

University of Massachusetts Boston

## ScholarWorks at UMass Boston

---

Gastón Institute Publications

Gastón Institute for Latino Community  
Development and Public Policy Publications

---

7-2023

### Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Southbridge

Phillip Granberry

University of Massachusetts Boston, [phillip.granberry@umb.edu](mailto:phillip.granberry@umb.edu)

Victor Luis Martins

University of Massachusetts Boston, [v.martins001@umb.edu](mailto:v.martins001@umb.edu)

Michelle Borges

University of Massachusetts Boston, [michelle.borges001@umb.edu](mailto:michelle.borges001@umb.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston\\_pubs](https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston_pubs)



Part of the [Demography, Population, and Ecology Commons](#), [Latina/o Studies Commons](#), and the [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Granberry, Phillip; Martins, Victor Luis; and Borges, Michelle, "Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Southbridge" (2023). *Gastón Institute Publications*. 305.

[https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston\\_pubs/305](https://scholarworks.umb.edu/gaston_pubs/305)

This Research Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy Publications at ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gastón Institute Publications by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@umb.edu](mailto:scholarworks@umb.edu).



# **Latinos in Massachusetts**

## **Selected Areas:**

### **Southbridge**

**Phillip Granberry, Victor Luis Martins, & Michelle Borges**

**July 2023**



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

**University of Massachusetts Boston  
Gastón Institute for Latino Community  
Development and Public Policy Publications**

**July 2023**

**Latinos in Massachusetts Selected Areas: Southbridge**

**Phillip Granberry  
University of Massachusetts Boston**

**Victor Luis Martins  
University of Massachusetts Boston**

**Michelle Borges  
University of Massachusetts Boston**

## Southbridge Overview

Southbridge is a town of 17,673 residents, of whom 6,012, or 36.1%, identify as Latino or Hispanic, according to the 2020 Decennial Census. Statewide, Latino residents contribute 12.6% of the total population. In addition, there are slightly more than 10,000 White residents, making up 56.7% of Southbridge's population, while Black, Asian, and other residents collectively account for only 7.2% of the town's population (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Population Percentages by Ethno-Racial Groups in Southbridge**

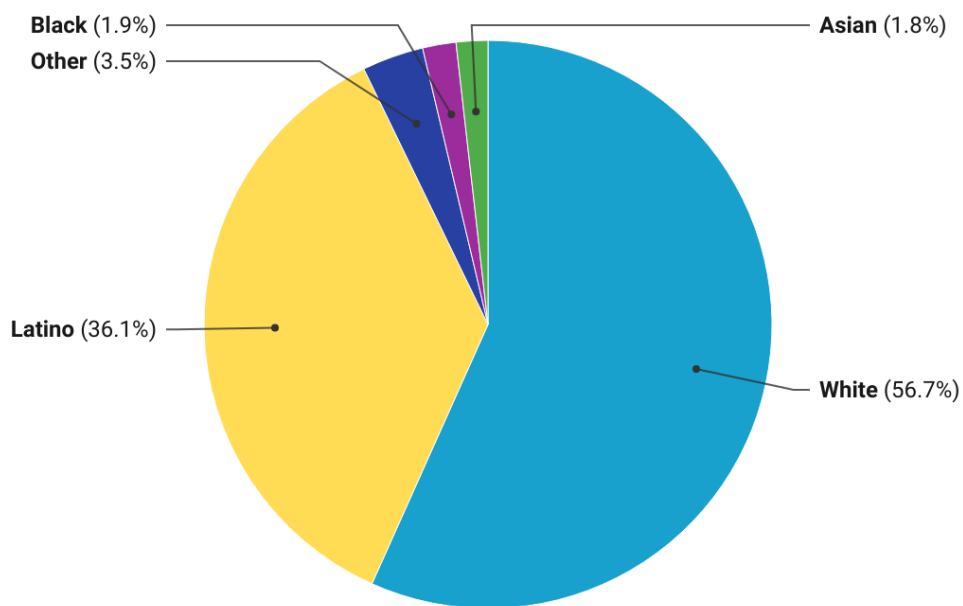


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2020 Decennial Census · Created with Datawrapper

Between the 2010 and 2020 Decennial Censuses, the Latino population increased by 44.0%, while the White population decreased by 12.3%. The smaller Black population increased by 43.2%, while the Asian population increased by 6.1%. The increase in the town's Latino population almost exactly equaled that of Latinos statewide, which increased by 41.4%. The White population's decline in Southbridge greatly outpaced the statewide trend of a 4.7% decline.

## Figure 2: Population Growth by Ethno-Racial Groups in Southbridge 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. Because the Black and Asian populations are smaller, they are omitted when their population estimates are too small for some characteristics.

Interestingly, despite having a sizeable Latino population, Southbridge has a very small foreign-born population, making up only 5.0% of town residents. By comparison, foreign-born residents of Massachusetts make up 17.3% of the statewide population, and Latinos are 32.1% foreign-born.

The Latino population in Southbridge is predominantly made up of Puerto Ricans. Of those with Puerto Rican origins, 54.9% were born within the continental United States and 45.1% were born on the island of Puerto Rico. Nevertheless, it should be noted that all Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens from birth, so they are not included in foreign-born estimates. Other Latino groups with a presence in Southbridge include residents with Mexican, Dominican, Colombian, and Peruvian origins. 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 Southbridge



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

## Median Age and Marital Status

The Latino population in Southbridge is notably younger than the town's majority White population, whose median age is 48.4 years, nearly twice the Latino median age of 27.9 years. Blacks' median age is similar to that of Whites, and Asians' median age is similar to that of Latinos (Figure 4). Statewide, Latino residents have a median age of 28.9 years, slightly older than in Southbridge.

**Figure 4: Median Age by Ethno-Racial Groups in Southbridge**



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

Marriage rates in Southbridge vary significantly across ethno-racial groups. Possibly due to their younger age profile, Latinos have a low marriage rate, at 32.1%, which is lower than Latinos' statewide marriage rate of 36.4%. White Southbridge residents have a marriage rate of 38.7%, while Asians have significantly a higher marriage rate (55.8%) and Blacks have a lower rate of 22.4% (Figure 5).

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



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

## Educational Attainment

Educational attainment in Southbridge is low, with 16.6% of residents aged 25 and older having a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 46.6% statewide. As Figure 6 shows, Latinos have a low percentage of their population with at least a Bachelor's degree at 11.1%, compared to 18.2% for Whites, 22.4% for Blacks, and 56.6% for Asians. At the other end of the educational scale, Latinos have an especially high share of their adult population lacking a high school diploma at 30.6%, compared to 13.2% for Whites.

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

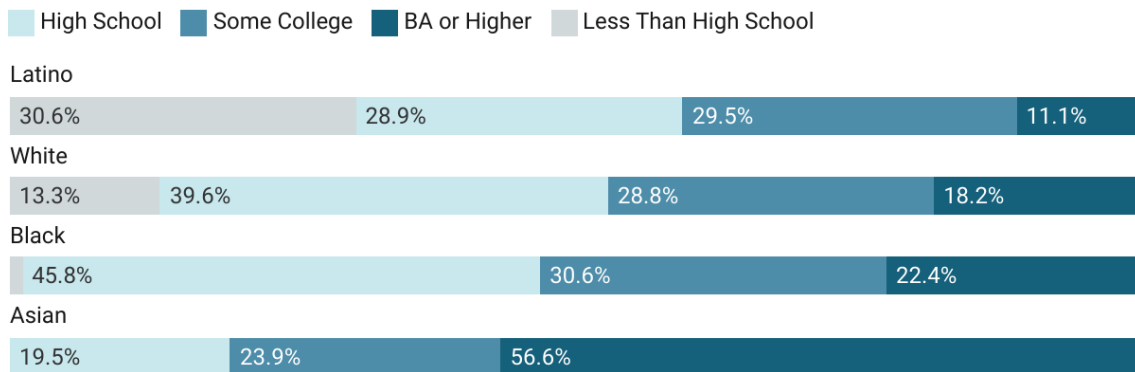


Chart: Gastón Institute · Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey · Created with Datawrapper

## Labor Force Participation

The labor force participation rate in Southbridge is 62.9%, which is lower than for the Commonwealth overall, 67.1%. Similarly, Latinos have a lower labor force participation rate in Southbridge (60.2%) than Latinos statewide (68.7%). As Figure 7 shows, they also have the lowest rate in the city, with Whites (63.1%), Blacks (72.9%), and Asians (81.2%) having a higher labor force participation rate.

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



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

The overall unemployment rate in Southbridge during this period was a high 9.1% compared to the statewide unemployment rate of 5.5%. The Latino unemployment rate in Southbridge of 9.7% is higher than the White unemployment rate of 7.7% (Figure 8). Latinos in Southbridge who participate in the labor force also do not fare as well as Latinos statewide, who during this period experienced a 6.1% unemployment rate. Blacks and Asians are not reported here due to their smaller populations and high margin of error.

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



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

Among those who are employed, Latino workers are less represented in white-collar managerial or professional positions. White workers have a higher share of these positions. Correspondingly, Latinos are more concentrated in service and blue-collar jobs than White workers. (Figure 9). For Latinos across the state, this distribution is 28.8% white-collar, 45.4% service, and 25.7% blue-collar.

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



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

## Income

Southbridge’s median household income is \$50,514, which is much lower than the statewide median household income of \$89,026. Latinos in Figure 10 have the third lowest median income (\$38,733) of any ethno-racial group in the town. Latinos in Southbridge are much less economically successful than Latinos in other parts of the Commonwealth, as the statewide Latino median household income is \$52,106.

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



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



## Housing Status and Medical Uninsurance

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

Southbridge's homeownership rate (46.1%) is much lower than the statewide rate of 63.2%. For the Latino community, the homeownership rate is 27.1% (slightly lower than the 29.7% figure for Latinos statewide). Only Blacks (6.0%) have a lower ownership rate among the ethno-racial groups in Southbridge. Asian residents have the highest homeownership rate (57.4%), followed closely by Whites (55.6%).

**Figure 11: Homeownership Rates by Ethno-Racial Groups in Southbridge**



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

Southbridge's rate of medical uninsurance (3.2%) is higher than the state's overall rate of 2.5%. Figure 12 shows that Southbridge's Latinos have a lower share without medical insurance, at 2.5%. The Latino statewide rate of medical uninsurance is 5.5%. The medical care providers in Southbridge's community health centers appear to be assisting the Puerto Rican population to obtain needed medical insurance.

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



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 34<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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.

