in Fall River are more likely to work in blue-collar related occupations (47%) followed by service positions (39%). This distribution of the occupations among Latinos differs from the statewide distribution in which 52% of Latinos work in service occupations and 23% work in blue-collar occupations.

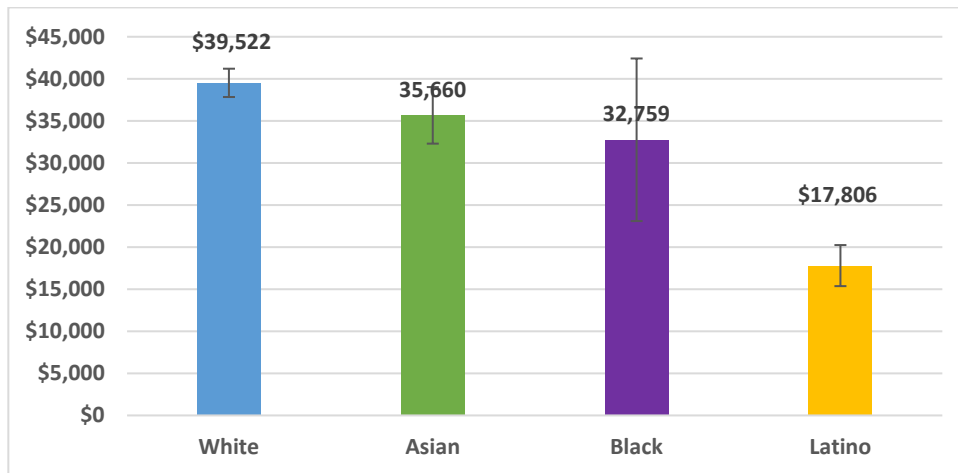
Figure 9: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C24010

Income

Figure 10: Median Household Income by Ethno-Racial Group



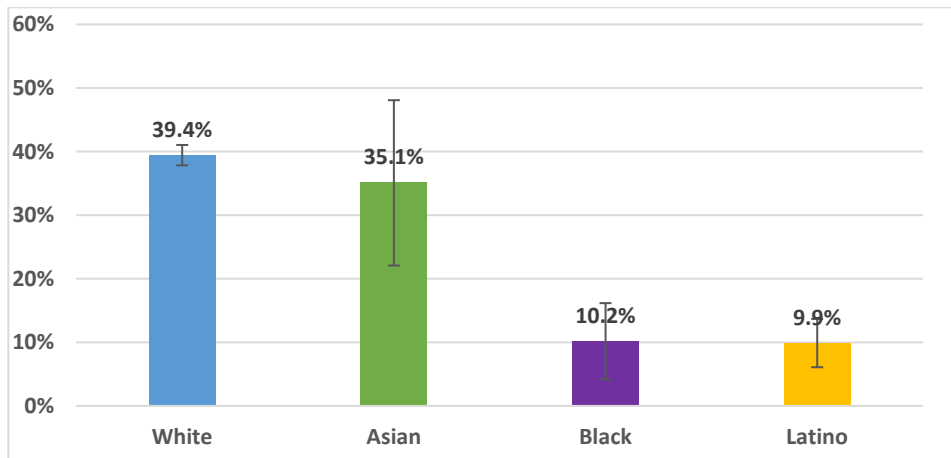
Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – S1903

The median household income in Fall River is \$36,789, compared to the statewide median of \$70,945. In Fall River, Latino households earn \$17,806 (Figure 10). White households have the highest income (\$39,522). Latinos earn significantly less in Fall River than they do statewide. For Massachusetts, Latinos household income is \$37,100.

Housing Status and Medical Uninsurance

Homeownership varies dramatically in Fall River, where whites have the largest share (39%) who are homeowners. With their lower median income, it is not surprising that Latinos have the lowest homeownership rate (10%). Across the state, the Latino homeownership share is 25%. Thus, the Latino population appears less economically integrated into Fall River in both income and homeownership.

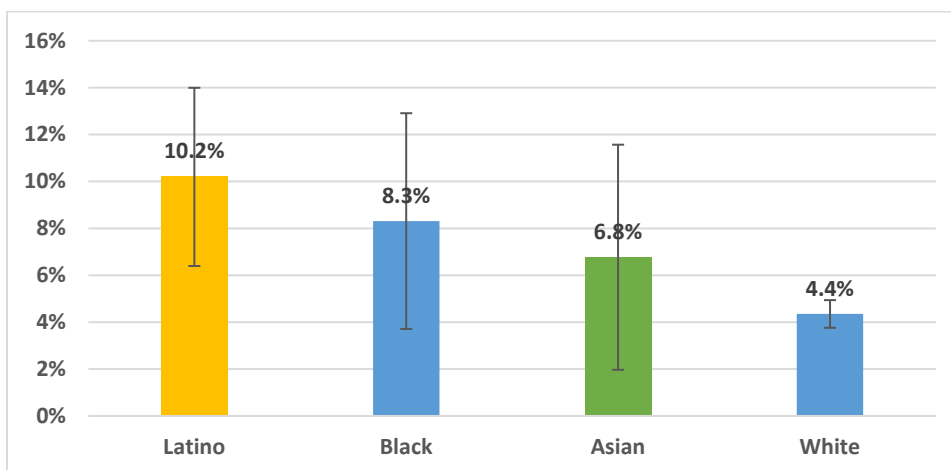
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates - B25003

Disparities exist in health insurance coverage among these population. Uninsurance rates among Latinos is 10.2%, much higher than the statewide Latino rate (6.3%). This lack of coverage is somewhat surprising because Puerto Ricans should have access to public health insurance programs like MassHealth. The 2,500 non-Puerto Rican Latinos who compose this population could have a higher uninsurance rate.

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C27001

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 produces demographic profiles and analysis for Latino communities throughout the Commonwealth.

Our descriptive analysis uses ACS data to estimate population size and characteristics in order to compare Latinos to other ethnoracial groups. Technically, these categories are non-Latino white, Black or African American alone,

and Asian alone, though they are identified as “white,” “black”, and “Asian” in these profiles. Because these estimates contain a “margin of error,” they may vary from one year’s report to another but still fall within this “margin of error.” Only when another estimate is outside of this margin of error can we identify a population change over time. Even with the limitation of this “margin of error,” these reports use the best demographic data of Latinos in the city and towns of Massachusetts.

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. 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 Latinos and the sexual health communication of Puerto Rican mothers with their children. In addition to his research and teaching in the Gastón Institute and Economics Department at UMass Boston, he is Senior Researcher in demography for the Boston Planning and Development Agency.

Trevor Mattos holds a master of arts (M.A.) in applied economics from the University of Massachusetts Boston and a master of public policy (MPP) from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Trevor applies quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to a variety of economic and social policy issues. His current research focuses on the earnings of Latina immigrants in the United States, as well as other topics related to the economic conditions in Latinx communities.