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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: West Springfield

by Phillip Granberry, PhD, and Trevor Mattos

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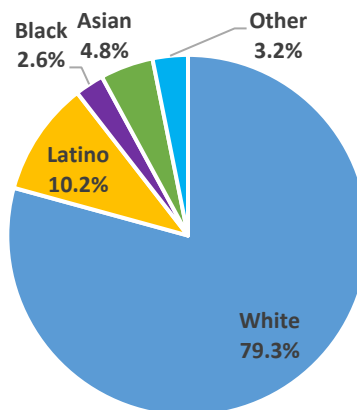
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West Springfield Overview

The Latino Population

The city of West Springfield, Massachusetts is home to 28,575 residents, of whom 2,924 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 smaller than the statewide population, which is 11% Latino. Black, Asian, and “other” populations collectively make up only 11% of the city’s population (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in West Springfield

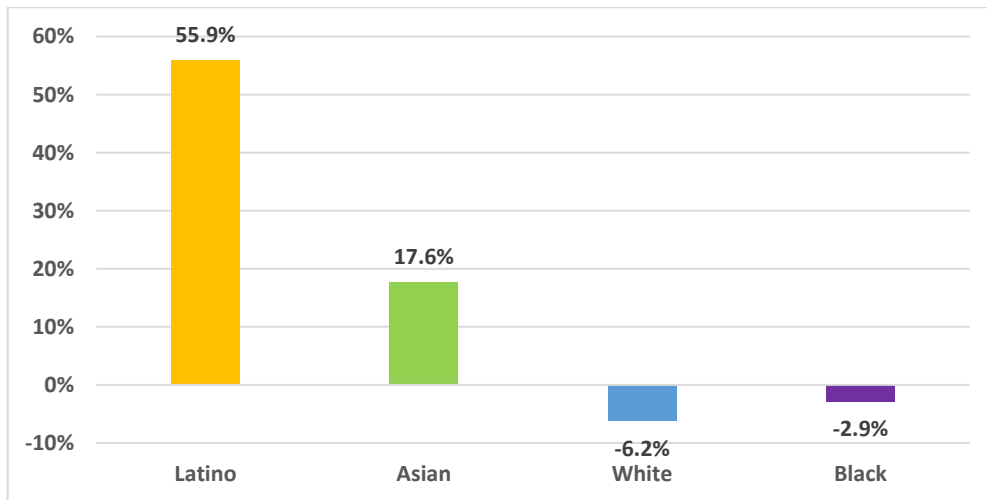


Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates - B03002

Between 2010 and 2016, West Springfield saw a significant increase in the size of the Latino population, from 1,876 to 2,924, representing a 56% increase. Statewide, the Latino population grew by 25% during this same period. The Asian population of West Springfield grew by 18%, while the city’s white and black populations declined (Figure 2). West Springfield is geographically on the west side of the Connecticut River from Springfield, Massachusetts, which has a Latino population of more than 60,000, and the city Latino population appears to benefit from migration within Hampden County.

West Springfield has a similar share of its population that is foreign-born compared to the Commonwealth. West Springfield is 15.5% 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 West Springfield.

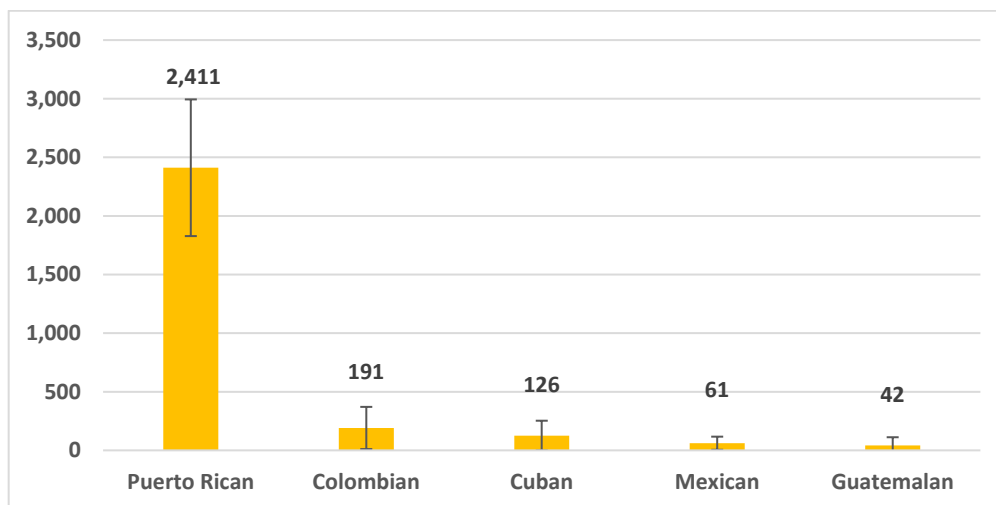
Figure 2: Population Change by Ethno-Racial Group from 2010 to 2016



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

The largest Latino subpopulation in West Springfield is Puerto Rican, with more than 2,400 residents. Colombians, Cubans, and Mexicans are the next largest Latino groups, though each number fewer than 200 (Figure 3). Statewide, Puerto Ricans are the largest group, followed by Dominicans, Salvadorans, Mexicans, and Guatemalans.

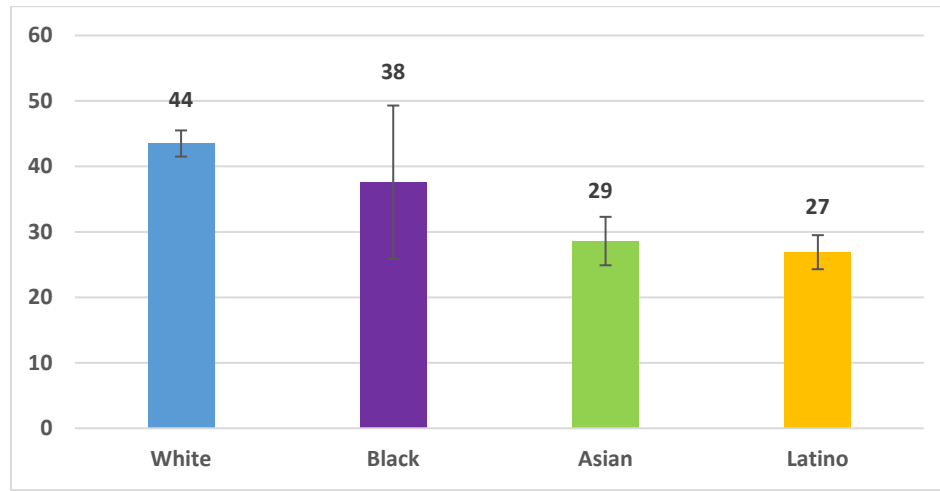
Figure 3: Origin of the Top Latino or Latino Subpopulations



Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B03001

Median Age and Marital Status

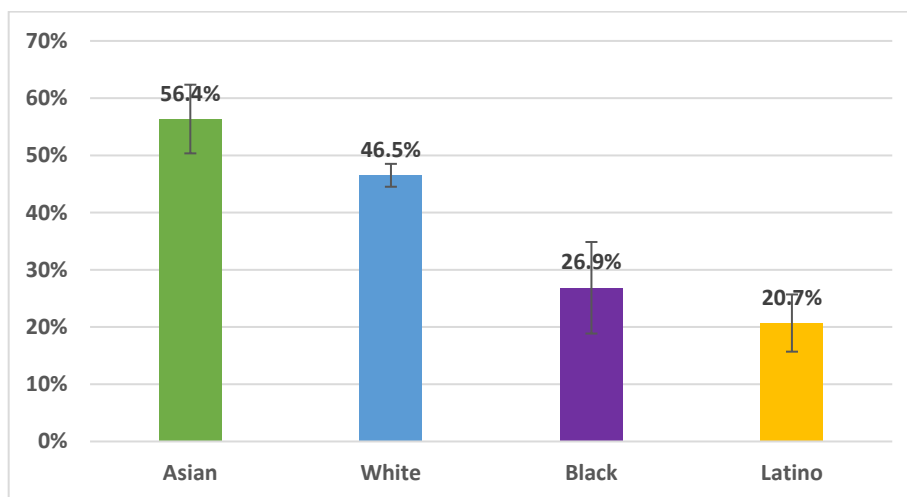
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – B01002

The age demographics vary significantly across these ethno-racial groups. Whites are the oldest population both statewide and in West Springfield. Their median age in West Springfield is 44 years, while that of Latinos, the youngest group, is 27 years. Across the state, the median age for Latinos is similar to West Springfield, at 27 years. Asians and blacks 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

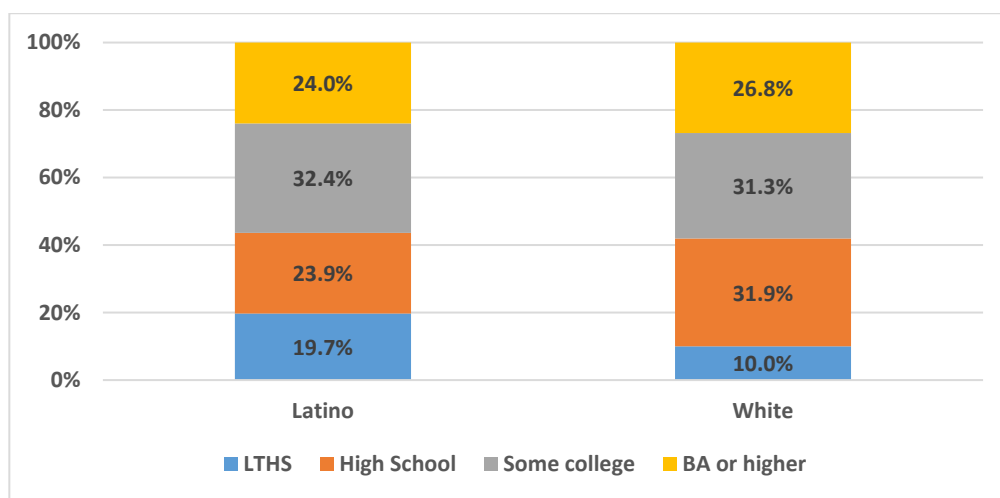
Marriage rates are highest among Asians and lowest among Latinos in West Springfield. The marriage rate for Latinos is 21%, which is smaller than their statewide marriage rate of 32%. Asians have the highest marriage rate of 68%, which is higher than the marriage rate of 52% for Massachusetts (Figure 5).

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Education

In West Springfield, Latinos have a greater share of residents who did not complete high school (20%) compared to whites (10%). On the opposite end of the spectrum, 27% of whites have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 24% of Latinos. However, this share is greater for Latinos than their statewide share (18%). We do not include estimates for Asians and blacks because the margin of errors are too large when these smaller adult populations are divided into these four educational categories.

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

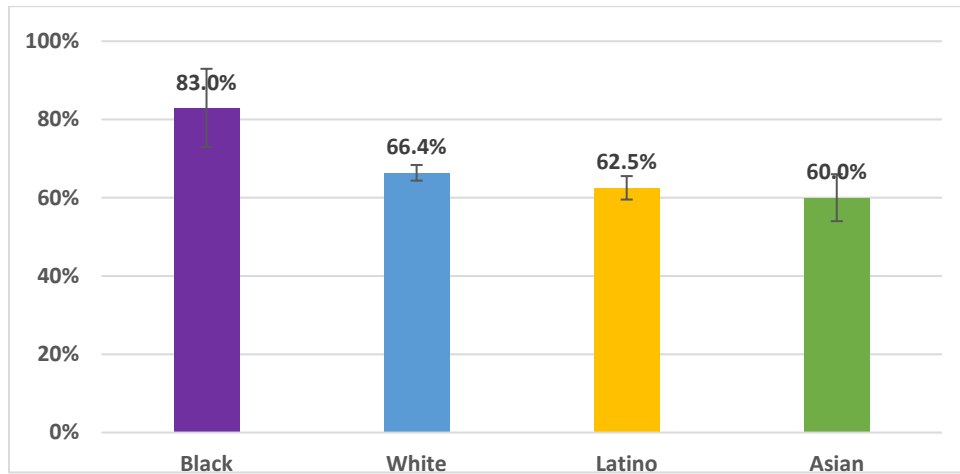


Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C15002

Labor Force Participation

Labor force participation in West Springfield is highest among blacks (83%) and lowest among Asians (60%). The Latino labor force participation at 63% (Figure 7) is smaller in West Springfield than for Latinos statewide (67%).

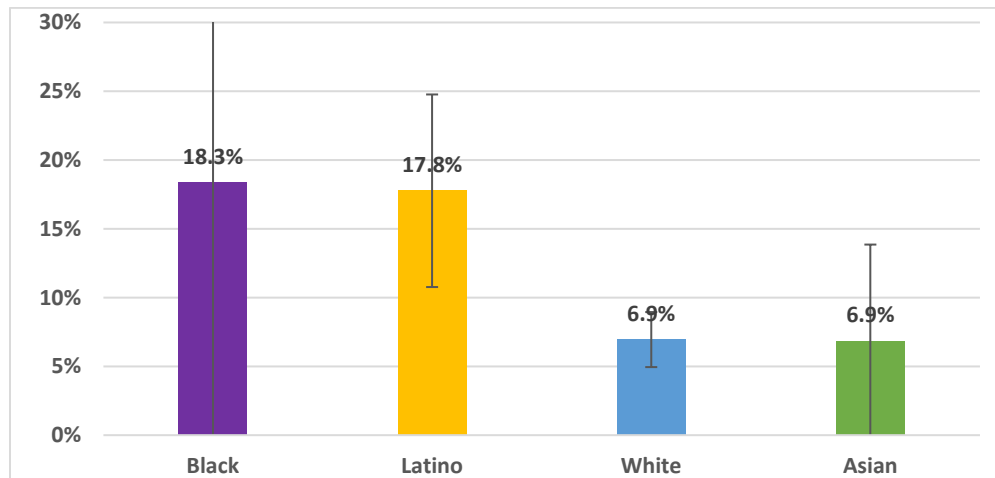
Figure 7: Labor Force Participation among Individuals 16 Years and Older by Ethno-Racial Group



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

The unemployment rates in West Springfield, much as in other parts of Massachusetts, are higher for Latinos and blacks than for whites and Asians. Latinos and blacks have the highest unemployment rates (Figure 8) in West Springfield, while Asians and whites have the lowest (6.9%). The Latino unemployment rate in West Springfield is above the statewide Latino rate of 11.5%. Statewide in Massachusetts during this period, unemployment was 6.8%.

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

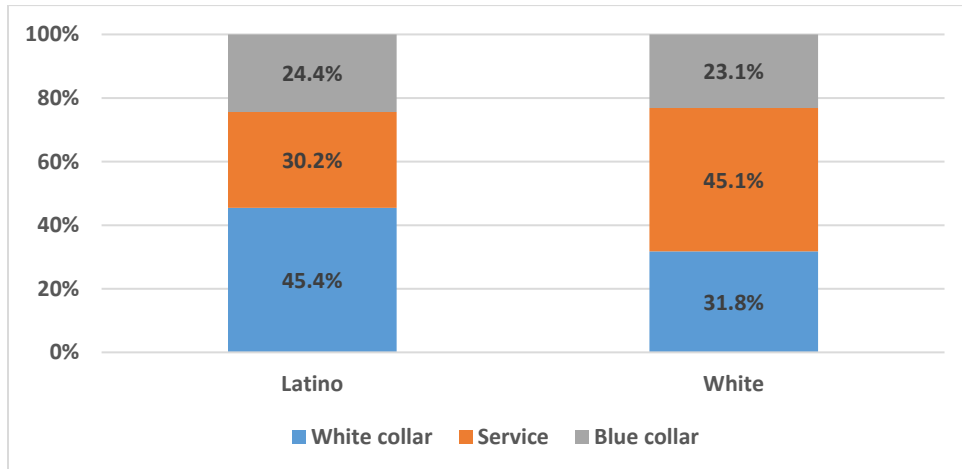


Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C23002

Latino residents in West Springfield are more likely to work in white collar, managerial and professional, related occupations and less likely to work in service positions than whites (Figure 9). This occupational distribution among Latinos differs from their statewide distribution in which 52% work in service occupations and 23% work in white-collar positions.

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

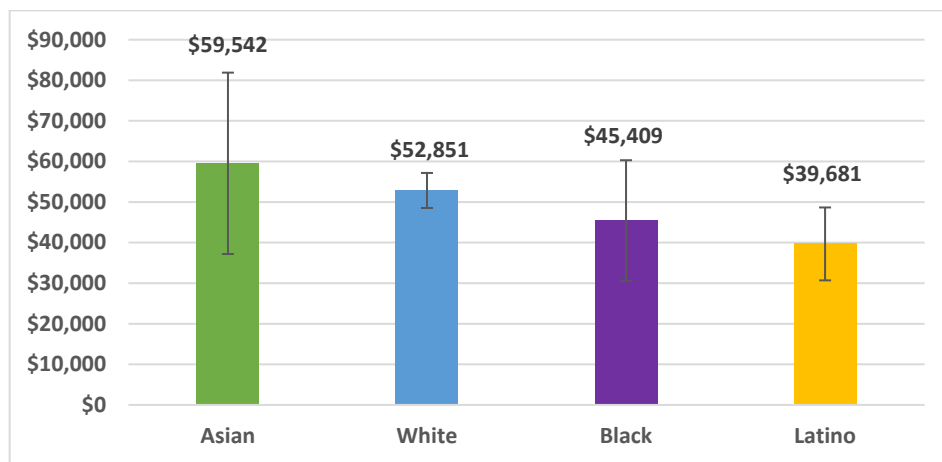


Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – C24010

Income

The median household income in West Springfield is \$50,649, compared to the statewide median of \$70,945. In West Springfield, Latino households earn \$39,681 (Figure 10). Asian households have the highest income (\$59,542). Latinos earn more in West Springfield than they do statewide. For Massachusetts, their household income is \$37,100.

Figure 10: Median Household Income by Ethno-Racial Group

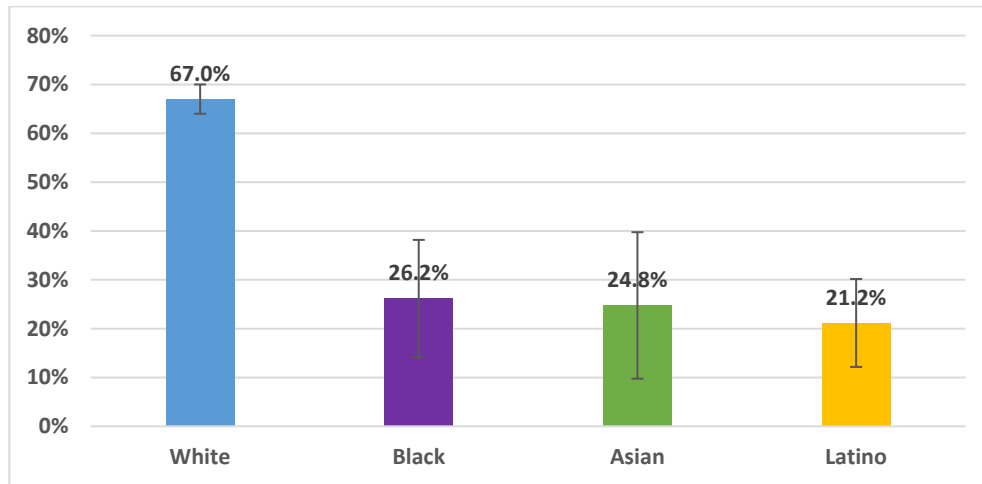


Source: 2012-2016, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates – S1903

Housing Status and Medical Uninsurance

Homeownership varies dramatically in West Springfield, where whites have the highest ownership share (67%), and Latinos have the lowest share (21%). Across the state, 25% of Latino householders are homeowners. Thus, if the Latino population would continue to grow in West Springfield, homeownership could be one indication of their ability to become more integrated into the city.

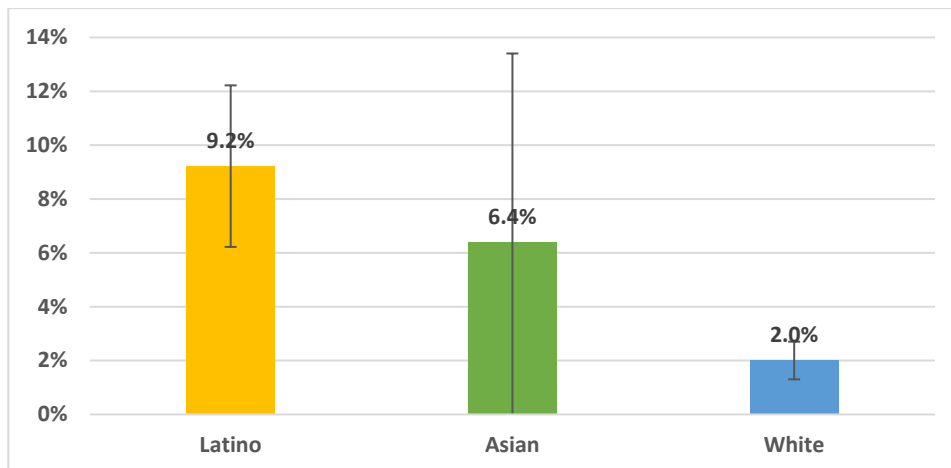
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



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

Disparities exist in health insurance coverage among these population. The share of Latinos without medical insurance is 9.2%, much higher than their statewide share (6.3%). This lack of coverage is higher than among Asians than whites in West Springfield.

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 ethnological 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.