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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Worcester

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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas

Worcester

by Phillip Granberry, PhD, Trevor Mattos

July, 2017

**THE MAURICIO GASTON INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY**



Worcester

The Latino Population

This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in Worcester. 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.

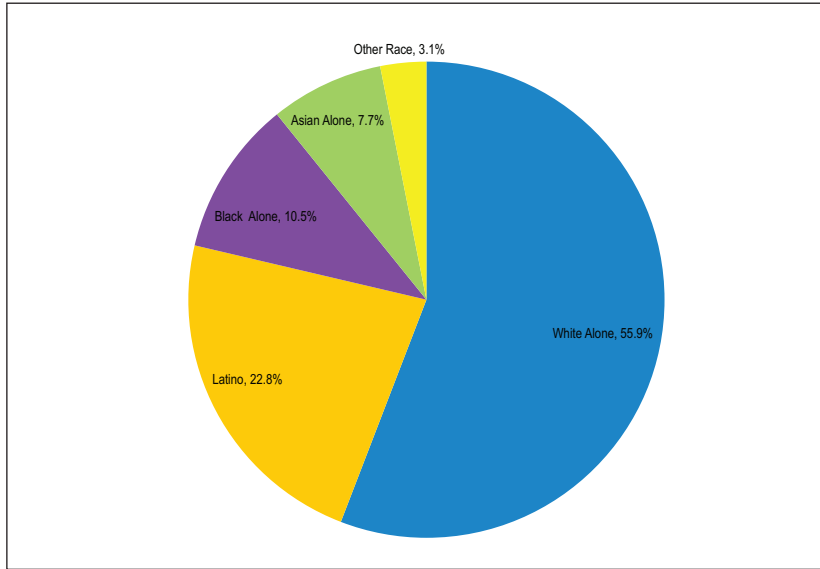
The report on Worcester is part of a larger series that covers other cities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This report analyzes Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data from the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data are analyzed by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), which consists of a minimum population of 100,000 and is the smallest geographic area publically available for individual-level analysis. Worcester is a large enough city that it constitutes a PUMA by itself. The ACS PUMS data thereby enables us to arrive at more detailed demographic and economic estimates of Worcester's Latino community.

Since ACS data are a sample of the population, there is a particular margin of error associated with each population estimate. In the bar graphs in this report, the 'I' that accompanies each bar represents the confidence interval for that estimate; we expect that another sample would generate an estimate within this interval 95% of the time.

In this report, Latinos are compared to non-Latino whites, non-Latino blacks, and Asians for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics. 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.

Worcester, the second largest city in Massachusetts, is home to an estimated 42,101 Latinos, who make up 22.8% of the city's population. Whites constitute the largest ethno-racial group (55.9%), while blacks (10.5%) and Asians (7.7%) are the other ethno-racial group with a sizable presence (Figure 1).

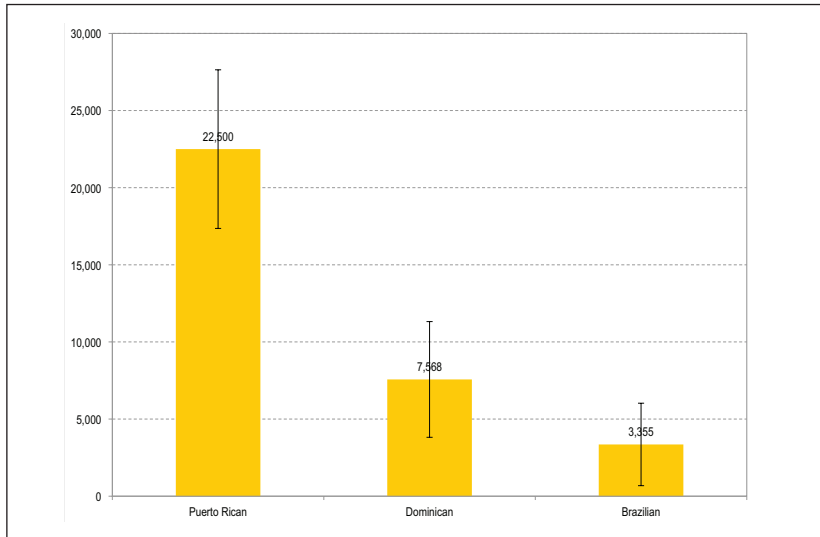
Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

The Latino population in Worcester is diverse in its origin but driven by Puerto Ricans, who number 22,500. Dominicans (7,568), and Brazilians (3,355) are the other sizable Latino subpopulations; these four groups make up 79.4% of the area’s Latino population. Although Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, other Latino groups help give Worcester a proportionately greater foreign-born population (20.9%) than the state as a whole (16.2%).

Figure 2: Ancestry of the Top Latino Groups in 2015



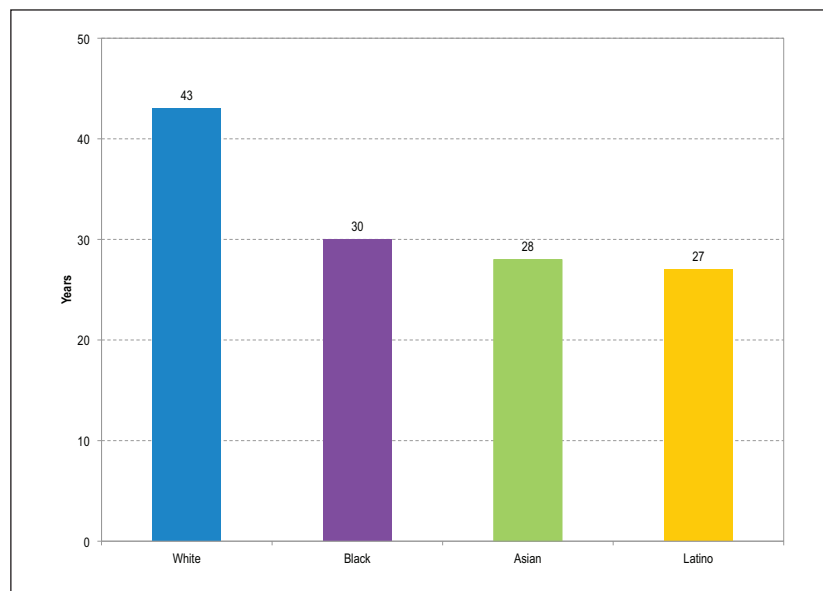
Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

The remainder of this report presents an overview that compares Latinos to whites, blacks, and Asians in this area for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics.

MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Figure 3 highlights differences in median age between populations, drawing attention to the importance of Latinos in Worcester. Latinos have a median age (27 years) the same as the statewide Latino average and younger than the median age of blacks (30 years), Asians (28 years), and whites (43 years). This suggests that Latinos have more families with young children and will require an investment in education of their youth; however, these younger Latinos will contribute economically, socially, and politically in later years as an older white population ages and retires. Worcester's older population will require younger residents to keep this city's neighborhoods vibrant and maintain a productive workforce, and Latinos are poised to make this contribution.

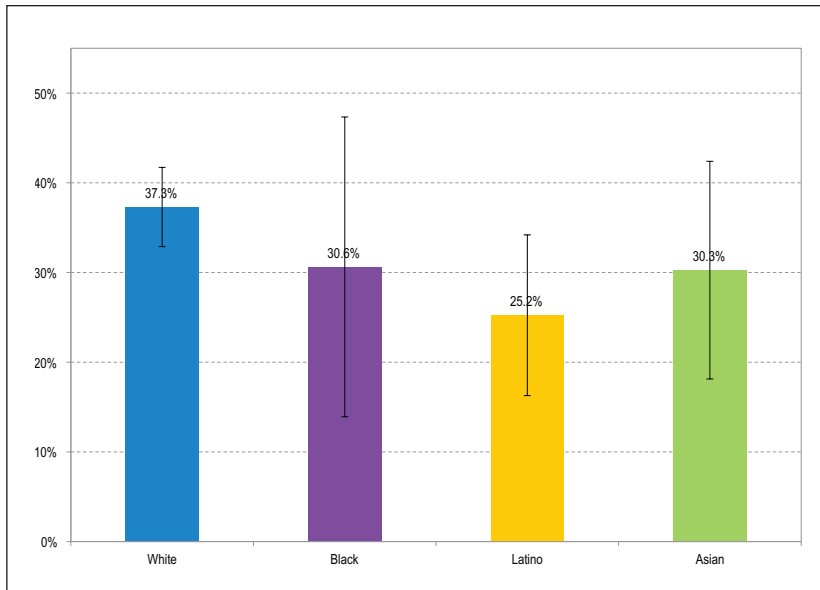
Figure 3: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

The youthfulness of Worcester's Latino population may influence marriage rates within the community as well. The Latino marriage rate shown in Figure 4, covering all persons ages 15 and older, is lower than for whites, blacks, and Asians. Statewide, the Latino marriage rate is higher (34.1%) in comparison to 25.2% in Worcester.

Figure 4: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015 of the Population 15 and Older

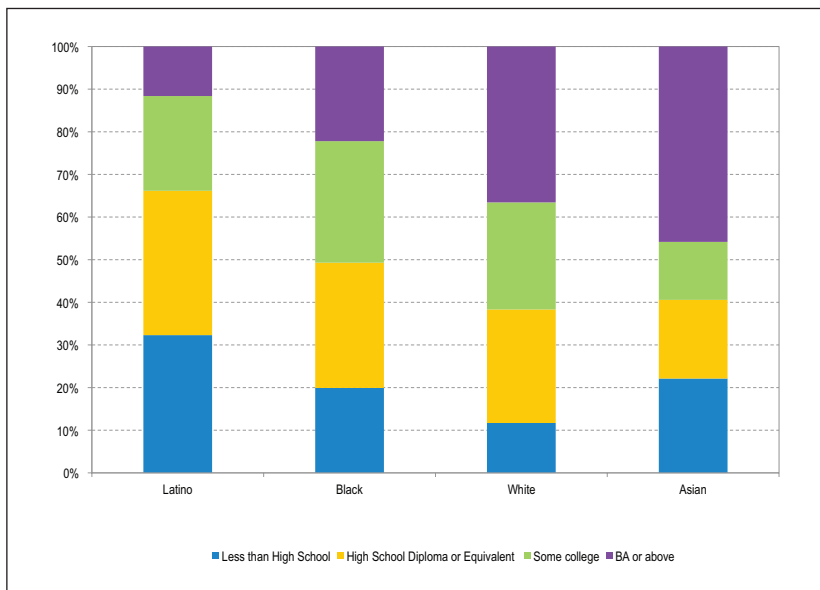


Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

EDUCATION

Figure 5 highlights the fact that Latinos have a high percentage of their adult population lacking a high school diploma: 32.3%, compared to 11.7% for whites, 19.9% for blacks and 21.1% for Asians. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 11.6%, compared to 22.2% for blacks, 36.6% for whites, and 45.8 for Asians.

Figure 5: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015 (Adults 25 Years and Older)

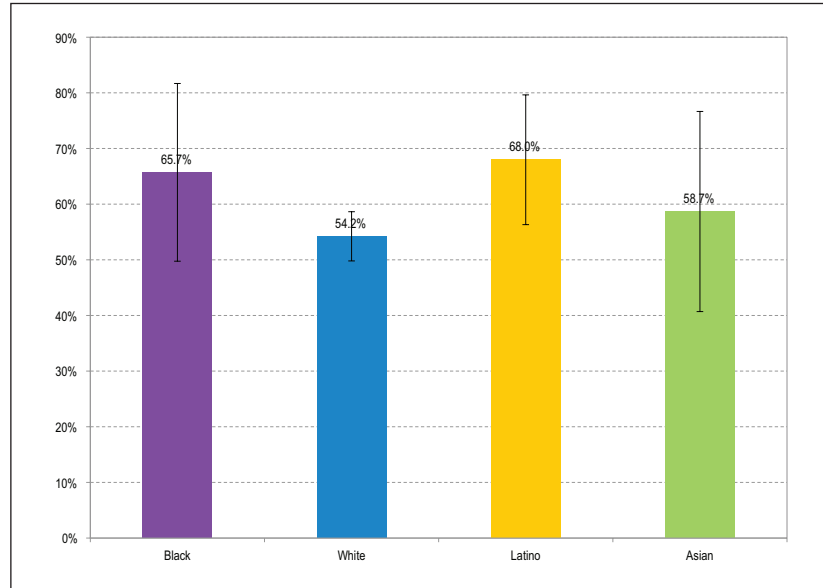


Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Figure 6 shows that Latinos have the highest labor force participation rate (68.0%) in the city, more than blacks (65.7%), Asians (58.7%), and whites (54.2%). This labor force participation rate is slightly lower than the statewide Latino average of 69.9%.

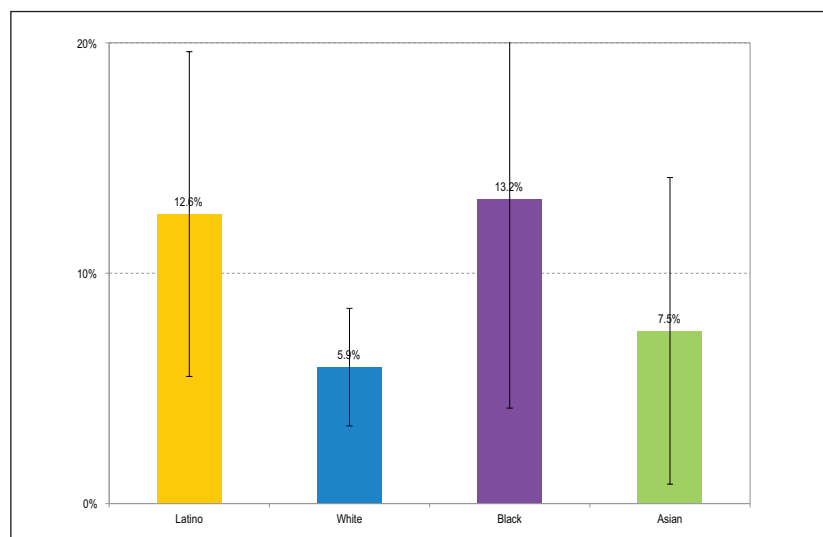
Figure 6: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

Figure 7 tells a similar and even less positive story for those Latinos who are in the work force. Cognizant of the large margin of error, the unemployment rate among Latinos in 2015 was 12.6%, which was nearly double that of whites and higher than the statewide Latino unemployment rate of 8.2%.

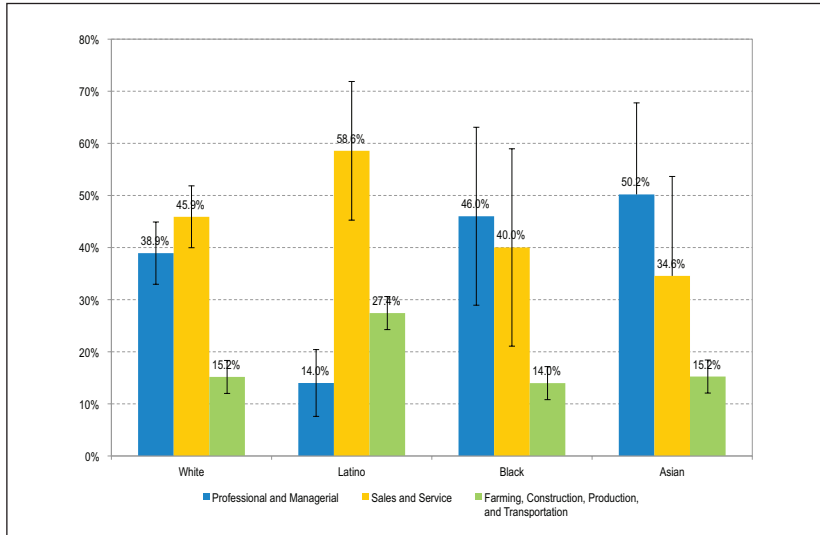
Figure 7: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

Figure 8 suggests that Latinos serve as complements to other ethno-racial groups in the Worcester labor market whose members have higher educational attainment. Latinos are overrepresented in sales and service occupations. Correspondingly, Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs (professional and managerial).

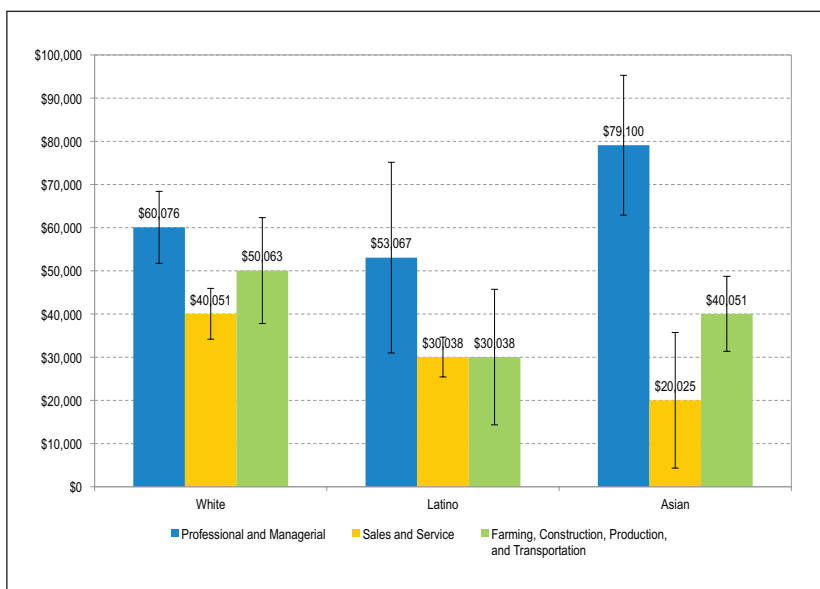
Figure 8: Population Employed by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

When examining the wage rates for these occupational categories, we see that Latinos in Worcester are receiving lower median income for full-time year-round workers than other ethno-racial group for the most part (Figure 9). They earn less than whites but more than Asians for their sales and service work. Latinos earn less than whites and Asians for their blue-collar work. In managerial and professional occupations, Latinos earn less than whites and Asians.

Figure 9: Median Income by Occupational Category by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015

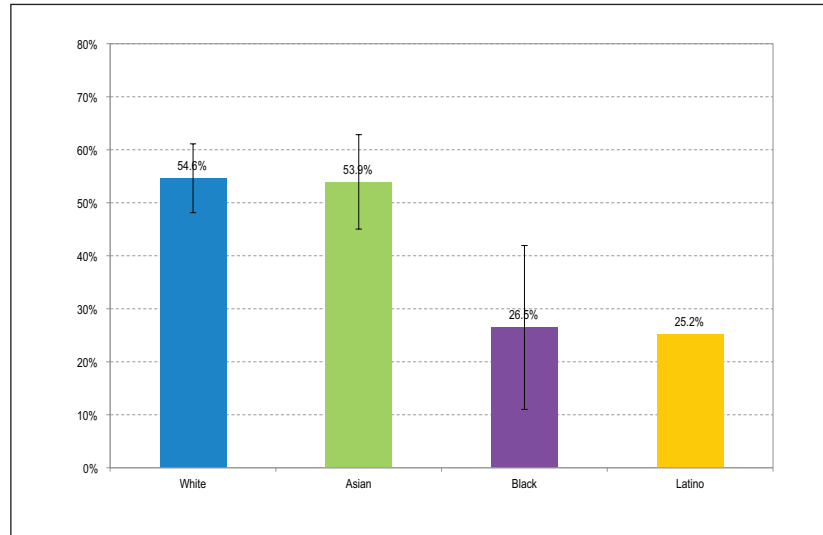


Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

The final measures of Latino participation in Worcester are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Latinos traditionally have low homeownership rates across the country. Figure 10 shows that this trend holds true for Worcester, where Latinos' homeownership level (25.2%) is lower than for other ethno-racial groups in the city but is slightly higher than the statewide Latino rate of 25.1%. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 74.8% of Latinos in Worcester are renters.

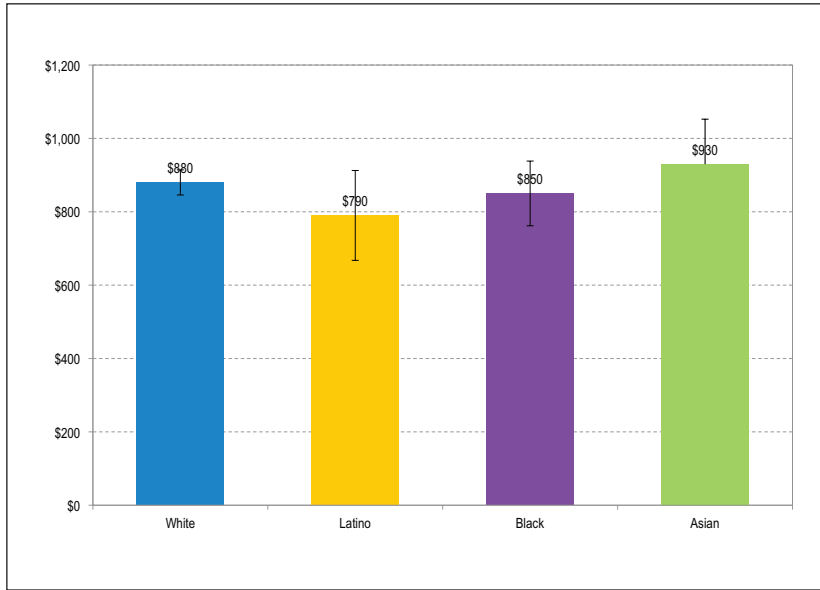
Figure 10: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

With low levels of homeownership, Latinos in Worcester are more dependent on the local rental market. Figure 11 shows that monthly rents paid by Latino renters (\$790) are lower than for white (\$880), black (\$850), and much lower than for Asian renters (\$930).

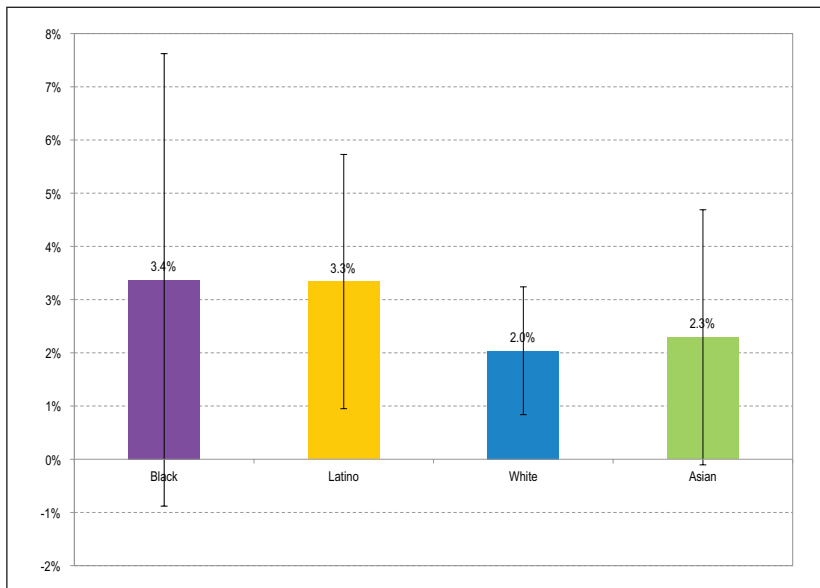
Figure 11: Rental Costs by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

Figure 12 below shows that the percentage of Latinos in Worcester who lack medical insurance (3.3%) is lower than for blacks (3.4%) and higher than for whites (2.0%) and Asians (2.3%), but is only about half of the statewide Latino uninsurance rate of 7.5%. The greater percentage of Latinos in Worcester who are Puerto Rican and have access to public health insurance plans due to their citizenship may account for lower uninsurance rates in comparison to statewide.

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance by Ethno-Racial Group in 2015



Source: 2015 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

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 has produced this series of demographic profiles for selected Massachusetts areas based on an analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) data. Demographic profiles highlighting Latino subgroups will be produced on an ongoing basis.

Our descriptive analysis uses ACS data to estimate population size and characteristics in order to compare Latinos to other ethno-racial groups. Technically, these groups are non-Latino whites, non-Latino blacks, and non-Latino Asians, though they are identified as “white,” “black”, and “Asian” in these profiles.

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.

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.

Trevor Mattos holds a M.P.P. in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and is currently a Graduate Research Assistant at the Gastón Institute, while pursuing a Master’s degree in Applied Economics at UMass Boston. His work primarily focuses on analysis of socio-demographic and economic conditions in Latino communities across Massachusetts.