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Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Framingham

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The Mauricio Gastón Institute for
Latino Community Development
and Public Policy



Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas

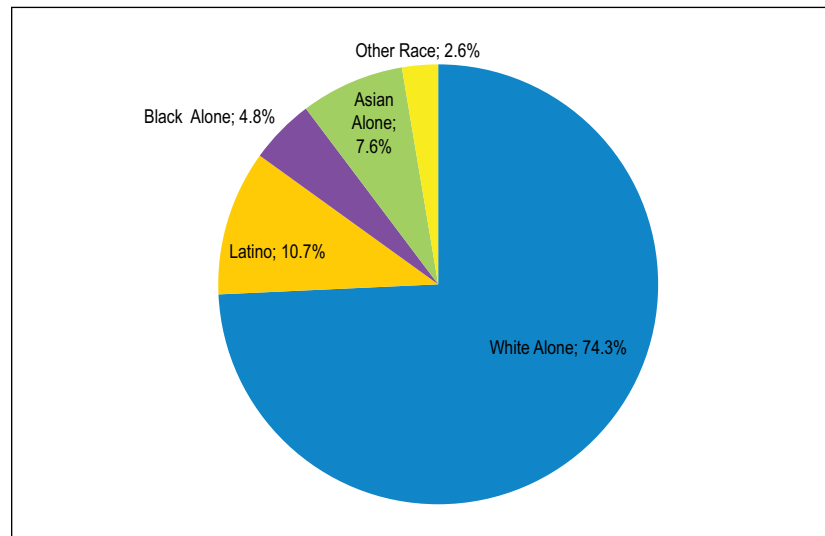
Framingham

by Phillip Granberry, PhD and Sarah Rustan | September 17, 2010

INTRODUCTION

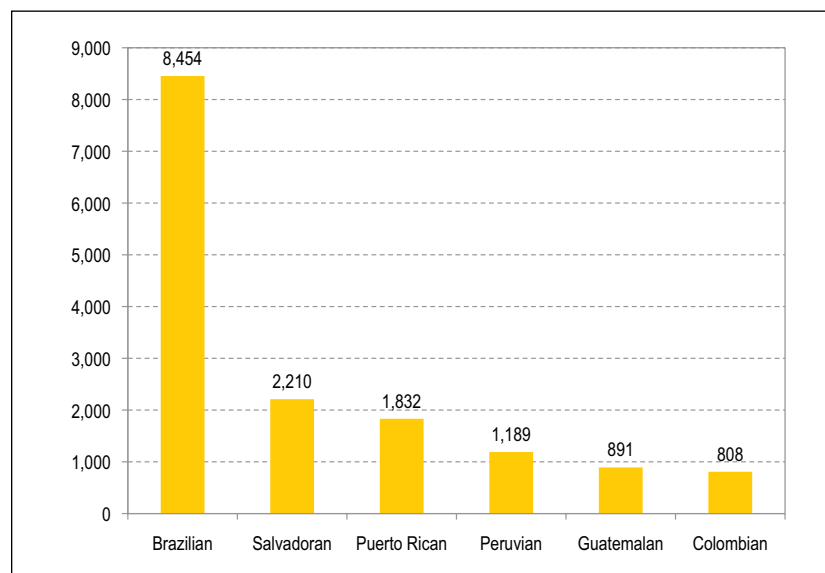
This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in the Framingham area. This report is prepared for the 2010 Statewide Latino Public Policy Conference organized by UMass Boston's Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy. It is part of larger series that covers fourteen cities, or clusters of cities, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Each report analyzes data from the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The ACS's smallest geographic area is a Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) consisting of a minimum census population of 100,000. In the PUMA for the Framingham area, the city of Framingham accounts for nearly 64.8% of the total population, and the remainder is dispersed in small towns around Framingham.

Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



The Framingham area is home to an estimated 11,156 Latinos, who account for 10.7% of the area’s population. Whites make up the largest percentage of the area’s population (74.3%), while Asians represent 7.6% and blacks represent 4.8 % (Figure 1).

Figure 2: Ancestry of the Top Latino Groups in 2008



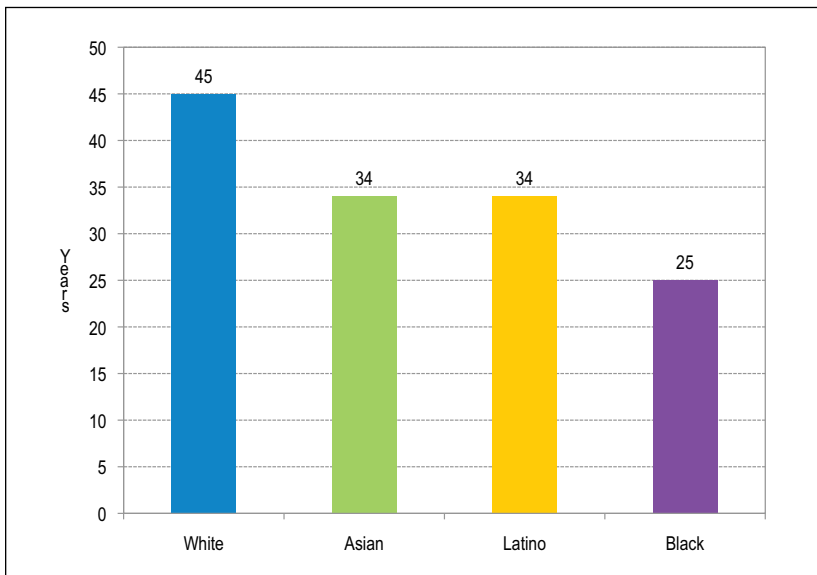
Framingham is home to a diverse Latino population. Brazilians (8,454) make up the largest Latino subpopulation in the area, followed by Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans, Peruvians, Guatemalans, and Colombians (Figure 2). This Latino presence is significantly shaped by international migration, and the Framingham area has a proportionately greater foreign-born population (22.9%) than the state as a whole (14.4%).

The remainder of this report presents an overview that compares Latinos and their top subpopulations to whites, blacks, and Asians in the Framingham area for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics¹.

MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Figure 3 highlighting differences in median age draws attention to the importance of Latinos in the Framingham area. Latinos have a median age (34 years) similar to Asians and greater than blacks but much younger than the white majority. This suggests that Latinos have more families with younger children than whites 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. This older population will require younger residents to keep these cities' neighborhoods vibrant and maintain a productive workforce, and Latinos are poised to make this contribution.

Figure 3: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

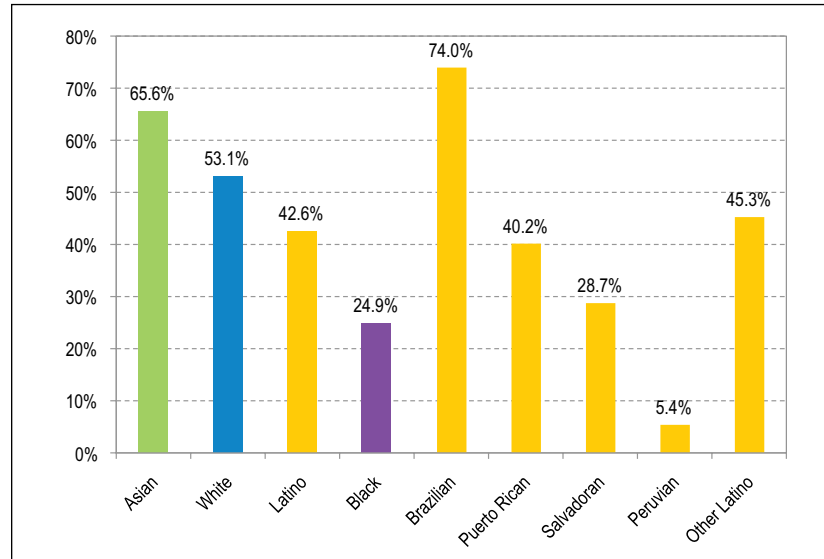


Notes

¹ Because of the smaller size of some ethno-racial groups and Latino subpopulations in the ACS data for the Framingham area, some demographic and labor force participation estimates have too large of a standard error and have been dropped from this analysis.

The youthfulness of the Framingham area's Latino may influence their marital status. Figure 4 shows that the marriage rate for Latinos (for persons age 16 and older) is lower than for any other ethno-racial groups except blacks. However, the Latino marriage rate of 42.6% is higher than the statewide Latino marriage rate of 33.6%. Latino subpopulations show wide variation in their marriage rates; a number of factors, including the differing ages of these populations, could be driving this variation.

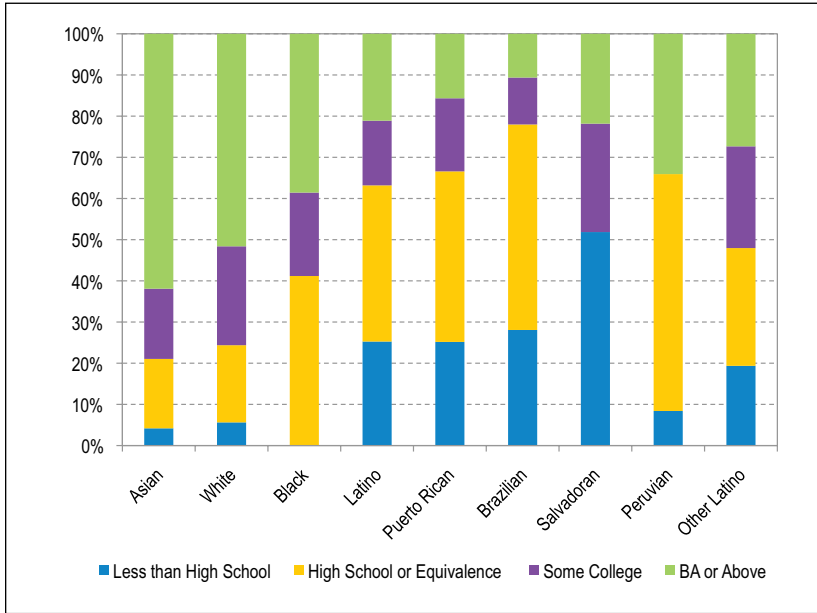
Figure 4: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



EDUCATION

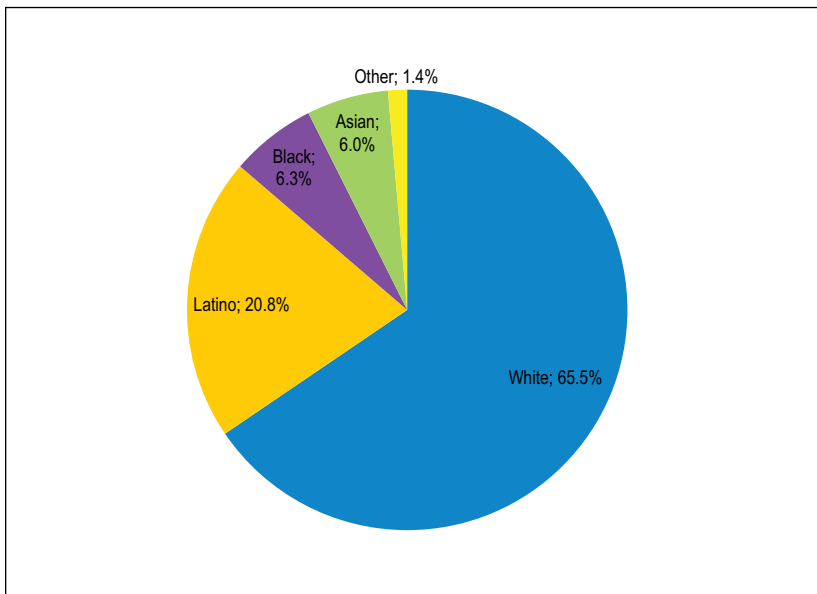
Figure 5 highlights the fact that Latinos have the highest percentage of their population who lack a high school diploma: 23.3%, compared to 5.6% for whites and 4.2% for Asians. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos in the Framingham area have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 21.1%, compared to 61.9% for Asians, 51.6% for whites, and 38.6% for blacks.

Figure 5: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008 (Adults 25 Years and Older)



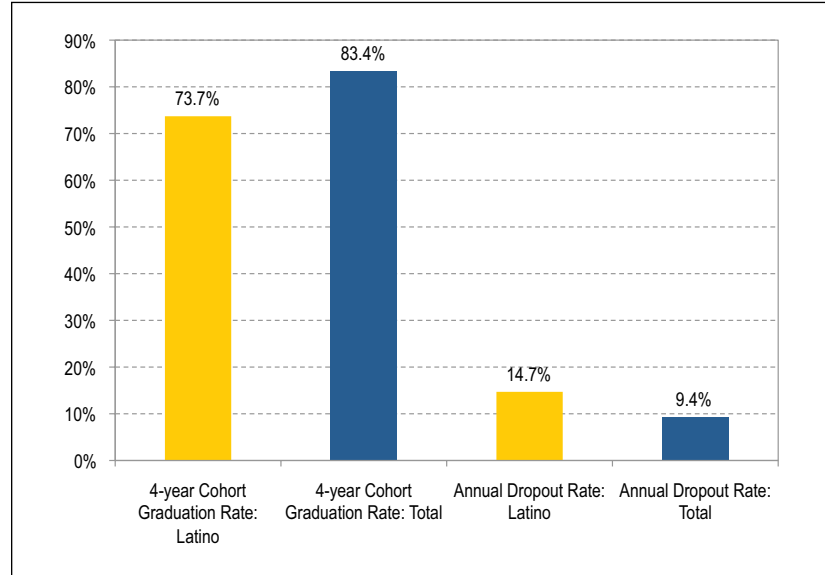
Figures 6A and 6B provide information regarding Latinos in the Framingham Public Schools, based on data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. After an 18.5% increase during the 2000s, they made up 20.8% of the student population in the 2008-2009 academic year, which is greater than any of the other ethno-racial groups except whites.

Figure 6A: Spotlight on Framingham Public Schools by Ethno-Racial Group, Academic Year 2008-2009



While still lagging behind the total population, this growing Latino student population in Framingham is performing better in school better than Latinos in many other school districts. Nearly three quarters of Latino students (73.7%) graduate in four years compared to 83.4% for the total population. Similarly, only 14.7% of Latinos drop out of school compared to only 9.4% for the total population.

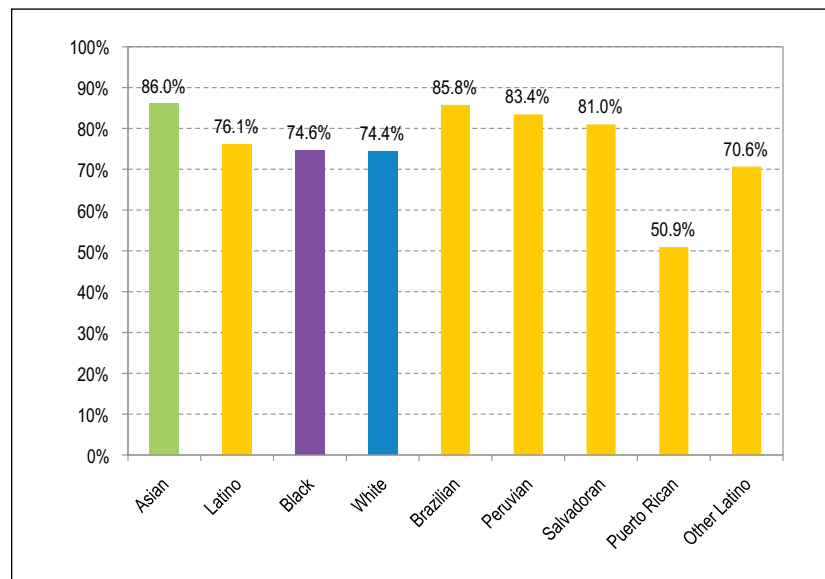
Figure 6B: Spotlight on Framingham Public Schools by Outcomes, Academic Year 2008–2009



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

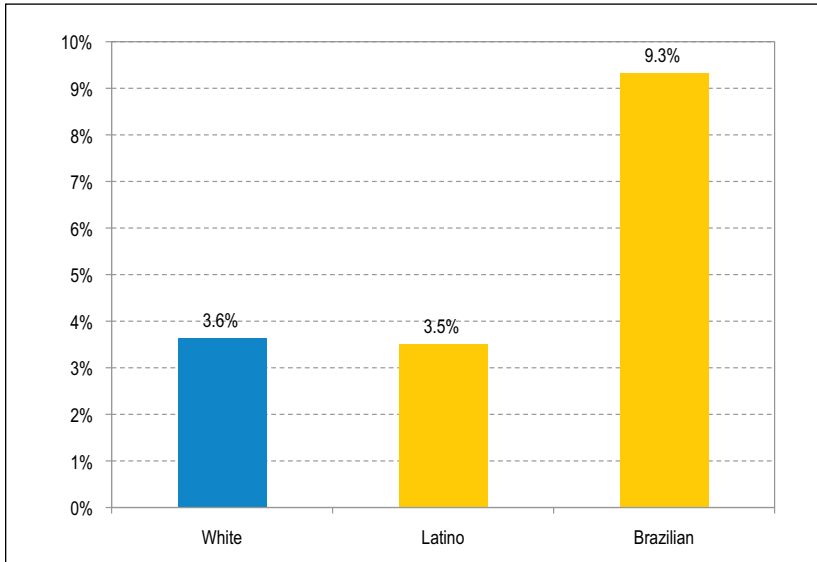
Figure 7 shows that Latinos have a labor force participation rate (76.1%) that is less than for Asians (86.0%), but greater than for blacks (74.6%) and whites (74.4%). The Latino labor force participation rate for the Framingham area is significantly higher than among Latinos across the state, whose overall participation rate is 68.6%. This is despite the lower median age of Latinos shown by Figure 3, which suggests that they have more families than whites with young children. Larger numbers of families with young children often result in lower labor force participation rates due to child care needs.

Figure 7: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



The high labor force participation of Latinos carries over to their employment, and Figure 8 tells an even more positive story. The unemployment rate among Latinos in 2008 was 3.5%, which was lower than for whites (3.6%). However, Brazilians, who had high labor force participation, also experienced a high unemployment rate of 9.3%.

Figure 8: Unemployment Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



Figures 9A and 9B suggest that Latinos serve as complements in the Framingham area’s labor market to other ethno-racial groups whose members have higher educational attainment. Latinos are overrepresented in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs (farming, construction, production, and transportation). Salvadoran and Peruvian workers are concentrated in these occupations (Figure 9B). Correspondingly as Figure 9A shows, Latinos are underrepresented in what are traditionally considered white-collar jobs (professional and managerial).

Figure 9A: Population Employed in Professional or Managerial Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

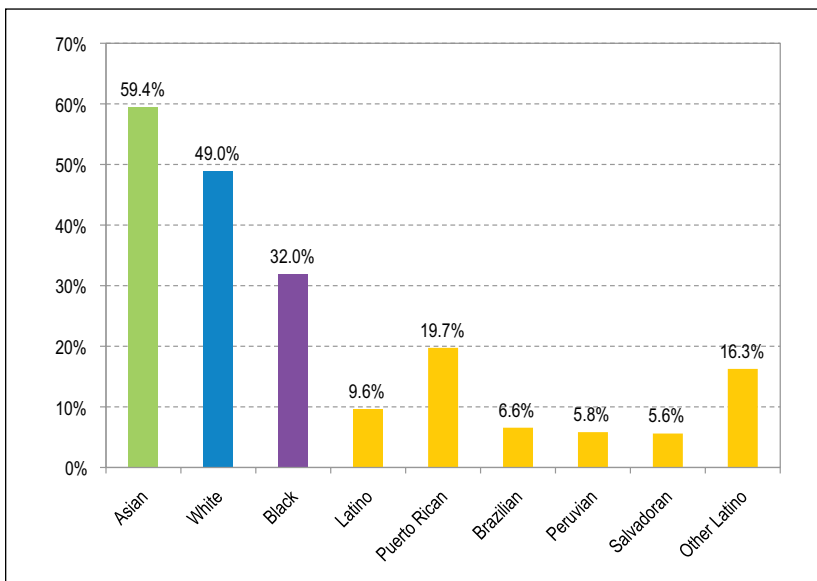
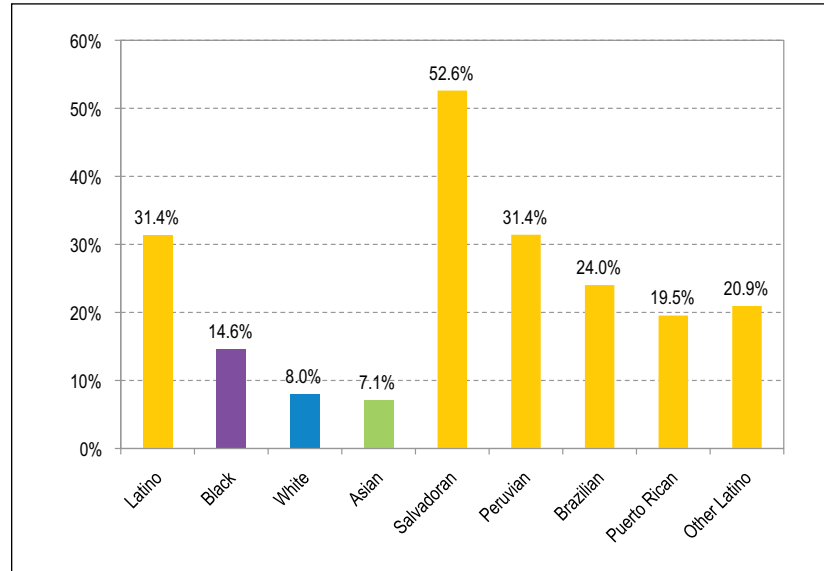


Figure 9B: Population Employed in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



EARNINGS

When examining the wage rates for these occupational categories, Latinos generally appear to be receiving lower wages than those of other ethno-racial groups for most occupational categories. They earn lower wages for their white-collar employment than any other ethno-racial group (Figure 10A). They earn comparable wages to whites for service-sector employment (Figure 10B). They earn less than any other ethno-racial group but blacks for their blue-collar employment (Figure 10C).

Figure 10A: Hourly Wages in Professional or Managerial Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

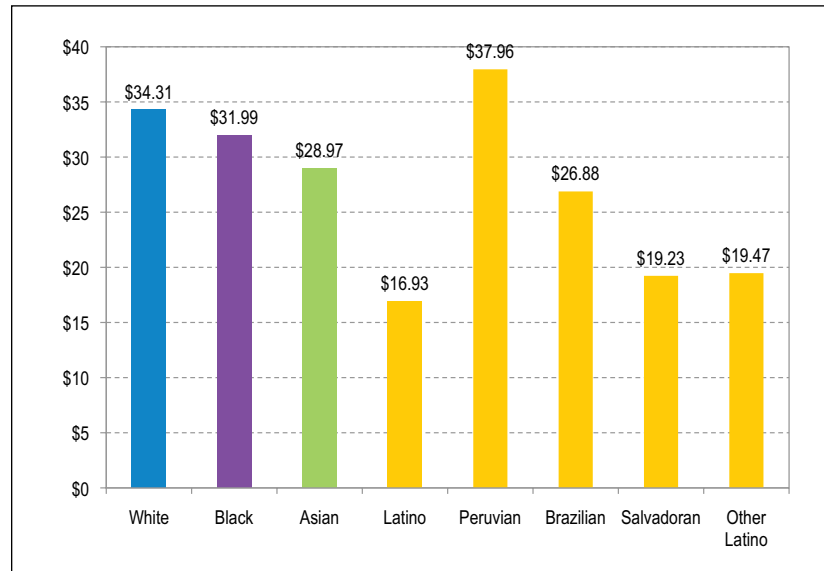


Figure 10B: Hourly Wages in Sales and Service Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008

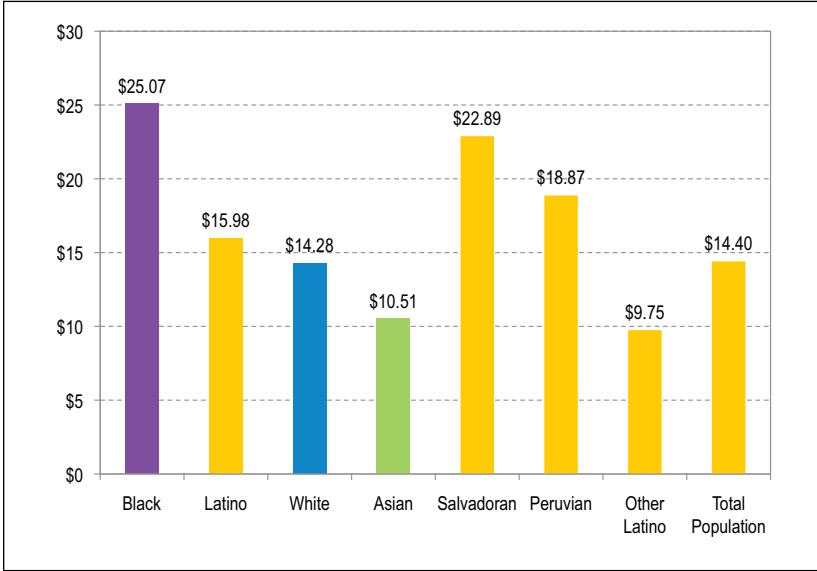
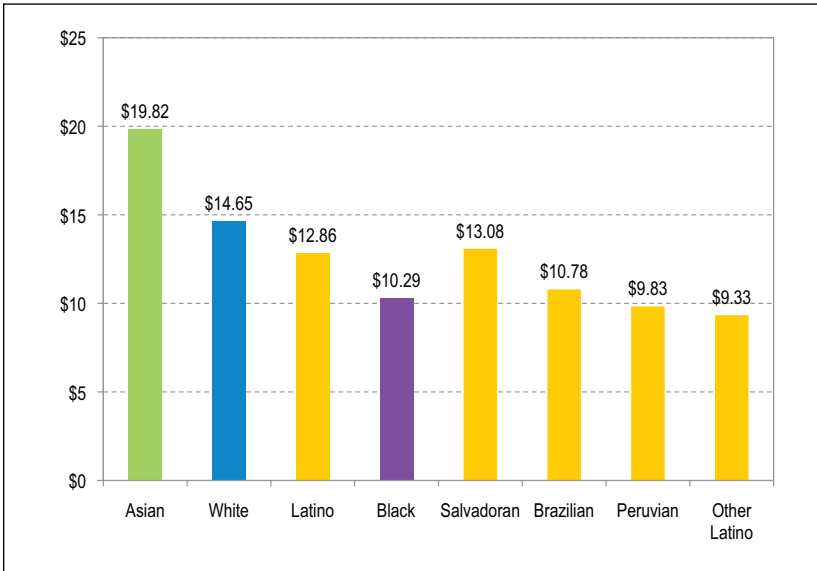


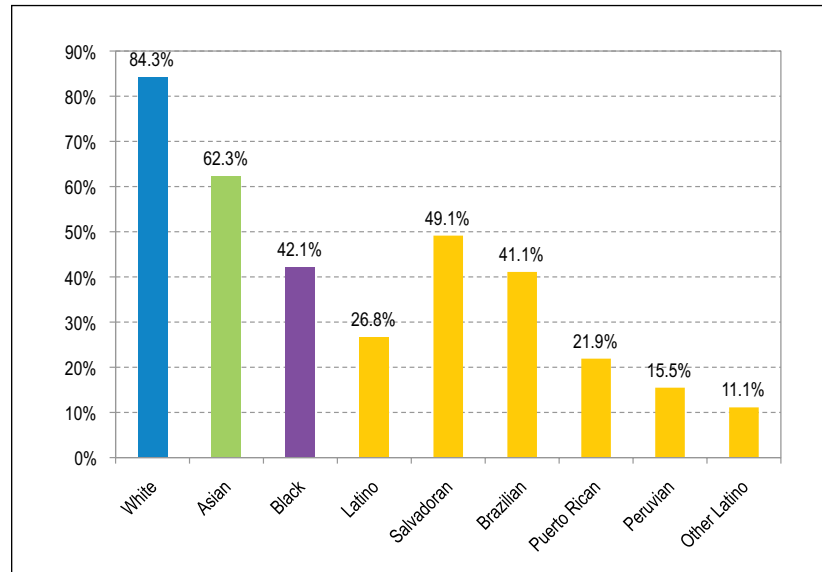
Figure 10C: Hourly Wages in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

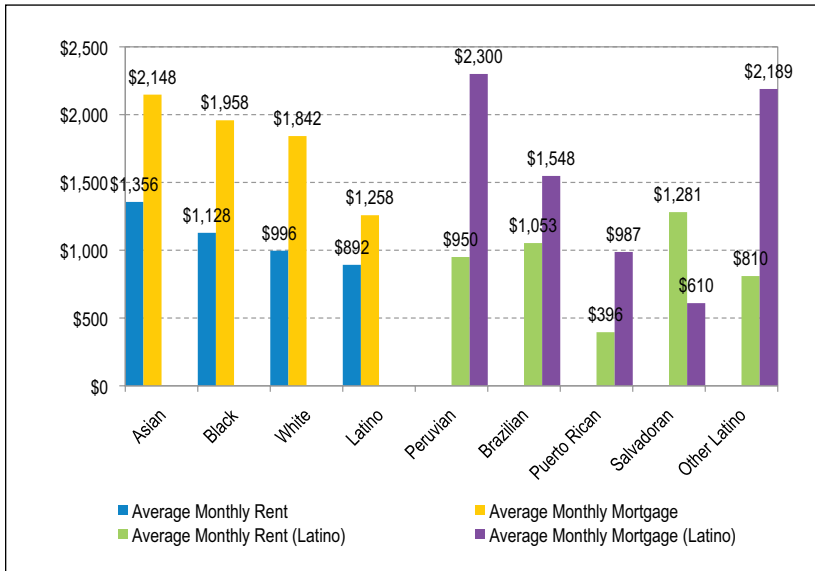
The final measures of Latino participation in the Framingham area are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Latinos traditionally have low homeownership rates across the country. Figure 11 shows that this trend holds true in this area: the 26.8% Latino homeownership rate is lower than for all other ethno-racial groups. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 73.2% of Latinos in the Framingham area are renters.

Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



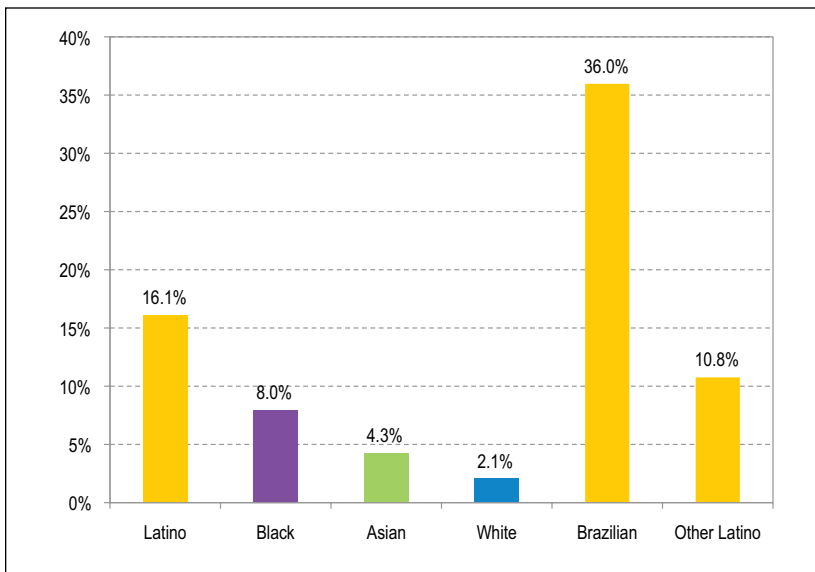
Latinos in Figure 12 pay lower average monthly mortgages at \$1,258 and rents at \$892 than any other ethno-racial group. This is not the case for all Latino sub-populations, as the smaller Peruvian population pays high monthly mortgages. The lower mortgage costs set Latinos in the Framingham apart from those in other areas of Massachusetts, where Latino homeowners typically pay higher average monthly mortgages than other ethno-racial groups.

Figure 12: Housing Costs by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008



The percentage of Latinos who lack medical insurance (16.1%) is greater than for any other ethno-racial group in the Framingham area and is significantly higher than the statewide average for Latinos (9.2%). Brazilians, who are a newly arriving subpopulation, have the highest uninsurance rate of 36.0%, even higher than their statewide rate of 31.2%.

Figure 13: Medical Uninsurance Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008





The Mauricio Gastón Institute for
Latino Community Development
and Public Policy

The Mauricio Gastón Institute of 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 Massachusetts and selected areas based on an analysis of 2008 American Community Survey data.

The 2008 American Community Survey allowed people to choose their ethnicity and race. Ethnicity identifies a person as Latino or Hispanic. We use the term “Latino” for all of those who self-identify as Latino in response to the ethnicity question. The racial categories are assigned to those who do not identify as Latino. Technically, their designation is non-Latino white, non-Latino black, and non-Latino Asian, though they are often referenced as white, black, and Asian in these profiles.

About the Authors

Phillip Granberry is a social demographer who specializes in unauthorized migrants in the United States. He worked with various community based organizations assisting recently arrived U.S. migrants before earning a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Boston in 2007. His past research has focused on Latinos in the United States. One part of this research has addressed the formation and use of social capital among Mexican migrants in Los Angeles County, and another part of this research has addressed demographic trends of Latinos in New England. His current research focuses on Brazilian and Dominican migrants in the Metropolitan Boston area. He currently teaches in the Economics Department and is a research associate of the Gastón Institute.

Our descriptive analysis uses both household- and individual-level ACS data to estimate population size and percentages, to compare Latinos to other ethno-racial groups (e.g., whites, blacks, and Asians), and to compare the top ten Latino subpopulations in Massachusetts by ancestry. These are Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Brazilians, Salvadorans, Mexicans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Hondurans, Peruvians, and Cubans. We use ancestry, based on migration from Latin America, rather than language: a self-identified Latino born in Massachusetts may have ancestors from a Latin American country but speak only English only. Whenever the category “Brazilian” appears in one of the figures, it includes all Brazilians, but the category “Latino” includes only those Brazilians who self-identified as Latino.

After the dissemination of the 2010 United States Census, the Gastón Institute will be updating these demographic profiles. These updates will allow for a better analysis of the Massachusetts Latino populations. We also plan to expand this series by adding analyses of the other New England states and by covering more cities.

Sarah Rustan is a PhD candidate in Law, Policy, and Society at Northeastern University with degrees in cultural management and architecture. Her professional background includes broad experiences in the nonprofit sector, including research as well as nonprofit and cultural management. Her past research has examined diverse topics ranging from charitable giving to women in the workforce. At present she is working on a dissertation exploring the role that nonprofit organizations play in promoting the development of social capital. She currently serves as a Research Associate and Data Analyst for the Gastón Institute and as a Doctoral Fellow at Northeastern University. Sarah’s research interests include demography, community change, and public policy.

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