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9-17-2010

# Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Brockton

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### Recommended Citation

Granberry, Phillip and Rustan, Sarah, "Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Brockton" (2010). *Gastón Institute Publications*. Paper 37.

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The Mauricio Gastón Institute for  
Latino Community Development  
and Public Policy



## Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas

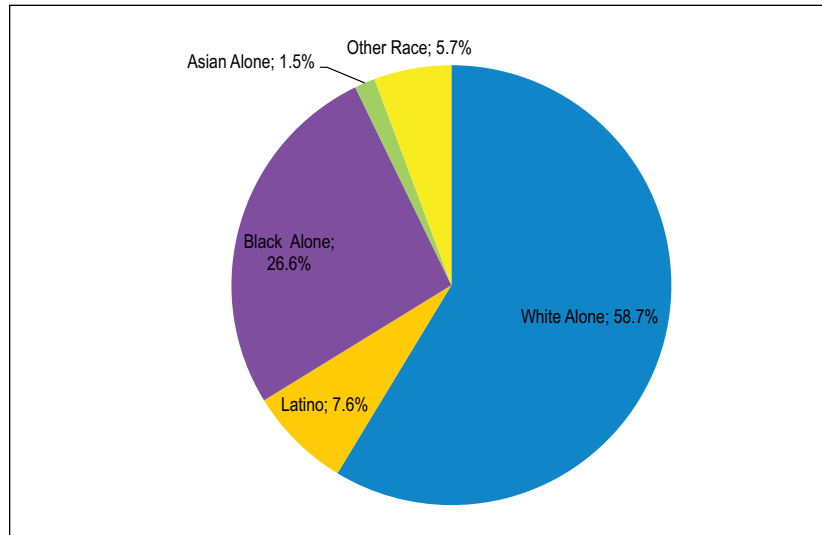
### Brockton and Abington

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

#### INTRODUCTION

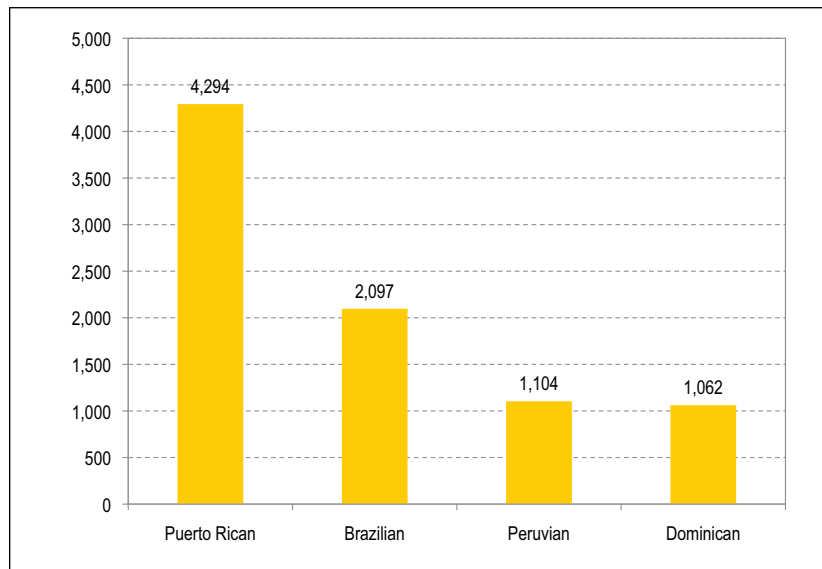
This report provides a descriptive snapshot of selected economic, social, educational, and demographic indicators pertaining to Latinos in the Brockton–Abington area. This report is prepared for the 2010 Statewide Latino Public Policy Conference organized by UMass Boston’s Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy. It is part of a 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 Brockton area, the majority of the population (82.3%) in 2000 lived in Brockton itself, while 12.9% lived in Abington and the remaining population lived in surrounding towns. The great majority of the Latino population of this PUMA lived in Brockton in 2000 (99.4%), while 0.6% lived in Abington. Thus, the Latino population in these cities will be referenced as Brockton throughout this report, although the data referenced does include the smaller Latino population in Abington as well.

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



Brockton is home to an estimated 8,500 Latinos, who make up 7.6% of the area’s population. Whites constitute the largest ethno-racial group (58.7%), while the black population accounts for 26.6% and a smaller Asian population accounts for only 1.5% of the population (Figure 1). In addition, the Brockton area has a sizeable Other Race category (5.7%) that is 68.9% Cape Verdean ancestry.

**Figure 2: Ancestry of the Top Latino Groups in 2008**



The Latino population in Brockton is dominated by Puerto Ricans, who number 4,294. Brazilians (2,097), Peruvians (1,104), and Dominicans (1,062) are the other sizable Latino subpopulations. Latinos help give the Brockton area a proportionately greater foreign-born population (19.7%) 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 Brockton area for selected demographic, economic, and social characteristics.

## MEDIAN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Figure 3 highlighting differences in median age draws attention to the importance of Latinos in the Brockton area. Latinos' median age of 27 years is slightly greater than for blacks but much younger than for Asians and 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 Brockton'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 2008**

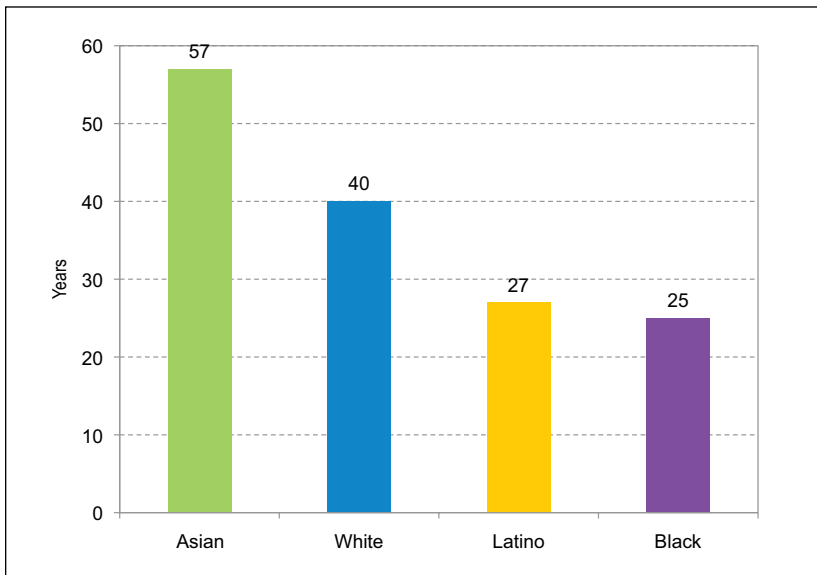
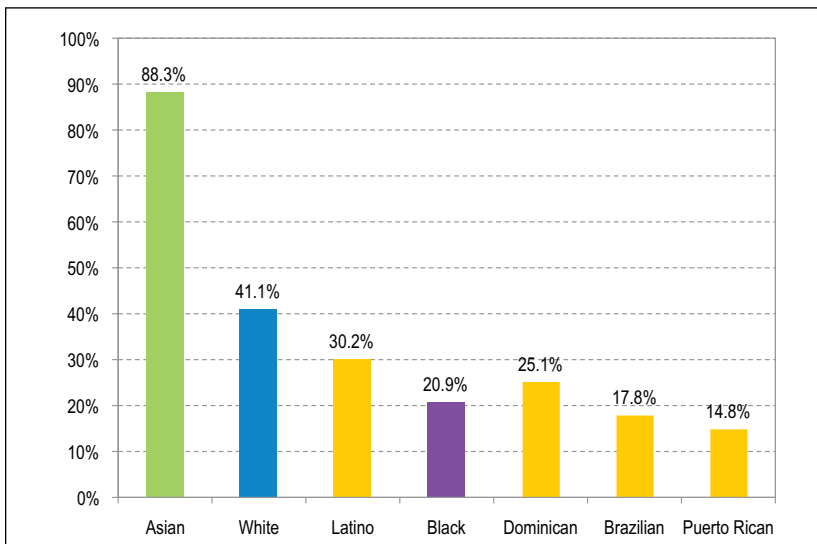


Figure 4 shows that the 30.2% marriage rate for Latinos (for persons age 16 and older) is less than for the other ethno-racial groups except blacks, who also have a younger population. Latino subpopulations show some variation in their marriage rates; a number of factors, including the differing ages of these populations, could be driving this variation.

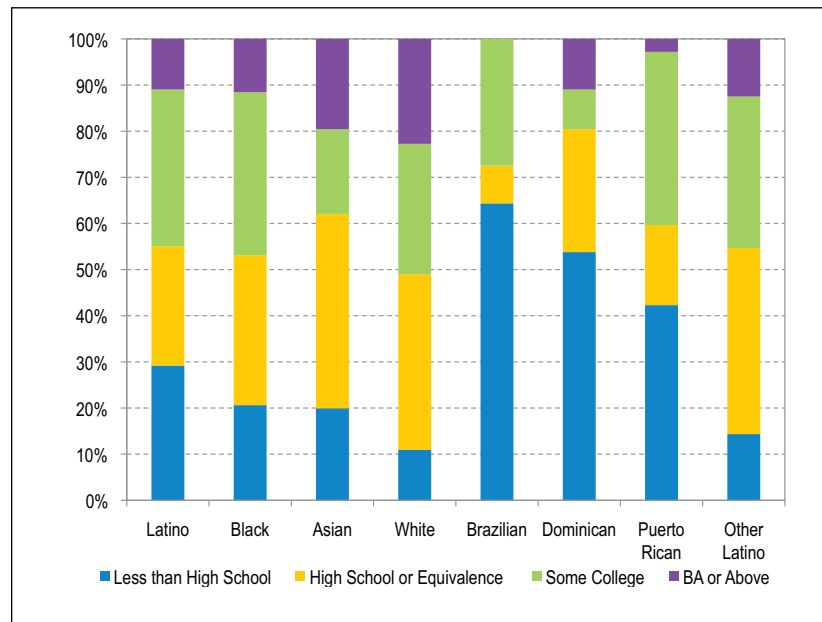
**Figure 4: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008**



## EDUCATION

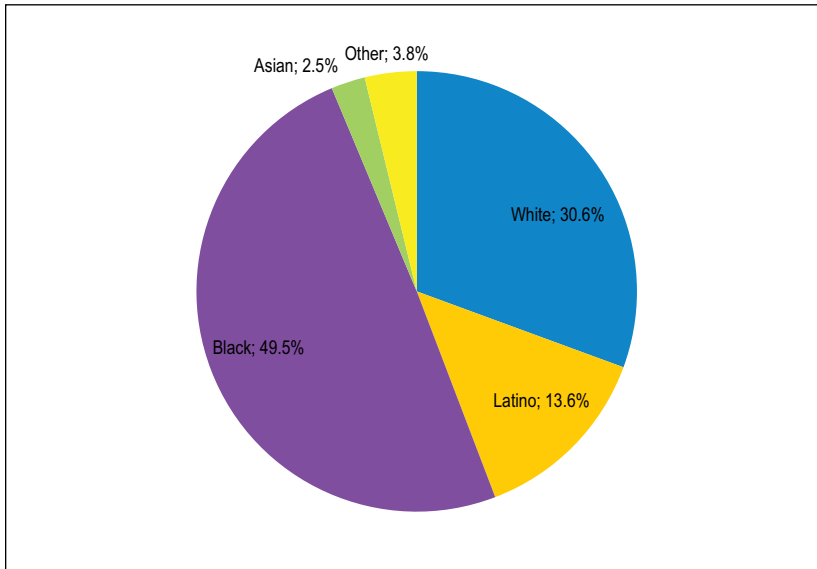
Figure 5 highlights the fact that Latinos have the highest percentage of their population who lack a high school diploma: 29.2%, compared to 20.6% for blacks, 19.9% for Asians, and 13.1% for whites. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos in Brockton have the lowest percentage of their population with at least a bachelor's degree: 10.9%, compared to 22.7% for whites, 19.6% for Asians, and 11.6% for blacks.

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



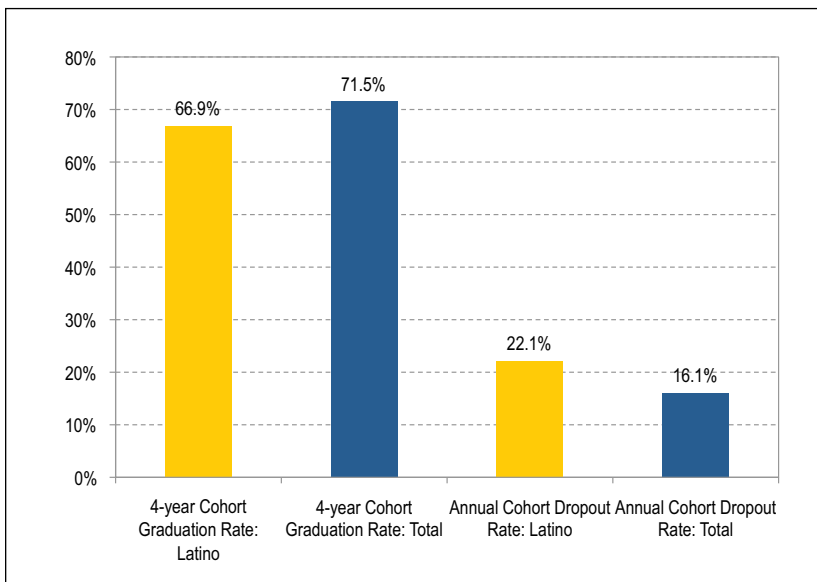
Figures 6A and 6B provide information regarding Latinos in the Brockton Public Schools, based on data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. After an 8.8% increase in the Latino student population during the 2000s, they made up only 13.6% of the student population in the 2008-2009 academic year, which is similar to the overall population makeup.

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



Latinos in Brockton Public Schools lag slightly behind the total population in academic success. About two thirds of Latino students (66.9%) graduate in four years compared to 71.5% for the total population. Similarly, 22.1% of Latinos drop out of school compared to 16.1% for the total population.

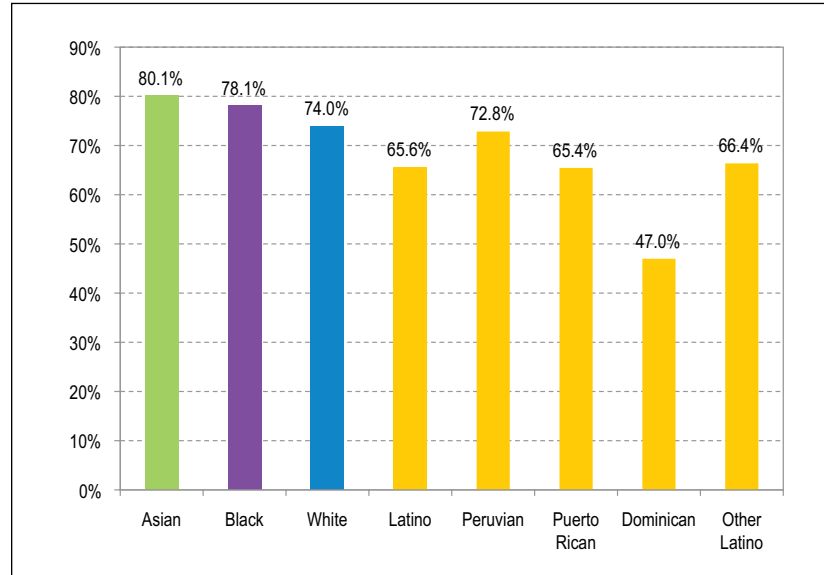
**Figure 6B: Spotlight on Brockton Public Schools by Outcomes, Academic Year 2008-2009**



## LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

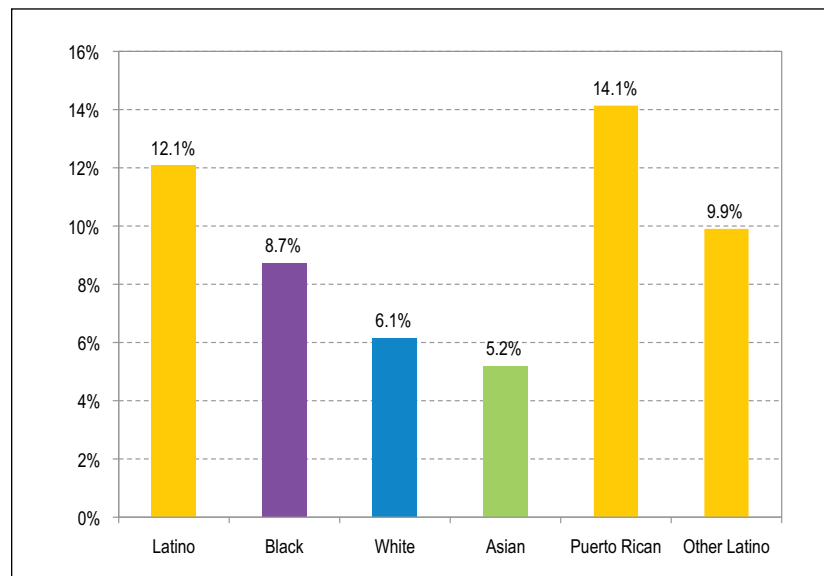
Even though Latinos' labor force participation (65.6%) is only slightly less than their statewide average of 68.6%, they lag behind Asians (80.1%), blacks (78.1%), and whites (74.0%) in the Brockton area (Figure 7).

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



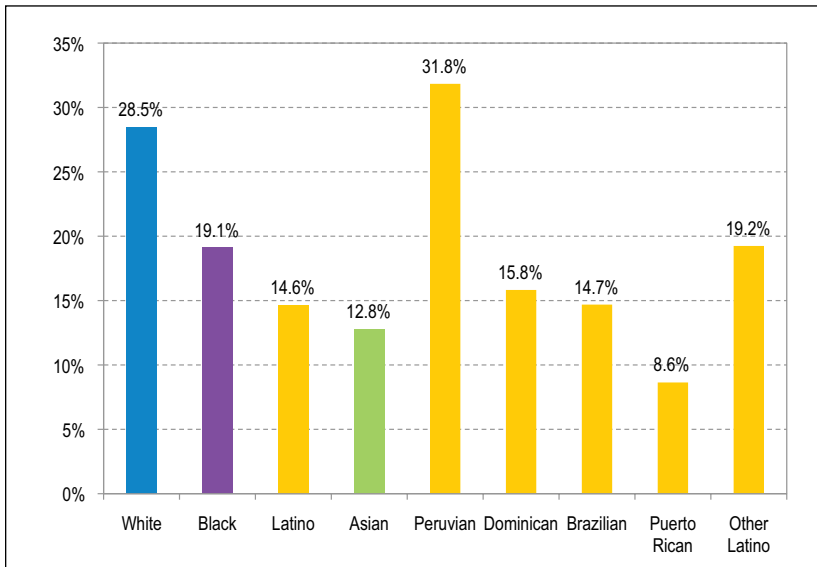
The previous labor force participation information suggests that Latinos in Brockton are motivated to participate in the area's economy. However, Figure 8 tells a different and slightly less positive story. The unemployment rate among Latinos in 2008 was 12.1%, which was higher than the corresponding figures of 8.7% for blacks, 6.1% for Asians, and 5.2% for whites.

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

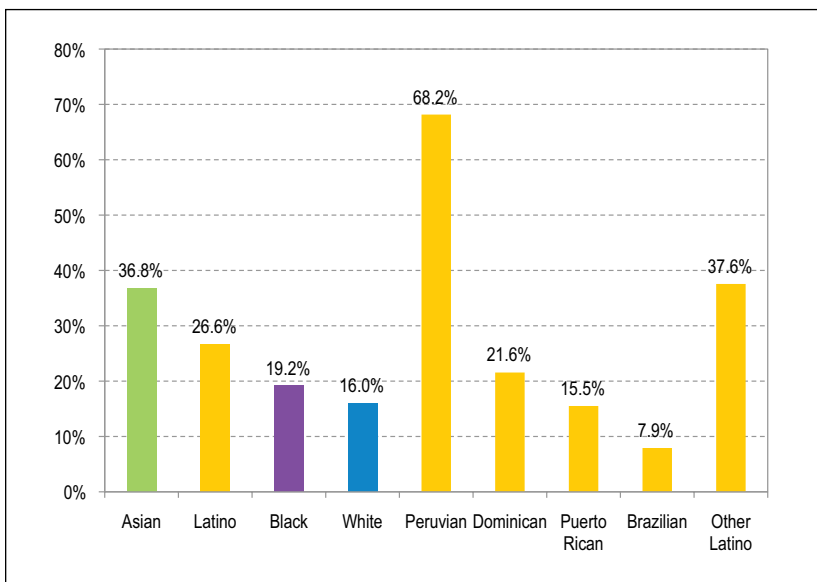


Figures 9A and 9B suggest that Latinos serve as complements to other ethno-racial groups in the area's labor market whose members have higher educational attainment. Latinos are overrepresented in what are traditionally considered blue-collar jobs (farming, construction, production, and transportation). Peruvians have a particularly large percentage of their population employed in blue-collar jobs with nearly 70% of the population working in this sector. 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**

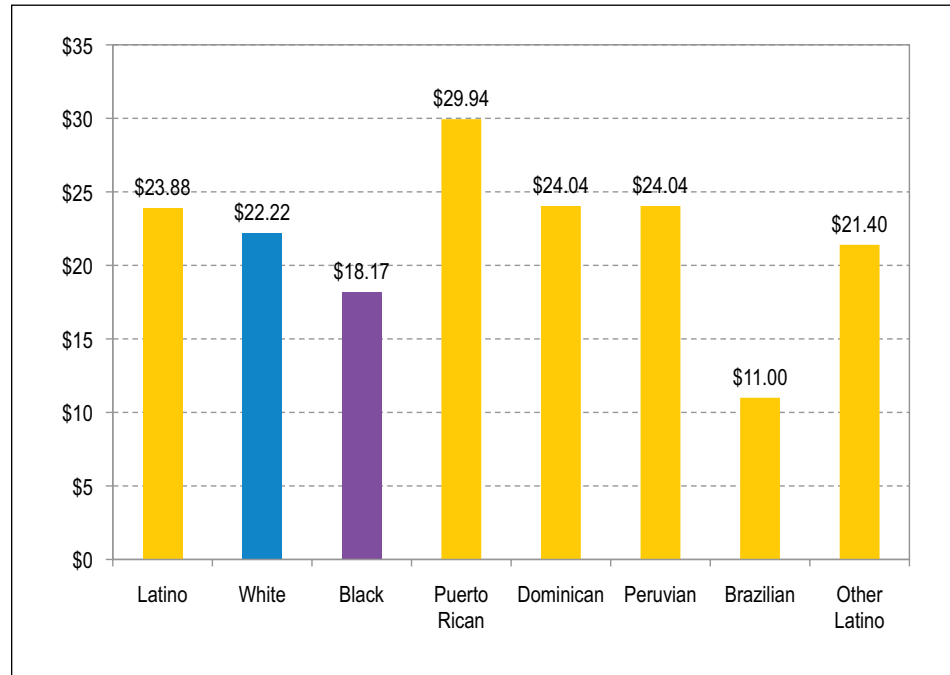




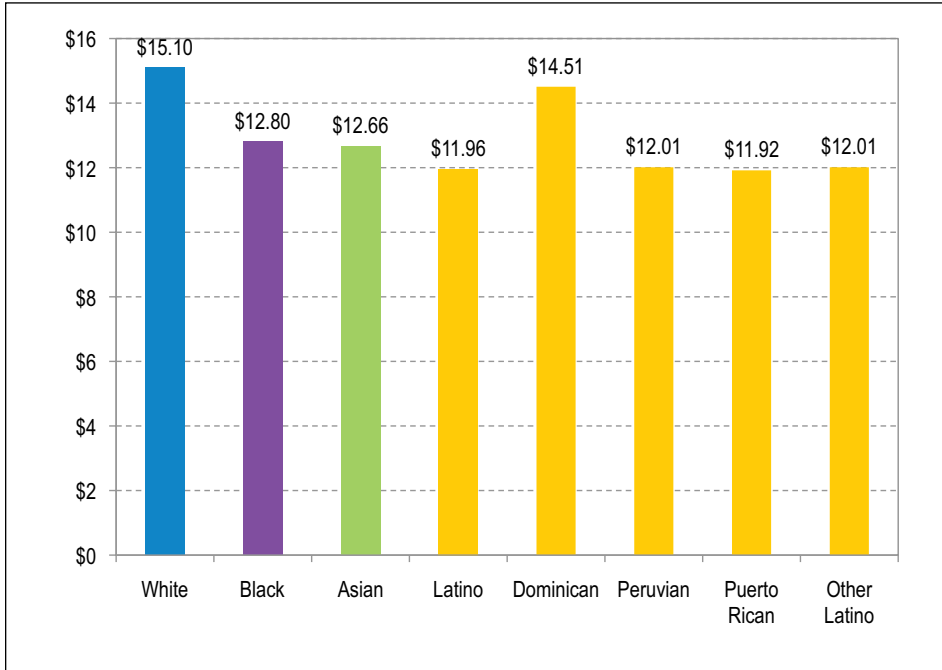
## EARNINGS

When examining the wage rates for these occupational categories, Latinos generally appear to be receiving wages below those of other ethno-racial groups. They earn lower wages than all other ethno-racial groups for their service-sector (Figure 10B) and blue-collar (Figure 10C) employment. However, they earn more than all other ethno-racial groups for their white-collar (Figure 10A) employment.

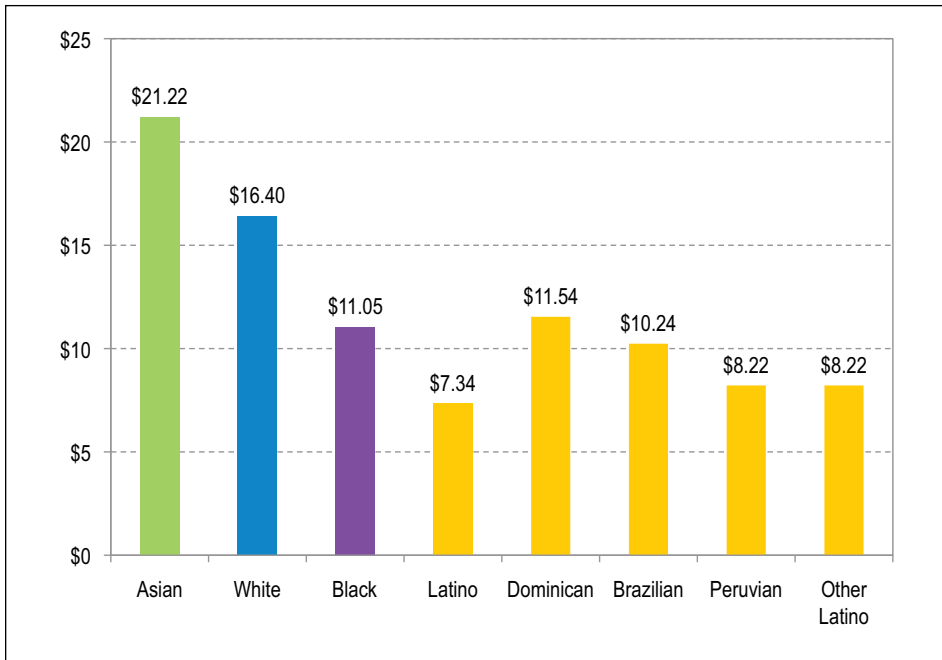
**Figure 10A: Hourly Wages in Professional or Managerial Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008**



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



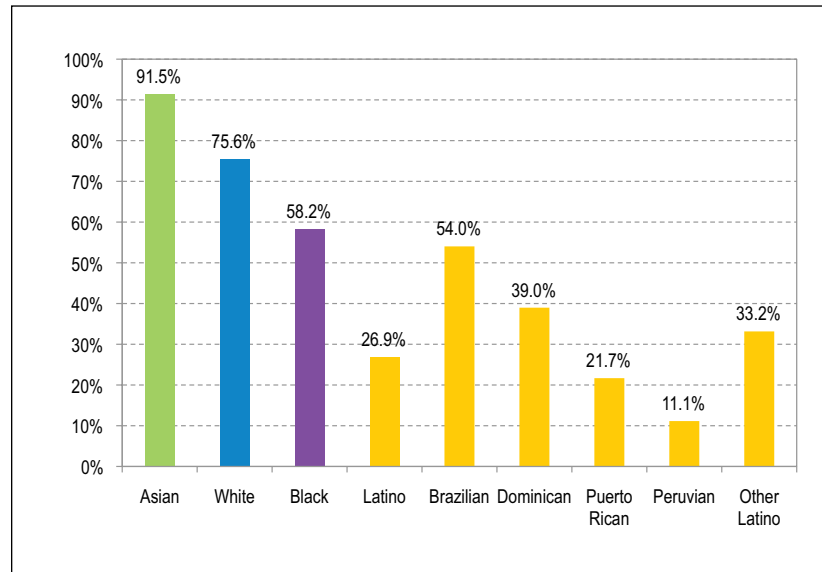
**Figure 10C: Hourly Wages in Farming, Construction, Production, and Transportation Occupations by Ethno-Racial Group in 2008**



## HOUSING STATUS AND MEDICAL INSURANCE

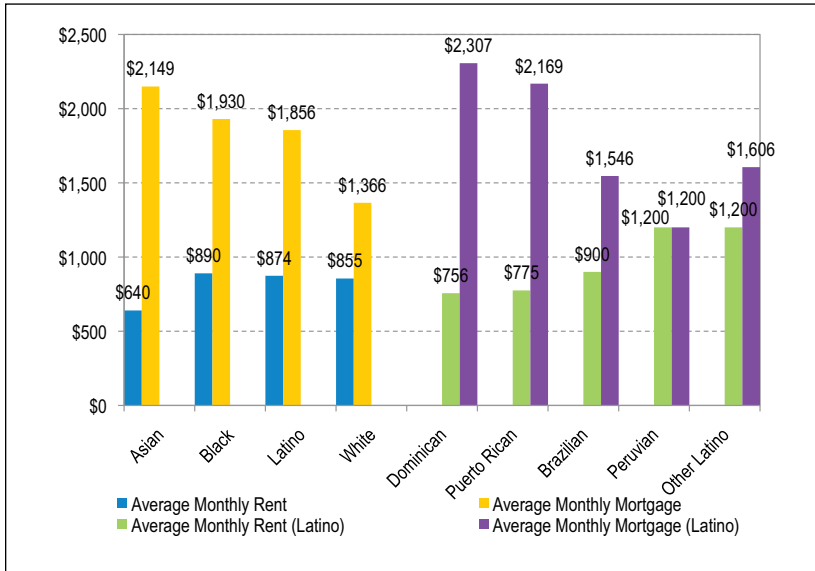
The final measures of Latino participation in Brockton are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation. Latinos traditionally have low homeownership rates across the country. Figure 11 shows that this trend holds true in Brockton: the 26.9% Latino homeownership rate is lower than for all other ethno-racial groups in the area. It is also lower than the statewide average of 32.9%. As a complement to these percentages in Figure 11, it is evident that 73.1% of Latinos in Brockton are renters.

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



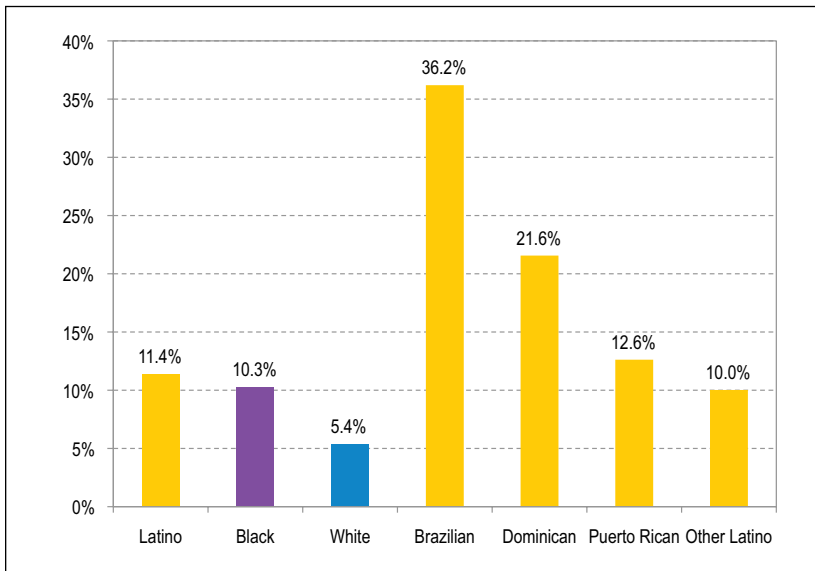
Latinos living in Brockton face high housing costs. Having largely become homeowners during the housing bubble of the last decade, Latinos in Figure 12 on average pay \$1,856 in monthly mortgages – greater than whites, comparable to blacks, but less than Asians. At the same time at \$874, Latino renters pay average monthly rents higher than those for the other ethno-racial groups except blacks.

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



The percentage of Latinos who lack medical insurance (11.4%) is greater than for any other ethno-racial group in Brockton and is also greater than their statewide average of 9.2%. Brazilians, who are a newly arriving subpopulation, have the highest uninsurance rate of 36.2%, 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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