

University of Massachusetts Boston

ScholarWorks at UMass Boston

Gastón Institute Publications

Gastón Institute for Latino Community
Development and Public Policy Publications

7-2020

Latinos in Massachusetts: Mexicans

Phillip Granberry

University of Massachusetts Boston, phillip.granberry@umb.edu

Krizia Valentino

University of Massachusetts Boston

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston_pubs



Part of the [Latina/o Studies Commons](#), [Migration Studies Commons](#), [Public Policy Commons](#), and the [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Granberry, Phillip and Valentino, Krizia, "Latinos in Massachusetts: Mexicans" (2020). *Gastón Institute Publications*. 254.

https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston_pubs/254

This Research Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy Publications at ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gastón Institute Publications by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. For more information, please contact scholarworks@umb.edu.



Latinos in Massachusetts: Mexicans

by Phillip Granberry, PH.D., and Krizia Valentino

July 2020

THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY

Foreword

The Gastón Institute's new report *Latinos in Massachusetts: Mexicans* by Phillip Granberry and Krizia Valentino, confirms with recent data the hypothesis by Mexican authorities about the specific characteristics of the Mexican community in Massachusetts. In most of the US, the Mexican community is the largest Latino group, made up of 35 million Mexican Americans, 11 of them Mexican born, and this is understandable because of our shared history, the ties of neighborhood between our countries with our common two-thousand-mile border, and our more than 25 years of trade partnership through NAFTA (USMCA as of July 1st, 2020) which has fostered a very intense collaboration and supply chain integration.

In Massachusetts, Mexicans are only the 6th largest group among Latinos, possibly because there was already an important Portuguese and Brazilian community before the big Mexican diaspora of the 1990s. As we can see in the report's comparison amongst Mexicans, other Latinos and Non-Latinos, the median age of Mexicans is very similar to the rest of the Latinos, with Mexicans on average, holding higher educational degrees, with a majority of them having completed undergraduate and graduate studies. This also helps explain why a higher percentage of Mexicans work in managerial positions, are involved in the arts and academic fields and why their wages and homeownership rates are higher than for the rest of Latinos.

Massachusetts being one of the two top innovation hubs in the United States, with a wide array of universities and research centers, has attracted a highly skilled group of Mexican Americans. This allows them, as the report shows, to enjoy a median household income that is significantly higher than the rest of the Latinos and even, slightly higher than the group of Non-Latinos. It is also of interest to note that, among Mexicans, the report indicates that women have relatively higher labor force participation than men; and that rate of citizenship by Mexicans (81%) is high, something not seen in the rest of the country, and which could also be explained by the characteristics of the innovation ecosystem.

One reflection to be made comes from seeing how one of the few areas where the Mexican group shares more similarities to the other Latinos, apart from age, is that only a small percentage of them have medical insurance. Could this be partly a cultural divide from Non-Latinos? The Mexican Consulate General in Boston and the Center for Mexican Studies of UNAM in Boston welcome this report as a helpful tool to better understand the uniqueness of the community of their co-nationals who call Massachusetts home.

Benjamín Juárez Echenique

Director, UNAM-Boston, Center for Mexican Studies

Alberto Fierro Garza

General Consul, Consulate General of Mexico in Boston

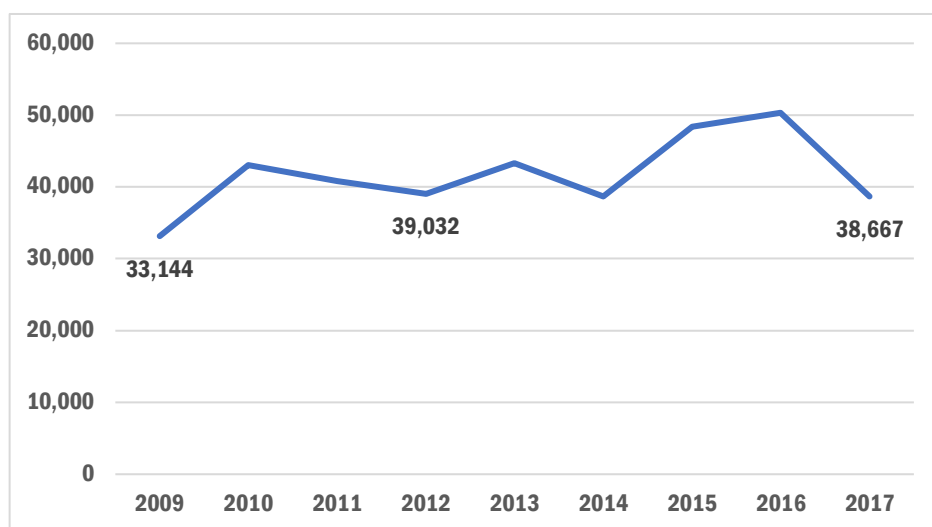
Intro

The Gastón Institute’s 2020 Latinos in Massachusetts series focuses on the ten largest Latino populations located throughout the state.¹ In order of size, these Latino populations are Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Brazilians,² Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Mexicans, Colombians, Cubans, Hondurans, and Ecuadorans. This report analyzes Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data from the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Our descriptive analysis uses both household- and individual-level data to estimate population size and percentages and to compare Mexicans to Other Latinos and Non-Latinos in the state.

Mexicans in the Massachusetts Population

Massachusetts was home in 2017 to 918,565 Latinos, of whom 38,667, or approximately 4%, were Mexican. Massachusetts has the 41st largest Mexican population in the United States. Appendix A maps the Mexicans in the United States. Appendix B maps the Mexicans by cities and towns in Massachusetts. Boston has the largest Mexican population followed by Springfield, Cambridge, Lynn, and Worcester. (These five cities between them have 31% of the Mexicans in the state.) Figure 1 shows that the population grew by 17% from 2009 to 2017. In the same time period, the state’s overall Latino population grew by 39%. By comparison, the state’s total population grew by 4% from 2009 to 2017.

Figure 1: Mexican Population from 2009 to 2017



Source: 2009-2017 American Community Survey

¹ These reports will not identify Latinos in specific cities and towns, as previous years’ reports have done. Instead, the focus is on the most prevalent Latino ethnic groups statewide.

² We use Latino origin and ancestry, based on migration from Latin America, to identify these populations. Thus, Brazilians are included in the category “Latino” although most Brazilians self-report using a racial category – white or black – rather than identifying with the term “Latino.”

Foreign-born Mexicans in Massachusetts, who on average arrived in the United States in 2002, composed only 26% of Mexicans in Massachusetts as of 2017. With 74% of their population native born, 81% of Mexicans in 2017 were United States citizens. By comparison, 36% of Other Latinos in 2017 were foreign born, and 78% of their population were citizens. The Non-Latino population was 14% foreign born, and 94% were citizens.

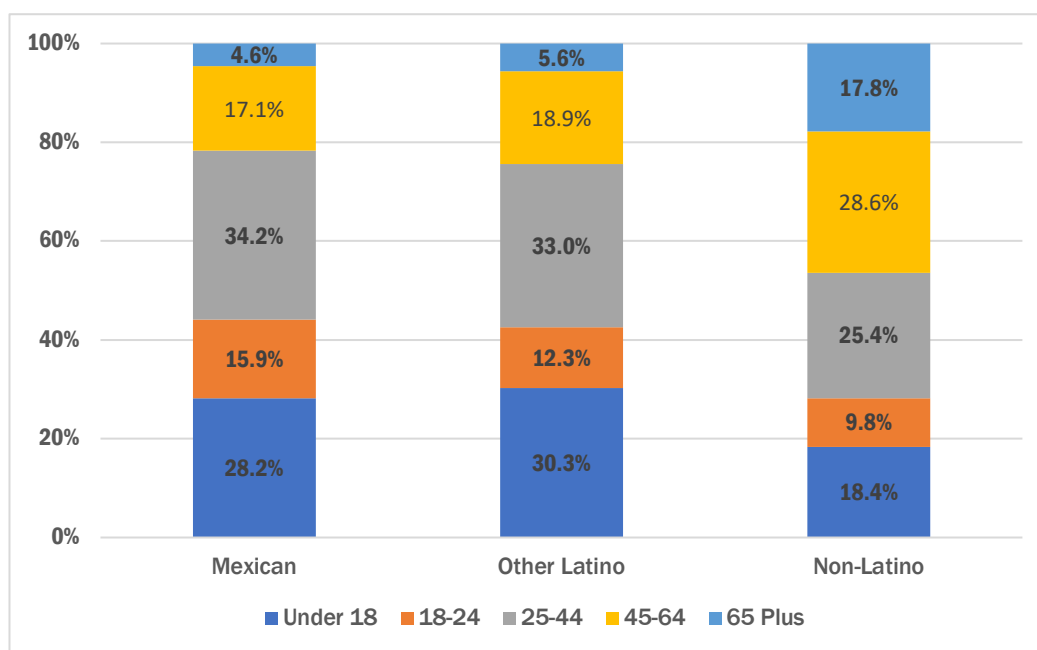
Even though 74% of Mexicans were native born, 43% of Mexican children in 2017 had at least one foreign-born parent compared to 47% of Other Latinos and 24% of Non-Latinos.

Age Distribution and Marital Status

The Mexican population in Massachusetts had a median age of 26 years, lower than 29 years for Other Latinos and 41 for Non-Latinos. Figure 2 shows that 44% of Mexicans were under age 25 compared to 43% for Other Latinos and only 28% of Non-Latinos.

At the same time, the prime working-age years of 25-44 and 45-64 together accounted for a slightly lower proportion of Mexicans (51%) and Other Latinos (52%) than of Non-Latinos (54%). Non-Latinos had a much higher share of the population 65 and older (18%) than of Mexicans (5%) and Other Latinos (6%).

Figure 2: Age Categories

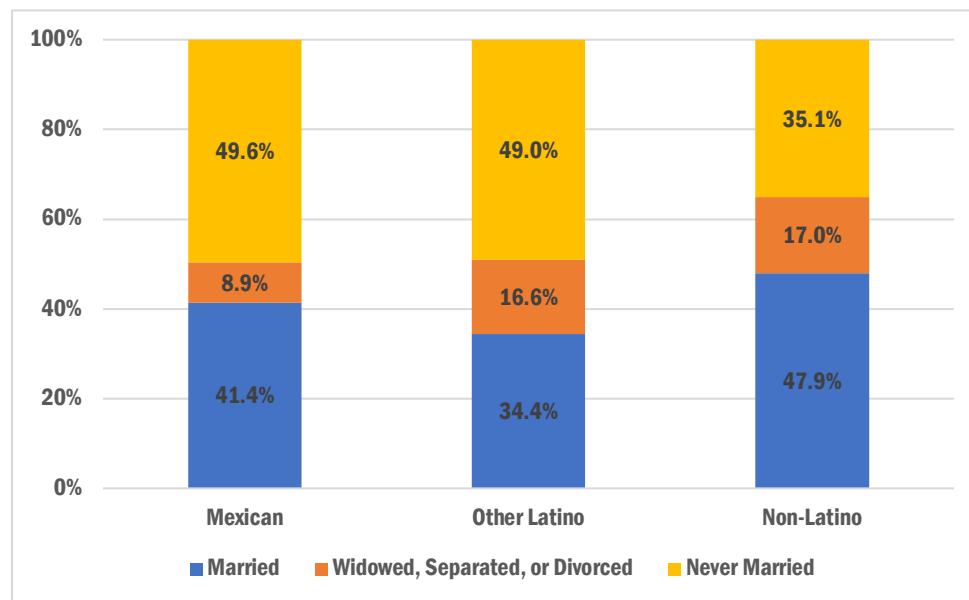


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Marital Status

Despite the Mexican population's youthfulness, Figure 3 shows that its marriage rate (41%) is much higher than that of Other Latinos (34%), though lower than that of Non-Latinos (48%).

Figure 3: Marriage Rates of the Population 15 Years and Older



Source: 2017 American Community Survey

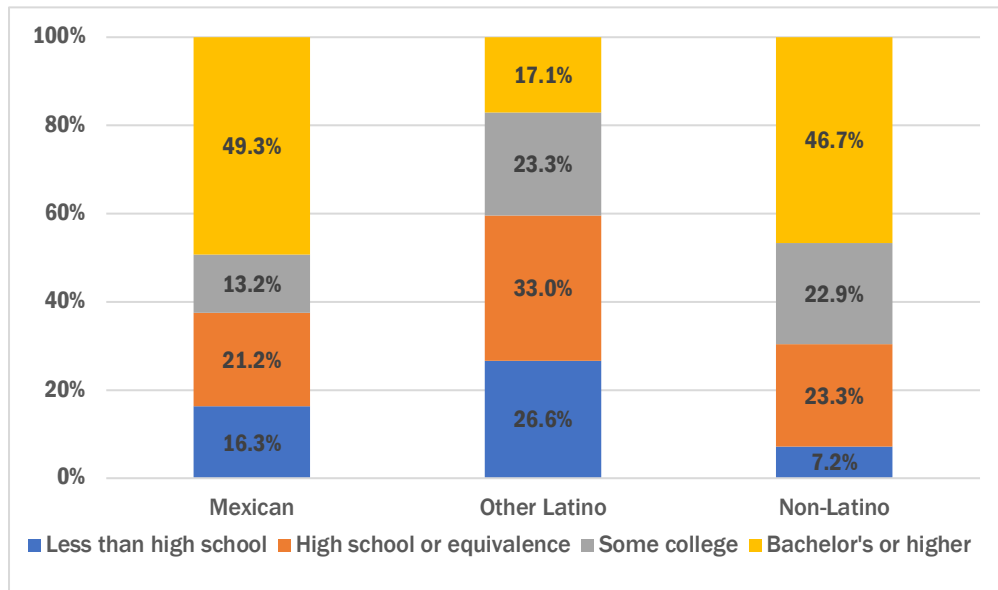
Education

Latinos in Massachusetts overall have relatively low levels of educational attainment, but this is not the case for Mexicans. Figure 4 shows that Mexicans had an especially high share of their 25-and-older population with a Bachelor's degree: 49%, compared to 17% for Other Latinos and 47% for Non-Latinos. Correspondingly, Mexicans had a much lower share of their population with less than a high school education (16%) than that of Other Latinos (27%), though it was higher than for Non-Latinos (7%).

The ages of 18 through 24 are important for obtaining higher education, and 61% of Mexicans in this age group who had not already earned a Bachelor's degree were enrolled in college, compared to 37% for Other Latinos and 61% for Non-Latinos.

English language difficulty is often referenced as a reason for Latinos' lower educational attainment. Mexicans have relatively strong English language ability. Of the population age 5 and older, 80% of Mexicans in 2017 either spoke only English or spoke it very well. This was a higher proportion than for Other Latinos (65%) though not for Non-Latinos (94%).

Figure 4: Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Older

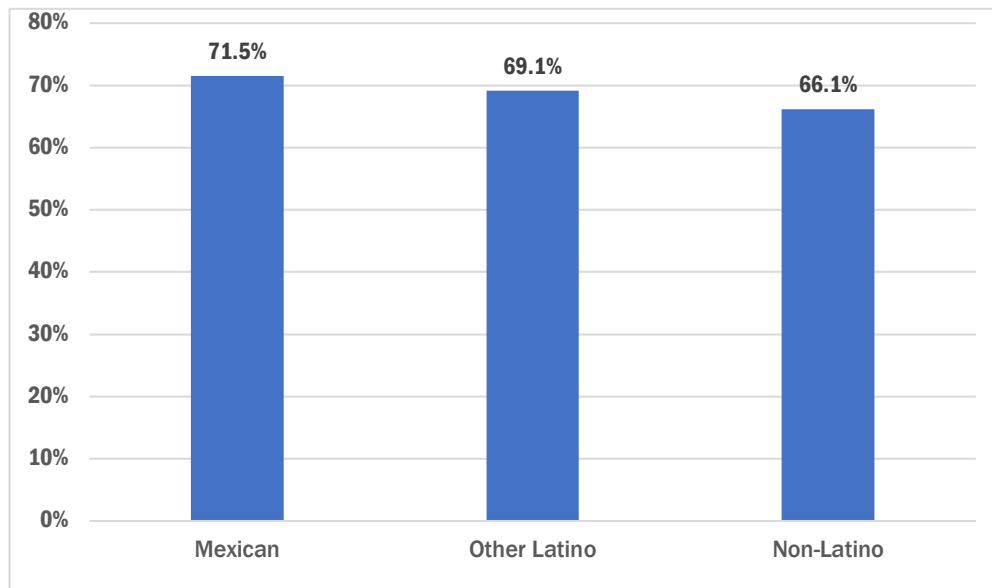


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Labor Force Participation

Mexicans had higher labor force participation (72%) than did Other Latinos (69%) and Non-Latinos (66%). Among Mexicans, women had a slightly higher labor force participation (74%) than men (69%). Younger Mexicans had higher labor force participation, which was 76% for those ages 25-44. This was lower than for Other Latinos (80%) and Non-Latinos (86%) in the age group.

Figure 5: Labor Force Participation of the Population 16 and Older

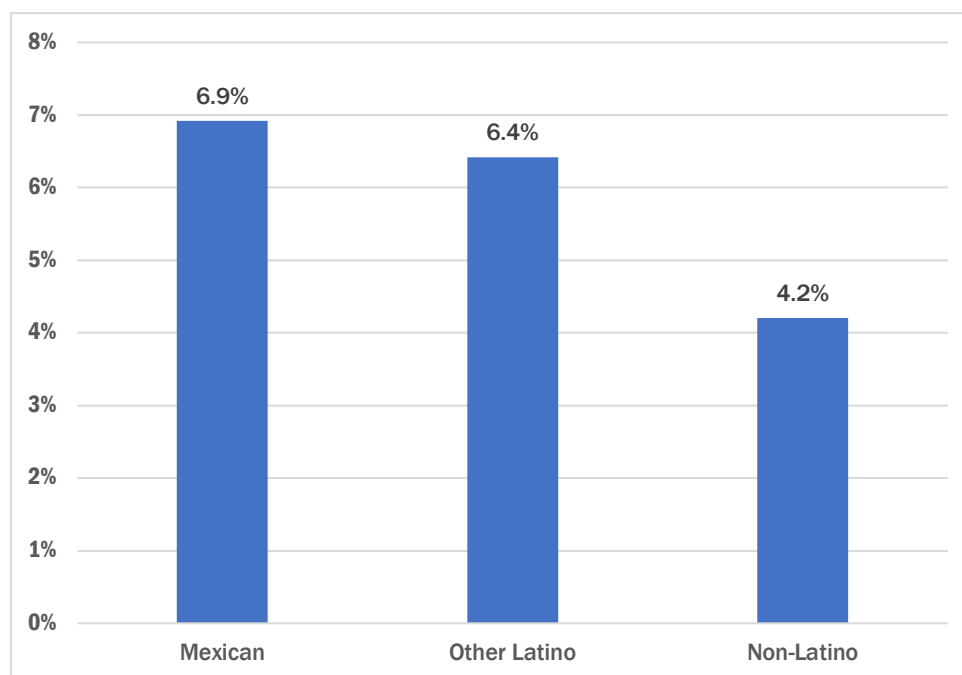


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Unemployment

In 2017, the ACS estimated Massachusetts unemployment at 4.5% overall, but 6.9% for Mexicans. This unemployment rate was higher than the rates for Other Latinos (6.4%) and Non-Latinos (4.2%).

Figure 6: Unemployment

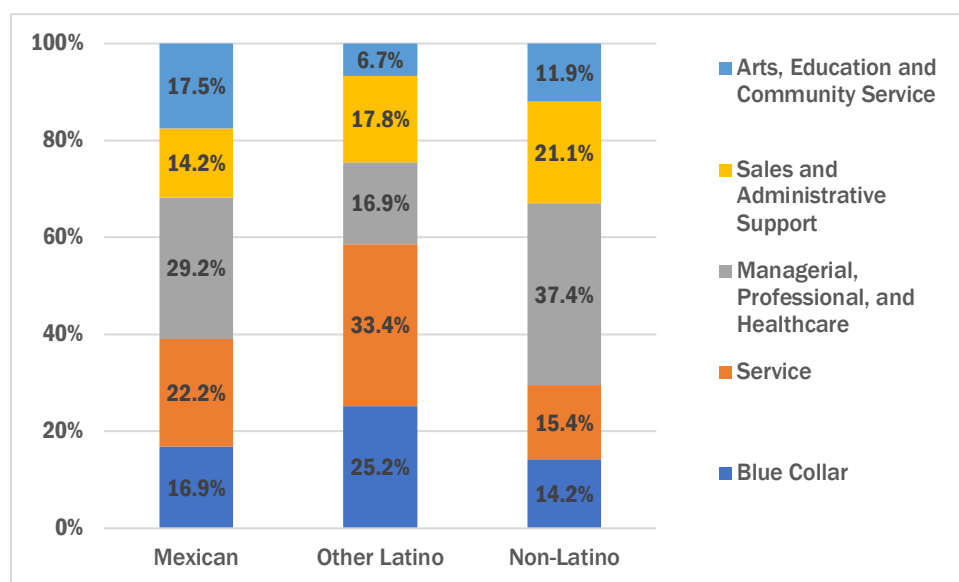


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Occupations

Over 29% of employed Mexicans work in managerial, professional, and health care occupations, a much higher proportion than from Other Latinos (17%) and not far below that of Non-Latinos (37%). In contrast, 39% of Mexicans work in blue collar and service occupations compared to 59% for Other Latinos and 30% for Non-Latinos. This distribution suggests that Mexicans with higher levels of educational attainment fill segments of the labor market that are somewhat more similar to Non-Latinos than to Other Latinos.

Figure 7: Occupational Distribution of Employed Workers



Source: 2017 American Community Survey

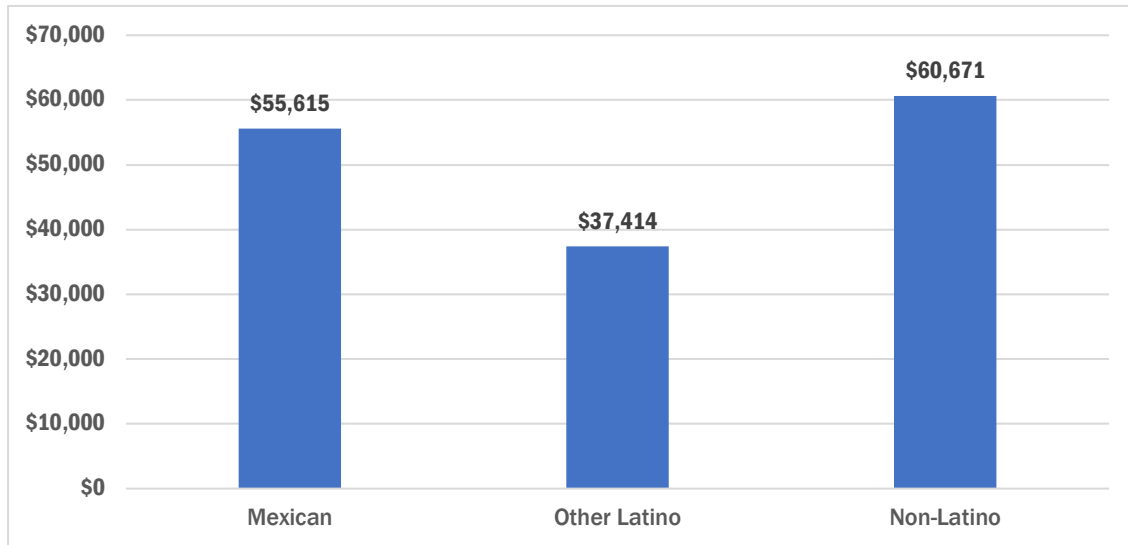
Wages

Given the previous occupational information in Figure 7, it is not surprising that Mexicans earned relatively high wages in 2017. Full-time Mexican workers in 2017 had a median wage income of \$55,615, which was approximately \$18,000 more than for Other Latinos and only \$5,000 less than for Non-Latinos.

Poverty

With their better labor market outcomes, only 10% of Mexicans in 2017 were below the poverty threshold. This is much lower than for Other Latinos (23%) and more similar to Non-Latinos (8%). A similar share of Mexican children (12%) were living below the poverty threshold compared to 31% for Other Latinos and 9% for Non-Latinos.

Figure 8: Median Wage Income of Full-Time Workers



Source: 2017 American Community Survey

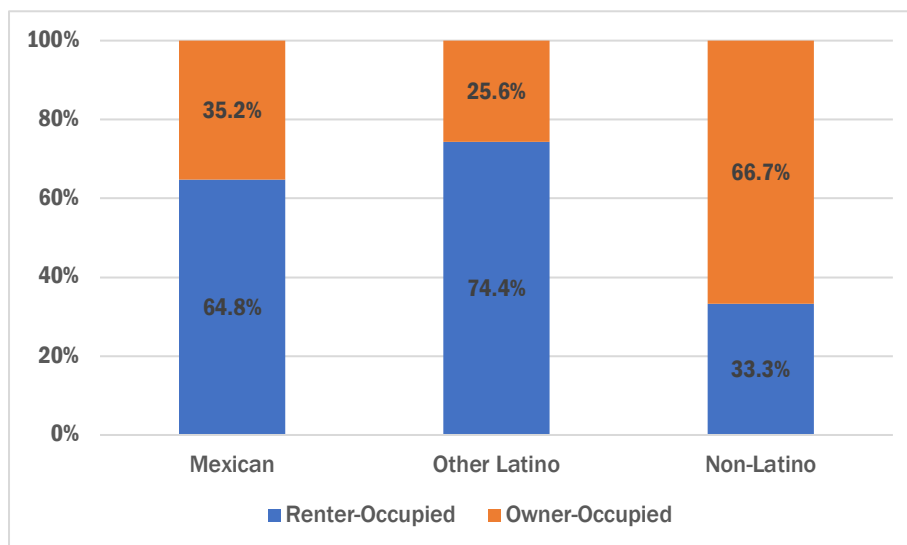
Standard of Living

The final measures of Mexicans' status in Massachusetts are projected to identify how they are rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. We look at homeownership, household income, housing costs, and medical insurance.

Homeownership

Mexicans in 2017 had a higher homeownership rate (35%) than Other Latinos (26%) but not Non-Latinos (67%). The Mexican rate of 35% means that 65% of Mexicans were renters.

Figure 9: Homeownership

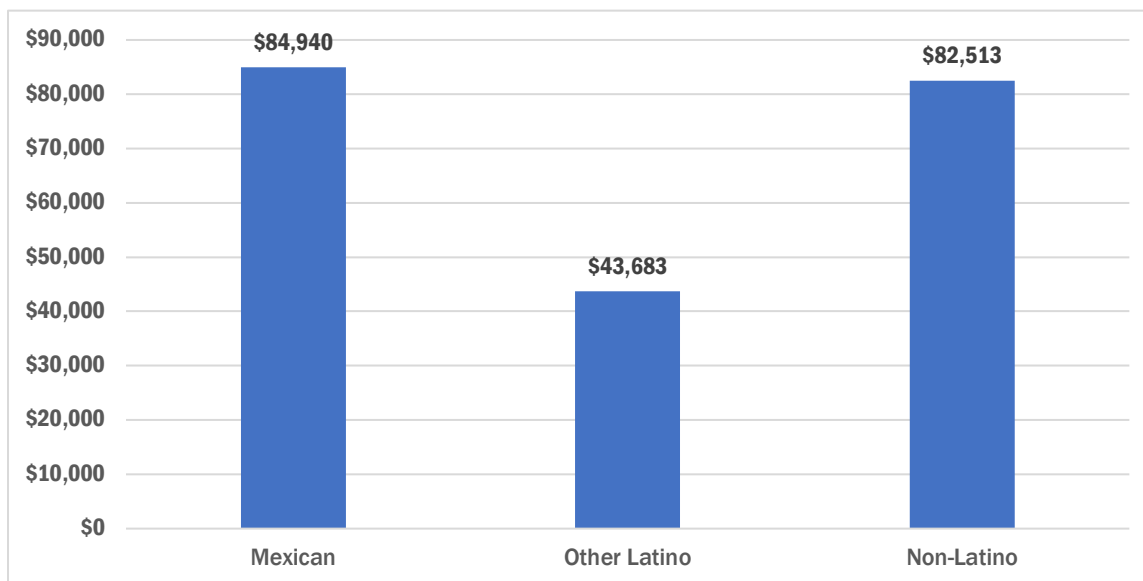


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Household Income

Household income is another aid in assessing a population's standard of living. It accounts for the incomes of all people ages 15 years or older occupying the same housing unit, regardless of relation. Mexicans' median household income was \$84,940. This was much higher than for Other Latino households (\$43,683) and slightly higher than for Non-Latino households (\$82,513).

Figure 10: Median Household Income

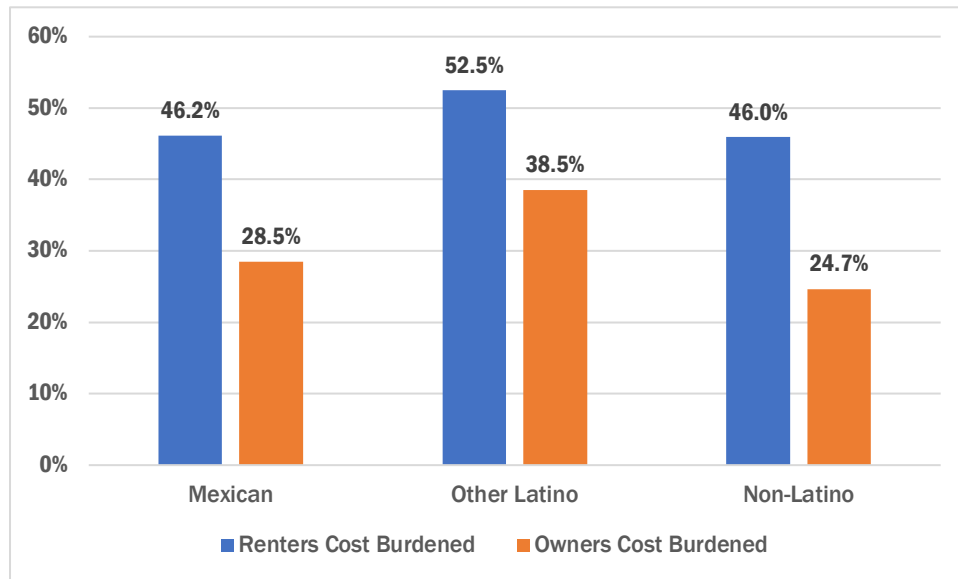


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Housing Cost Burden

A housing cost burdened household spends more than 30% of its monthly income on a rent or mortgage payment. In Massachusetts, noted for its high housing costs, 47% of all renting households in 2017 were housing cost burdened. The proportions for Mexican and Non-Latino households were the same (46%), but lower for Other Latino households (53%). Among homeowners, 29% of Mexican household were housing cost burdened. This was lower than for Other Latinos (39%) but slightly higher than for Non-Latinos (25%).

Figure 11: Housing Cost Burden

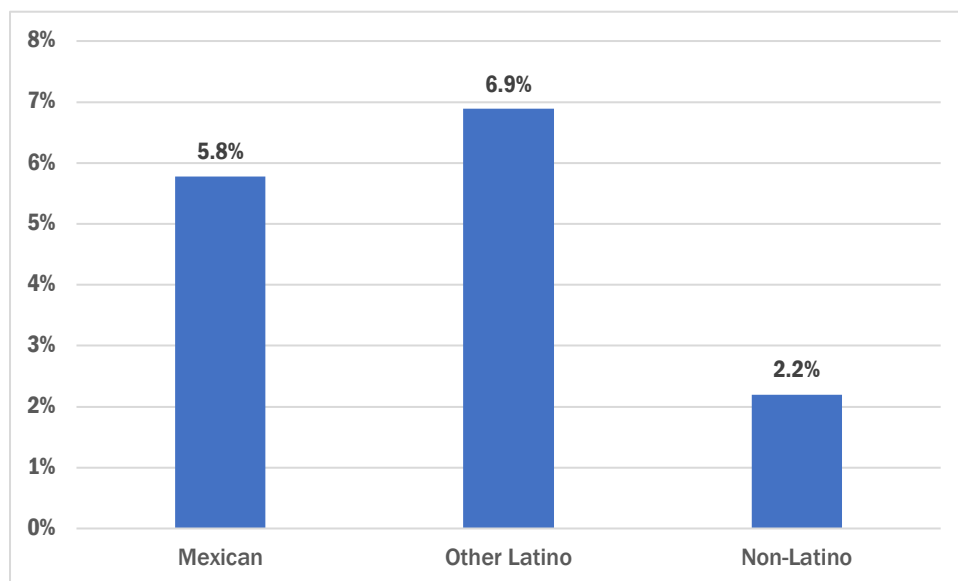


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Medical Insurance

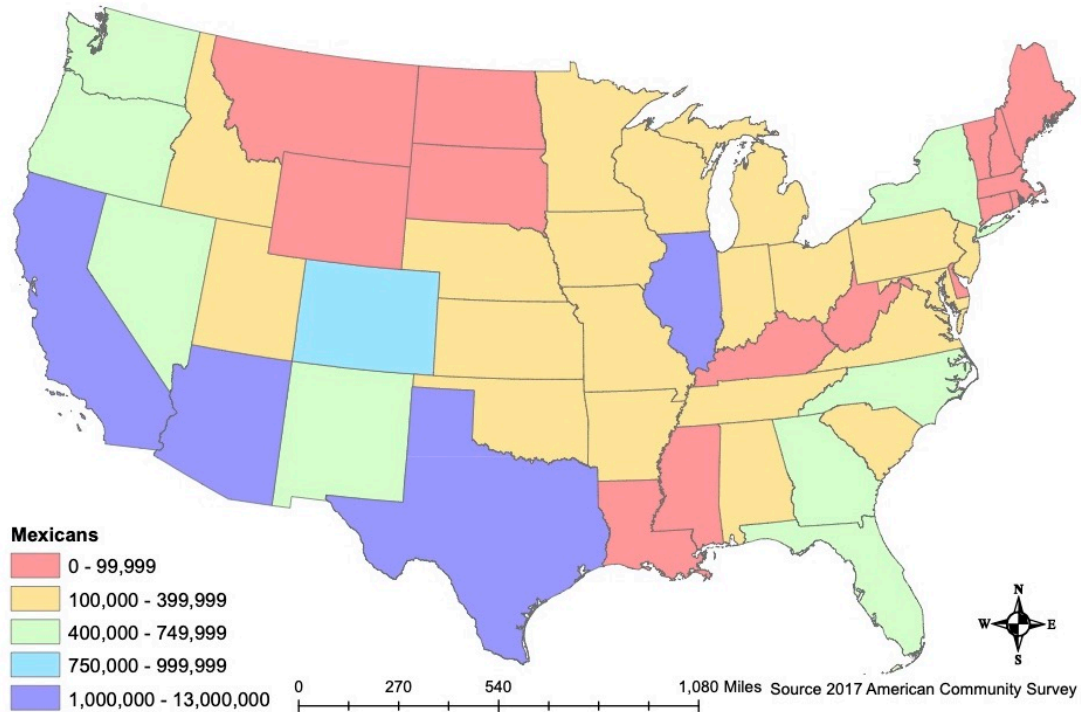
Mexicans, like Other Latinos, had less access to health insurance in 2017 than did Non-Latinos. The percentage of Mexicans who lacked medical insurance was 6%, compared to 7% for Other Latinos and 2% for Non-Latinos.

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance

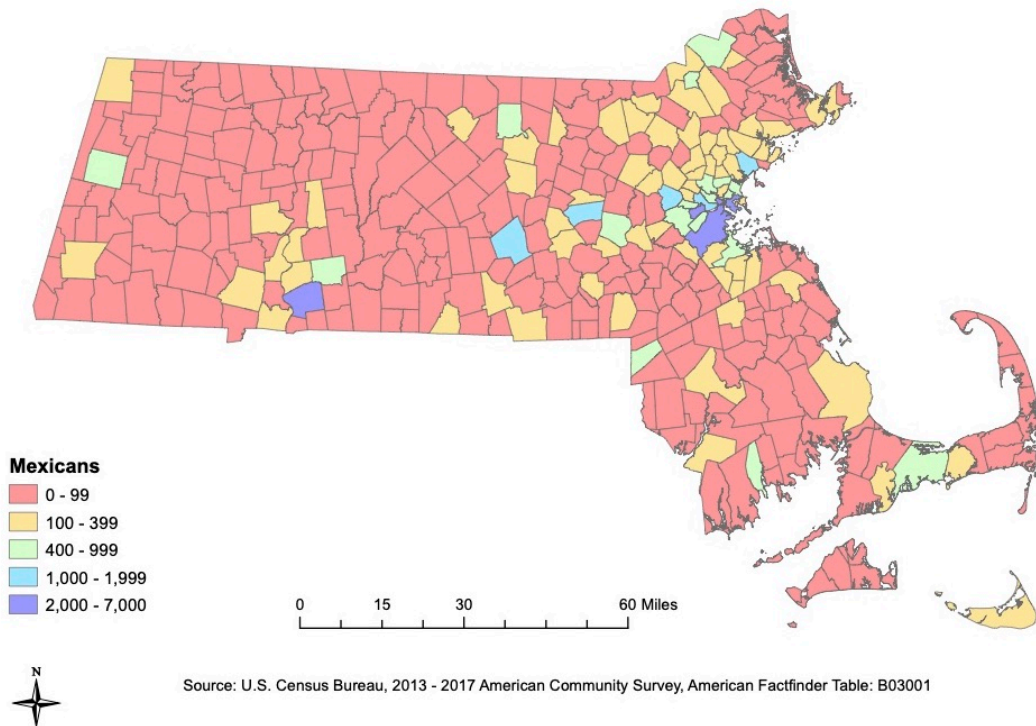


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Appendix A: Mexicans in the United States



Appendix B: Mexicans in the Massachusetts



Latinos in Massachusetts: Mexicans

by Phillip Granberry, PH.D., and Krizia Valentino.

July, 2020

We are grateful for the support of **Andrés Torres Paper Series, Marie Kennedy and Chris Tilly**, and the following sponsors:



About the Gastón Institute

Established in 1989, the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy was created by the Massachusetts Legislature in response to a need for improved understanding about the Latino experience in the commonwealth. Now in its 30th year, the Gastón Institute continues its mission of informing the public and policymakers about issues vital to the state's growing Latino community and providing information and analysis necessary for effective Latino participation in public policy development. To learn more about the Gastón Institute, visit www.umb.edu/gastoninstitute.

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.

Krizia Valentino is a graduate student in the Applied Economics program at UMass Boston, expected to graduate May 2020. She has supported data collection and analysis for a wide range of projects at the Gastón Institute, including a Survey Report for English for New Bostonians and the Latino Non-Profit Mapping Project with Amplify Latinx. In addition to her time at Gastón Institute, she is also a teaching assistant in the UMass Boston Economics department.



THE MAURICIO GASTÓN INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

www.umb.edu/gastoninstitute
gastoninstitute@umb.edu

| @GastonInstitute
| 617.287.5790