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Latinos in Massachusetts: Ecuadorians

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

October 2020

THE MAURICIO GASTÓN INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY



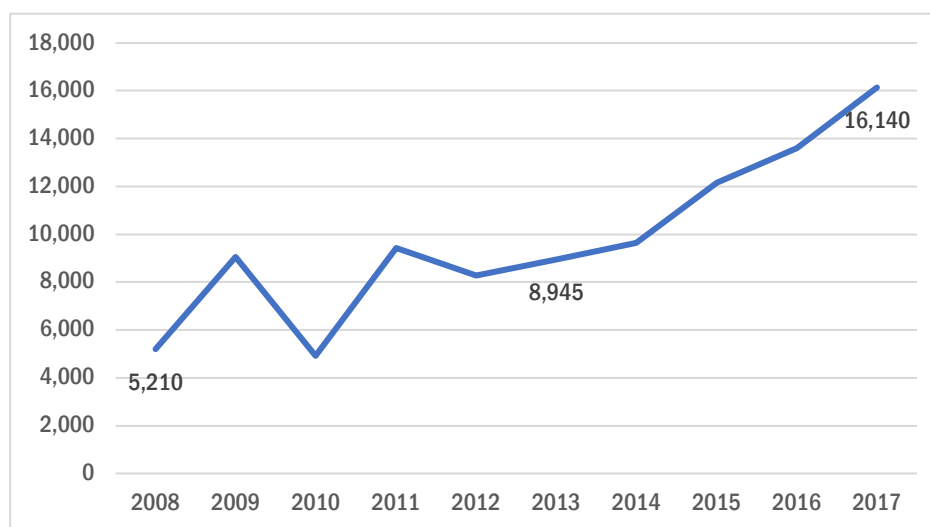
Intro

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 Ecuadorians. 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 Ecuadorians to Other Latinos and Non-Latinos in the state.

Ecuadorians in the Massachusetts Population

Massachusetts was home in 2017 to 918,565 Latinos, of whom 16,140, or 2%, were Ecuadorian. Massachusetts has the 8th largest Ecuadorian population in the United States. Appendix A maps the Ecuadorians in the United States, while Appendix B maps the Ecuadorians by cities and towns in Massachusetts. Worcester has the largest Ecuadorian population followed by Milford, Lowell, Boston, and Fall River. (These five cities and towns between them have 37% of the Ecuadorians in the state.) Figure 1 shows that the population grew by 210% from 2008 to 2017. In this same period, the state’s overall Latino population grew by 44%. By comparison, the state’s total population grew by 5.6% from 2008 to 2017.

Figure 1: Ecuadorian Population from 2008 to 2017



Source: 2008-2017 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 Ecuadorians in Massachusetts, who on average arrived in the United States in 2002, composed 61% of the Ecuadorians in the state as of 2017. With 39% of their population native born, 62% were U.S. citizens. By comparison, 35% of Other Latinos in 2017 were foreign born, and 79% of their population were citizens. The Non-Latino population was 14% foreign born, and 94% were citizens.

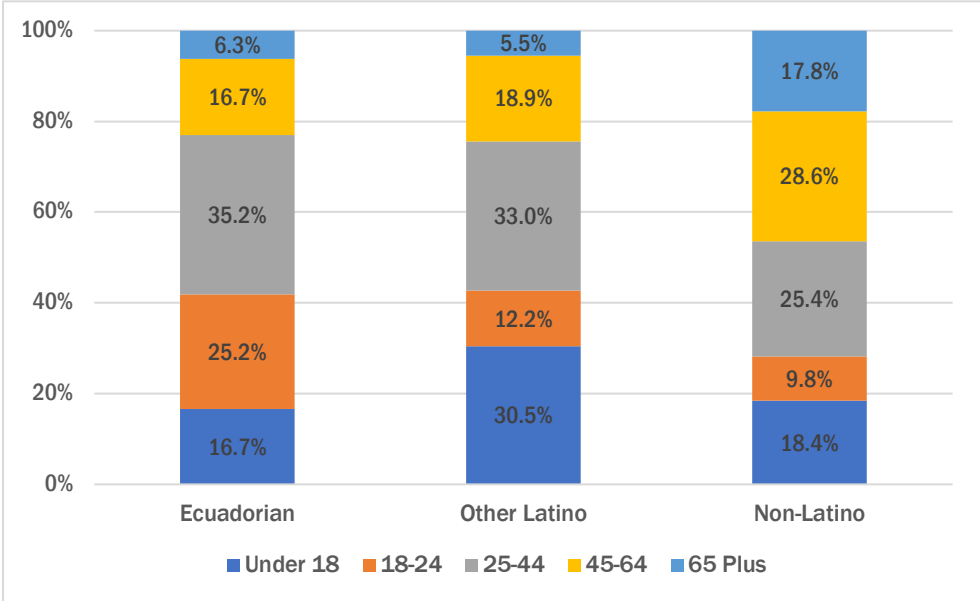
With 39% of Ecuadorians native born, 71% of Ecuadorian children in 2017 had at least one foreign-born parent compared to 47% of Other Latinos and 24% of Non-Latinos.

Age Distribution and Marital Status

The Ecuadorian population in Massachusetts had a median age of 27 years, younger than 29 years for Other Latinos and much younger than 42 years for Non-Latinos. Figure 2 shows that 43% of Ecuadorians and Other Latinos are under age 25 compared to only 28% of Non-Latinos.

At the same time, the prime working-age years of 25-44 and 45-64 together accounted for an equal proportion (52%) of Ecuadorians and Other Latinos and a slightly higher proportion of Non-Latinos (54%). Non-Latinos had a much higher share of the population 65 and older while Ecuadorians and Other Latinos had similar smaller shares.

Figure 2: Age Categories



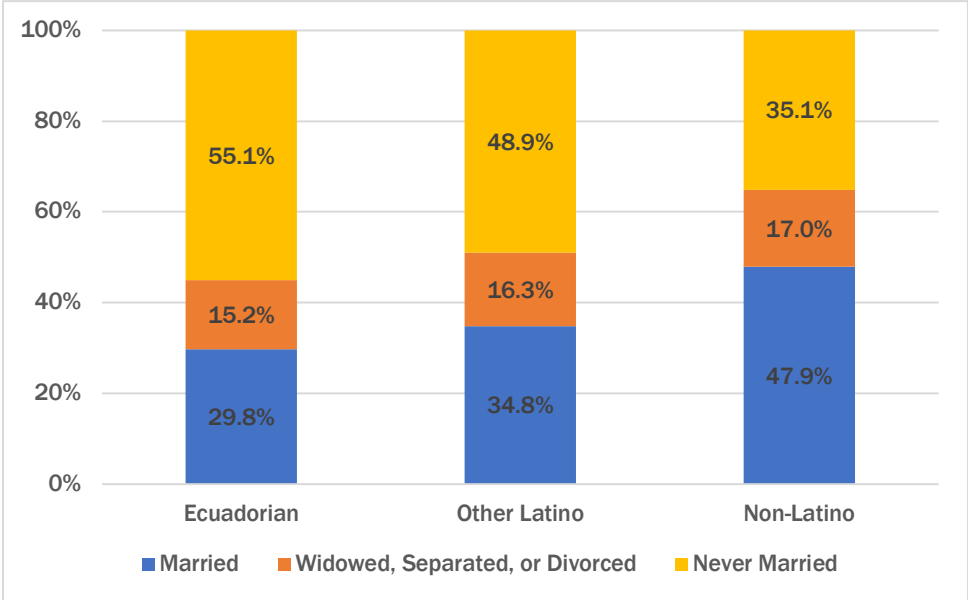
Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Marital Status

The Ecuadorian population’s youthfulness is a likely factor contributing to its relatively low marriage rate. Figure 3, covering all ages 15 and older, shows that Ecuadorians

(30%) were slightly less likely to be married as of 2017 than were Other Latinos (35%), and much less likely than were Other Latinos (48%).

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



Source: 2017 American Community Survey

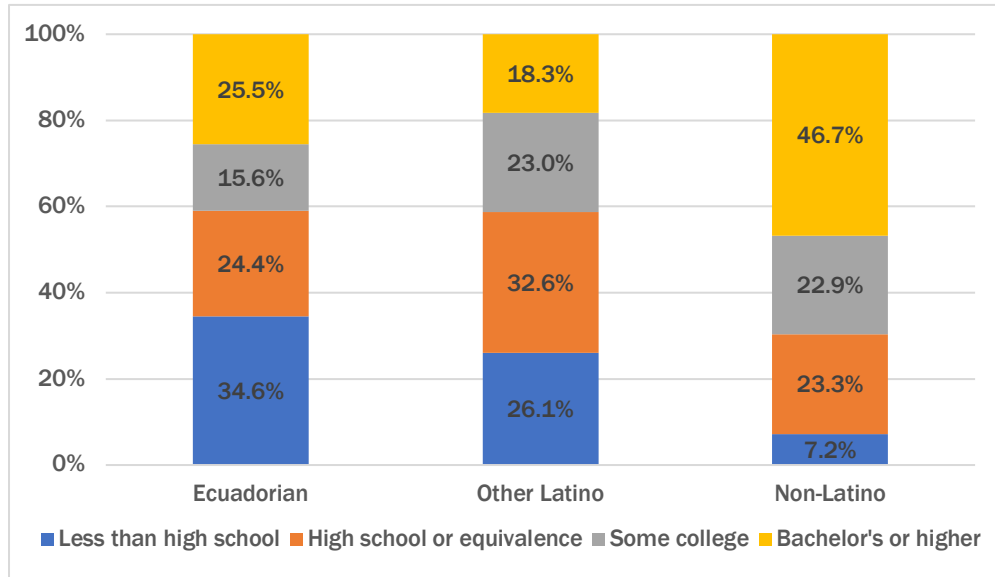
Education

Latinos in Massachusetts overall have relatively low levels of educational attainment, and this is somewhat true of Ecuadorians in the state. Figure 4 shows that Ecuadorians had a higher share of their population with less than a high school diploma: 35%, compared to 26% for Other Latinos and 7% for Non-Latinos. However, Ecuadorians had a slightly larger share of their population with at least a Bachelor’s degree (26%) than Other Latinos (18%) though smaller than for Non-Latinos (47%).

The ages of 18 through 24 are important for obtaining higher education, but only 19% of Ecuadorians in this age group who had not already earned a Bachelor's degree were enrolled in college, compared to 39% for Other Latinos and 61% for Non-Latinos.

English language difficulty is often referenced as a reason for low educational attainment. Of the population age 5 and older, 57% of Ecuadorians in 2017 either spoke only English or spoke it very well. This was a lower proportion than for Other Latinos (65%) and Non-Latinos (94%).

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

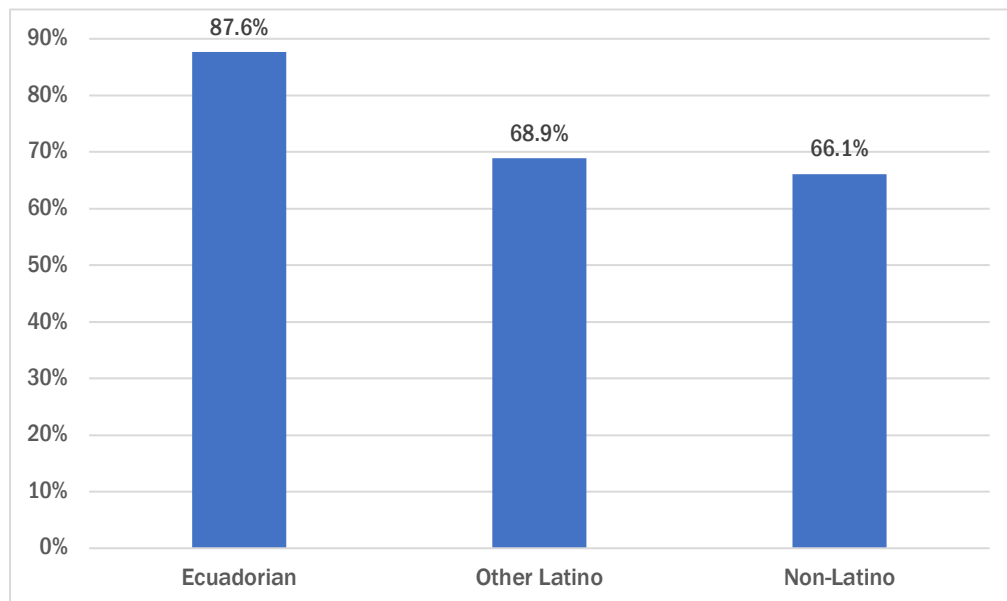


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Labor Force Participation

Ecuadorians had higher labor force participation (88%) than did Other Latinos (69%) and Non-Latinos (66%). Among Ecuadorians, men had even higher labor force participation (96%) than women (75%). Younger Ecuadorians had higher labor force participation, which was 93% for those ages 25-44. This was higher than for Other Latinos (80%) and Non-Latinos (86%) in the age group.

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

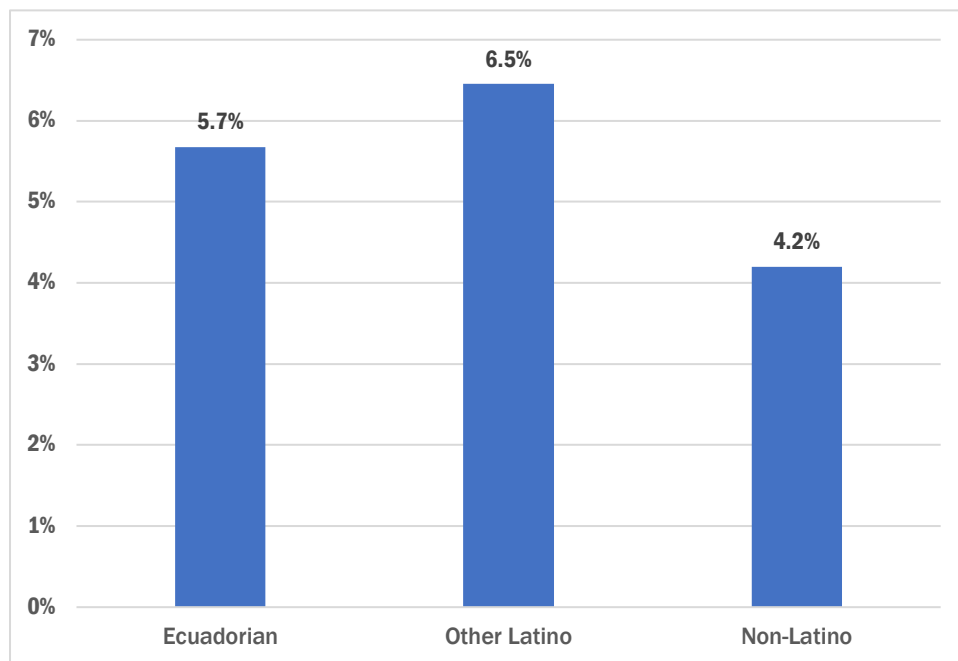


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Unemployment

In 2017, the ACS estimated Massachusetts unemployment at 4.5% overall, but at 5.7% for Ecuadorians. This was lower than for Other Latinos (6.5%) but higher than for Non-Latinos (4.2%).

Figure 6: Unemployment

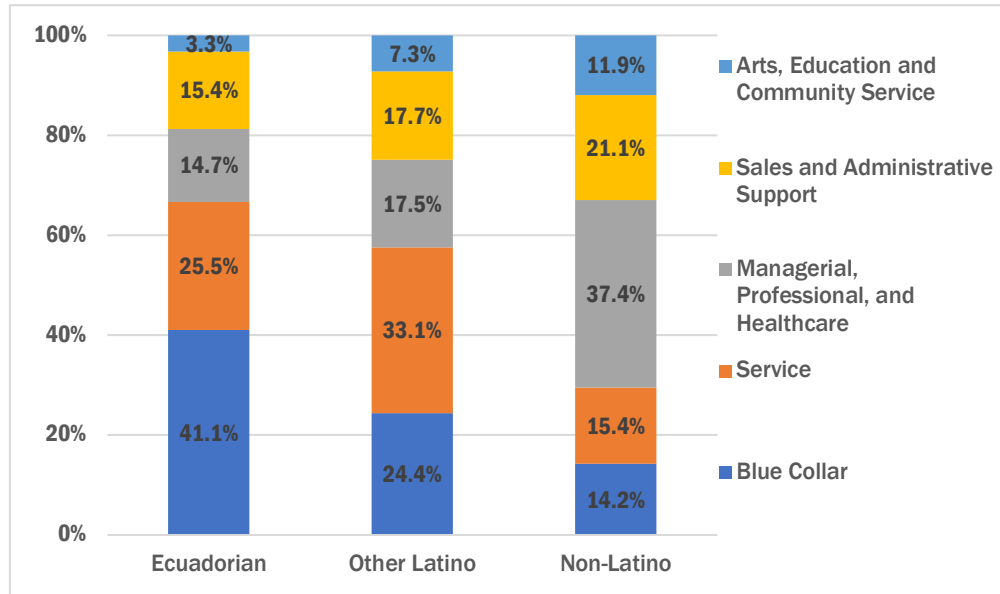


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Occupations

Over 67% of Ecuadorians (and a smaller proportion of Other Latinos, 58%) worked in service and blue-collar occupations, compared to less than 30% for Non-Latinos. In contrast, the percentage in managerial and professional occupations was 15% for Ecuadorians, 18% for Other Latinos, and 37% for Non-Latinos. These discrepancies suggest that Ecuadorians and Other Latinos, with lower average levels of educational attainment, fill segments of the labor market that are very different than those of Non-Latinos.

Figure 7: Occupational Distribution of Employed Workers



Source: 2017 American Community Survey

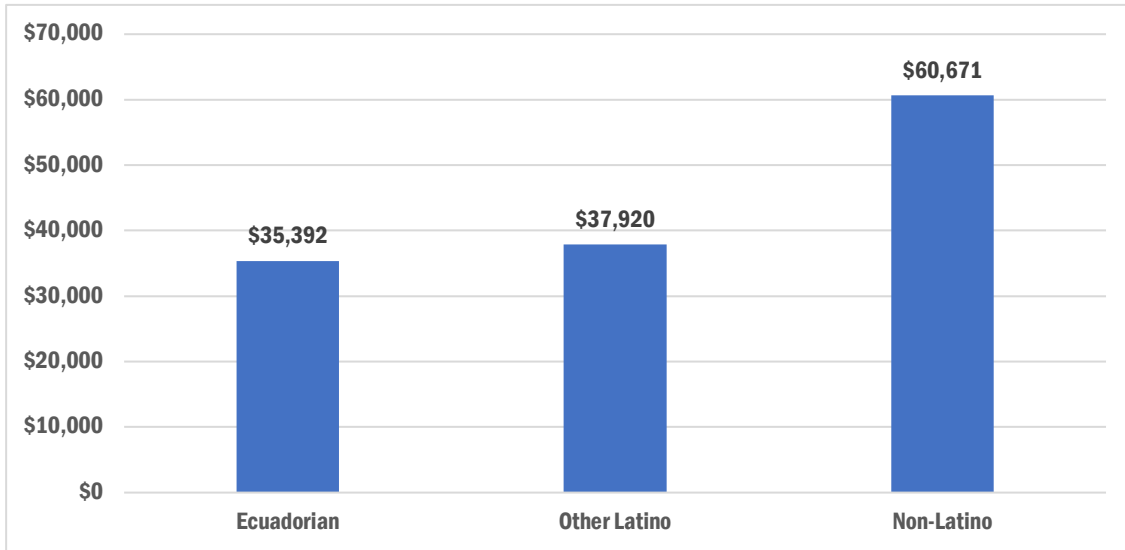
Wages

Given the previous occupational information in Figure 7, it is not surprising that Ecuadorians earned lower wages. Full-time Ecuadorian workers in 2017 had a median wage income of \$35,392, which was approximately \$2,500 less than for Other Latinos and \$25,000 less than for Non-Latinos. This overall wage income disparity between Latinos and Non-Latinos persisted when analyzed by nativity, age, and educational attainment.

Poverty

With their lower wage income, it is not surprising that 25% of Ecuadorians in 2017 were below the poverty threshold. This was higher than for Other Latinos (23%) and much higher than for Non-Latinos (8%). Nearly 27% of Ecuadorian children lived 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

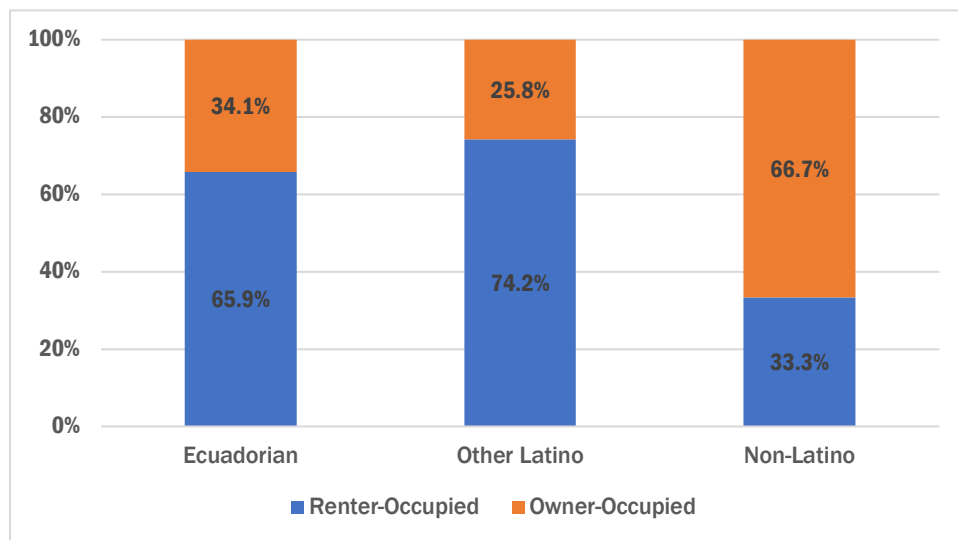
Standard of Living

The final measures of Ecuadorians' 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

Ecuadorians in 2017 had a higher homeownership rate (34%) than Other Latinos (26%) but not Non-Latinos (67%). The Ecuadorian rate of 34% means that 66% of Ecuadorians were renters.

Figure 9: Homeownership

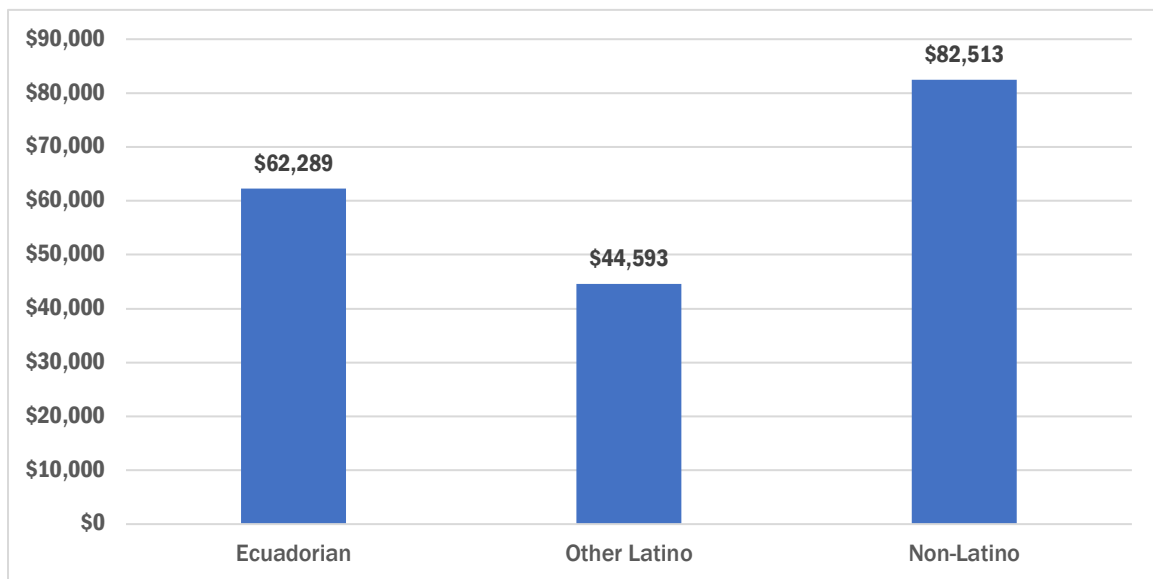


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

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. Ecuadorians' median household income was \$62,289. This was much higher than for Other Latino households (\$44,593) but less than for Non-Latino households (\$82,513). Given Ecuadorians' relatively low wage income, it reflects a larger household size.

Figure 10: Median Household Income

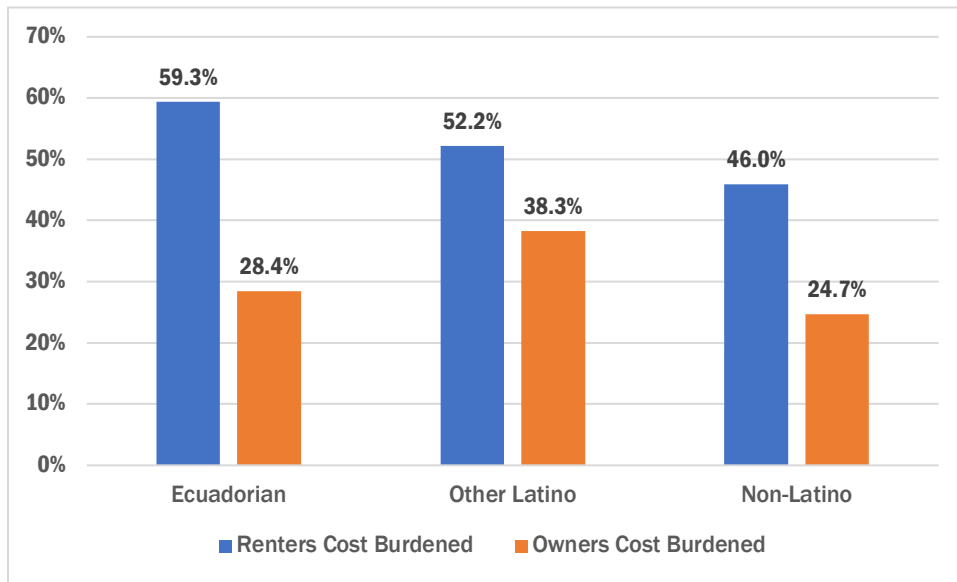


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

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. This figure was 59% for Ecuadorian households, 52% for Other Latino households, and 46% for Non-Latino households. Among homeowners, 28% of Ecuadorian household were housing cost burdened. This was lower than for Other Latinos (38%) but slightly higher than for Non-Latinos (25%).

Figure 11: Housing Cost Burden

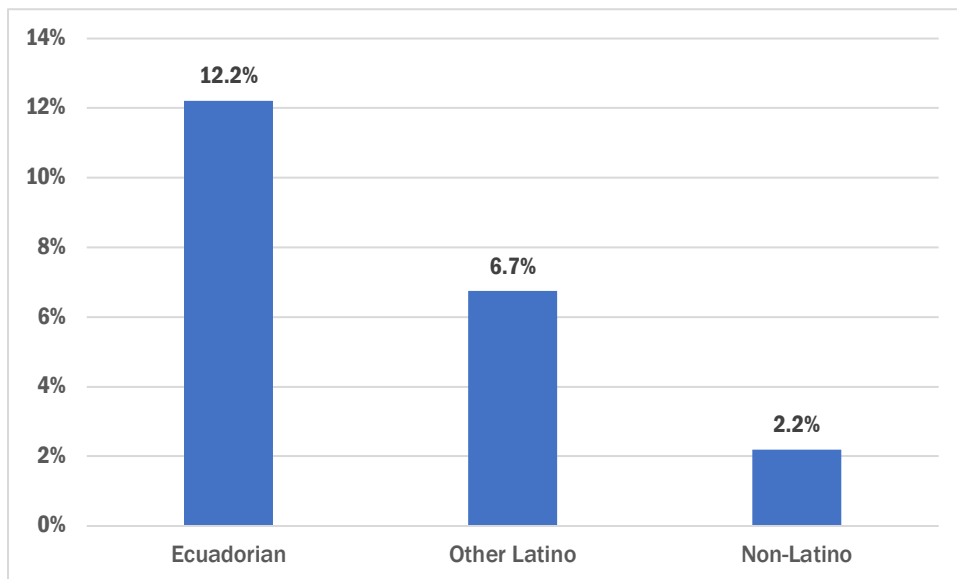


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Medical Insurance

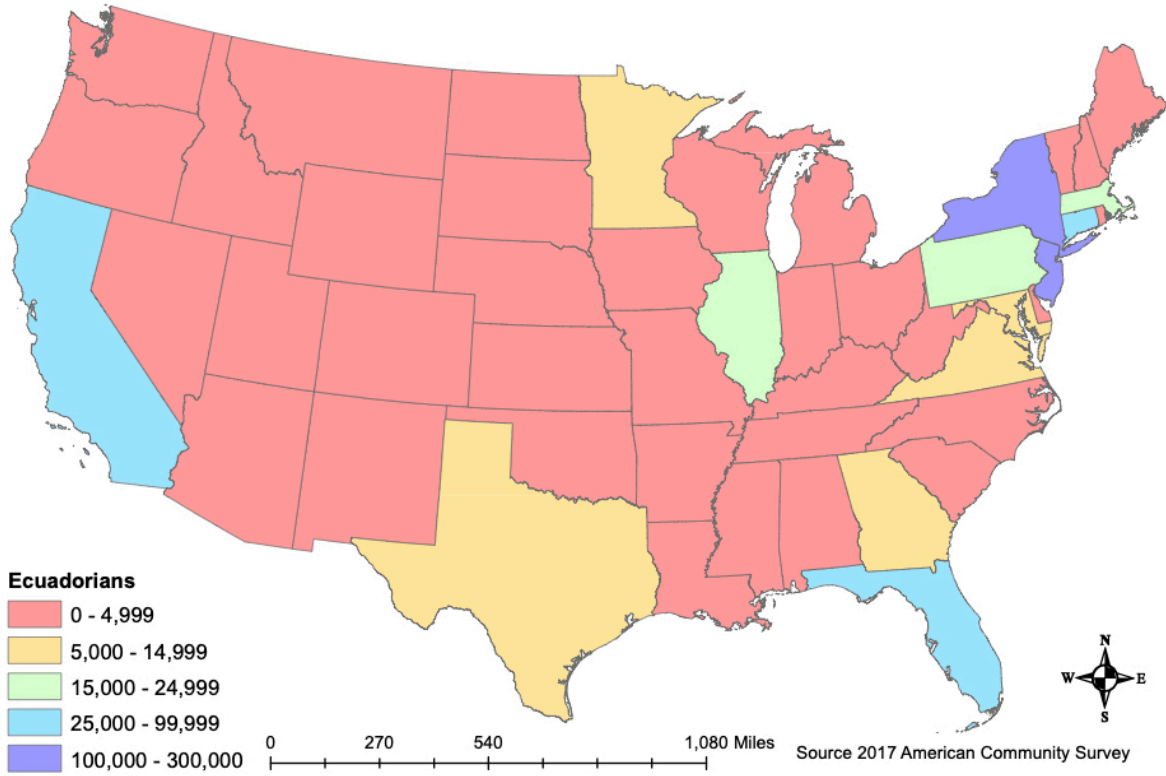
Ecuadorians like Other Latinos had less access to health insurance than did Non-Latinos. However, the percentage of Ecuadorians who lacked medical insurance was 12%, compared to Other Latinos (7%). Only 2% of Non-Latinos lacked access to medical insurance. The same trend holds for Ecuadorian children, as 5% lacked medical insurance compared to 2% for Other Latinos and 1% for Non-Latinos.

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance

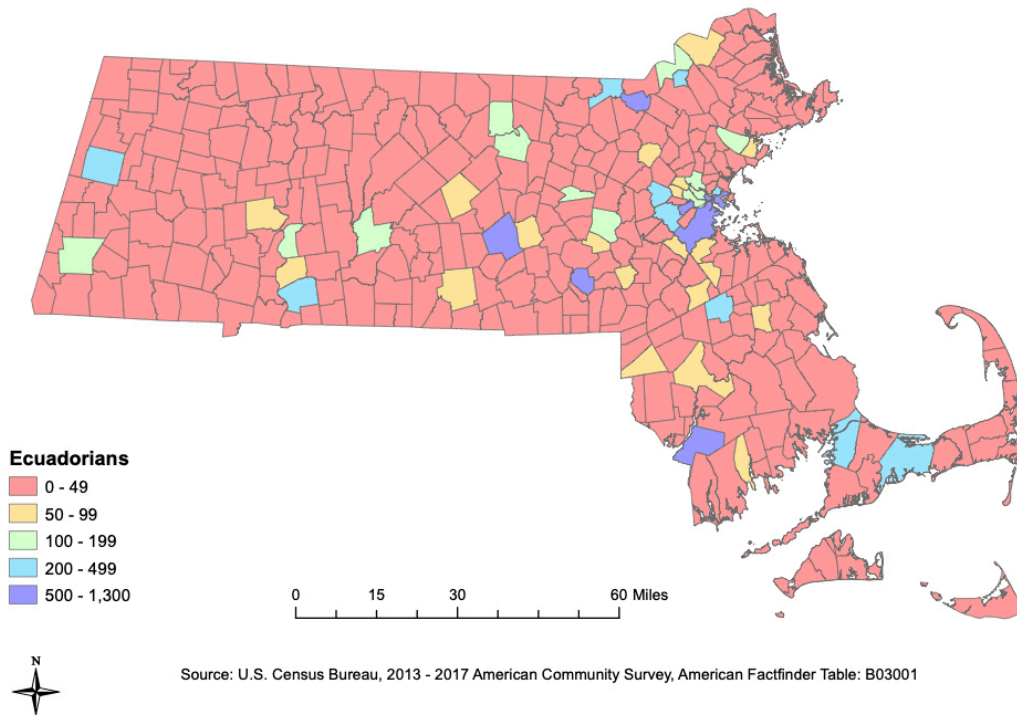


Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Appendix A: Ecuadorians in the United States



Appendix B: Ecuadorians in Massachusetts



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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 2020 graduate from the Applied Economics program at UMass Boston. 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.



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