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Phillip Granberry

University of Massachusetts Boston, phillip.granberry@umb.edu

Victor Luis Martins

University of Massachusetts Boston, v.martins001@umb.edu

Michelle Borges

University of Massachusetts Boston, michelle.borges001@umb.edu

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Latinos in Massachusetts

Selected Areas:

Brookline

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THE MAURICIO GASTÓN INSTITUTE
FOR LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND PUBLIC POLICY
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

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**Phillip Granberry
University of Massachusetts Boston**

**Victor Luis Martins
University of Massachusetts Boston**

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Brookline Overview

Brookline is a town of 63,191 residents, of whom 4,272, or 6.8%, identify as Latino or Hispanic, according to the 2020 Decennial Census. Statewide, Latino residents constitute 12.6% of the total population. In Brookline, the largest population is White (65.3%), followed by Asians (19.1%). Blacks account for 3.1% of the town's residents (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline

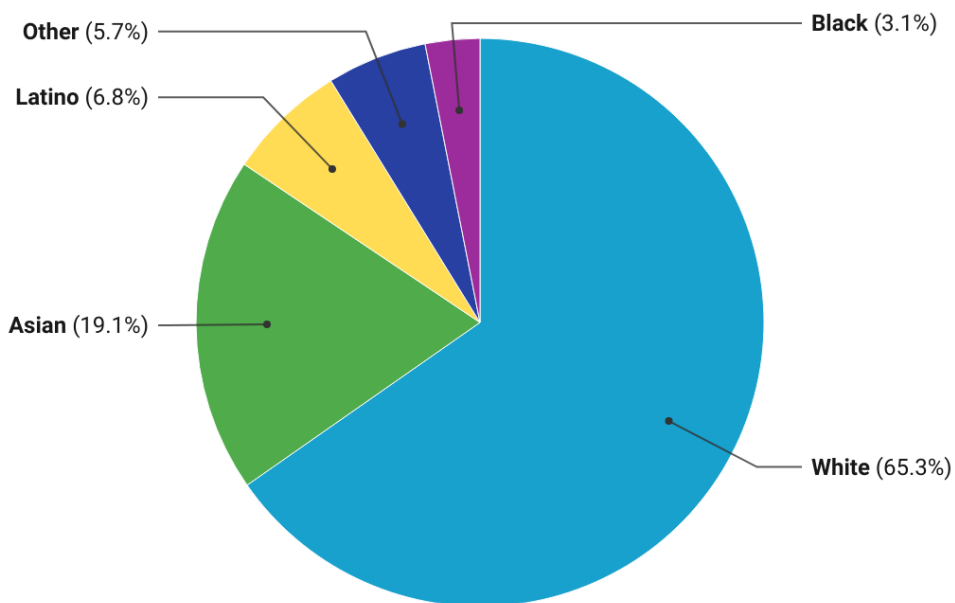


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2020 Decennial Census · Created with Datawrapper

Between the 2010 and 2020 Decennial Censuses, Brookline experienced 7.6% population growth, slightly higher than the state's 7.4% growth. During this time, the White population of Brookline declined by 4.2% while the Latino population increased by more than 44.1% (higher than their statewide rate of 41.4%), the Asian population by 32.0%, and the Black population by 7.3%.

Figure 2: Population Growth by Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline from 2010 to 2020



Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2010 & 2020 Decennial Census · Created with Datawrapper

The remainder of this profile uses 2017–2021 American Community Survey data in order to analyze the demographic and economic characteristics presented in this profile.

Similar to other cities and towns in the metro Boston region, Brookline has long been a destination for international migrants. Today, the town has a far greater share of foreign-born (30.9%) than the Commonwealth as a whole (17.3%). This is especially the case among Latinos. In Brookline, 41.8% of the Latino population is foreign-born, greater than the 32.1% Latino statewide share. (Note that Puerto Ricans, who are U.S. citizens at birth, do not count among foreign-born Latinos.)

The Latino population in Brookline is a mix of Latinos of different origins. Mexicans are the largest single group in Brookline, and Puerto Ricans are the second largest, followed by Colombians, Venezuelans, and Dominicans (Figure 3). Statewide, the five largest Latino populations in Massachusetts in order of size are Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Mexicans.

Figure 3: Origin of the Top Latino Populations in Brookline

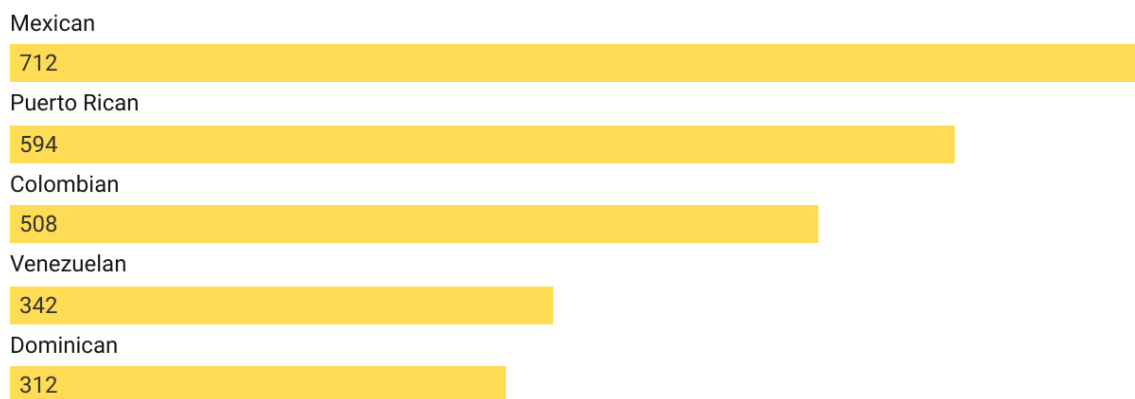


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

Median Age and Marital Status

Brookline’s median age of 35.3 years is younger than Massachusetts’ 39.9 years. Blacks, with a median age of 42.8 years, are the oldest, while Latinos are the youngest population with a median age of 31.7 years (Figure 4). However, this is older than the median age of 28.9 years for Latinos statewide.

Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline



Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

Brookline’s marriage rate of 47.2% is very close to the statewide marriage rate of 48.1%, but marriage rates vary significantly in Brookline (Figure 5). At the high end, Asian and White residents have marriage rates of 55.7% and 46.4%, respectively. The Latinos’ marriage rate is 36.8% (similar to their statewide marriage rate of 36.4%), while Blacks have the town’s lowest marriage rate (25.4%).

Figure 5: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline (Ages 15+)



Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

Educational Attainment

Standing in stark contrast to many other cities and towns across Massachusetts, particularly those outside the Greater Boston area, Brookline’s residents have high levels of educational attainment. However, even though Brookline has exceptionally high educational attainment rates, there are noteworthy differences across ethnic-racial groups. Adult residents who did not complete high school are almost entirely Black residents (Figure 6). Similarly, those with at least a Bachelor’s degree are far more concentrated in the White, Latino, and Asian populations. The proportion of adult Latinos in Brookline with at least a Bachelor’s degree (86.1%) far outpaces that of Latinos across the state, of whom only 21.6% have similar educational attainment.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment by Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline (Ages 25+)

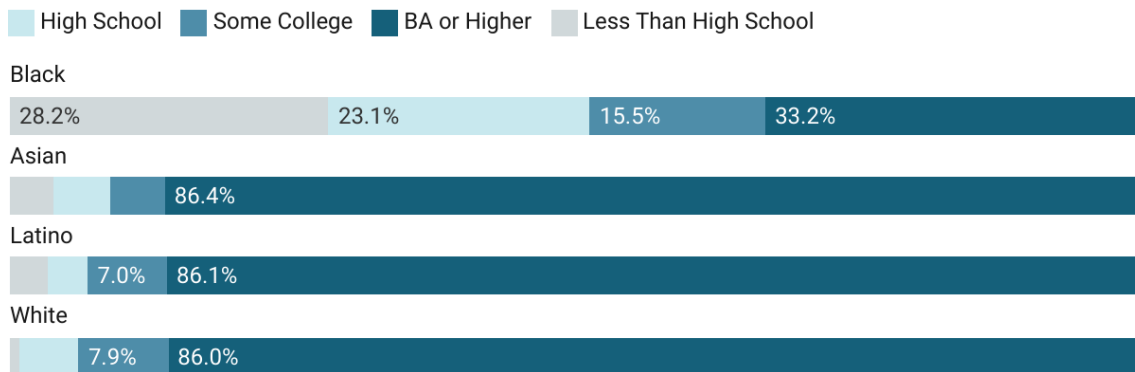


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

Labor Force Participation

The labor force participation rate in Brookline is 71.0%, which is higher than the Commonwealth’s 67.1%. Labor force participation in Brookline is highest among Latino residents, at 80.0%. (Statewide the Latino labor force participation rate is 68.7%.) Among White residents, the rate is 71.5%, and it is 69.0% for Asians. Blacks have the lowest labor force participation, at 48.7% (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Labor Force Participation by Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline (Ages 16+)



Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

The unemployment rate in Brookline is 3.6% compared to 5.3% statewide during this period. Unemployment is highest among Latino residents at 6.2%. (Statewide, Latinos’ unemployment rate is 8.9% during this period.) After Latinos come Blacks, with an unemployment rate of 4.2%. Unemployment among Asian and White residents is 3.5% and 3.3%, respectively (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Unemployment Rate by Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline (Ages 16+)



Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

The occupational distribution across ethno-racial groups in Brookline looks very different from that of many other towns and cities across the state, where there are many more low-skilled workers. Brookline workers are disproportionately concentrated in white-collar occupations. Again, however, there are large differences between groups, with the share of white-collar workers ranging from 86.5% for Asians to 66.4% for Blacks (Figure 9). Among Latino workers, 84.2% have white-collar employment, while only 13.0% work in services occupations and 2.9% in blue-collar occupations. In contrast, for Latinos across the state the distribution is 28.8% white-collar, 45.4% service, and 25.7% blue-collar.

Figure 9: Occupational Categories by Employed Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline (Ages 16+)

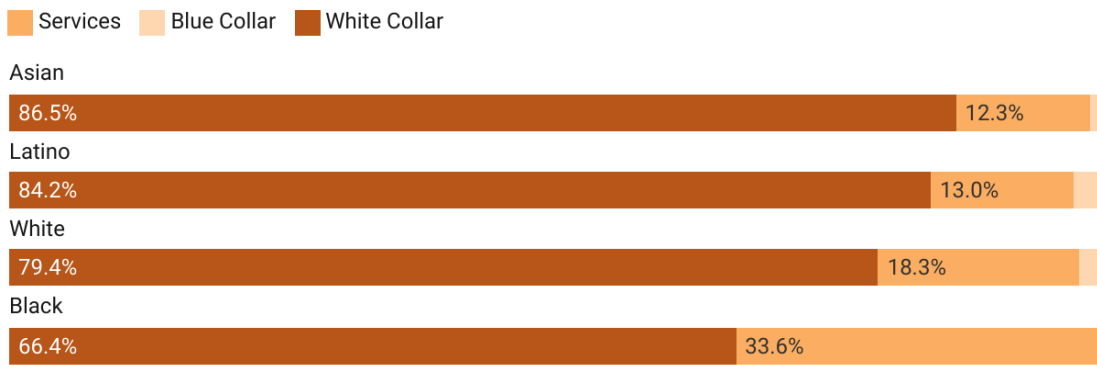


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

Income

The median household income for all households across Massachusetts is \$89,026, while in Brookline, the median income is \$122,356. There is, however, a great deal of income variation in Brookline, from \$129,381 for White households to \$83,674 for Black households. The median household income of \$119,429 for Latinos in Brookline is more than twice the statewide Latino median of \$52,106, providing further

evidence of Latinos' elevated economic status in Brookline when compared to other Latino communities across the state.

Figure 10: Median Household Income by Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline



Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

Housing Status and Medical Uninsurance

The final measures of Latino participation in Brookline are intended to identify how well Latinos are being rewarded for their economic, social, and political participation.

Brookline's homeownership rate (48.3%) is much lower than the statewide rate of 63.2%. For Latinos, the homeownership rate is 40.7% (higher than 29.7% for Latinos statewide). Only Blacks (25.6%) have a lower homeownership rate than Latinos among the ethno-racial groups in Brookline. White residents have the highest homeownership rate (51.1%), followed by Asians (45.4%).

Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline



Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

The great majority of Brookline residents have medical insurance. However, those who lack medical insurance are not equally distributed across ethno-racial groups. For example, while differences in the uninsurance rate between Asians, Latinos, and Blacks are not very large, the uninsurance rate for White residents is somewhat lower, at 1.0% (Figure 11). The uninsurance rate for Latinos is the highest in the town at 3.6% but lower than the statewide uninsurance rate for Latino residents of 5.5%.

Figure 12: Medical Uninsurance Rates by Ethno-Racial Groups in Brookline



Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

About the 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 an improved understanding of the Latino experience in the commonwealth. Now in its 34th 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.

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 at the Gastón Institute and Economics Department at UMass Boston, he is Senior Researcher in demography for the Boston Planning and Development Agency.

Victor Luis Martins holds an M.A. in Applied Economics from the University of Massachusetts Boston, specializing in Financial Economics and Macroeconomics. With a strong background in statistical analysis and data manipulation, he applies quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to analyze economic and social policy issues. Victor's current research focuses on the financialization and interest burden of non-financial corporations in the United States, as well as related economic and demographic conditions in Latinx communities in Massachusetts. His expertise

includes programming skills for data analysis, statistical modeling, and the interpretation of empirical data.

Michelle Borges is an economist from Brazil. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in Applied Economics at the University of Massachusetts Boston and working as a research assistant at the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy. Her research interests span the areas of Labor Economics, Development Economics, Immigration, and Feminist Economics.

