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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Salem

by Phillip Granberry, Ph.D., and
Vishakha Agarwal, Ph.D.

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THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Introduction

This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Salem. 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 Salem is part of a larger series that covers cities and towns with a population of at least 35,000 residents in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a significant Latino population. Each report analyzes data from the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. We obtained the data from the Census Bureau in tabular form, and we transformed these data into figures presented in this report.

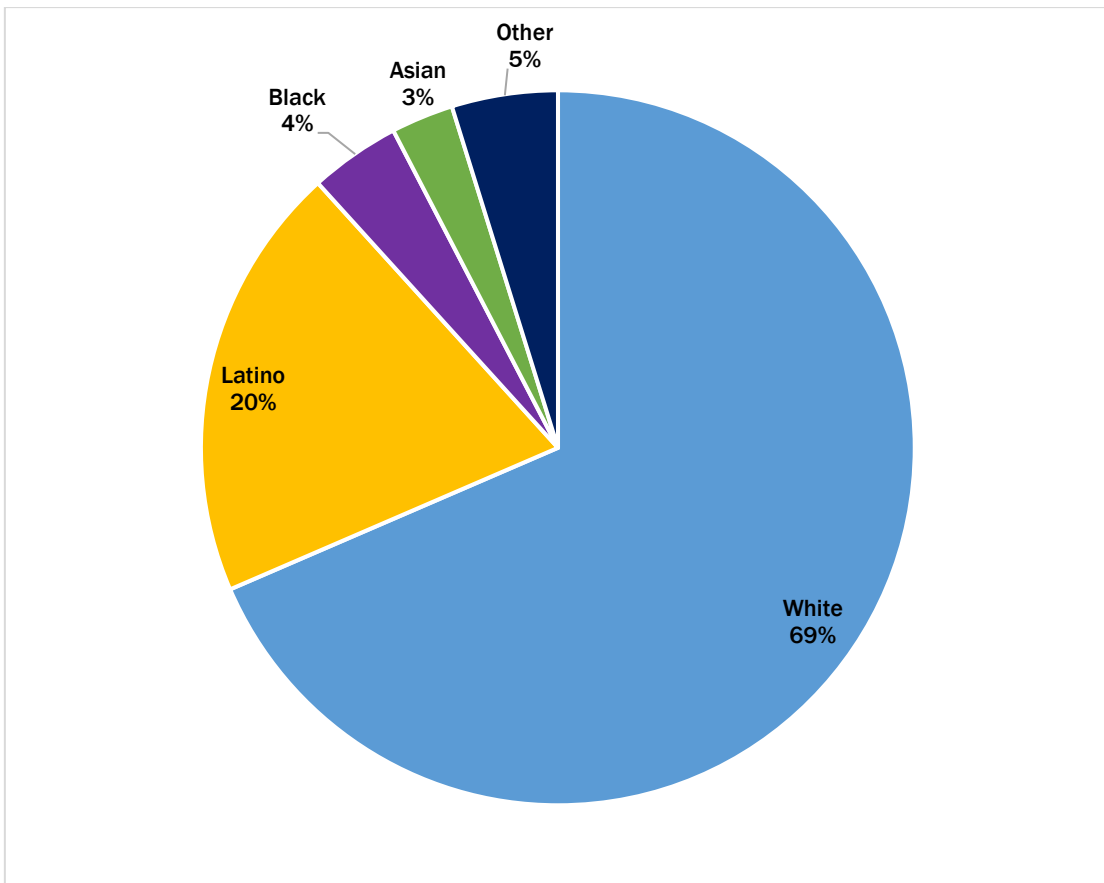
The Census Bureau identifies Latinos through a question that asks respondents to choose either "Hispanic or Latino" or "Not Hispanic or Latino." Separately, it asks respondents to identify a race. This report uses the term "Latino" to include all those who selected "Hispanic or Latino" on the Census or ACS form, regardless of racial designation. The report compares Latinos, thus defined, to Non-Latino Whites, Blacks, and Asians, based on individuals' racial identification. The number of ethno-racial groups included in a particular analysis may vary each ethno-racial group is included in the analysis only when the observed sample size is large enough to produce reliable population estimates.

The Gastón Institute strives 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 Salem.

Salem Overview

As a historic seaport, Salem has long welcomed new arriving populations. According to the 2020 Decennial Census it is home to an estimated 8,785 Latinos. They represent 20% of the city's population of 44,480 (Figure 1). This is a smaller share than for Whites (69%) but greater than for Blacks (4%) and Asians (3%).

Figure 1: Population Shares by Ethno-Racial Group in Salem

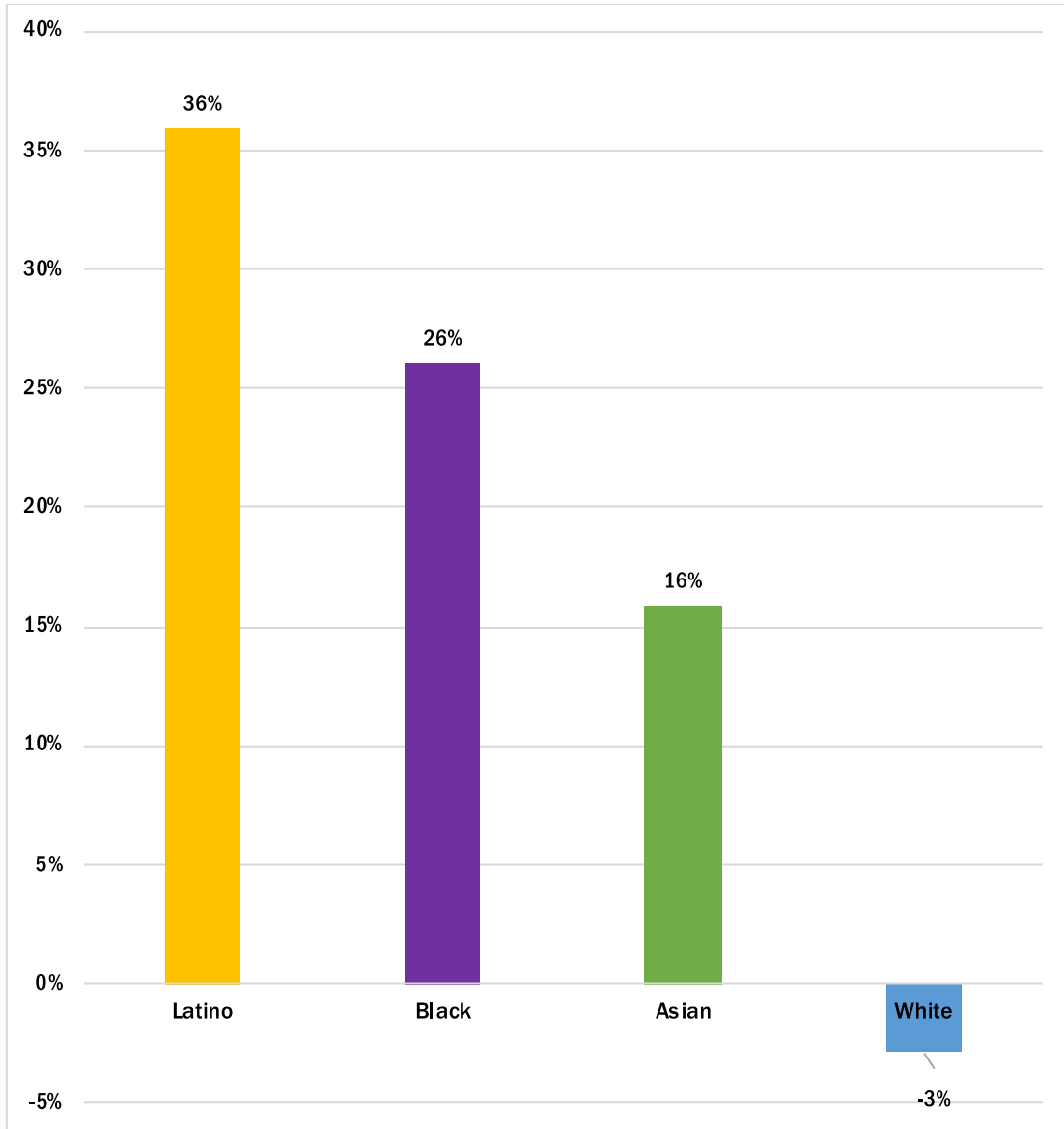


Source: 2020 U.S Census

A striking feature of Salem is its recent population change. From 2010 to 2020, the Latino population increased by 36%, which is not far short of the statewide Latino increase of 41% (Figure 2). As in many other cities in Massachusetts, Whites in Salem experienced a population decline of 3%, while Asians (16%) and Blacks (26%) experienced a population growth during the decade.

Salem has a smaller share of foreign-born residents (14%) than the Commonwealth as a whole (17%). However, this is not the case among Latinos. In Salem, 40% of their population are foreign born, which is higher than the Latino statewide share (32%).

Figure 2: Population Change from 2010 to 2020 by Ethno-Racial Group

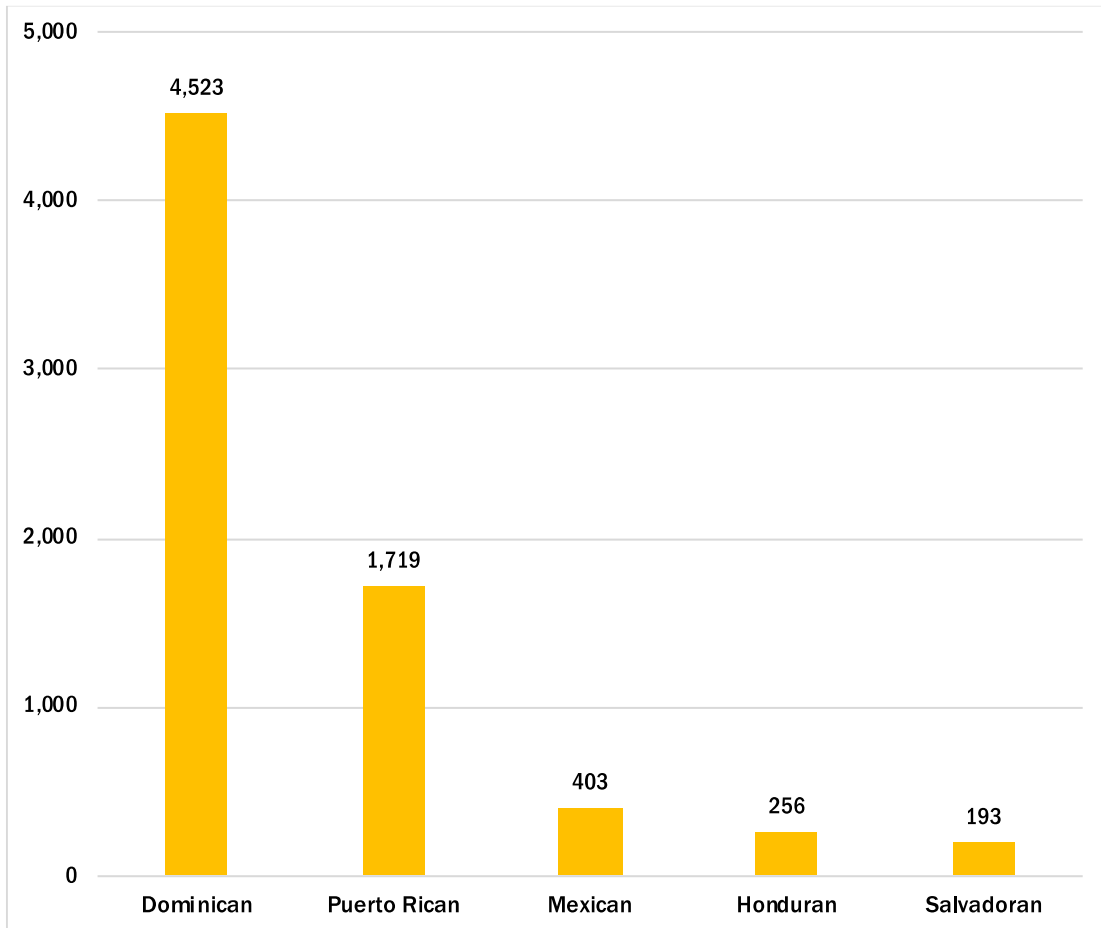


Source: 2010 & 2020 U. S. Censuses

The remainder of this profile uses 2016-2020 American Community Survey data in order to analyze the demographic and economic characteristics presented in this profile.

When examining the origin of Latinos in the Salem, it is important to note that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens; they are not included in foreign-born estimates in the preceding paragraph. As Figure 3 shows, the largest Latino subpopulation in the city consists of Dominicans (4,523), followed by Puerto Ricans (1,719), Mexicans (403), Hondurans (256), and Salvadorans (193). Statewide, the five largest Latino populations in Massachusetts in order of size are Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, Mexicans, and Guatemalans.

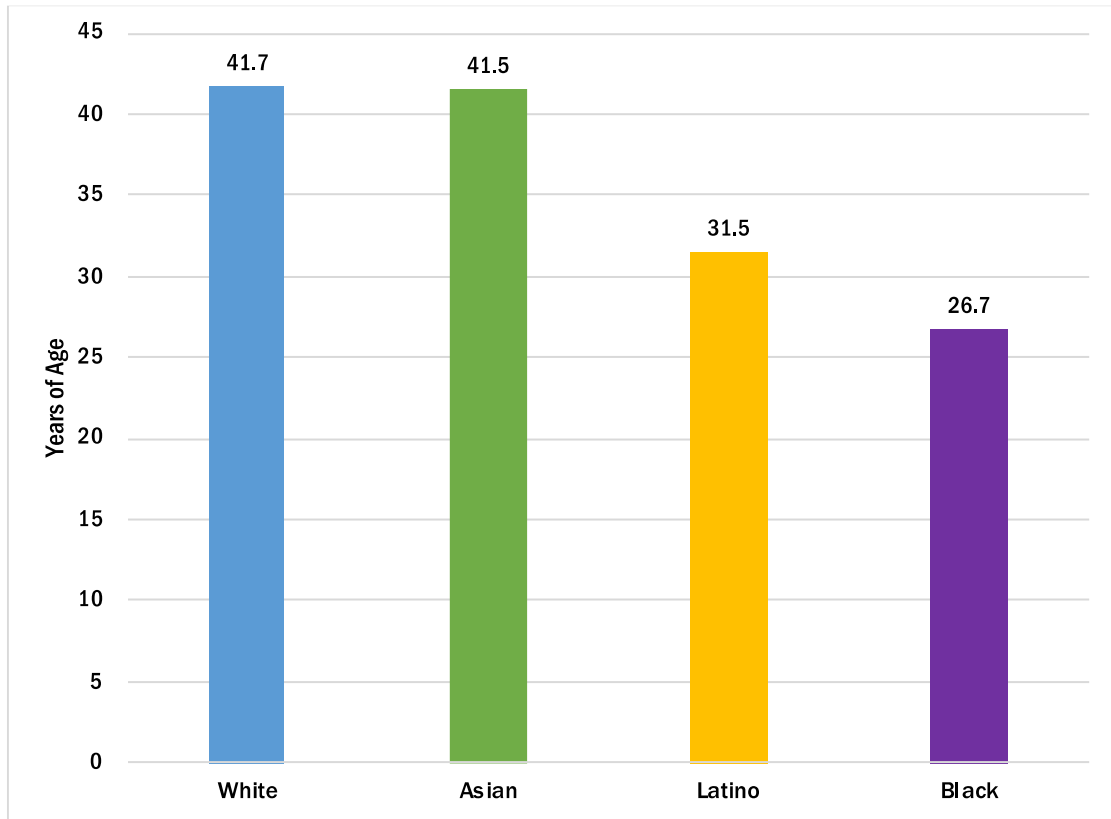
Figure 3: Origin of the Top Latino Populations



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

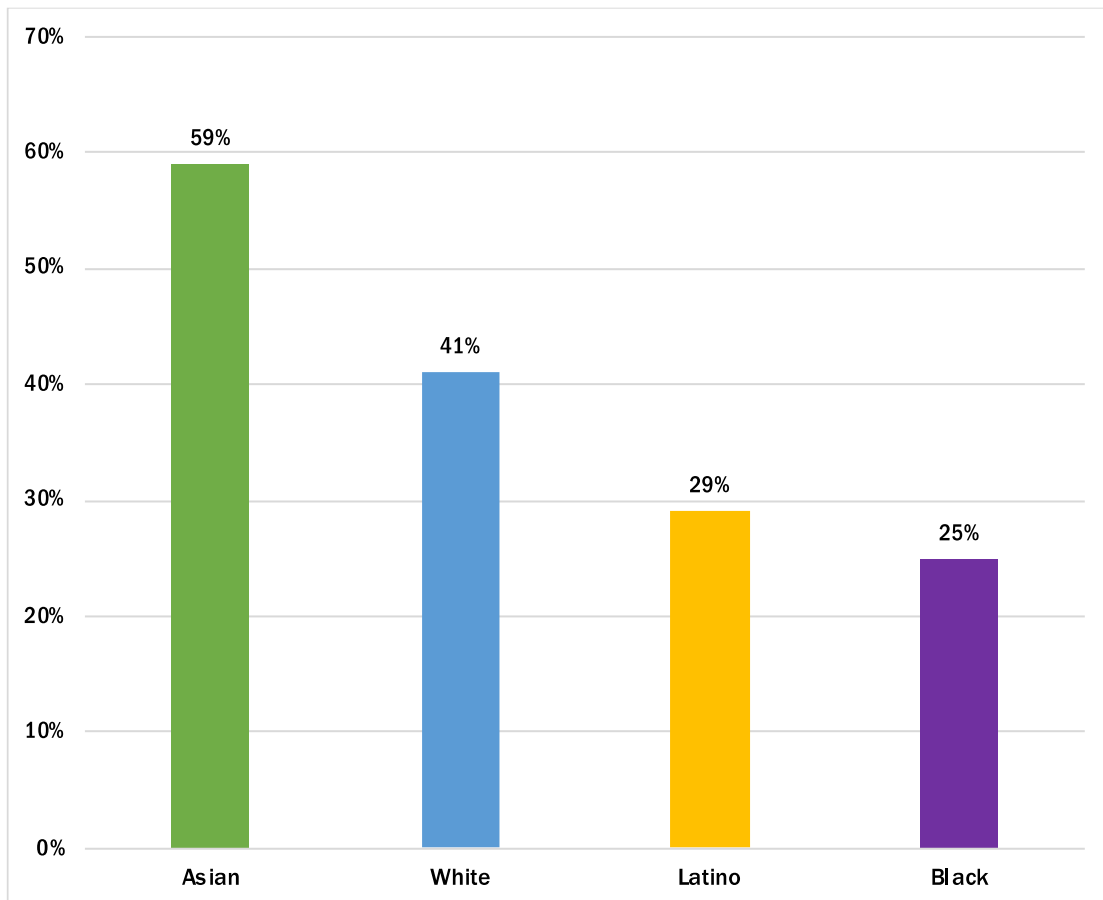
Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

The median age of Salem’s population is 38 years. The median age of the Latino population, 31.5 years, is older than their statewide median age of 29 years. As Figure 4 shows, however, Latinos in Salem are much younger than the city’s White (41.7 years) and Asian (41.5 years) populations, though older than Blacks (26.7 years).

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



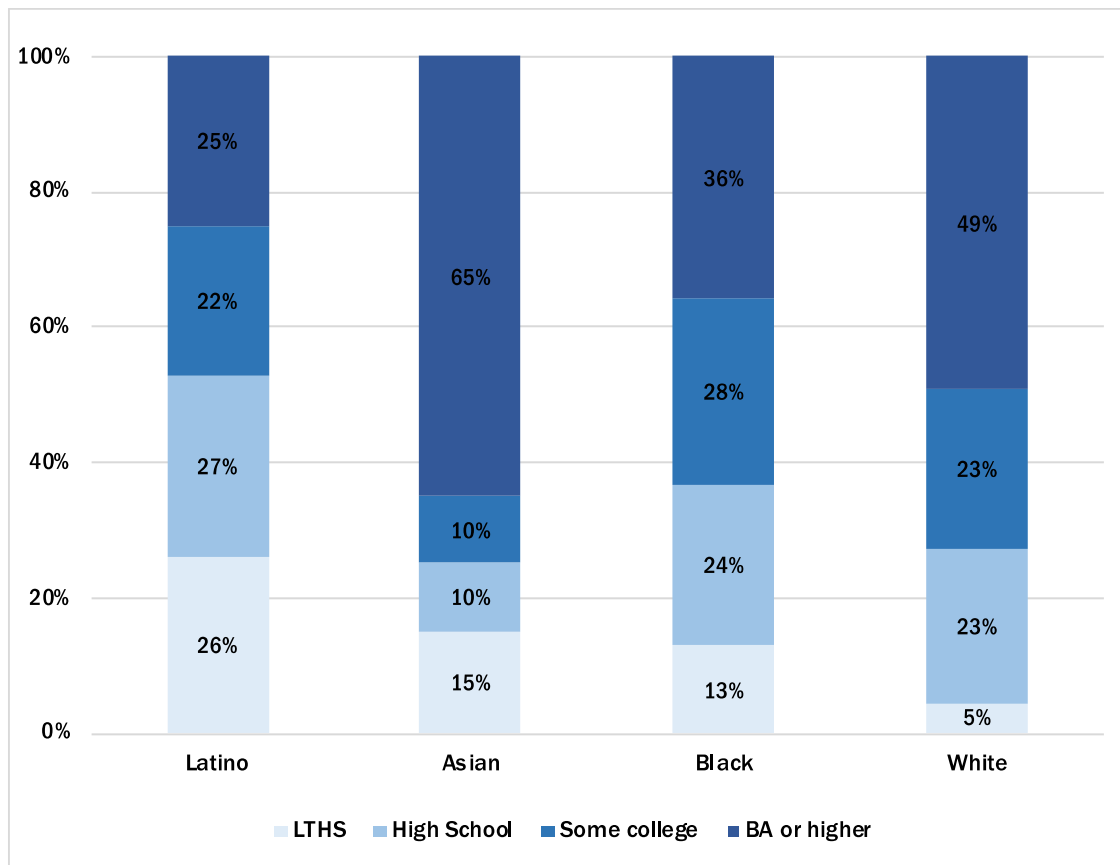
Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

The marriage rate in Salem for persons 15 and over is 40%. As shown in Figure 5, the marriage rate for Latinos (29%) is higher than for Blacks (25%) but lower than for Whites (41%) and Asians (59%). The Latino marriage rate in Salem is also lower than for Latinos statewide (33%).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The average educational attainment in Salem is similar to the Commonwealth as a whole. Both statewide and in Salem, 45% of the population age 25 and older have at least a Bachelor's degree. As Figure 6 shows, Latinos in Salem have an especially low share of their adult population with at least a Bachelor's degree: 25%, compared to 49% for Whites. The statewide rate for Latinos is only 21%. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos have a higher share of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 26%, compared to 5% for Whites.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 25 and older)

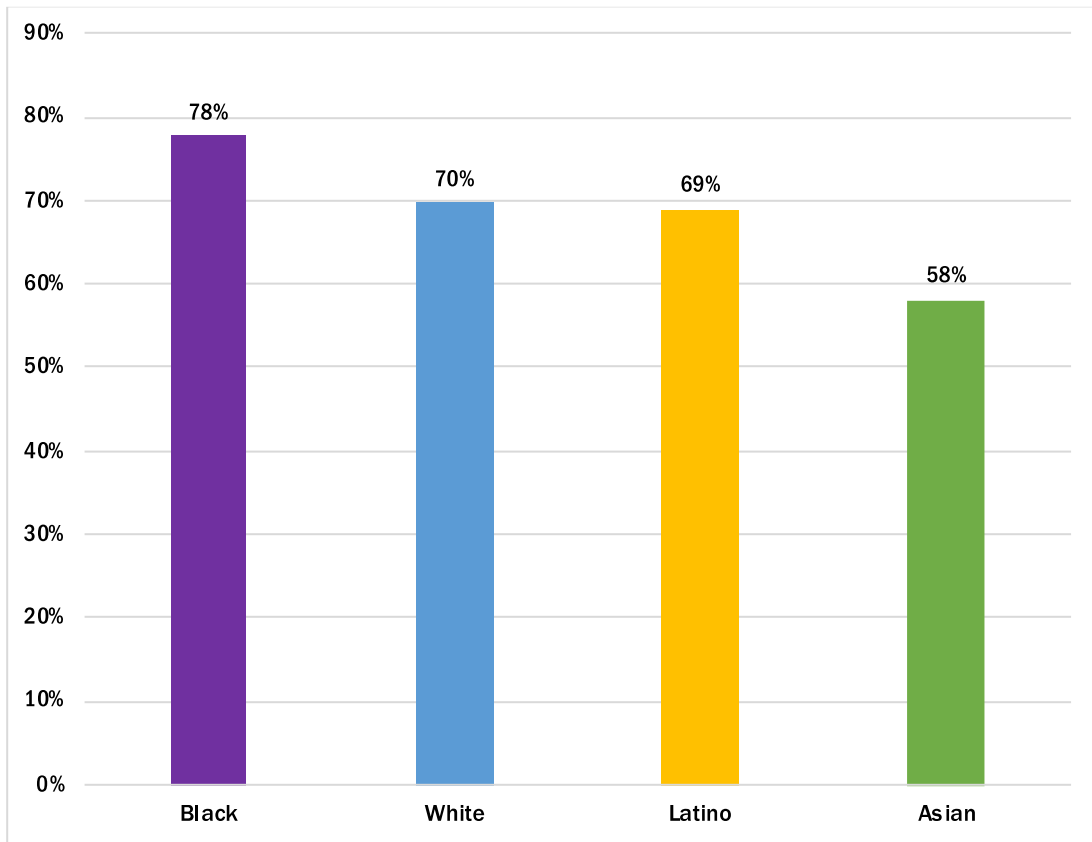


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The labor force participation rate in Salem is 69%, which is higher than for the Commonwealth overall (67%). Latinos have a similar labor force participation rate in Salem (69%) as Latinos statewide (69%). As Figure 7 shows both Whites (70%) and Blacks (78%) have higher labor force participation in Salem.

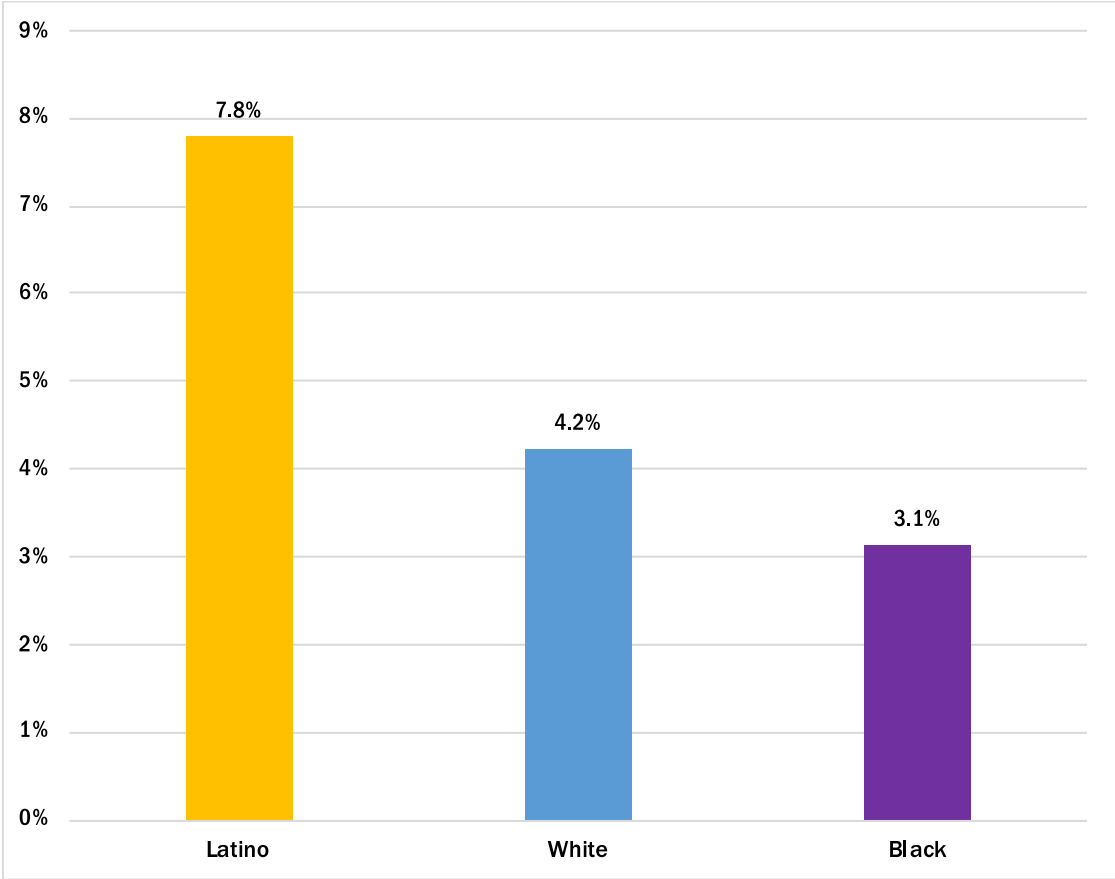
Figure 7: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16 and older)



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

The overall unemployment rate in Salem during this period was 4.6% compared to the statewide unemployment rate of 5.1%. The Latino unemployment rate in Salem of 7.8% was much higher than for Whites (4.2%) and Blacks (3.1%). The Asian unemployment is not reported to due to its small sample size. When Latinos in Salem participate in the labor force, they have slightly better success than Latinos statewide, who during this period experienced a 8.3% unemployment rate.

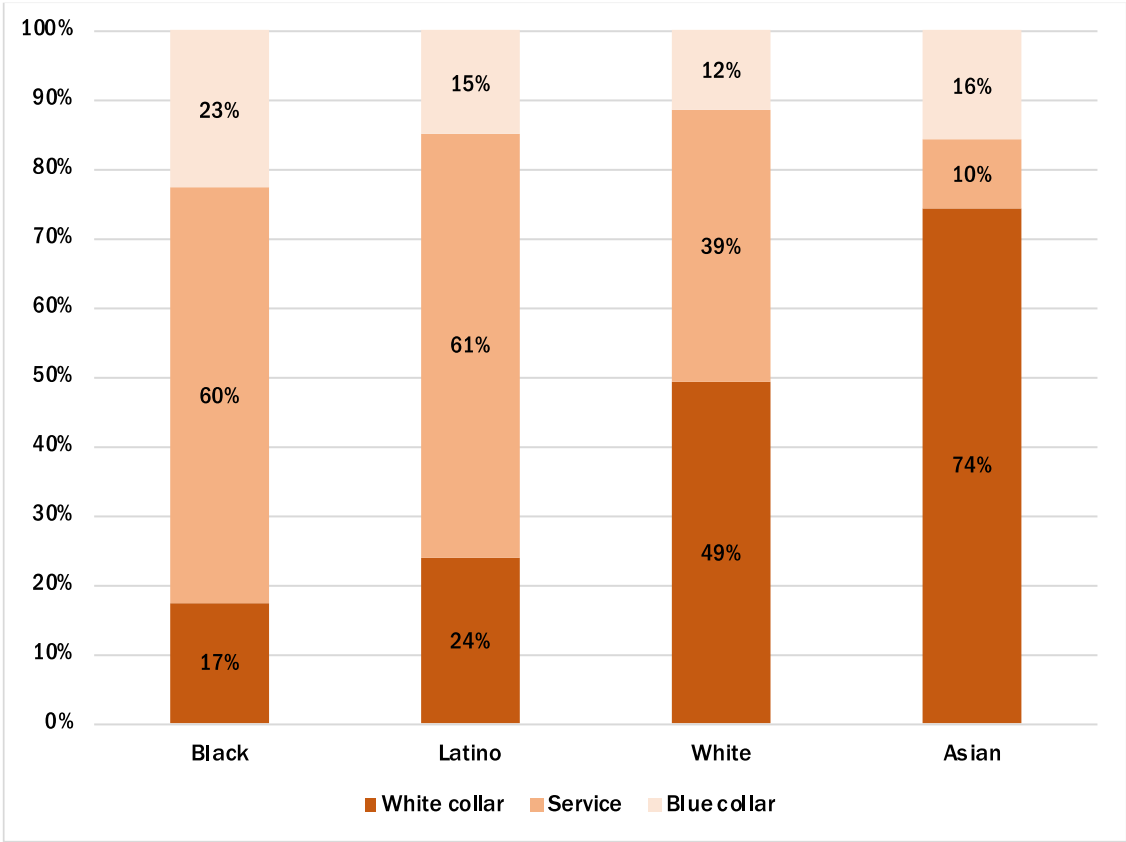
Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16 and older)



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Figure 9 highlights that Latinos mainly work in the service sector. Latinos in Salem are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs with only 24% working in these management, business, science, and arts occupations. Correspondingly, they are overrepresented in the service sector, with 61% working in services and sales occupations, and in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs, with 15% working in natural resources, construction, maintenance, production, transportation, and material moving occupations. For Latinos across the state, this distribution is 28% white-collar, 47% service, and 25% blue-collar.

Figure 9: Population Employed by Occupational Categories by Ethno-Racial Group (ages 16 and older)

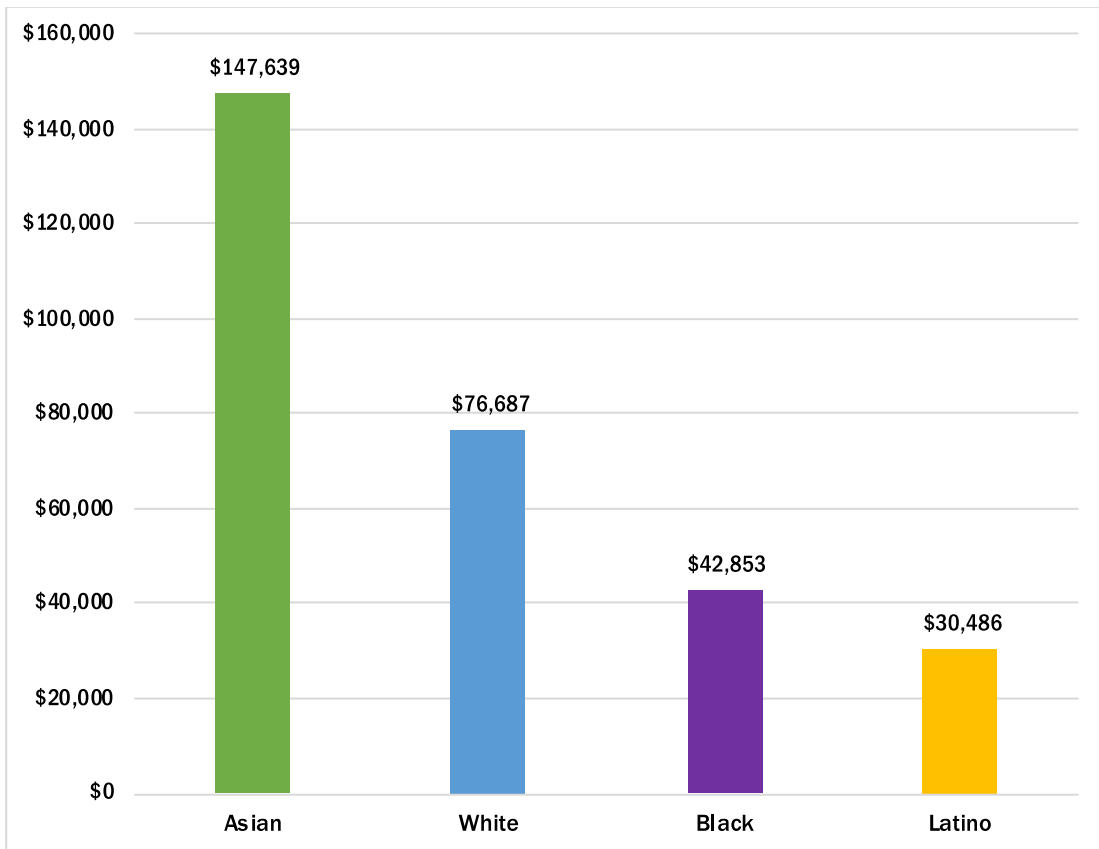


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Salem’s median income is \$66,428, which is lower than the statewide median income of \$84,385. Latinos in Figure 10 have the lowest median income (\$30,486) of any ethno-racial group in the city. Latinos in Salem also lag behind Latinos in other parts of the Commonwealth, as the statewide Latino median income is \$48,450.

Figure 10: Median Income by Ethno-Racial Group in 2020

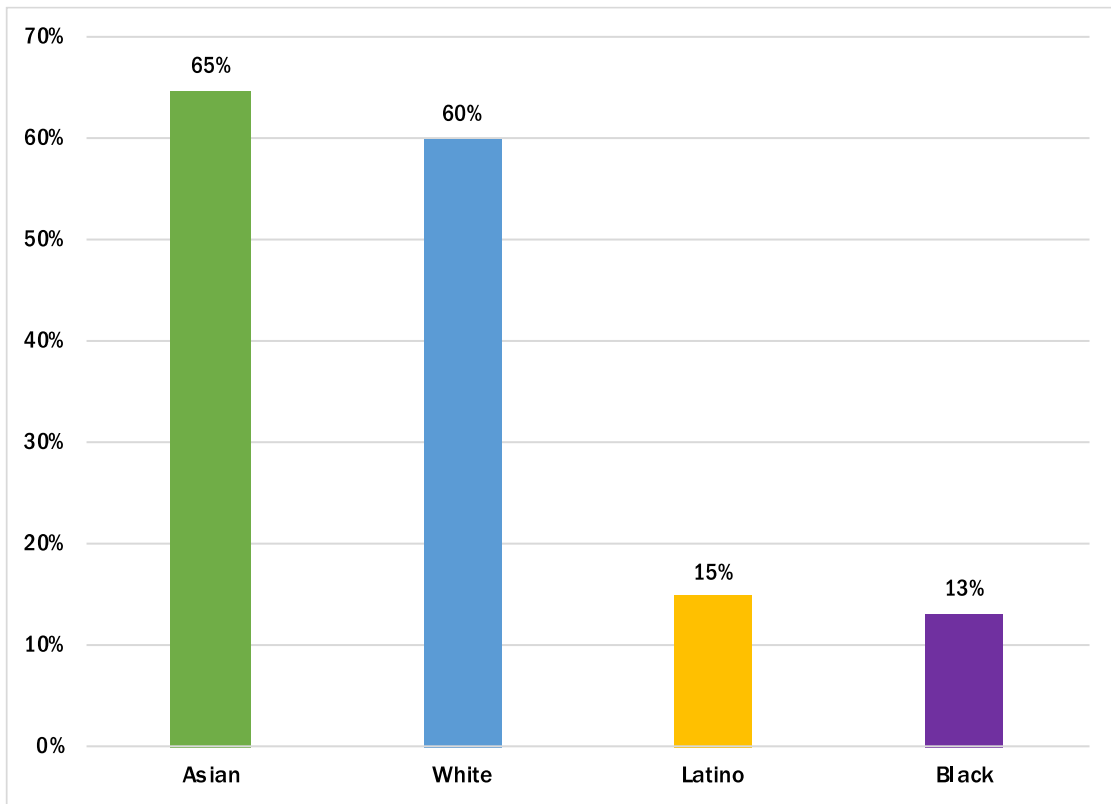


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL UNINSURANCE

The final measures of Latino participation in Salem are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Salem has a lower homeownership rate (50%) than the statewide rate (63%) as measured by occupied housing units. Figure 11 shows that Latinos have the second lowest homeownership rate at 15%, which is significantly lower than the 28% rate for Latinos statewide.

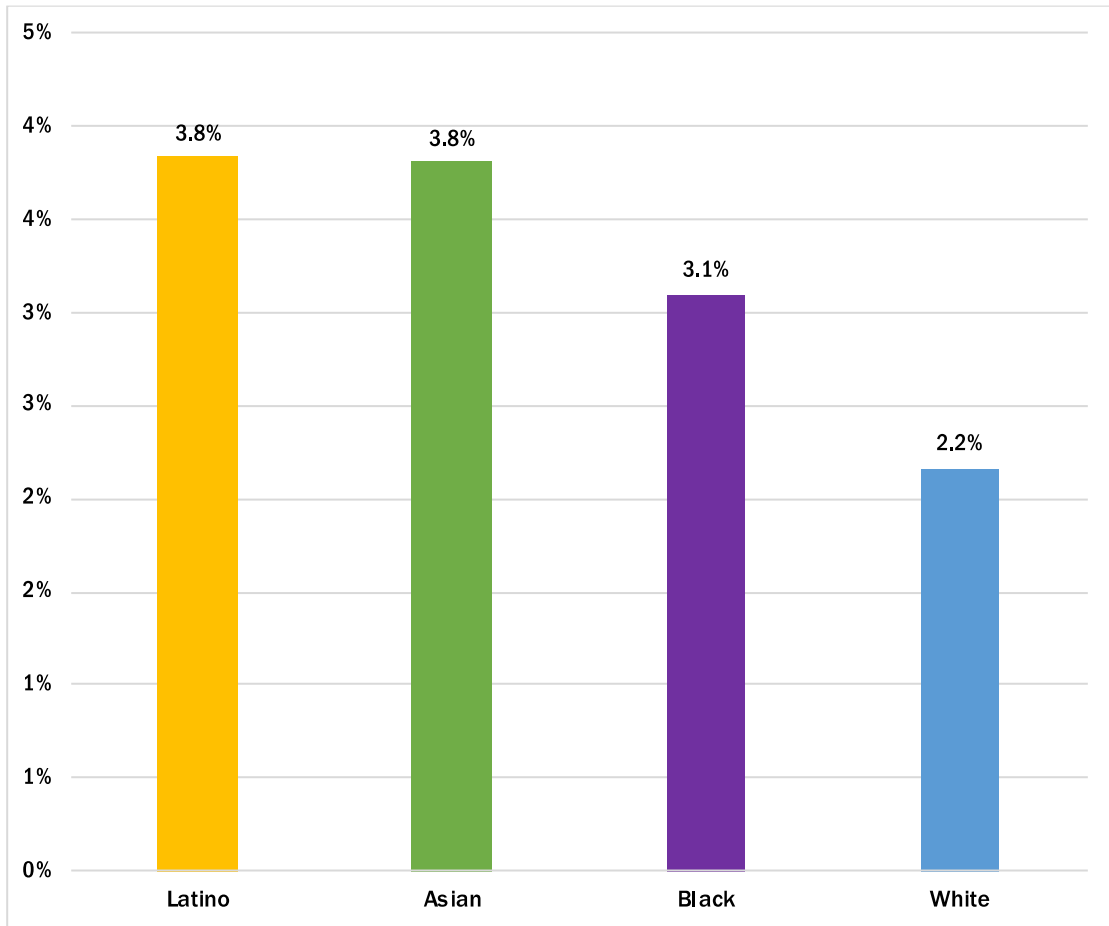
Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

Salem’s overall rate of medical uninsurance (2.4%) is lower than the statewide share of 2.7%. Figure 11 shows that Salem’s Latinos have a 4% uninsurance share, similar to that of Asians but much higher than for Whites (2%) and Blacks (3%). The Latino uninsurance share in Salem is similar to the Latino statewide rate of 5.6%.

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey

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 worked with various community-based organizations assisting recently arrived U.S. immigrants before earning a Ph.D. in Public Policy from UMass 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.

Vishakha Agarwal recently earned a Ph.D. in Public Policy from the McCormack Graduate School at UMass Boston. Vishakha's research focuses on students' everyday classroom experiences, violent school discipline, and student engagement. Her dissertation takes an ethnographic approach and examines how interactions between teachers and students and among peers impacts students' learning outcomes and, shapes their perceptions of self and sense of school belonging.



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