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Latinos in Massachusetts

Selected Areas:

Cambridge

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July 2023



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

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Cambridge Overview

Cambridge is a city of 116,892 residents, of whom 10.0% identify as Latino or Hispanic, according to the 2020 Decennial Census. Statewide, Latino residents contribute 12.6% of the total population. In Cambridge, the largest resident population is White (60.9%). The Asian population is the second largest group in the city, making up 21.0%, followed by the Black population, which accounts for 11.2% of city residents (Figure 1).

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

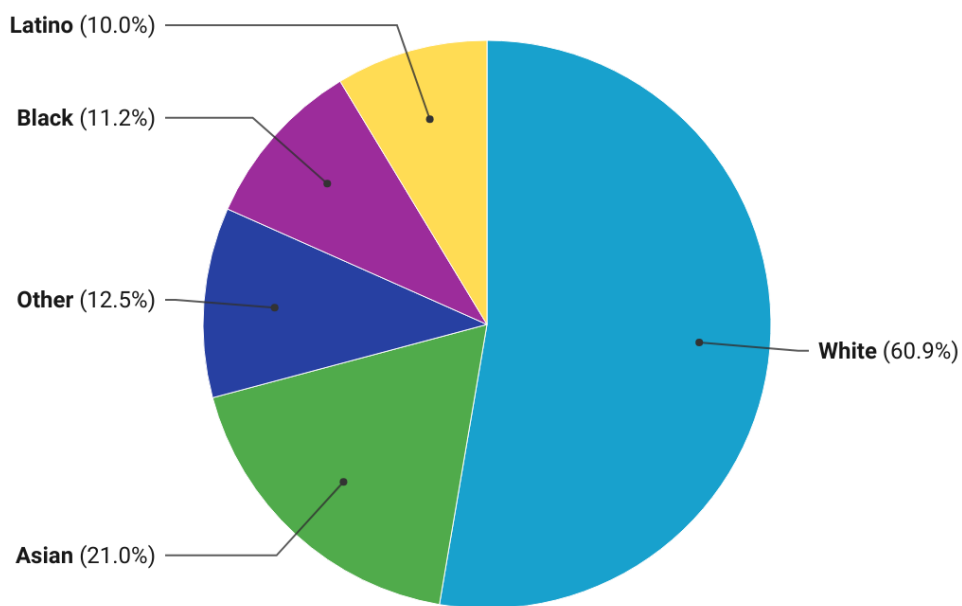


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2020 Decennial Census · Created with Datawrapper

Between the 2010 and 2020 Decennial Censuses, Cambridge experienced 12.6% population growth, and all major ethnic-racial groups had increasing shares. Asians and Latinos grew by more than 30%, while the Black and White populations grew by 3.7% and 0.5%, respectively (Figure 2). Across the state, Latinos increased by 41.4% during this period, indicating below-average growth in the Latino population in Cambridge.

Figure 2: Population Growth by Ethno-Racial Groups in Cambridge 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.

Cambridge has long been a destination for international migrants, and today it has a greater concentration of foreign-born (29.1%) than the Commonwealth as a whole (17.3%). This is especially the case among Latinos. In Cambridge, 36.7% of the Latino population is foreign-born, which is higher than the Latino statewide share (32.1%).

The Latino population in Cambridge is a mix of Latinos from different origins and not dominated as much by Puerto Ricans and Dominicans as are many other Massachusetts towns and cities. Puerto Ricans are the largest single group in Cambridge, but Mexicans are the second largest, followed by Dominicans, Salvadorans, and Colombians (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 Cambridge

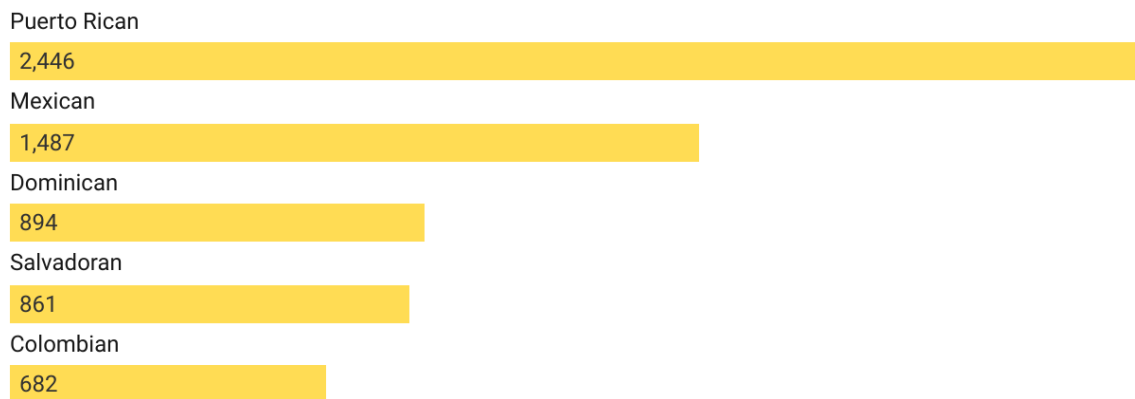


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

Median Age and Marital Status

Because of its colleges and universities, Cambridge's median age of 30.6 years is younger than Massachusetts' 39.9 years. Whites have the highest median age of 32.2 years in Cambridge, while the median age for Latinos is similar to their statewide median age – 28.4 years. Asians and Black in Cambridge have a median age of 28.9 and 31.6, respectively.

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



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

Due to its younger population, Cambridge's marriage rate of 33.9% is lower than the statewide marriage rate of 48.1%. Marriage rates vary significantly in Cambridge (Figure 5). At the high end, White and Asian residents have marriage rates of 34.9% and 34.6%, respectively. Latinos' marriage rate is 28.1% - 8.3 percentage points lower than the statewide marriage rate for Latinos (36.4%). Blacks have the lowest marriage rate in Cambridge (25.9%).

Figure 5: Marriage Rates by Ethno-Racial Groups in Cambridge (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, Cambridge likely has New England's most densely concentrated human capital base. However, even though Cambridge 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 Blacks and Latinos, accounting for more than 15% of each group (Figure 6). Similarly, those with at least a Bachelor's degree are far more

concentrated in the White and Asian populations. Still, the proportion of adult Latinos in Cambridge with at least a Bachelor's degree (61.3%) 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 Cambridge (Ages 25+)

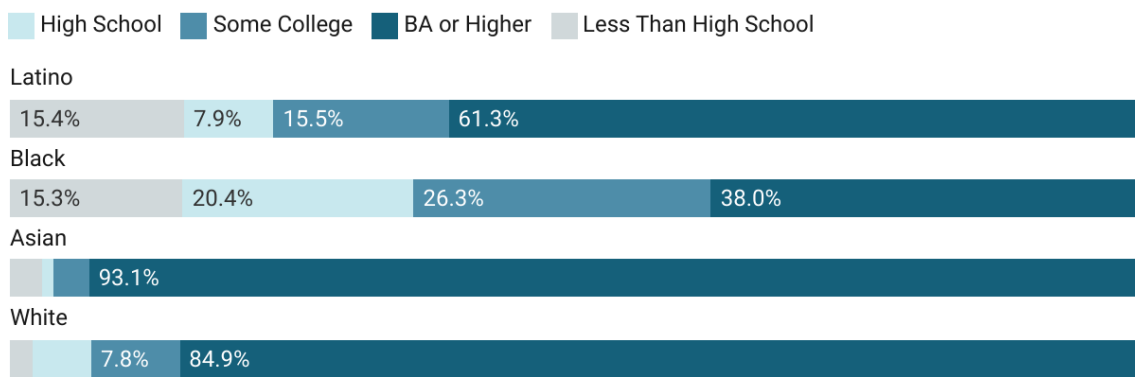


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

Labor Force Participation

The labor force participation rate in Cambridge is 69.4%, which is higher than the Commonwealth's 67.1%. Labor force participation in Cambridge is highest among White residents, at 71.4%. Among Asian residents, the rate is 68.9%. Labor force participation is slightly lower among Latino populations, at 67.5%, and Blacks have the lowest labor force participation, at 60.8% (Figure 7). Statewide the Latino labor force participation rate is 68.7%.

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



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

Variations in unemployment rates may reflect trends in educational attainment and human capital across ethno-racial groups. Unemployment is highest among Black residents at 9.4%, which may relate to the fact that this population has the lowest concentration of Bachelor's degree holders. After Blacks come to Latinos, with an

unemployment rate of 7.8%, corresponding to their second-lowest educational attainment rate. Unemployment among Asian and White residents is 3.4% and 2.2%, respectively (Figure 8). Statewide, Latinos' unemployment rate was 8.9% during this period.

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



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

The occupational distribution across ethno-racial groups in Cambridge looks very different from that of many other towns and cities across the state, where there are less-skilled workers. Cambridge workers are disproportionately concentrated in white-collar occupations. Again, however, there are large differences between groups, and as with many other characteristics, Whites and Asians are more prevalent in white-collar jobs than Latinos and Blacks. While 87.3% of Asians and 81.3% of Whites have white-collar employment, 67.6% of Latinos and only 46.7% of Black workers fill these positions (Figure 9). Statewide, 28.8% of Latino workers fill white-collar jobs. This trend, too, demonstrates that Latino residents of Cambridge attain better economic outcomes than Latinos in other parts of Massachusetts. For Latinos across the state, 45.4% work in service and 25.7% in blue-collar occupations.

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

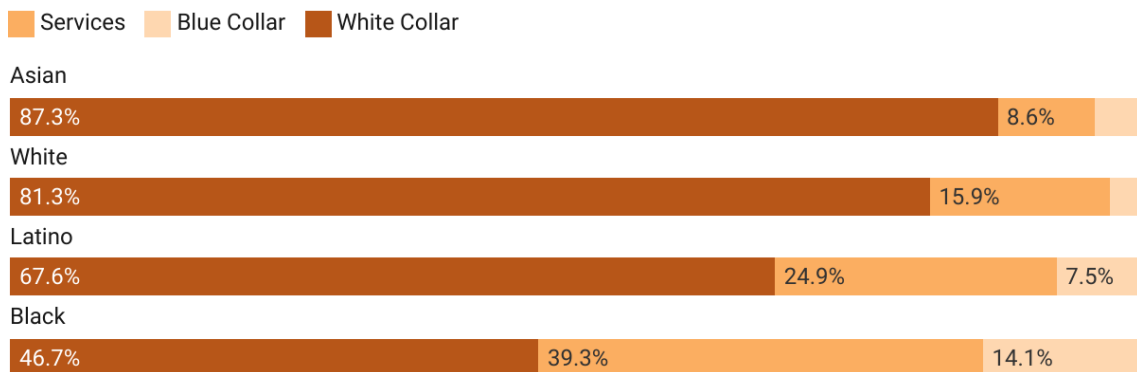


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

Income

The median household income for all households across Massachusetts is \$89,026, while in Cambridge, the median income is \$112,565. There is, however, a great deal of income inequality in Cambridge. Although Asian workers have higher rates of educational attainment, White household incomes are higher, with median incomes of \$133,472 for Whites and \$105,890 for Asians. This large and noteworthy disparity pales in comparison with corresponding differentials for Latinos and Blacks. The median household income for Latinos is \$86,669, while the median income for Black households is less than one-third that of White households (\$41,597). Statewide, the median household income for Latinos is \$52,106, providing further evidence of Latinos' elevated economic status in Cambridge when compared to other Latino communities across the state.

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



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

Housing Status and Medical Uninsurance

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

Cambridge's homeownership rate (33.4%) is much lower than the statewide rate of 63.2%. For Latinos, the homeownership rate is 22.6% (lower than 29.7% for Latinos statewide). Only Blacks (18.3%) have a lower ownership rate than Latinos among the ethno-racial groups in Cambridge. White residents have the highest homeownership rate (39.7%), followed by Asians (22.7%).

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



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

The majority of Cambridge residents have health insurance. However, those who lack health insurance are not equally distributed across ethno-racial groups. For example, while differences in the uninsurance rate between Asians, Latinos, and Whites are not very large, the uninsurance rate for Black residents is somewhat higher, at 6.1%. Uninsurance rates for Asians, Latinos, and Whites are 2.4%, 2.2%, and 1.3%, respectively (Figure 12). The statewide uninsurance rate for Latino residents is 5.5%.

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



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.

