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Hispanic Map of the United States 2022

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Abstract: This study will offer an overview of the situation of the Spanish language and the Hispanic population in the United States up to December 2022, covering areas such as demographics, language, identity, economics, education, politics, and health. The various sections also include information about the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic from 2020 until the end of 2022. This new issue of the Observatorio's *Hispanic Map*, moreover, puts into context the diversity characterizing the Hispanic/Latino population, as well as its achievements, over the last two decades. The study concludes by pointing out certain areas which require more attention in order to facilitate the group's socio-economic progress.

Keywords: Spanish, identity, demographics, Hispanic, Latino, health, Covid-19 pandemic, culture, politics, economy, education.

* Editors' note: This text is an English translation, offered by the Observatorio, of the Spanish original submitted by the author. See study 084-02/2023SP.

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1. Introduction

The 2022 Hispanic Map¹ will examine data related the demographics of the Hispanic population, along with education, economics, Latino social identification and identity, proficiency in Spanish and English, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and political participation current to December 2022.

The national census conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2020 has once again demonstrated the country's vast diversity, and contains certain data points of particular interest, including that:

- the Hispanic population grew by more than two percent, from 16.3% of the U.S. population in 2010 to 18.9% by August 11th, 2022 ([U.S. Census Bureau 2022](#));
- the U.S. Census Bureau projects that the Hispanic population will double by 2060 due to the natural growth of the young, native Latino population ([Vespa et al., 2020](#));
- The Hispanic population aged 18 and under is projected to account for one-third of the total U.S. Hispanic population by 2060, up from one-fourth in 2016 ([Vespa et al., 2020, p.8](#));

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¹ This edition of the Hispanic Map of the United States follows the same criteria as past editions. Among the most consulted sources are the U.S. Census Bureau, Pew Research Center, and the National Center for Education Statistics, which were used to outline the current situation of Hispanic people in the United States with the greatest possible precision. Other research articles that provide objective data have also been consulted. The terms 'Latino' and 'Hispanic' will be used indistinctly; the same is true for the terms 'U.S.-born' and 'native'; and the terms 'foreign-born' and 'immigrant' or 'migrant'. 'Foreign-born' refers to anyone born outside of the United States and Puerto Rico. 'Dominant language English' or 'Dominant language Spanish' indicate that a person's knowledge or proficiency in one language is greater than in the other. 'Dual' indicates that a person speaks Spanish and English with the same degree of fluency. For the purposes of this study, language competency has generally been determined by subjective surveys of self-perception conducted by the United States Census Bureau or Pew Research Center.

- Hispanic people will have the highest growth rate of any population outside those who identify as biracial or mixed-race/ethnicity;
- the Hispanic population, independent of race, was 62.1 million in 2020, an increase of 23% from 2010 ([US Census 2021](#));
- finally, the five states with the largest Hispanic population in 2020 are California (15.5 million), Texas (11.4 million), Florida (5.7 million), New York (3.9 million), and Illinois (2.3 million).

This data reflects changes in education, language, identity, economics, and political participation. Questions of identity are complex and ever relevant, and a wide range of factors—including time in the U.S., education level, income, and language proficiency—have a profound influence on the development of the Latino population in the country and how it identifies. Additionally, data shows that third and higher generations are more proficient in English than Spanish, a generational and linguistic indicator tied to identity. For example, the percentage of Latino people who do not consider themselves as such rises with each generation, reaching as high as 50% by the fourth generation. Likewise, in third and higher generations, 75% of the Latino population lists English as their dominant language and 24% consider themselves bilingual, though they continue to identify symbolically with Spanish. The combined effects of these factors cause Spanish use to diminish with each subsequent generation, and for more Latino people to identify as American with the passage of time.

Twelve years after the publication of the 2010 national census results, Hispanics and the Spanish-language continue to have significant weight in the U.S., despite a slowdown in growth beginning with the restrictive immigration laws of the 1990s. Those laws, along with the effects of the pandemic in 2020, have led to a deceleration in the growth of the immigrant population, particularly among Latino immigrants. Indeed, while the proportion of Hispanic people born in the United States

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has been on the rise since the early 2000s, the Latino immigration rate has continued to fall. This is a significant demographic shift when it comes to the proportion of Spanish-speakers: U.S.-born Hispanics are the leading driver of Hispanic population growth, but their dominant language is English. 91% of U.S.-born Hispanic people report that they speak English with greater fluency.

In any case, Spanish is the second most widely spoken language in the United States after English. In 2019, the [American Community Survey](#), an annual survey on social, economic, and political issues conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, estimated there to be 41.8 million Spanish-speakers in the U.S. ([Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022](#)). From 1980 to 2019, the number of Spanish-speakers has risen 275.6%. Of that growth, only 56.8% came between 2000-2019. The number of Latino people aged 5 and older who speak Spanish at home has fallen from 75% in 1980 to 70% in 2019, according to the calculations of the Pew Research Center, which collects continuous sociopolitical data about the U.S. population ([Lopez et al., 2017](#)). Nonetheless, in 61% of homes where a language other than English is spoken, that other language is Spanish.

In this study, we have dedicated a space to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and its impact on the Hispanic population. Latino families in both rural and urban areas of the U.S. have suffered profound repercussions from the pandemic ([Sulbarán Lovera, 2020](#)). For example, they have seen higher rates of unemployment and deaths of family members when compared to white and Asian Americans. What's more, Covid-19 was the number one cause of death among the Latino community in 2020 ([CDC, Covid Traker 2022](#)). The effects of the pandemic have also been evident in the finances of Hispanic families, though those negative impacts began to dwindle in 2021. The negative impact on Latino-owned businesses reported in the beginning of the pandemic (March 2020) had fallen by 50% by the summer of 2021.

Pandemic aside, there are promising indicators of economic growth in this group. For example, the buying power of the Hispanic people is rising and could reach \$2.3 trillion in 2024, or 11.6% of the total buying power of the U.S. population. In the last decade (2010-2020), the number of Hispanic business owners rose 34%, and in 2021, one in four owners of new small businesses were Hispanic. Additionally, Latino enrollment in two- and four-year colleges ([UnidosUS 2022](#)) has risen 372% (from roughly 782,400 Latino college students in 1990 to 3.7 million in 2020), which is also an indicator of increased buying power.

Alongside the general rise in Hispanic education levels has been a concurrent decrease in the high school dropout rate: 7.4% in 2020. However, Hispanic students still have the second highest dropout rate in the country, overtaken only by American Indians/Alaska Natives ([CNES 2022](#)). These percentages are higher in Hispanic men than women: 8.9%, compared to 5.9%. Although the rise in Latino college enrollment is a sign of progress in strictly numeric terms, Latino students remain underrepresented in colleges, especially colleges with competitive admissions processes (those which admit fewer than 25% of applicants).

While there are signs of growth in economics and education, the Hispanic population still fare worse than other racial and ethnic groups in certain key areas, with per capita income and median household income beneath the national level. Additionally, 17.1% of *individuals* living beneath the poverty line are of Hispanic origin, a 0.1% rise from 2020, though it bears stating that 2021 saw a historic decrease in Latino *household* poverty (15.5%) ([Creamer et al., 2022](#)).

Another point of data worth highlighting in this introduction is that Latina women experience a wider wage gap than almost all other demographic groups. Relative to non-Hispanic white men, the hourly wage gap for Latina women has remained consistent since 1979 ([Mora & Dávila, 2018](#)). What's more, according to

the census, the Hispanic population remain the largest group without health insurance ([Branch & Conway, 2022](#)). This is significant, given that private medical insurance is tied to one's ability to find a job that provides health insurance as an employee benefit.

After a detailed outline and analysis of demographic, identity, education, and socio-economic data, this study will close with an exploration of politics, beginning in 2016 and proceeding through to the midterm elections in 2022. Hispanic political participation is steadily rising, and the final section will examine the rise in both Hispanic voter registration and turnout, along with what political issues are important to the Latino population and representation in Congress, among other things. Topics related to broadcast and social media will be left for later editions of this map.

2. Demographics

2.a Growth Rate

In 2020, the United States population was estimated at 331.4 million, 62.1 million of whom identified as Hispanic. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2020, the Hispanic-identifying population has gone from accounting for 16.3% of the U.S. population (roughly 50.5 million) in 2010, to 18.7% (roughly 62.1 million) in [2020](#), and 18.9% in August [2022](#). If this trend remains stable, the Census Bureau estimates that the Hispanic population will nearly double in size by 2060, as was pointed out in the introductory summary above.²

² The Census Bureau obtained these figures based on an estimate of 3.6% growth in the total foreign-born U.S. population between 2016 and 2020.

This increase is due to the natural growth of the young native Latino population, as opposed to a rise in Latino immigration, which has declined since the Great Recession in 2007 ([Stepler & Lopez, 2016](#)). In 2020, the Hispanic population was the group with the third-highest population growth rate after residents who identify as Asian and biracial or mix race/ethnic background, in that order. The growth in the Asian population reflects high immigration rates, whereas that of the mixed-race population is natural growth ([Vespa et al., 2020, p.3](#)).

The 2020 census brought about a broader recognition of various forms of ethno-racial (self-)identification, which aids the U.S. government in allocating socioeconomic resources to groups in need. The census grants us a potential window into how much of the Hispanic population identifies as white, Black, some other race, or biracial/mixed-race. While the non-Hispanic white population is projected to decrease in future decades (from 199 million in 2020 to 179 million by 2060), it is estimated that the white population in general, that is, including the white Hispanic population, will grow from 253 million to 275 million by 2060 ([Vespa et al., 2020, p.3](#)).

Although the census has allowed the self-identified Hispanic or Latino residents to select the race they identify with, the examples given in the census questions suggest a potential underestimation of Hispanic racial diversity. Figures 1a and 1b show the question about race in the 2020 and 2010 censuses, respectively. We have contrasted them here to highlight how the question has been rephrased, as well as to showcase the new examples offered to participants in 2020. In Figure 1b, we can also see the question about Hispanic ethnicity from the 2010 census, which was left unchanged in the 2020 census. As Figure 1b shows, the examples presented beside each racial category in the 2020 edition are not an exhaustive list of possible identifications for people who self-identify as Hispanic or Latino. For example, by not listing ‘Cuban,’ ‘Dominican,’ ‘Mexican,’ or ‘Ecuadorian,’ as examples

of Black or African American, or by not listing ‘Argentina,’ ‘Ecuador,’ ‘Cuba,’ or ‘Mexico,’ as examples of white, the census may have missed certain racial nuances in countries with great diversity where racial terminology is not applied in the same way as it is in the U.S.

7. What is this person's race?
 Mark one or more boxes **AND** print origins.

White – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc. ↴

Black or African Am. – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc. ↴

American Indian or Alaska Native – Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. ↴

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese | <input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian – Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc. ↴ | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander – Print, for example, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc. ↴ |

Some other race – Print race or origin. ↴

Figure 1a. Question about ‘race’ in the 2020 census.

→ **NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.**

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano

Yes, Puerto Rican

Yes, Cuban

Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — *Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.* ↴

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark one or more boxes.

White

Black, African Am., or Negro

American Indian or Alaska Native — *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.* ↴

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean | <input type="checkbox"/> Guamanian or Chamorro |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian — <i>Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.</i> ↴ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander — <i>Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.</i> ↴ | |

Some other race — *Print race.* ↴

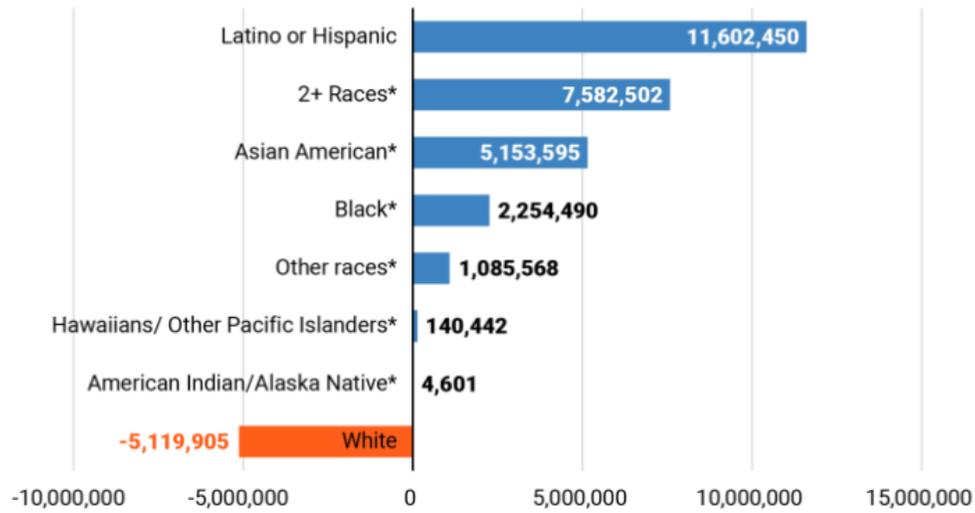
Figure 1b. Question about 'race' in the 2010 census.

Despite these potentially lost nuances, the change to the formulation of the question about race in the 2020 census has made room for a more profound exploration of Hispanic racial self-identification. In the 2010 census, the Latino population responded to an independent question about their race. Those who answered 'Mexican,' 'Hispanic,' 'Latin American,' 'Puerto Rican,' etc., as their race were classified by the census as 'some other race,' following the directives of the U.S.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1997. The change in the question's form and codification has led to vastly differing racial identification results in 2010 and 2020, with the number of Hispanic people who identify with more than one race increasing 576%; that is, it increased from 3 million (or 6%) to 20.3 million (32.7%). In 2020, 42.2% (26.6 million Latino people) identified exclusively as 'some other race,' a 41.7% increase from 2010. Meanwhile, the number of Hispanic people who identified exclusively as 'white' decreased 52.9%, from 26.7 million in 2010 to 12.6 million in 2020 ([Jones et al., 2021](#)).

Though the intention of the Census Bureau in 2020 was to provide a more concrete and reliable accounting of racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S., we cannot know if, for example, the Ecuadorian population from the region of Esmeraldas—with deep Black and African roots—identified as 'Latino,' and 'Black,' without specifying their country, or as 'Latino,' and 'some other race,' and wrote "Ecuador" in that category, in which case we would not know their race. This example applies to other Latin American countries such as the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and others with large Afro-Latino populations, as well as, of course, to the Asian Latino population. As for the indigenous Latino population, in their question about race, the census takers did include indigenous groups from North and Central America (Mayan and Aztec), though they could also have included South American indigenous groups, among other indigenous groups. We will have to wait until 2023 for the census to finish and publish their analysis, and so to have more concrete data.

Figure 2, taken from the Brookings Institute ([Frey, 2021](#)) shows the racial and ethnic changes of the U.S. population from 2010 to 2020: in that decade, the Hispanic population grew 23%, accounting for 51.1% of total population growth in the U.S. over the same period ([US Census 2021](#)). Figure 3 shows the change in proportion of Hispanics or Latinos in the U.S. during that time.



* non-Latino or Hispanic members of racial group

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2010 and 2020 U.S. decennial censuses.

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Figure 2. Racial and ethnic changes in the U.S. population, 2010-2020.

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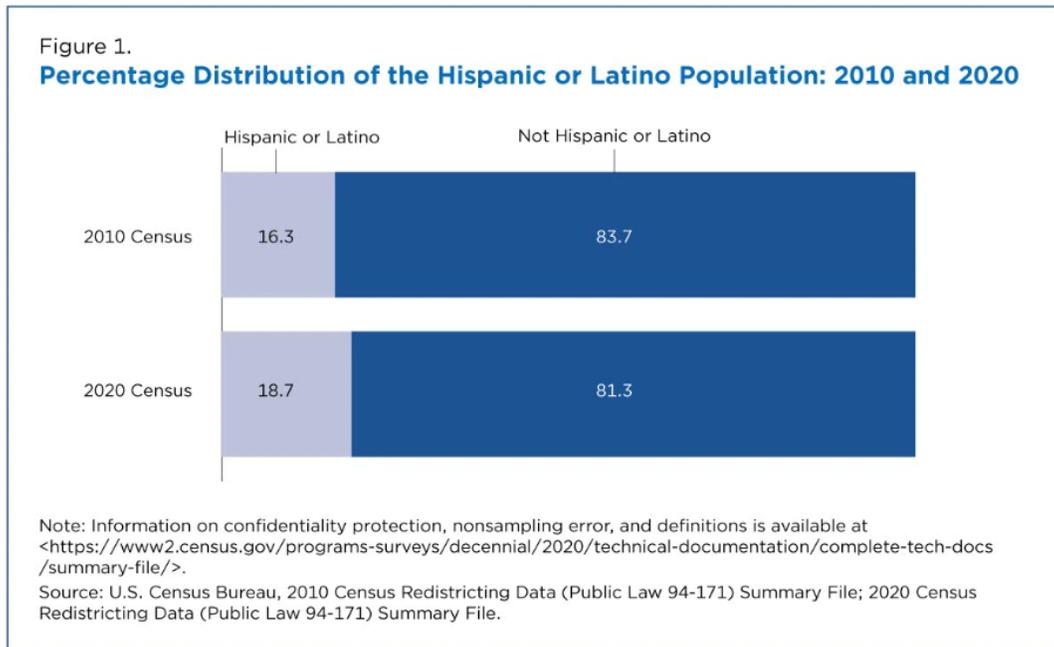


Figure 1.

Percentage Distribution of the Hispanic or Latino Population: 2010 and 2020

Note: Information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions is available at <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/complete-tech-docs/summary-file/>.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File; 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File.

Figure 3. Percentage distribution of the Hispanic or Latino population, 2010-2020.

According to the latest projections from the Census Bureau ([US Census Bureau 2018: revised October 2021](#)), the Latino population is expected to account for 28% of the total U.S. population by 2060. In 2016, the Hispanic population accounted for 17.8%, which would mean a more than 10% increase by 2060 if the projection holds.

The 2018 Hispanic Map discussed the ways the rising Hispanic population corresponds to broader demographic shifts in the country, which remain in effect today. The downward trend of the white population continues: the proportion of non-Hispanic whites has fallen since the end of the 20th century while that of other racial and ethnic groups has risen. The 2018 Hispanic Map presented data which suggested that non-Hispanic whites would account for less than half of the total U.S. population by 2045 ([Colby & Ortman, 2015](#); [U.S. Census Bureau-ACS 2021: DP05](#)), and this projection is expected to hold: the Census Bureau estimates that the non-Hispanic white population will fall from 199 million in 2020 to 179 million in 2060. However, the white population in general (including white Hispanic people) is projected to grow from 253 to 275 million within the same period ([Vespa et al., 2020, p.3](#)). In 2017, the Census Bureau projected a 9% decrease in the non-Hispanic white population between 2016 and 2060, while other demographic groups were projected to grow, assuming no major changes in current conditions, especially relative to projections of immigration rates ([US Census Bureau 2017](#); [Vespa et al., 2020](#)). The Census Bureau's calculations assume that the immigration trends of the past few decades will remain consistent in the decades to come.

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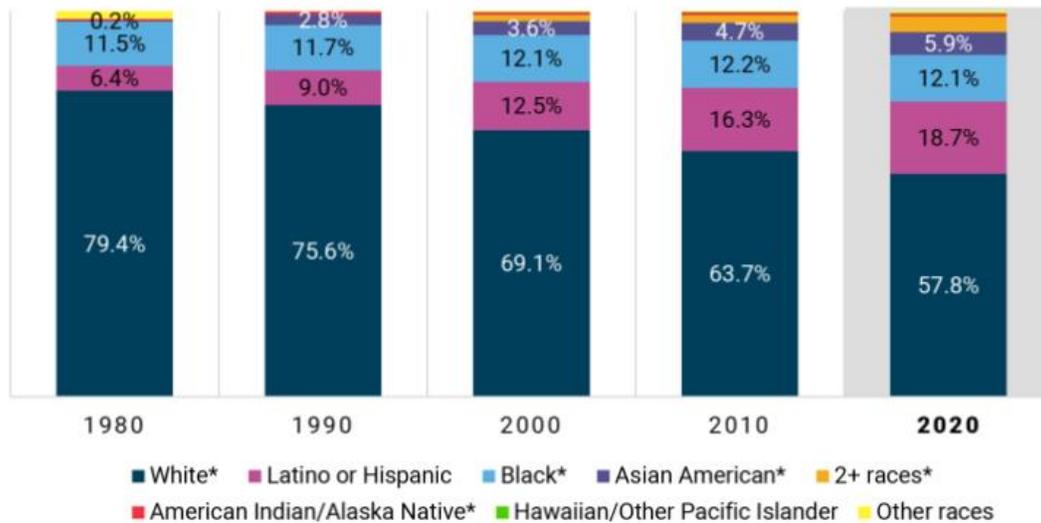
2.b Immigration vs. Natural Growth

A study of the census by Johnson ([Johnson, 2020](#)) puts these population change projections into context based on two influential factors: birth and mortality rates, and international migration. The study assumes three immigration scenarios: zero

(there is no immigration, but there is emigration), low (immigration rates are cut roughly in half), and high (immigration rates rise by 50%). The same assumptions of birth and mortality rates are used across all three scenarios.

As was mentioned earlier, according to the Census Bureau's standard prediction, the Latino population will have nearly doubled by 2060 (from 57.47 million in 2016 to 111.22 million in 2060). However, in a zero-immigration scenario, the Hispanic population would grow 35.2% (reaching 77.69 million by 2060). In a low-immigration scenario, it would grow 74.1% (reaching 100.04 million by 2060), and in a high-immigration scenario, it would grow 122.7% (or 127.98 million by 2060). To put these numbers into context, the bi- or multi-racial population would grow 159.5% in a zero-immigration scenario, 185.6% in a low-immigration scenario, and 215.6% in a high-immigration scenario. Meanwhile, the Asian population would fall 20.8% in a zero-immigration scenario, but would grow 60.1% in a low immigration scenario and 162.4% in a high immigration scenario ([Johnson, 2020, pp. 2-4](#)). While the Latino and bi- or multi-racial populations will grow naturally, independent of immigration rates, Asian population growth will be more subject to changes in immigration policy.

The Hispanic population remains the largest minority group in the country. Using the visualizations of the census data collected by the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institute ([Frey, 2021](#)), Figure 4 shows the U.S. population sorted by percentage of racial or ethnic background from 1980 to 2020. As the figure makes evident, the Latino population has passed the African American as the largest minority group in 2000, and the gap continued to grow by 2020.



*non-Latino or Hispanic members of race group

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 1980-2020 US decennial censuses.
 Note: For 1980 and 1990, category 2+ races did not exist and Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders were included as part of Asian Americans.

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Figure 4. Ethnic-racial makeup of the United States, 1980-2020.

Currently, bi- and multi-racials are the fastest-growing demographic group, with a projected growth of 215%. They are followed by the Asian population, at 171%. In the third place, natural births in the Hispanic population will produce a 122% increase, from 37.819 U.S.-born Hispanic people in 2016 to 83.971 in 2060 (Vespa et al., 2020, p. 7). However, these demographic shifts will arise for different reasons. The foreign-born Hispanic population will grow 38.5% in that same period, while the foreign-born Asian population will grow 63.5%, and the foreign-born Black population by 104%.

It is important to keep in mind, though, that Hispanic women’s birth rates continue to decline. The birth rate fell from 98.3 births per 1,000 of Hispanic women in 2006 to 71.7 in 2015 (Krogstad, 2017); in 2021, the birth rate of Hispanic women aged 16-44 fell to 56.3 (Osterman et al., 2023). As such, while it remains true that the Hispanic population is growing, the pace of that growth has slowed.

It is also important to note that U.S.-born Hispanic people (39,886,947 in 2020) represent the largest proportion of the Hispanic population in the U.S. Likewise, it is worth remembering that the continuous growth of U.S. Hispanic people in recent years has been due to natural births. The number of U.S.-born Hispanic people reached 67% of the total Latino population in 2019 ([Funk & López, 2022](#)), compared with 60% in the year 2000. The number of foreign-born Latino people in that same year was estimated to be 19,474,073 ([US Census Bureau 2020](#)).

Keeping this in mind, Figure 5 shows the evolution of immigration from Latin America and Spain ([Migration Policy Institute \(MPI\) Data Hub, 2019](#)). The largest group of immigrants is from Mexico (shown in Figure 5 as the red line at the top of the graphic), however, that number has seen a decrease since 2010, when the population of Mexican-born immigrants reached approximately 11.7 million (or 30% of the total immigrant population): in 2019, the foreign-born Mexican population accounted for roughly 24% of all immigrants in the United States, or roughly 11 million. This decrease in the general rate of Mexican immigration to the U.S. has contributed to a slowdown in Latino population growth in the U.S. as a whole. All other Latin American immigrant groups shown have increased since the 1990s, though none have surpassed 3%. El Salvador accounts for nearly 3% of all immigrants in the U.S., while many other nations of origin shown in Figure 5 account for less than 1% of the total U.S. immigrant population, with Spain accounting for 0.3% and Uruguay 0.1% in 2019.

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U.S. Immigrant Population by Country of Birth, 1960-2019

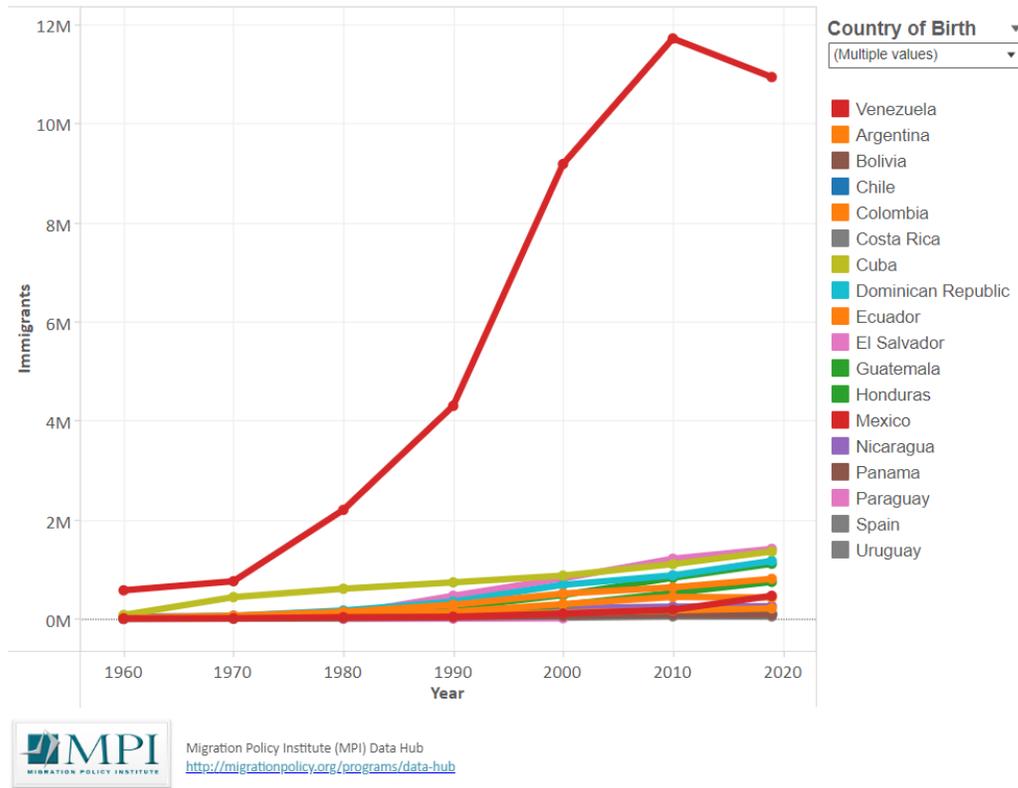


Figure 5. Number of immigrants by country of origin, 1960-2019.

Historically, immigration has been the primary factor in the growth of the Hispanic population, as there were fewer Hispanic children born in the U.S. than there were Hispanic immigrants. Now, the trend has inverted, with more natural births and less immigration. Immigration policies in the U.S. have become stricter since the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, especially from the 1990s onward, such that the Latino population already in the country began to grow at a faster rate.

U.S.-born Hispanics are the leading source of Hispanic population growth in the U.S., a trend which has accelerated since 2010. The so-called Great Recession led to an even greater decrease in Latin American immigration rates, especially from Mexico. Between 2010 and 2019, 9.3 million Hispanics were born in the U.S.,

compared to 3.5 million Hispanic immigrants who arrived in that same period. For comparison, between 2000-2010, 6.5 million Hispanics immigrated to the U.S. ([Krogstad et al., 2022](#)). As Figure 6 shows, the foreign- and Puerto Rican-born Hispanic population has decreased since the outset of the 21st century.

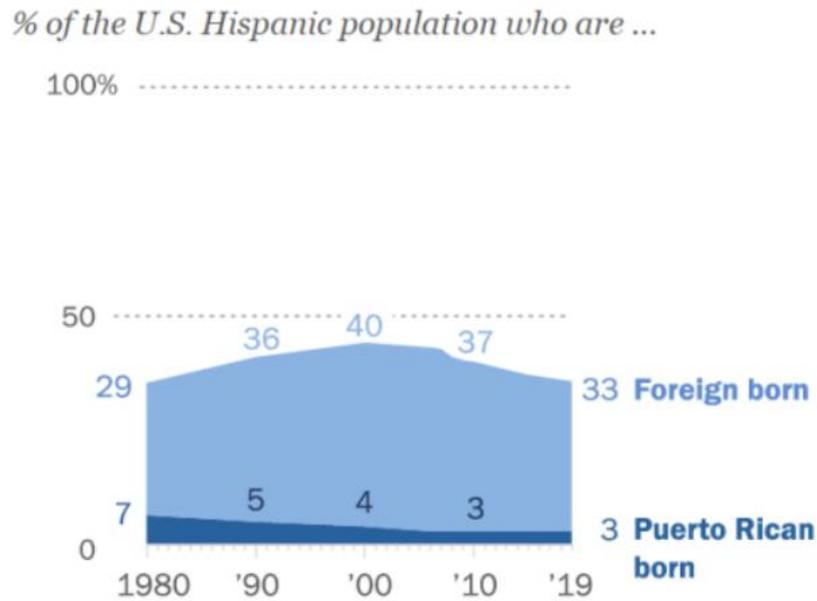


Figure 6. Foreign-born and Puerto Rican-born Hispanics, 1980-2019. ([Pew Research Center, June 2022](#)).

As the 2018 Hispanic Map pointed out, the fact that natural growth and not immigration is driving the rise in Hispanic population has major implications for this group's quality of life, linguistic capacities, education level, adult income, homeownership, and identity.

2.c Countries of Origin

The Hispanic population in the United States comes from over 20 distinct Spanish-speaking countries, 6 of which have U.S. populations over one million. Table 1 presents the fourteen Spanish-speaking countries with the largest U.S. populations; immigrants from these areas and their descendants account for 95% of the Hispanic people in the U.S.

| Country | 2016 | | 2020 | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| Mexico | 36,255,589 | 66.3% | 36,537,028 | 65.2% |
| Puerto Rico | 5,450,472 | 9.9% | 5,699,150 | 10.1% |
| Cuba | 2,212,566 | 4% | 2,332,584 | 4.1% |
| El Salvador | 2,195,477 | 4% | 2,244,914 | 4% |
| Dominican Republic | 1,914,120 | 3.5% | 2,042,360 | 3.6% |
| Guatemala | 1,416,175 | 2.5% | 1,484,005 | 2.6% |
| Colombia | 1,104,535 | 2% | 1,241,915 | 2.2% |
| Honduras | 948,587 | 1.7% | 949,671 | 1.6% |
| Spain | 773,447 | 1.4% | 868,888 | 1.5% |
| Ecuador | 715,270 | 1.3% | 728,325 | 1.3% |
| Perú | 627,538 | 1.1% | 675,247 | 1.2% |
| Nicaragua | 401,743 | 0.7% | 417,171 | 0.7% |
| Venezuela | 366,443 | 0.6% | 480,510 | 0.8% |
| Argentina | 269,421 | 0.4% | 289,171 | 0.5% |
| Total | 54,651,383 | | 55,990,939 | |

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Table 1. Hispanic people in the United States by country of origin.
(U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder 2016: B03001, and [U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2020](#)).

Due to the decrease in Mexican immigration, the percentage of Mexican-born Hispanic people fell between 2016-2020, as Table 1 shows. Second from the top is the Puerto Rican-born Hispanic group, whose population has grown within that same

time span, followed by Cubans, El Salvadoreans, Dominicans, Guatemalans, and Colombians. Latino people from Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Costa Rica have never numbered over 200,000. Spain's migrant population within the U.S. is comparable to Honduras or Ecuador's.

2.d Age

The Hispanic community remains the youngest demographic group in the United States, although their average age has risen slightly: in 2016, the average age of the Hispanic population was 28.9 ([U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder 2016: B01002I](#)), compared to 29.5 in 2020. Nonetheless, they remain younger than other demographic groups: the average age of the "white-alone" population (those with exclusively white origins) fell from 43.4 in 2016 to 41.1 in 2020; the Black population's average age rose from 33.9 to 34.3; and the exclusively Asian population's rose from 36.9 to 37.2 ([American Community Survey 2021](#)). The average age of the general U.S. population was 37.9 in 2016, and rose to 38.5 in 2023 ([World Population Review 2023](#)).

2.e Population by State

In 2020, the Hispanic population continues to be concentrated in traditional states of immigration and Hispanic residency, such as California (15,579,652), Texas (11,441,717), Florida (5,697,240), New York (3,948,032), Illinois (2,337,410), Arizona (2,192,253,) New Jersey (2,002,575), Colorado (1,263,390), and New Mexico (1,010,811) ([US Census Bureau 2020](#)). However, more and more states have significant Hispanic populations: Georgia (1,123,457), North Carolina (1,118,596), Washington (1,059,213), Pennsylvania (1,049,615), and Massachusetts (887,685). These, among others, have experienced large Hispanic population growth in the last decades ([US Census Bureau 2020](#)). Other states with fewer Hispanic people are

nonetheless experiencing growth, such as Maryland (729,745), Indiana (554,191), Alabama (264,047), Arkansas (256,847), and Kansas (382,603). It is also worth pointing out that there were 3,249,043 Hispanic people in Puerto Rico in 2020 ([US Census Bureau 2020](#)).

Table 2 below offers a comparison of Hispanic population numbers by state from 2016 to 2020. Table 3 shows its percentage growth by state. We can see that New Mexico continues to have the highest proportion of Latino people, 50.1%, followed by Texas, with 40.2%, and California, also with 40.2% ([US Census Bureau 2021](#)). However, California had the largest Latino population in strictly numerical terms, at 15,579,652 in 2020 ([U.S. Census Bureau 2020](#)).

| | State | Hispanic Population 2020 | Hispanic Population 2016 |
|----|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | California | 15,579,652 | 15,280,773 |
| 2 | Texas | 11,441,717 | 10,881,124 |
| 3 | Florida | 5,697,240 | 5,126,975 |
| 4 | New York | 3,948,032 | 3,747,125 |
| 5 | Illinois | 2,337,410 | 2,181,439 |
| 6 | Arizona | 2,192,253 | 2,144,775 |
| 7 | New Jersey | 2,002,575 | 1,786,668 |
| 8 | Colorado | 1,263,390 | 1,181,219 |
| 9 | Georgia | 1,123,457 | 972,698 |
| 10 | New Mexico | 1,010,811 | 1,009,873 |

Table 2. Hispanic population by state
(U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder 2016: PEPASR6H, and [U.S. Census Bureau, 2020](#)).

| | State | Hispanic Population 2021 | Hispanic Population 2016 |
|----|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Nuevo México | 50,1% | 48,5% |
| 2 | Texas | 40,2% | 39,1% |
| 3 | California | 40,2% | 38,9% |
| 4 | Arizona | 32,3% | 30,5% |
| 5 | Nevada | 29,9% | 28,5% |
| 6 | Florida | 26,8% | 24,9% |
| 7 | Colorado | 22,3% | 21,3% |
| 8 | Nueva Jersey | 21,5% | 20% |
| 9 | Nueva York | 19,5% | 19% |
| 10 | Illinois | 18% | 17% |

Table 3. The Hispanic population as a percentage of total population by state.
(U.S. Census Bureau/American FactFinder 2016: PEPASR6H, and [U.S. Census Bureau, 2021](#)).

The map presented in Figure 7 shows Hispanic geographic distribution by county. As we can see, the counties with the largest Hispanic populations are mostly concentrated in the Southwest and in southern Florida.

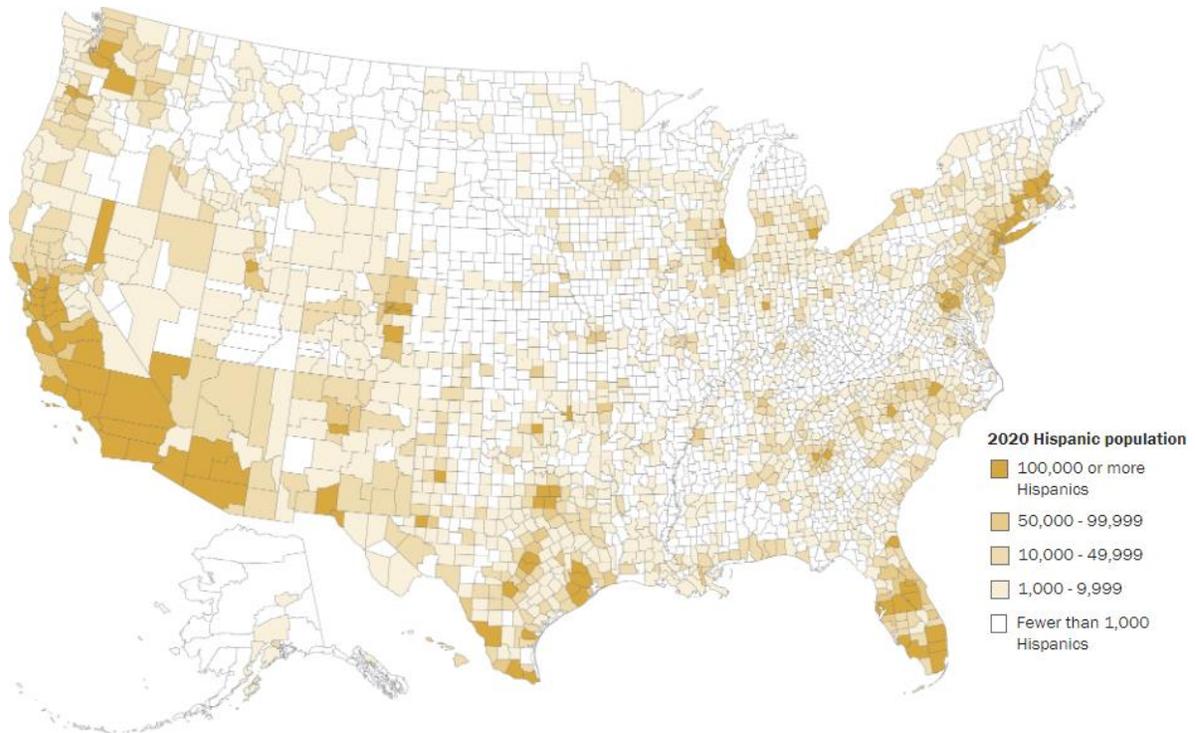


Figure 7. Distribution of Hispanics in the U.S. by county, based on data from the 2020 census ([Pew Research Center 2022](#)).

Finally, Table 4 shows the range of counties with the highest Hispanic populations between 2010 and 2020, led by Los Angeles (CA), Harris (TX), and Miami-Dade (FL). However, these counties do not have the fastest-growing Hispanic population, as shown by Table 5, which presents the counties with the highest rates of Hispanic population growth during the same period. The counties at the top of that list are McKenzie and William in North Dakota (ND), Charlton in Georgia (GA), and Allen in Louisiana (LA).

| County | Hispanic population | Rank of Hispanic population | Hispanic share of population | Rank of Hispanic share of population | Hispanic growth, 2010 - 2020 | Hispanic growth rank, 2010 - 2020 |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Los Angeles County, CA | 4,804,763 | 1 | 48% | 111 | 2% | 1,568 |
| Harris County, TX | 2,034,709 | 2 | 43% | 134 | 22% | 1,189 |
| Miami-Dade County, FL | 1,856,938 | 3 | 69% | 31 | 14% | 1,372 |
| Cook County, IL | 1,382,778 | 4 | 26% | 283 | 11% | 1,433 |
| Maricopa County, AZ | 1,351,415 | 5 | 31% | 229 | 20% | 1,243 |
| Riverside County, CA | 1,202,295 | 6 | 50% | 102 | 21% | 1,209 |
| Bexar County, TX | 1,190,958 | 7 | 59% | 62 | 18% | 1,280 |
| San Bernardino County, CA | 1,170,913 | 8 | 54% | 86 | 17% | 1,316 |
| San Diego County, CA | 1,119,629 | 9 | 34% | 195 | 13% | 1,394 |
| Orange County, CA | 1,086,834 | 10 | 34% | 191 | 7% | 1,501 |

Table 4. List of 10 counties ranked by Hispanic population number, proportion, and growth, 2010-2020 ([Pew Research Center 2022](#)).

| County | Hispanic population, 2010 | Hispanic population 2010 rank | Hispanic population, 2020 | Hispanic population 2020 rank | Hispanic growth, 2010-2020 | Hispanic growth rank, 2010-2020 |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| McKenzie County, ND | 139 | 2,668 | 1,532 | 1,432 | 1,002% | 1 |
| Williams County, ND | 436 | 2,008 | 3,897 | 976 | 794% | 2 |
| Charlton County, GA | 310 | 2,232 | 2,036 | 1,286 | 557% | 3 |
| Allen Parish, LA | 342 | 2,167 | 1,893 | 1,318 | 454% | 4 |
| Stark County, ND | 454 | 1,984 | 2,274 | 1,223 | 401% | 5 |
| Lake County, MI | 243 | 2,390 | 1,195 | 1,577 | 392% | 6 |
| Winn Parish, LA | 240 | 2,398 | 1,023 | 1,674 | 326% | 7 |
| LaSalle Parish, LA | 331 | 2,194 | 1,402 | 1,480 | 324% | 8 |
| Pickens County, AL | 313 | 2,230 | 1,053 | 1,654 | 236% | 9 |
| Brown County, SD | 496 | 1,930 | 1,659 | 1,388 | 234% | 10 |

Table 5. List of 10 counties ranked by Hispanic population growth, 2010-2020 ([Pew Research Center 2022](#)).

3. Identity and Social Attitudes

3.a 'Hispanic' vs. 'Latino'

Being 'Hispanic' or 'Latino' in the United States has as many meanings in 2022 as it might have in 1980, when the Census Bureau first used the term 'Hispanic' to classify this population. There may be even as many meanings as there are people who identify by those labels. However, there are factors that influence a person's preference for one term or the other, or neither, or both. These include the organizational traditions of the groups they're part of, their birthplace (inside or outside the country), how many years they've been in the U.S., where in the U.S. they live, how many generations it has been since their first relative came to the country, their nationality of origin, their economic situation, and their ethno-racial perception in the U.S. social system. All these factors, along with social perceptions external to the group, influence the ways that Hispanics see themselves ([Lacomba, 2020, pp. 3-4](#)).

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The object of this section is to inform readers of the variety of perspectives on these terms and the nuances they may conceal, which make it difficult to come to an unequivocally definitive position. It's a matter of separating a sense of belonging to all things Latino or Hispanic from a sense of ownership over an absolute identity conveyed by these terms through their symbolism, not just for those who are part of the group, but also those outside of it. While the terms 'Latino' and 'Hispanic' define a diverse group, the Office of Management and Budget of the U.S. Census Bureau brings them together under the umbrella of the following definition: "'Hispanic or Latino' [is defined] as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race" ([US Census Bureau 2022](#)).

In short, it is a broad definition, and it includes ‘Hispanic’ ties, understood here as the Spanish language and cultural practices passed down from Spanish colonization in Latin America. This definition was first formalized for the U.S. census in 1980, as mentioned above. It was also promoted by groups of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans in the country between 1950-1980, though not without difficulty. At the time, those were the predominant groups ([Lacomba, 2020, p. 5](#)) and, as noted in the previous section, the same groups predominate today, although with distinct sociodemographic characteristics.

The term ‘Hispanic’ refers to the Spanish language and to origins in a Spanish-speaking country. Given that this term groups Spaniards with Latin American Spanish-speakers, certain groups within the ‘Latino’ community react against it, identifying Spaniards as Europeans based on their geographic origins in Europe and their shared history with the other European countries—including the Netherlands, England, France, and Portugal—that colonized Latin America. For these reasons, they see Spaniards as ‘Hispanic,’ but not ‘Latino.’ The latter term refers to an origin in Latin America and generally tends to include indigenous Latin American origins as well.

That being said, if we follow this definition of Latin America rigorously, it must be asked whether populations not typically included under the ‘Latino’ category identify as such. For example, if we use the term ‘Latino’ as an exclusively geographic reference, we must ask whether Brazilians and other Caribbean groups such as Jamaicans, Antilleans, Belizeans, and Haitians identify with this label. Likewise, we must consider whether indigenous Latin American groups feel connected to any of these definitions. Finally, there are also Spaniards who consider themselves Latino via sociocultural, familial, and linguistic affinities with the group.

The academic discipline focused on the U.S. Latino population is called “Latino Studies.” This is also the name that has been given to departments at U.S. universities by academics who seek to distinguish the field from “Latin American Studies,” which is more widespread, and where teaching and research are focused on Latin America as a geographic area to be studied, not on the U.S. Latin American population. “Latino Studies” departments have come about through the development of Chicano and Puerto Rican studies, which themselves came about through the mobilization of young university students in the student movements of the 1960s, and more concretely, during the Chicano movement between 1963-1972 ([Lacomba, 2020, p.11](#)).

In the view of descendants of the generations that mobilized in the nineteen sixties, seventies, and eighties, the terms ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Latino’ are linked not only to supposed linguistic and cultural similarities, or to specific geographic areas, but also to an associative tradition for the progress of Latino communities and the end of discrimination against them. This is something which the more recently arrived populations from Latin America do not know about or share with those descendants. Additionally, and particularly for those in New York and the Southwest who grew up in the latter decades of the 20th century, the term ‘Hispanic’ is often associated with insults received from other social groups during that era, and therefore brings to mind the social discrimination they faced at the time. Latino Studies departments focus on spreading the knowledge about those social circumstances, as well as with the cultural, academic, economic, and political contributions of the U.S. Latino community.

In surveys periodically undertaken by the Pew Research Center, Hispanics self-identify based on the categories ‘country of origin,’ ‘Hispanic/Latino,’ ‘American,’ ‘no preference,’ ‘Hispanic,’ and ‘Latino.’ Based on these surveys, Figures 8 and 9 indicate that in 2018 and 2019, Hispanic people primarily self-identified based on their country of origin (47% of those surveyed), or by 3% less than

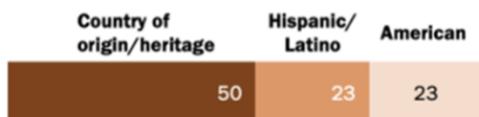
in 2015. Still, ‘country of origin’ has remained the most prevalent manner of self-identification for this group since at least 1980. As far as the ‘Hispanic/Latino’ distinction, in 2018-2019, some 39% identified as ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latino,’ and 14% as ‘American’ (referring, in this case, to the United States), which contrasts with the numbers from 2015, where 23% identified as ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latino’ and 23% identified as ‘American.’

In terms of a general preference for one term or the other, there are a few significant data points. While some studies show a preference for ‘Hispanic’ over ‘Latino’ ([Lopez et al., 2022](#); [Taylor et al., 2012](#)), others indicate that Hispanic people refer to their ethnic origin using the term ‘Latino’ more often than ‘Hispanic’ ([Rodríguez, 2014](#)). Figures 8 and 9 quantify the results collected by the Pew Research Center’s surveys over those same years. In 2019, 54% had no preference for one term or the other, 27% preferred Hispanic, and 18% preferred Latino. In 2015, 51% had no preference, 32% preferred Hispanic, and 15% selected Latino. The percentage of people who prefer to identify by their country of origin has increased, and the two pan-ethnic terms have followed opposing trends: identification as ‘Hispanic’ has decreased while identification as ‘Latino’ has increased; in the coming years, we will see whether these trends indicate a definitive change in the preferences for one term or the other.

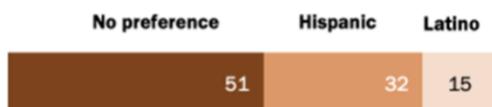
30

Hispanics have mixed views on how they describe their identity

% of Hispanics saying they describe themselves most often as ...



Do you prefer the term "Hispanic" or "Latino"?

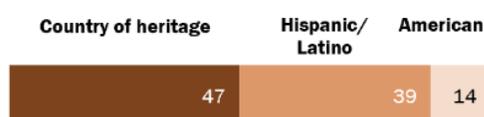


Note: "No preference" is a voluntary response. Other voluntary responses not shown.
Source: Pew Research Center 2015 National Survey of Latinos (Oct. 21-Nov. 30, 2015).

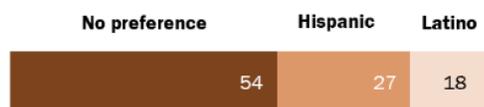
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Hispanics have mixed views on how they describe their identity

% of Hispanics saying they describe themselves most often as ...



Do you prefer the term "Hispanic" or "Latino"?



Note: "No preference" is a voluntary response. Other voluntary responses not shown.
Source: Surveys of U.S. Latino adults conducted in 2018 and 2019.

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Figures 8 and 9. Self-identification by terminology 2015-2019 ([PEW Research center 2021](#)).

It is worth noting that TV shows, music genres, and celebrities use the word ‘Latino’ instead of ‘Hispanic’ or ([Rodríguez, 2014](#)). We need look no further than the so-called Latin Grammy Awards for an example of this.

Likewise, as Moreno-Fernández and Hernández-Nieto (2017) point out, when Latinos are asked about their commonalities, 39% say they have much in common with other Hispanics, 39% say they share some values, 15% say they have few things in common with other Latinos, and 5% say they have nothing in common ([Lopez, 2013](#)).

While it is true that the terms ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Latino’ encapsulate many meanings, this categorization has its own purposes in U.S. identity politics. For example, ‘Hispanics’ have formal representation in Congress through the [Congressional Hispanic Caucus](#). Formed in 1976, this caucus drafts legislation addressing U.S. Hispanic communities and the issues that affect them.

The diversity in the group, alongside internal interpretations of the identity labels ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Latino,’ make global representation of ‘Latino-ism’ difficult. The same could be said of Congressional proposals meant to represent all Hispanic people. Nonetheless, these categories help bring visibility to this group and its general characteristics, even if the internal particularities are diluted. In effect, given the diversity of perspectives, these identifying categories should be considered primarily in general terms, because the diversity of this group makes for rich nuances of identity that the pan-ethnic categories of ‘Latino’ and ‘Hispanic’ flatten.

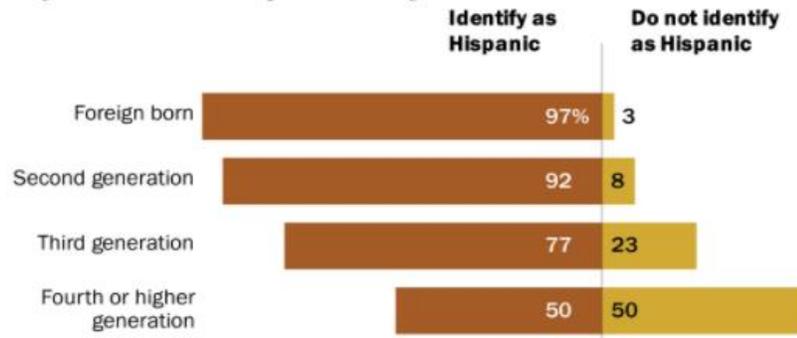
3.b Cross-generational Identification as Hispanic / Latino

Group identification is also influenced by birthplace. Figure 10 shows the tendency of Americans with Hispanic ancestry to identify as Hispanic or otherwise, based on how far they are from the first immigrant generation. Of those born outside of the U.S. (generally known as the ‘immigrant generation’ in migration studies), 97% identify as Hispanic and 3% as non-Hispanic. The descendants of the immigration generation, born in the United States and known as ‘second-generation immigrants,’ also largely identify as Hispanic, at 92%, with only 8% identifying as non-Hispanic. It is the children of the second-generation, or ‘third-generation immigrants,’ who begin to identify as non-Hispanic in greater proportion than the previous two generations: 77% identify as Hispanic, and 23% as non-Hispanic. Beginning with ‘fourth generation immigrants’ and beyond, these two numbers grow closer, with each of the possible identifications being used by around 50% of individuals.

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Among Americans with Hispanic ancestry, share that identifies as Hispanic or Latino falls across immigrant generations

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry who ...



Note: Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Those who do not self-identify as Hispanic say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Second generation refers to those born in the 50 states or District of Columbia to at least one immigrant parent. Third generation refers to those born in the 50 states or D.C. to parents and grandparents who are U.S. born. Fourth or higher generation refers to those born in the 50 states or D.C. with parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, or even more distant relatives, who are born in the 50 states or D.C.

Source: Pew Research Center 2015 National Survey of Latinos (Oct. 21-Nov. 30, 2015) and survey of self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry or heritage only (Nov. 11, 2015-Feb. 7, 2016).

"Hispanic Identity Fades Across Generations as Immigrant Connections Fall Away"

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Figure 10. Percent tendency of U.S. citizens with Hispanic ancestry to identify as Hispanic or non-Hispanic in the United States, by generation ([Pew Research Report, September 15th, 2020](#)).

In contrast, according to the data from Lopez ([2013](#)) highlighted in the 2017 Hispanic Map and shown here in Figure 11, the percentage of Hispanic people who consider themselves American is as high as 30% by the second-generation and 59% in third and higher generations.

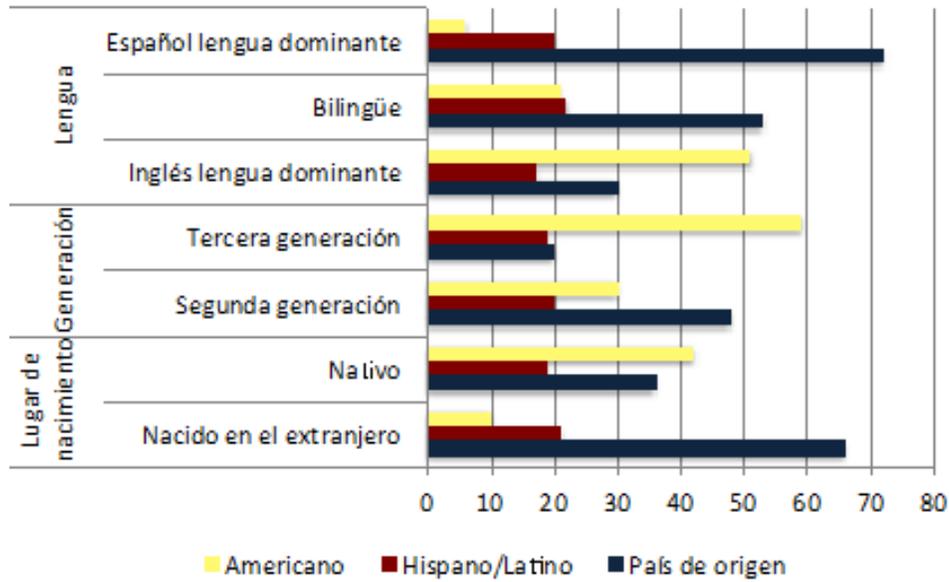


Figure 11. Hispanic self-identification by language, generation, and birthplace (Lopez, 2013).

The 2021 National Survey of Latinos, published by the Pew Research Center, shows that Hispanic people are less likely to identify as American, although the likelihood of American identification continues to rise with each generation. Figure 12 shows the percentage of Hispanic people who, in their own words, identify with the categories ‘Hispanic or Latino,’ their ‘country of origin,’ ‘American,’ ‘white,’ or ‘some other race.’ We can see that identification as ‘American’ rises with each generation. While 5% of foreign-born individuals identify as ‘American,’ 20% of individuals born four generations after their Hispanic ancestors arrived in the country identify that way. Relative to results from 2013, it is evident that the tendency to identify as American rises with each subsequent generation, though to a lesser and lesser degree. This could be due to differences in the way the question is formulated in distinct surveys, but the upward trend of identification as ‘American’ in later generations nonetheless holds steady, despite these potential discrepancies.

% of Hispanic adults saying, in their own words, their race or origin is ...

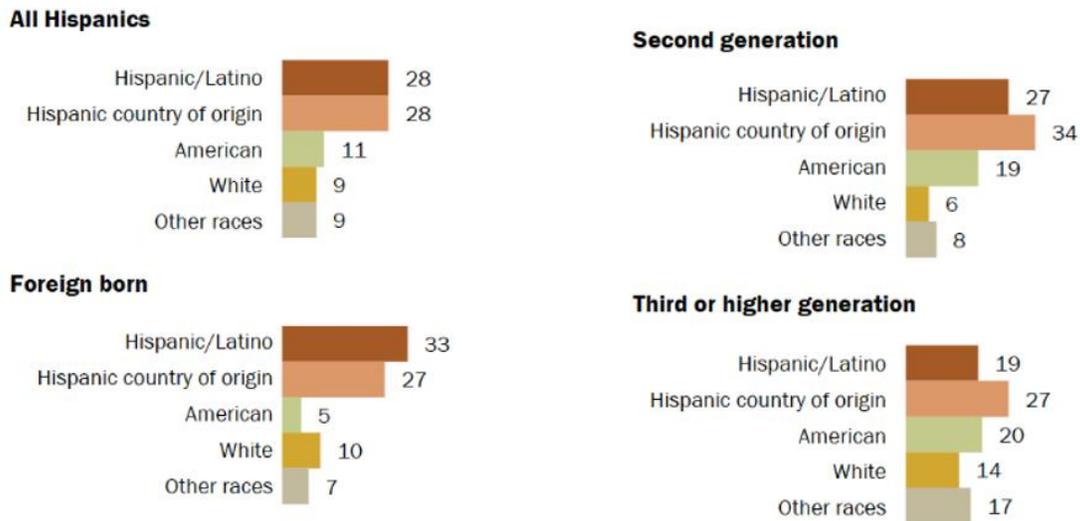
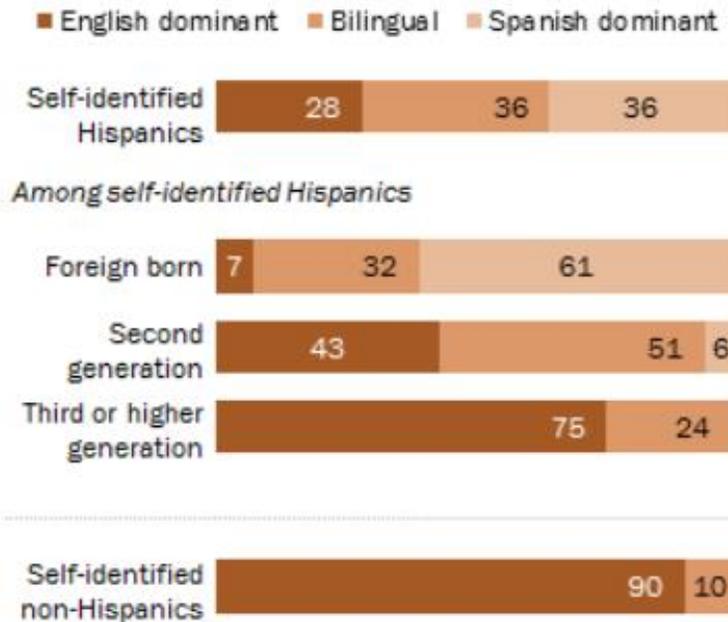


Figure 12. Percentage of Hispanic adults who, in their own words, identify by their race or country of origin ([PEW Research Center, November 3rd, 2021](#)).

When it comes to dominant language (English or Spanish)—also determined to some degree by birthplace and years lived in the U.S. Taylor et al. (2012) indicate that 51% of Hispanic people who consider themselves American are English-dominant. Among those who are Spanish-dominant, only 6% consider themselves American. In terms of the relationship between self-identification and generation, Figure 11 shows that self-identification increases from 10% for the generation that first immigrates to the U.S. to 59% by the third generation. Figure 13 shows the prevalence of English compared to the decline in Spanish use with each subsequent generation: 61% of foreign-born individuals who identify as Hispanic normally use Spanish, as compared to the 7% who prefer English and the 32% who consider themselves bilingual; these numbers stand in contrast to the third generation, where 75% speak English and 24% consider themselves bilingual, but none indicate that they speak only Spanish.

English becomes dominant language among later immigrant generations as Spanish declines

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry who are ...



PEW Research Center, surveys conducted in 2015 in 2016

Figure 13. Surveys conducted in 2015 and 2016. Percentage of adults in the U.S. with Hispanic ancestry who are English-dominant, Spanish-dominant, or bilingual, by immigration generation and self-identification ([Pew Research Center, December 20th 2017](#)).

In other words, being Hispanic in the United States today is not necessarily tied to speaking Spanish, although 95% of Latinos maintain at least a symbolic connection to the language. As shown in the 2017 Hispanic Map, roughly 71% of Hispanic people believe that you can be Hispanic without speaking Spanish, a percentage which bifurcates when we filter for birthplace: only 58% of foreign-born Hispanic people believe that to be true, compared to 87% of U.S.-born Hispanic

people ([Lopez, 2016](#)). These numbers are not surprising given today's demographic context (an increase in the US-native Hispanic population) and restrictive immigration policies (a decrease in foreign-born Hispanic people).

4. Language Proficiency and Use

4.a Context

In the annual report *El Español en el mundo 2021* [Spanish in the World 2021], the Instituto Cervantes estimated that there are around 493 million native Spanish-speakers in the world, and that the group of *potential users*, defined as native Spanish-speakers, Spanish-speakers with limited proficiency, and those who seek to learn Spanish as a foreign language (p.137), was over 591 million, which constitutes 7.5% of the world population ([Villalba, 2021, p. 28](#)). This marks a rise since the Instituto Cervantes' 2017 report, which found 477 million native speakers and 572 million potential users ([Fernández Vítóres, 2017](#)). It is estimated that, in 2060, when the U.S.'s Hispanic population will double (as has been mentioned several times in this study), this country will have the second-largest community of Spanish speakers in the world ([Mercado, 2023, p. 1](#)).

Where does Spanish in the United States stand in the global panorama? The U.S. has one of the highest numbers of Spanish-speakers of any country in the world. Since 1980, the U.S. Census Bureau has monitored the languages spoken within its territory and contrasted their use with English. While the figures provided by the Census Bureau and the American Community Survey (ACS) are only approximations and tend to undercount, these are nonetheless solid references for national data. Data from 2022, provided by the 2019 edition of the ACS, estimates there to be around 41.8 million Spanish-speakers in the U.S.

That being said, prior studies suggest that the number could have been as high as 48.6 million in 2015 if we had included undocumented immigrants and non-Hispanic people who speak Spanish at home, as well as native Latino people and non-natives who were not surveyed (Escobar & Potowski, 2015; [Krogstad & González-Barrera, 2015](#)). Based on the 2010 census, the Department of Homeland Security estimated there to be 11.4 million undocumented people in the U.S. in 2018 ([Baker, 2021, p. 3](#)); other studies put forth a lower number, estimating 10.5 million in 2017 ([Lopez et al., 2021](#)). This is relevant to the present study as over 70% of these undocumented immigrants come from Spanish-speaking countries ([MPI Data Hub 2019](#)). In other words, had those numbers been counted, the United States would have been the second largest Spanish-speaking country in the world in the 2000s, surpassed only by Mexico (Escobar & Potowski, 2015, p. xix).

Figure 14 shows how the Census Bureau's ACS formulates questions about language use in both English and Spanish. The latest report on language use in the U.S. from the U.S. Census Bureau ([Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022](#)), indicates that approximately 13.5% of the population speaks Spanish at home. This would mark an increase from the 12.9% listed in the language use report from the 2011 census (Ryan, 2011). Concretely, between 1980 to 2019, there has been a 275.6% increase in the number of people who use Spanish at home, with 56.8% of that increase occurring between 2000 and 2019 ([Dietrich & Hernandez, 2022, Table 1](#)).

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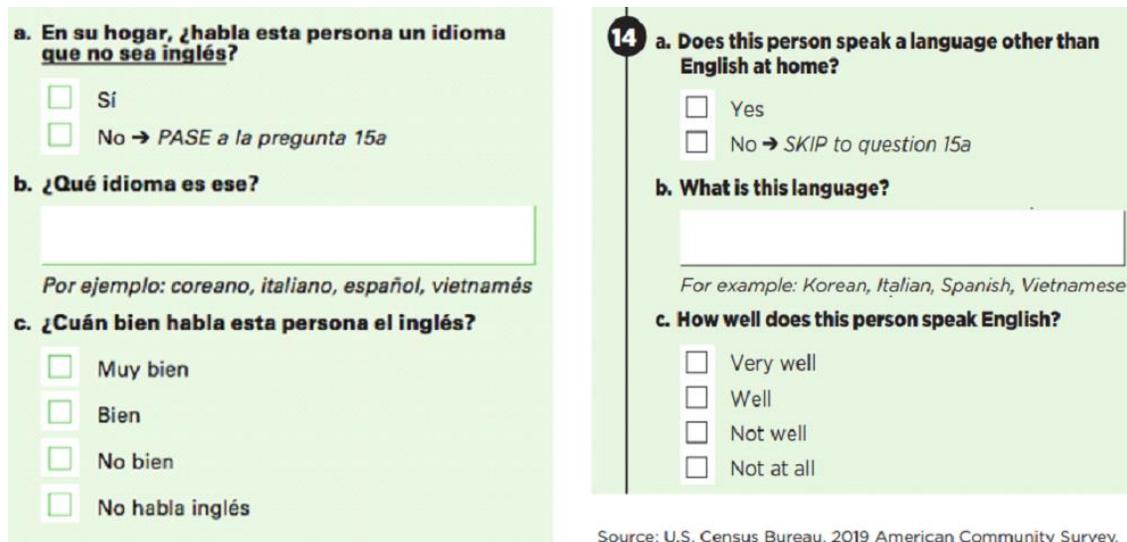


Figure 14. Reproduction of the question about language use in the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau/ACS 2019, in English and Spanish).

4.b Spanish and English Among Hispanic People

While Spanish continues to hold considerable weight in the U.S., demographic data from recent decades can tell us how its use has changed. In prior sections of this study, it has been emphasized that the number of US-born Hispanic people has risen while Latin American immigration has fallen. These demographic circumstances have had measurable effects. According to self-reporting, 75% of third-generation Latino people are English-dominant and 24% consider themselves bilingual (Spanish-English). This trend is not only true for Hispanic people but is consistent among other immigrant groups in the United States, as well. The loss of a mother tongue is one factor among many used to measure the (general) integration of immigrants in a country. According to Rumbaut ([2009, pp. 44-48](#)), Latino immigrants lose their mother tongue more slowly than other immigrant groups, yet by the fourth generation, only 5% of Mexican-American people (the largest group of Latin Americans in the U.S.) maintain the ability to speak Spanish *very well*.

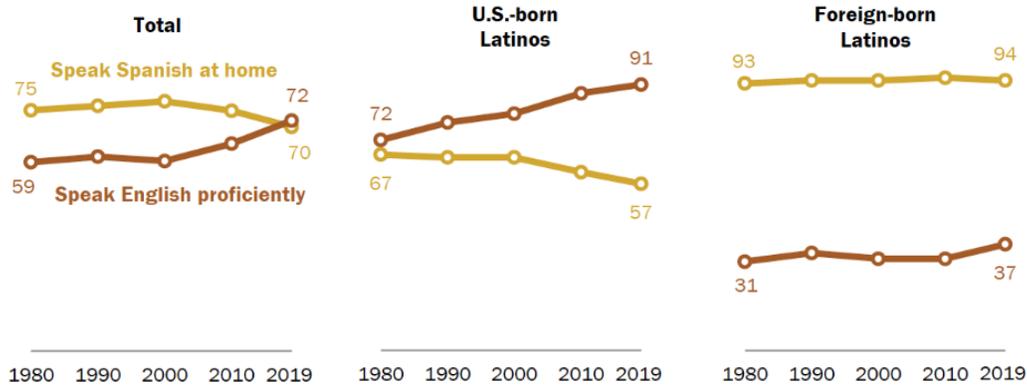
There has been no change in Spanish proficiency trends since the publication of the 2017 Hispanic Map. Figure 15 illustrates the English and Spanish proficiency of Hispanics aged 5 and older between 1980 and 2019. In it, we can see an increase in English proficiency and a decrease in Spanish proficiency in the Latino home environment, especially for those born in the United States ([Funk & Lopez, 2022](#)).

The total number of Hispanic people who speak Spanish at home has fallen 5%, from 75% to 70%. Specifically, the number of Latino people born in the U.S. who speak Spanish at home has fallen 10%—from 67% in 1980 to 57% in 2019—while the rate for foreign-born Latino people over the same period remained largely consistent, at 93% and 94%.

In contrast, the total number of Latino people proficient in English has risen 13%, from 59% in 1980 to 72% in 2019. Separated by subgroup, U.S.-born Hispanics show a greater proficiency in English, with a 19% growth—from 72% in 1980 to 91% in 2019—and foreign-born Hispanic people have also shown an increase, progressing from 31% who were proficient in English in 1980 to 37% in 2019.

For Latinos, English proficiency has increased and Spanish use at home has decreased, especially among those born in the U.S.

% of Latinos ages 5 and older who ...



Note: Latinos who speak English proficiently are those who speak only English at home or, if they speak a non-English language at home, indicate they speak English "very well."

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 1980, 1990, 2000 censuses (5% IPUMS) and 2010 and 2019 American Community Surveys (IPUMS).

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Figure 15. English proficiency (shown by brown lines) and Spanish use at home (yellow lines) based on U.S. nativity (Funk & Lopez, 2022, Pew Research Center).

It should be said that bilingualism is more prevalent among first- and second-generation immigrants. Given that the children of immigrants grow up in the U.S. education system, the second-generation Hispanic population is proficient in English and can typically also speak Spanish or at least understand it. This group of Hispanic children and teenagers forms the core of Spanish with what are known as “heritage speakers.” These students have needs distinct from those of students who learn Spanish as a foreign language, as they have been exposed to Spanish both formally and informally by their parents. As such, their Spanish education centers around developing the skills they’ve learned informally in the home and formalizing their knowledge in areas of less frequent use, which typically includes reading-writing, among other things. A field of pedagogy does exist that focuses on Spanish-language instruction and studies the learning processes of students who have inherited Spanish from their parents in migratory contexts (Parra, 2017).

As children, third-generation immigrants tend to receive less Spanish input at home, which leads to a decrease in their rate of bilingualism ([Alba, 2004](#); Alba, 2005; [Silva-Corvalán, 2014, p. 2](#)). A more infrequent use of Spanish in this generation, however, is not necessarily linked to an emotional distance from the language, as Hispanics value the ability to speak Spanish and pass it down ([Taylor et al., 2012](#)).

As we saw in the demographic section of this study, the U.S. Hispanic population is currently rising as more Hispanic people are born in the country. In general, these individuals are proficient in English. As shown by Figure 16, using data from the 2021 ACS, out of a total of 38 million (or second- and higher-generation) Hispanic people born in the U.S., around 17 million speak only English, while about 20 million speak another language in addition to English, which we can assume to be Spanish. Among this second group, some 17 million indicate that they can speak English ‘very well,’ and some 3.5 million ‘less than very well.’ This data contrasts with that of the 20 million foreign-born (or first-generation) Hispanic people: approximately 1.3 million speak only English, while 18.4 million speak another language in addition to English; among this second group, some 6 million indicate that they speak English ‘very well,’ and some 12.3 million ‘less than very well.’

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| Label | United States | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | Estimate | Margin of Error |
| ▼ Total: | 57,677,085 | ±11,817 |
| ▼ Native: | 37,867,331 | ±91,353 |
| Speak only English | 17,015,886 | ±117,209 |
| ▼ Speak another language: | 20,851,445 | ±99,190 |
| Speak English "very well" | 17,265,795 | ±94,809 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 3,585,650 | ±46,319 |
| ▼ Foreign born: | 19,809,754 | ±90,189 |
| Speak only English | 1,321,476 | ±28,280 |
| ▼ Speak another language: | 18,488,278 | ±88,659 |
| Speak English "very well" | 6,089,153 | ±50,473 |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 12,399,125 | ±83,732 |

Figure 16. Latino population grouped according to English proficiency, birthplace, and home language ([ACS, B16005i: 2021](#)).

4.c Barriers to English Proficiency

In 2021, more than 36 million Hispanic people aged 5 and older answered that they spoke only English or spoke it very well, and around 16 million answered that they did not speak English well. Among the factors that impede Hispanic progress in learning English are determinants such as age, sex, birthplace, education level, and amount of time in the U.S. ([Steinmetz, 2015](#); [Krogstad et al., 2015](#)).

In 2021, more than 36 million Hispanic people aged 5 and older answered that they spoke only English or spoke it very well, and around 16 million answered that they did not speak English well

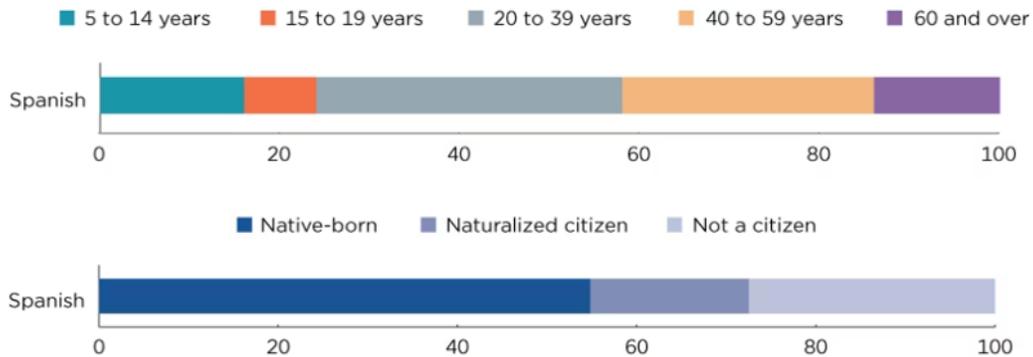
Age and education level remain strong barriers to learning English. According to a 2015 study, 21% of Hispanic people aged 65 or older don't speak English, alongside 9% who speak some English but not very well, and only 4% who reported speaking it very well. Hispanic people with a bachelor's degree tend to speak English well, or only speak English, at a rate of 61%. As we might have expected, foreign-born Hispanics show the least proficiency in English ([Krogstad, et al., 2015](#)).

Data from the American Community Survey in 2019 leads us to conclude that age, education level, and birthplace remain important factors in English proficiency today. In 2019, nearly 39% of speakers who used Spanish at home reported speaking English "less than very well." Figure 17 presents other data points from the same survey, showing that the majority of those who use Spanish at home are aged 20-60. Through studies on immigration, we know that foreign-born immigrants are typically young, working-age adults. We can link this piece of information with the data shown in Figure 17: home users of Spanish tend to come to the country as young adults and maintain Spanish as the dominant language at home.

Additionally, Figure 17 shows the percentage of speakers who use Spanish at home, based on studies with measurable data. In 2019, nearly 60% of those who used Spanish at home had no college degree; within that group, 25% graduated high school compared to 35% who did not. Of those who graduated high school, approximately 21% attended a university for at least one year or obtained a two-year degree. Finally, close to 19% of these at-home Spanish users completed a bachelor's degree (a four-year degree) or postgraduate university studies.

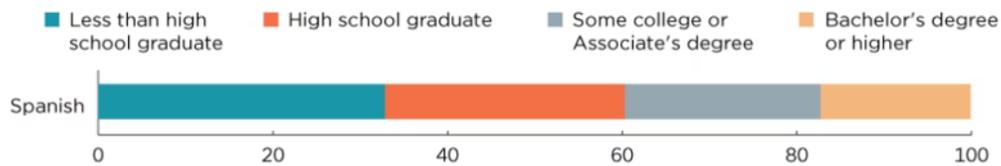
Most Frequently Spoken Languages at Home by Age, Nativity and Citizenship: 2019

(In percent)



Most Frequently Spoken Languages at Home by Education Attainment

(In percent)



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Figure 17. Most frequently spoken languages at home by age, U.S.-nativity, citizenship, and education attainment in 2019. Proprietary adaptation of the ACS's original model to show data specifically related to Spanish-speakers ([US Census Bureau 2019 ACS, 1-year estimates](#)).

4.d The Study of Spanish in the United States

The data published in the 2017 Hispanic Map remains relevant today, not least because Spanish is still the most widely studied language in the U.S.: among primary and secondary school students (K-12), 7.4 million took Spanish classes in the 2014-2015 academic year. Followed by Spanish are French (1.3 million students), German (330,898), and Chinese (227,086) ([American Councils for International Education 2017](#)).

About 19.66% of the primary and secondary school student body in the U.S. takes foreign language classes, with variations among states: Arizona, Arkansas, and New Mexico are under 10%, while D.C., Maryland, New Jersey, Vermont, and West Virginia are over 30%, and there are sixteen states with no foreign language graduation requirement. What's more, the numbers are on the decline. In 2014, a study by the American Councils for International Education (ACIE) found that 10.6 million K-12 students took foreign language classes, compared to 14.7 million in 2008 and 14.2 million in 1997 ([Rhodes & Pufahl, 2014](#)).

According to the ACIE data cited above, there were a reported total of 8,177 Spanish programs in public and private U.S. high schools, accounting for 46% of all 17,778 foreign language programs in those same schools, where French programs numbered 3,738 (21.3%), German 1,548 (8.7%), Latin 1,513 (8.5%), and Chinese 1,144 (6.45%) ([Tabla 4, ACIE 2017](#)).

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There have also been changes in bilingual education. In November 2016, California struck a requirement that classes be taught in English in public schools ([Hopkinson 2017](#)); meanwhile, in November of the following year, Baker, the governor of Massachusetts, signed into law the Language Opportunity for Our Kids Act, also known as the [LOOK Act](#), which eliminated legal restrictions that concerned instruction in a language other than English, primarily impacting immigrant students who were taught solely in English. At the same time, there has been a rise in popularity of the so-called Seal of Biliteracy, wherein students proficient in two or more languages receive an honor on their high school diploma.³

³ More information available at: sealofbiliteracy.org.

As for universities, this study has used data from surveys conducted by the Modern Language Association (MLA) in 2013 and 2016. The MLA's data shows that Spanish was the most widely studied language in pre- and post-graduate university programs in both 2013 and 2016 ([Looney & Lusin, 2019, p. 9](#)). As Figure 18 will display, Spanish has held this position since 1995. There were 790,576 students enrolled in Spanish in American universities in 2013, and 712,240 in 2016. While enrollments over that three-year period declined, future MLA study results will be necessary to ascertain whether these numbers indicate a significant trend. As of the publication of the present study, there is no updated data for 2019 and 2022; it would be interesting to note whether the American university population had a reaction to learning Spanish during the presidency of Donald Trump (2016-2020), who took an anti-foreign-language stance, with particular emphasis on Spanish ([Goldmacher, 2016](#)). It will also be important to keep in mind the effects of Covid-19 when analyzing the decline in Spanish enrollment, and enrollment in foreign languages more broadly.

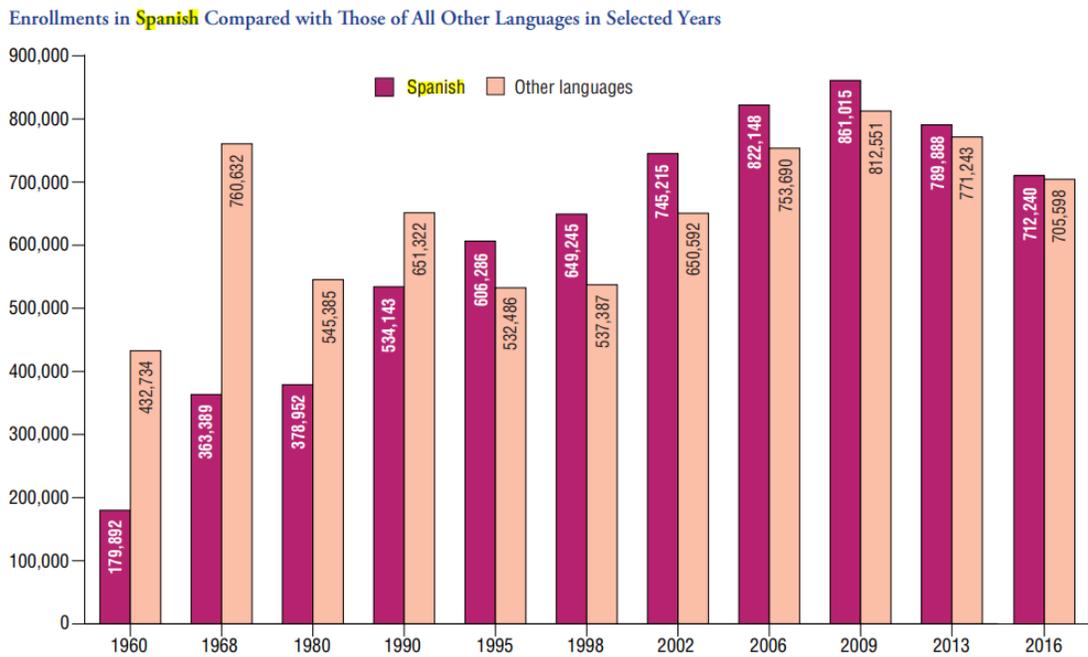


Figure 18. Enrollments in Spanish compared with those of all other languages in selected years ([Looney & Lusin, 2019](#)).

In departments where Spanish is taught, enrollments have generally declined to 9,8% in 2016, from 8,3% reported in 2013 ([Looney & Lusin 2019, p. 4](#)). Still, over one-third (36.3%) of Spanish programs asserted that they were stable or had grown. In fact, although Spanish enrollment in universities declined for the first time in 2013, and continued to fall in 2016, total Spanish enrollments remain greater than that of every other language combined (705,598 in 2016) ([Looney & Lusin, 2019](#)). This decline has been most pronounced at two-year colleges, or community colleges, with a roughly 16% drop in Spanish enrollments in 2016. That is an important data point, as many American universities list foreign language study as an admission requirement, and in many cases, community colleges serve not only to provide certifications, but also as a bridge to four-year colleges. Spanish enrollments at these two-year colleges declined 17.2% from 2013 to 2016.

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Figure 18 shows that this downward trend has been true for all foreign language programs since 2009. While the most pronounced decline in Spanish enrollments took place at two-year colleges, Spanish programs in general showed stability in 2016. When data from the past six years (2017 to 2022 and beyond) becomes available, we will have a better understanding of whether the information shown above is part of a larger trend and should be understood as existing within an unfavorable political context, as well as the possible negative impact of Covid-19.

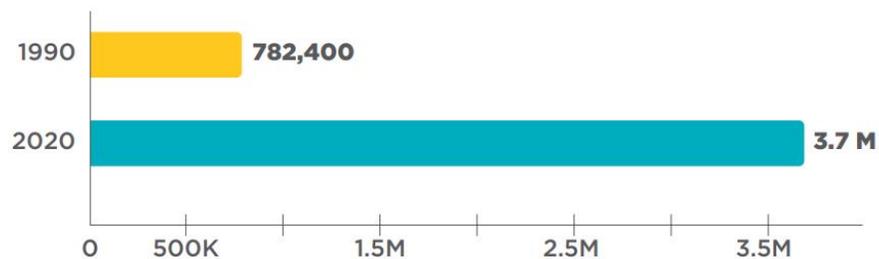
5. Demographic Landscape in Education

5.a College Enrollment

The [National Center for Education Statistics](#) (NCES) has provided enrollment data from higher education institutions since 1976, with statistics on the diverse racial and ethnic groups outlined by the Census Bureau: Black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and mixed-race. This data gives a window into the progress of Hispanic college enrollment.

In 1976, there were 383,800 Hispanic students attending colleges that awarded official degrees. To put that number in context, white student enrollment at the same universities was roughly 9.8 million, and Black student enrollment accounted for slightly over 1 million of the 11 million total students at higher education institutions. In other words, Latino students accounted for a tiny fraction of the college population compared to white and Black students in 1976. In 2019, the total number of students at higher education institutions reached 19.5 million and fell to approximately 19 million in 2020. In those same years, Latino enrollment reached 3.7 million, though it fell slightly in 2020, to 3.688 million, accounting for 20% of higher education institution students. In the same two years, white student enrollment was roughly 10 million and Black student enrollment was around 2.5 million. We can see from this that both the Latino and African American university populations have grown considerably from 1976 to 2019, while the white student body has largely remained stable in size.

Figure 19 shows Latino enrollment numbers in higher education institutions in 1990 and 2020 ([NCES 2021, Table 306.10](#)). The data used in the graphic comes from the NCES study mentioned above.



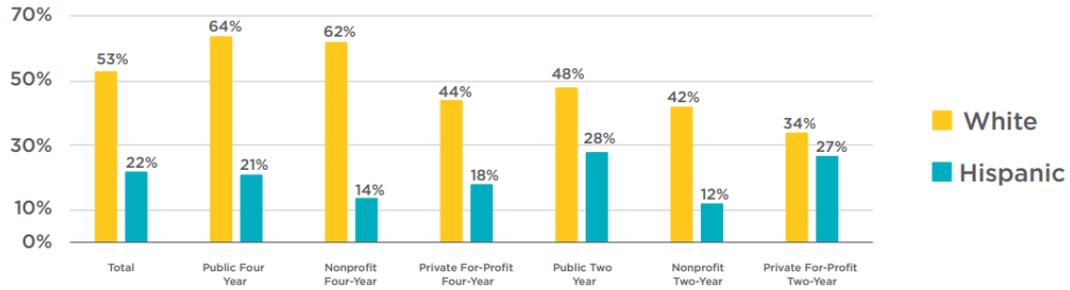
Source: UnidosUS calculation using U.S. Department of Education, "Digest of Education Statistics," National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC, 2021, Table 306.20, accessed June 15, 2022, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_306.10.asp.

Figure 19. Hispanic enrollment (1990 and 2020) ([UnidosUS, Fact Sheet, July 2022](#)).

These are encouraging numbers, as they represent progress in strictly numerical terms, especially considering that they imply higher numbers of high school graduates. However, Latino students are still considered “at risk” in that they are less likely to graduate from whatever level of schooling they reach, particularly from college. The primary barriers to graduation are related to economics, gender, and race ([Krogstad, 2016](#)).

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Additionally, of the nearly 3.7 million Hispanic students enrolled in 2020, 70% were the first in their families to go to college; of those, 90% were enrolled at four- and two-year colleges, and 9% were enrolled in postgraduate programs (master’s and doctorate). In Fall 2020, Latino students were overrepresented in two-year public and for-profit degree programs, in relation to the total number of Latino students registered in some form of a pre-graduate program (22%): specifically, the number of Hispanic students at community colleges was 28% of those enrolled and 27% at for-profit two-year colleges. Figure 20 shows these numbers relative to white students.



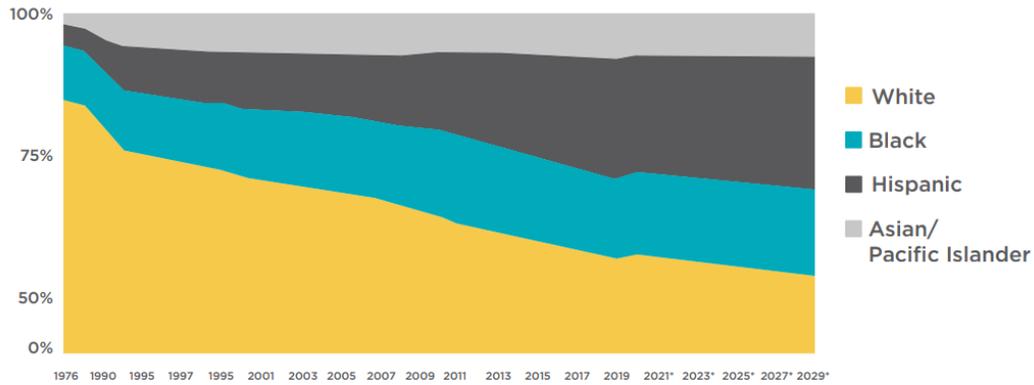
Source: U.S. Department of Education, "Characteristics of Postsecondary Students," National Center for Education Statistics, accessed June 15, 2022, <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/csb>.

Figure 20. Enrollment in 2020 by sector, Hispanic and white ([UnidosUS, Fact Sheet, July 2022](#)).

Despite the consistent rise in Hispanic college enrollment, the impacts of Covid-19 on the health and financial situations of this group could slow that trend, and with it the gains that arose in the 1990s. The pandemic and the impacts of Covid-19 have led some Latino students to reconsider their short-term educational plans, and many have joined the workforce before finishing school to make up for the loss of income in families where one or both heads of household lost their job during the pandemic.

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A projection from the organization [Excelencia in Education](#), illustrated below in Figure 21 and adjusted for the impact of Covid-19, estimates a 15% increase in Latino enrollment in the coming decade, approximately half of the enrollment gains (38%) seen between 2010 and 2019.

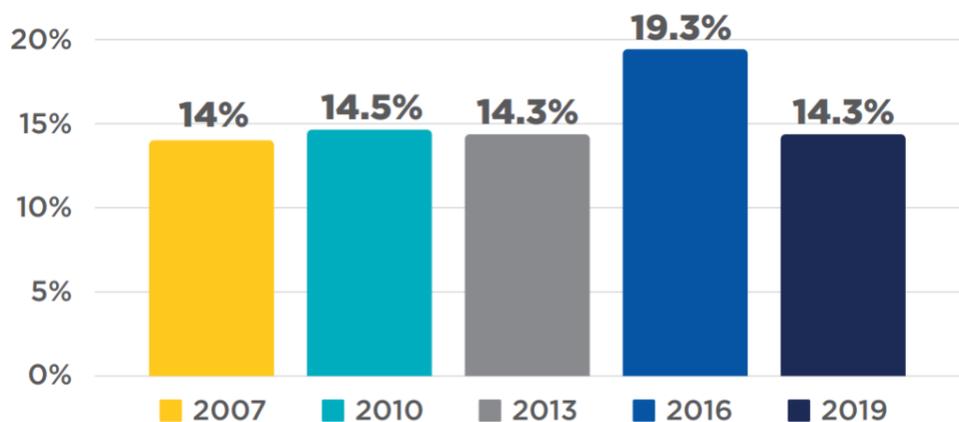


Source: Excelencia in Education, Latino College Enrollment: Past, Current, and Projections, April 11, 2022, <https://www.edexcelencia.org/fact-sheet/Latino-College-Enrollment-Past-Current-Projections>.

Figure 21. Projection of enrollment numbers by race and ethnicity ([UnidosUS, Fact Sheet, July 2022](#)).

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The pandemic began to affect observed enrollment patterns in 2020. The organization [UnidosUS](#) has provided data representative of this shift: for example, in August 2021, 17.2% of Latino adults aged 18 and older who had intended to attend some form of college in the fall canceled their plans, a higher rate than whites adults of the same age (14.5%). The primary reasons given for their decision were fear of contracting the virus (47%), difficulty paying for classes and school fees due to a decrease in household income (45%), and changes to financial aid (23%). These canceled plans come into greater focus when we remember that in 2019, 14% of Latino students undertook student debt to pay for their educations, although this group is less likely to take on debt than others in general. Figure 22 shows the percentage of Latino students who have taken on student debt to finance their studies from 2007–2019.



Source: Survey of Consumer Finances

Figure 22. Percentage of Latino families with student debt ([UnidosUS, Fact Sheet, July 2022](#)).

Alongside these factors, we must keep in mind that attending college does not necessarily mean completing a degree and graduating. Here, the data is not so promising. In 2020, 37% of Latino adults had completed a higher education degree, compared to 56% of white adults. In that same year, while white students obtained their degrees in 45% of cases, only 25% of Latino students obtained theirs. Among Latino students who began university in 2015, 51% completed their studies within 6 years, compared to 44% of Black students and 69% of white students. Furthermore, 59% of Latino students who graduate from full-time four-year colleges in six years or less complete their degrees from the same institution where they began their studies, compared to 67% of white students. In two-year colleges, 32% of Latino students who enroll in full-time programs graduate at the same college where they began, which is not so far from the 37% of white students who do the same ([UnidosUS 2022](#)). Finally, Latino students who enrolled part-time accounted for 44% of the group's total enrollment, compared to 38% of students of any racial or ethnic group ([Excelencia in Education 2022](#)).

In spite of the data in the above paragraph, the number of Hispanic students who have obtained a bachelor’s degree has doubled over the last decade, and the U.S. Department of Education predicts that within the current decade the percentage of Hispanic students enrolled in colleges and the percentage of the total population that self-identifies as Hispanic will reach parity at 21%, based on census data ([American Council on Education 2022](#)). Finally, the number of doctorate degrees awarded to Latino graduates rose from 5% to 7% in 2015, and in the 2019-2020 academic year, the number reached 14,868 ([Duffin, 2022](#)). As Figures 23 and 24 show, Latino students receive substantially fewer doctorate degrees than white ones.

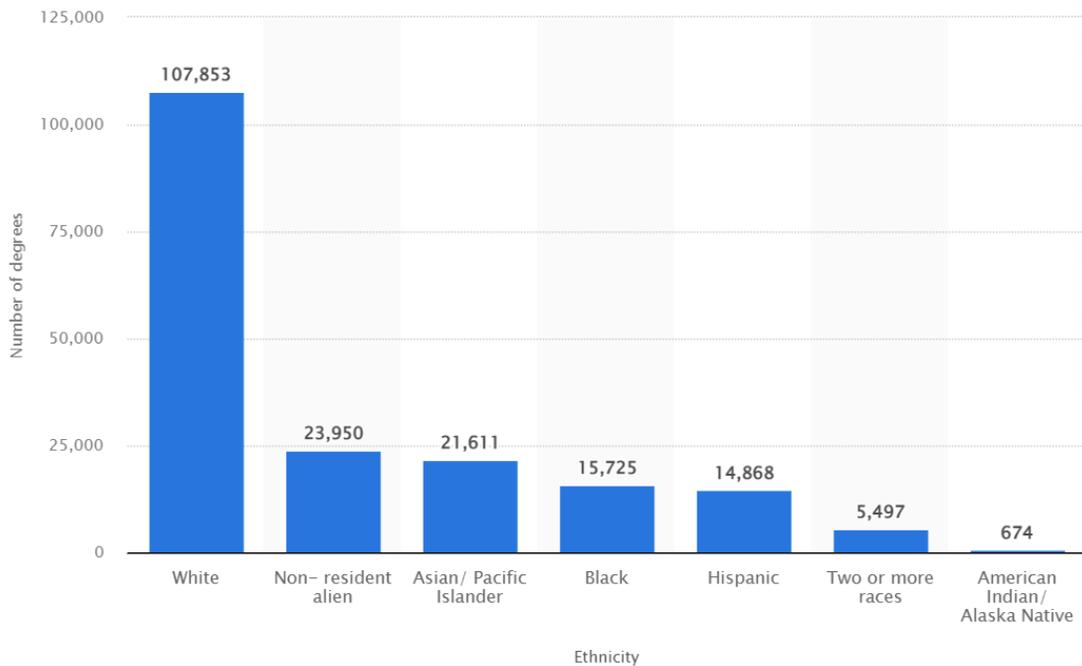


Figure 23. Doctorates awarded in the U.S. by ethnicity in the year 2019/20 ([Duffin, 2022](#)).

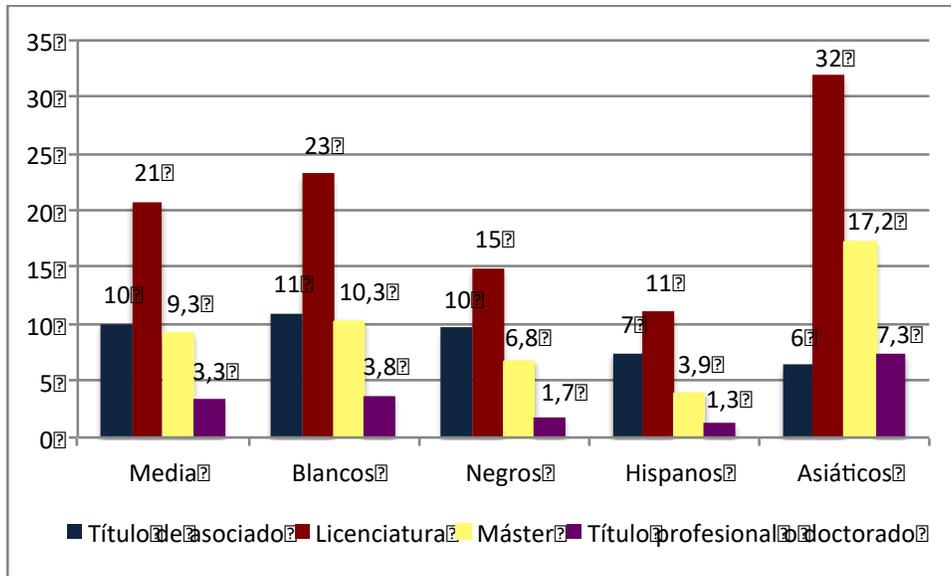
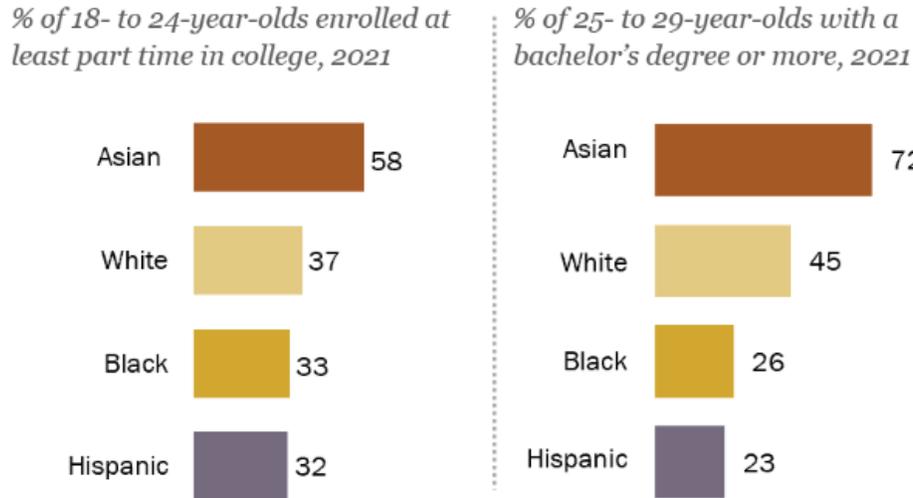


Figure 24. Percentage of population aged 18 and older with an associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, or professional or doctorate degree, sorted by race and ethnicity ([U.S. Census Bureau 2016, revised October 8, 2021](https://www.census.gov/data/releases/releases/data/2016/c2k16br01.html)).

As we can see in Figure 24, Latino people have the lowest education level of any ethnic or racial group in the U.S. According to data from the Pew Research Center, some of the factors that may explain this are the Latino overrepresentation in two-year degree programs, the high number of applications to less competitive universities, and part-time enrollments, which push back graduation timelines (Krogstad, 2016). While it is true that Latino enrollment in four-year colleges had increased through the 2019-2020 academic year, Hispanic students aged 18-24 were also the least likely of all enrolled groups to have a bachelor’s degree in 2021, as shown by Figure 25 ([Mora, 2022](#)). Underlying all these factors are the economic circumstances that determine their ability to pay for their studies.



Note: White, Black and Asian adults are single-race and not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the March 2021 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 25. Percentage of students enrolled at least part-time, or with a bachelor's degree, by ethnicity, in 2021 ([Mora, 2022](#); [PEW Research Center 2022](#)).

Even still, the Latino community has made great advances in higher education in recent decades. One factor behind these advances is that many school-age Latino people were born in the U.S. or arrived at an early age, helping them to become English-proficient. Additionally, any Latino person who came to the U.S. with their parents as children or teenagers under the age of 16 and stayed in the country after their visas expired, or who was brought to this country by that age without official inspections and was therefore undocumented, has been able to take advantage of the program known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) since 2012. Signed into law by former president Barack Obama, this program allows undocumented youth who have graduated high school to continue their studies and attend college. DACA provides work permits which are renewable on a two-year basis,

as well as a social security number that allows these students to open bank accounts and obtain driver's licenses, along with barring them from deportation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.

DACA has opened the doors to college for many undocumented youths, many of them Latino. As of September 4th, 2017, United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) reported a total of 689,800 active participants in the DACA program, of which 584,000 (79.4%) were Mexican, 25,900 (3.7%) El Salvadorian, 17,700 (2.6%) Guatemalan, and 16,100 (2.3%) Honduran. What's more, every single Spanish-speaking country has had participants in the DACA program. The countries with the lowest immigration representation in the U.S. and the fewest DACA participants in 2017 were Panama, with 440 participants, Paraguay, with 210, and Spain, with 110 ([USCIS 2017](#)). Work permits granted under DACA before July 16 2021 continue to be renewed, although new applications are not being processed, following an appeal led by the Southern District of Texas for applications submitted since that 2021 date and which continues to be in place as of October 14th, 2022 (date on which the USCIS webpage information was consulted for this study) ([USCIS 2022](#)).

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DACA participants have benefitted from access to the job market, which, although temporary and subject to renewal, has allowed them to finance their own studies and find employment after completing their degrees. Thanks to the program, this group of young people have now made major strides towards achieving their professional and socioeconomic goals ([Gonzales et al., 2017](#)).

The Dream U.S., an organization that awards scholarships to undocumented students, and Golden Door Scholars, which provides counseling and internships to help undocumented immigrants find stable, well-paying careers, published a report on the ten-year anniversary of the DACA program, in November 2022. The report details the achievements of these students as college alumni. Since the program's

inception in 2012, over 835,000 undocumented students have benefited and contributed to the country with their achievements. The report details the achievements of more than 1,400 former students. Their average age in 2022 was 25, while their average age upon arrival in the U.S. was 4. Some notable statistics: 68% of them are the first in their family to receive a college degree; 86% still have DACA status; 84% come from Latin American countries; 70% are women and 29% are men; 87% work full-time; 89% are bilingual (English and another language). In terms of their ethno-racial identities: 85% identify as Latino, 52% identify as non-white Latino, 30% as white Latino, 6% as Asian, 5% as Black, 4% as multi-racial, and 1% as non-Latino white.

Many of these former students who received scholarships from The Dream U.S. and Golden Door Scholars now work in so-called “essential” sectors. This term has taken on particular relevance since the pandemic in 2020, as it refers to jobs considered indispensable for country’s health and economy. Figure 26 shows the percentage of those former students in various essential sectors, which include: health and medicine; business and education; public and social services; science, math, and technology; trades and personal services; arts, entertainment, and sports; and media and social sciences.

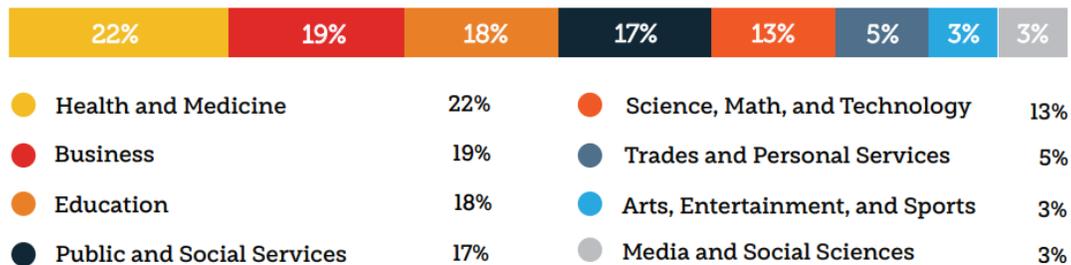


Figure 26. Percentage employment of former DACA students by job sector ([The Dream US, November 2022](#)).

In other words, although the educational advancements of Latinos in the U.S. are due in large part to growing nativity rates, public policies such as DACA have also played a part by knocking down structural barriers that once impeded undocumented Latino students from making academic progress.

5.b Primary and Secondary School Enrollment and Graduation

Hispanic primary and secondary school enrollment has risen continuously since the early 2000s. As the 2017 Hispanic Map highlighted, 2003-2013 saw a 6% increase in Hispanic enrollment in these levels of education, accounting for 19% of the total student body in 2003 and 25% in 2013. By Fall 2019, Hispanic people accounted for 22%, and by Fall 2020 that number had increased to 28%. The National Center for Education Statistics projects that Hispanic primary and secondary school students will account for 30% of all enrollment by 2030 ([National Center for Education Statistics 2017, 2022](#)). Figure 27 contrasts these enrollment percentages with other races and ethnicities in the same age group.

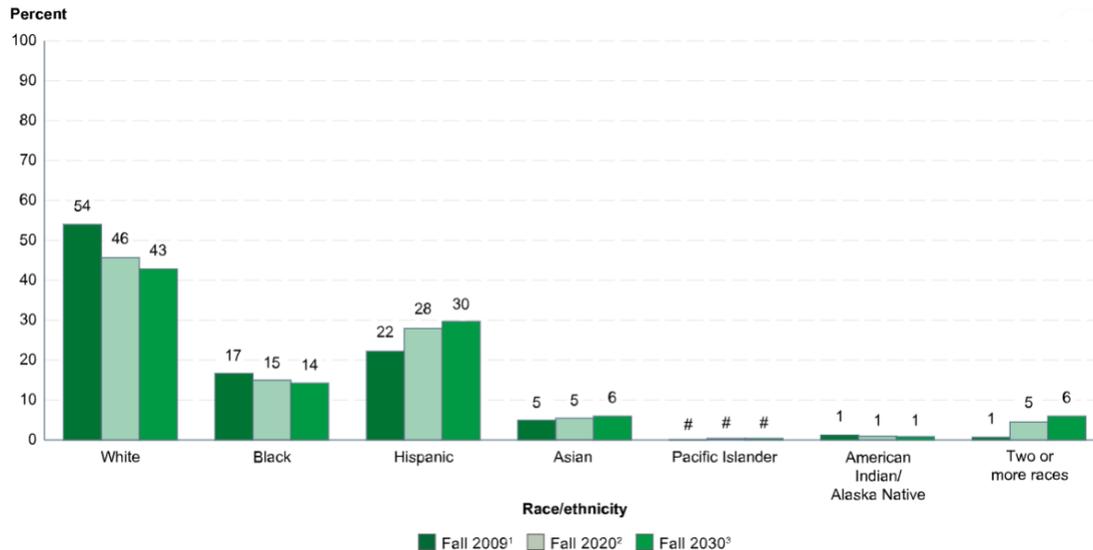


Figure 27. Percent primary and secondary school enrollment by race and ethnicity in Fall 2009, 2020, and 2030 ([NCES, updated to May 2022](#)).

Hispanic people accounted for 25.1% of all kindergarten students (5 years old) in 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). In 2020, the percentage of Hispanic children aged 3-4 who were enrolled in school was 33%, along with 82% of Hispanic children aged 5—these percentages are nearly in line with their white, Black, Asian, and multi-racial counterparts ([NCES 2022](#), see Figure 28).

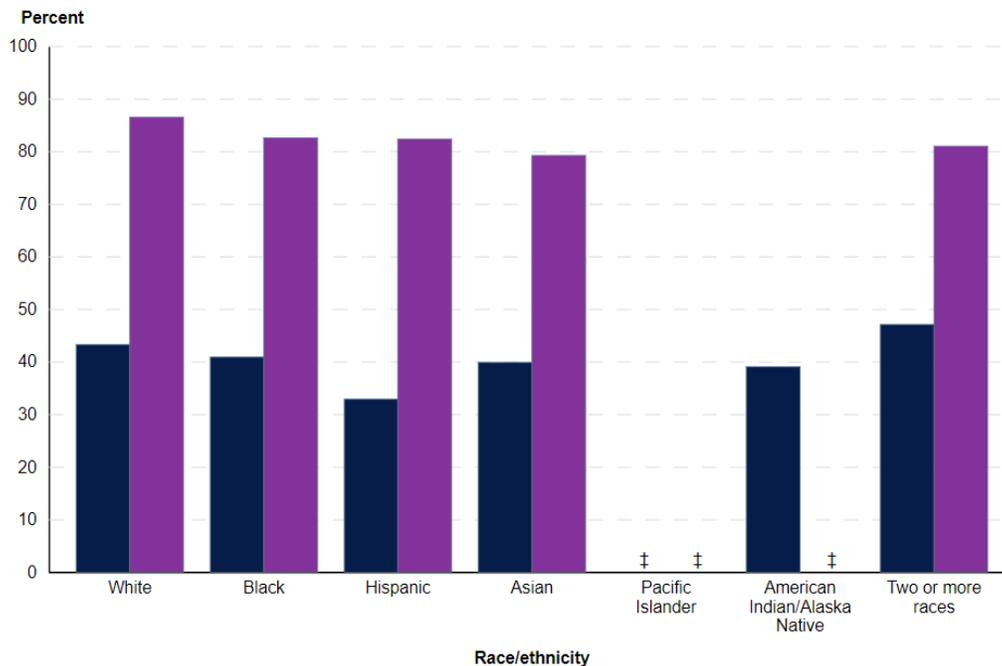


Figure 28. Percentage of students enrolled in school at ages 3-4 and 5, by race and ethnicity, in 2020 ([NCES, updated in May 2022](#)).

Moreover, the high school dropout rate for Hispanic people aged 16-24 remains on the decline. As shown in Figures 29 and 30, the rate dropped from 29.4% in 1992 to 9.2% in 2015, and has continued to decline, reaching 7.4% in 2020 ([CNES 2022](#)). For context, the average high school dropout rate for the general U.S. population was 7.4% in 2010, 5.9% in 2015, and 5.3% in 2020; or only 2.1% lower than the current rate for Hispanic students. This is a major shift from the 18.4% difference between the Hispanic and overall dropout rate in 1992 (National Center for Education Statistics 2017: 219.70; [CNES 2022](#)).

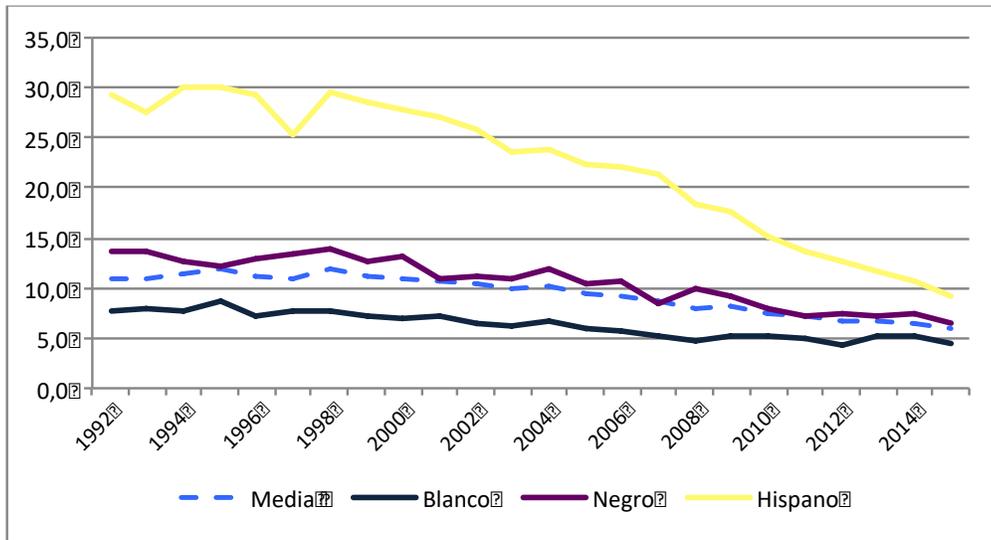


Figure 29. Historic high school dropout rates by race and ethnicity, from 1992 to 2015 (2017 Hispanic Map: Hernández-Nieto et al., 2017; [National Center for Education Statistics 2017](#): 219.70).

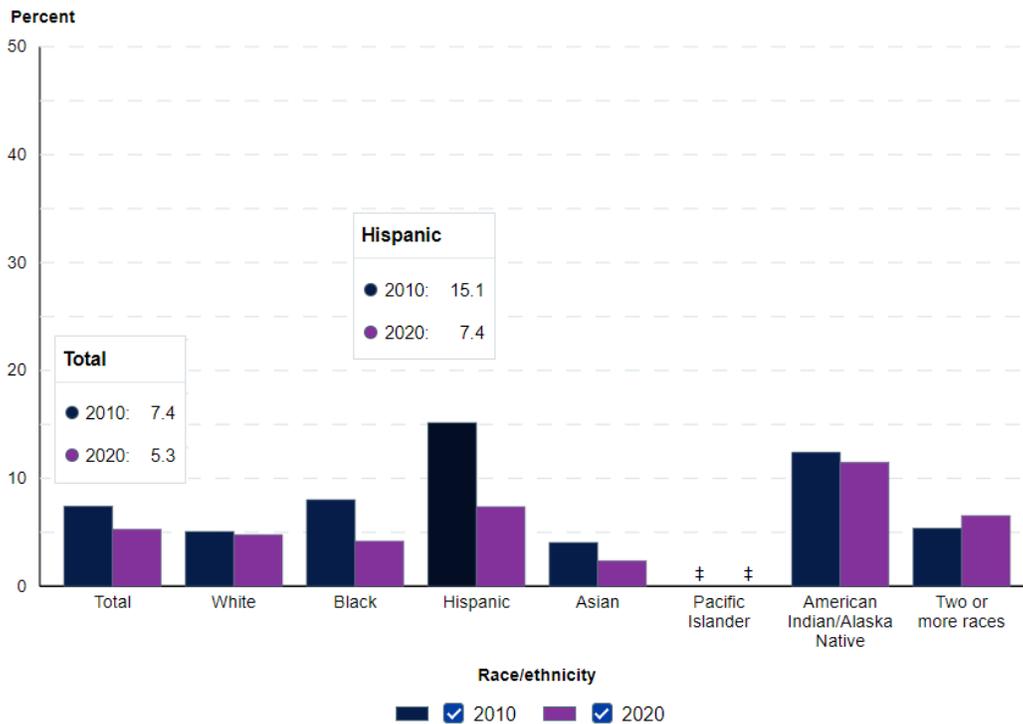


Figure 30. Dropout rate for the general U.S. population aged 16-24, categorized by race and ethnicity, in 2010 and 2020 ([National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\), updated to May 2022](#)).

5.c Racial Segregation and Achievement in Public Schools

It is important to discuss statistics on the racial representation of Latino people in primary and secondary schools, given their relevance to educational equality and equity for all students in the U.S.

In Fall 2019, 60% of Latino students at the primary or secondary level attended schools where 75% or more of the school population was made up of students of color; 21% attended schools where students of color accounted for 50-74% of the population; 14% attended schools where 25-49% of the population were students of color; and only 5% attended schools where less than 25% of the population were students of color ([CNES 2022](#), see Figure 31). These numbers are similar for African American students. In contrast, 46% of white children attend public schools where less than 25% of the population are students of color, while 32% of this group attends schools where between 25-49% of the population are students of color.

Additionally, each of these groups attend schools where their ethnic or racial group is predominant, except in the case of Asian and American Indian/Alaska Native students. 16% of Hispanic students attend schools where over 90% of the student body is Hispanic, approximately 17% attend schools where that percentage is between 75-89%, and 31% attend schools where the student body is 54-74% Latino ([Schaeffer, 2021](#), see Figure 32). One study that measured racial segregation in U.S. public schools found that the most pronounced segregation is between white and Latino students ([Frankenberg et al., 2019](#)). White students attend schools where their ethnic groups make up 69% of the student body on average, meanwhile Latino students attend schools where they make up 55% of the student body on average. Latino and Black students generally attend schools where the average combined population of the two groups is 66-67%. On average, Asian students attend schools

where only 24% of the student body is Asian. White and Asian students attend schools where the Black and Latino student populations are respectively 22% and 34% on average. Given that the schools with the most resources, and therefore better teachers and programs, are schools with a high concentration of white students, these statistics take on great significance when viewed through the lens of equity and diversity in U.S. public schools ([Frankenberg et al., 2019, p. 12](#)).

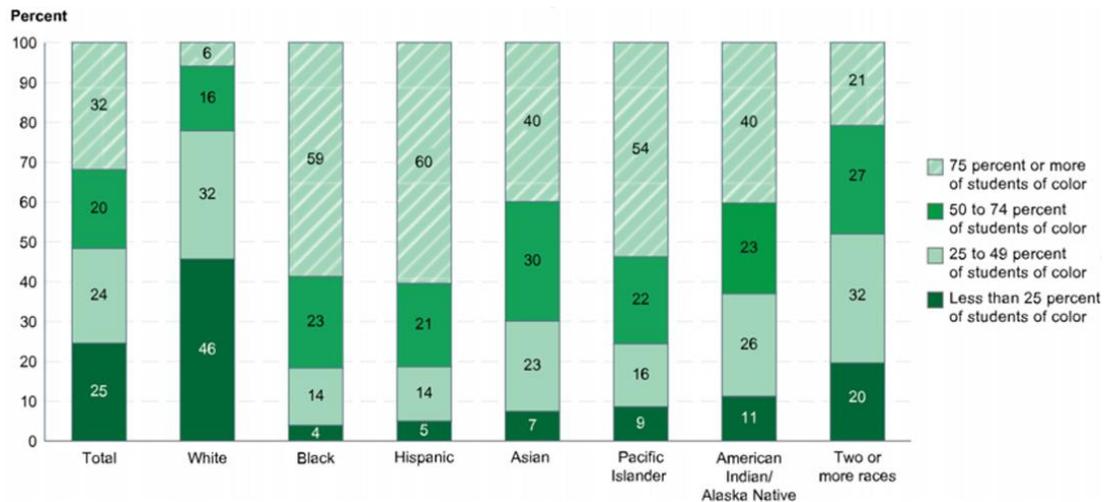


Figure 31. Percentage of the student body in primary and secondary school by race and ethnicity, and percentage of students of color in the same school in Fall 2019 ([NCES 2022, updated in May 2022](#)).

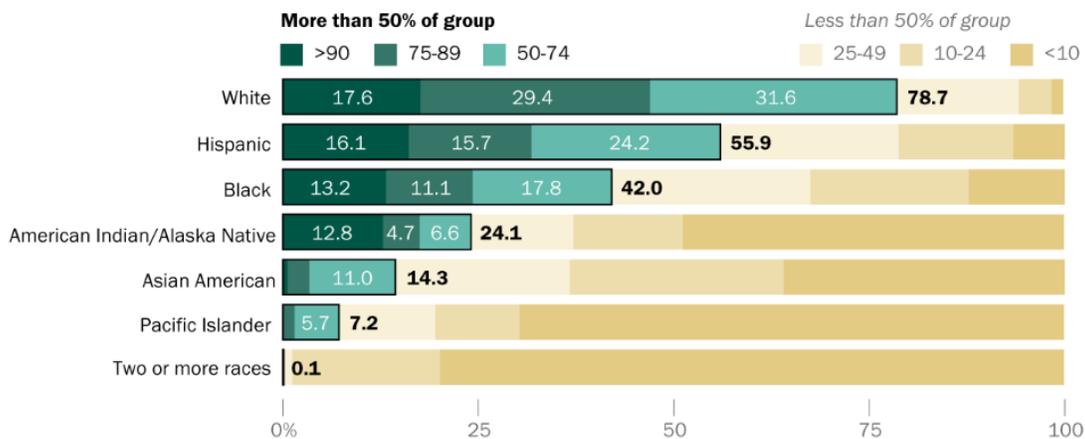


Figure 32. Percentage of U.S. public school students who typically attend schools where their classmates share their ethnic and/or racial background ([Pew Research Center, December 2021](#)).

Race, a term which, for the purposes of this study, should be understood within the American framework and usage, is also a factor in differing Hispanic academic achievement. According to data from the National Survey of Latinos by the Pew Research Center in 2014, students of ‘Afro-Latino’ origins report a lower educational attainment than other Latino students. According to the same survey, Afro-Latino people were also less likely to obtain university degrees than other Latino people in 2014: 24%, compared to 37% of all other Latinos ([Lopez & González-Barrera, 2016](#)).

5.d Educational Differences between Latino Men and Women

Sex is also a differentiating factor in Hispanic educational achievement. Hispanic women are more likely to finish high school than men: in 2016, 78.3% of Hispanic men finished high school, compared to 83.2% of women (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). In 2018, data from the organization The Education Trust, based on the American Community Survey (ACS), showed that 26.6% of Hispanic women held a post-secondary degree: 7.7% held a professional degree, 13% a bachelor’s degree, and 5.9% a master’s degree or higher. The same organization showed that in 2018, approximately 22.7% of Hispanic men finished high school, of which 6% went on to earn professional degrees, 10.2% achieved bachelor’s degrees, and 4.5% acquired master’s degrees or higher (see Figure 34). While these statistics are encouraging, there are still significant differences when contrasted with the educational achievement of the white population. For example, 51.4% of white women completed high school; of them, 11.3% went on to obtain a professional degree, 25.1% a bachelor’s degree, and 15% a master’s degree or higher. In the same year, 44.3% of white men finished high school, of which 8.8% obtained a professional degree, 23% a bachelor’s degree, and 12.5% a master’s degree or higher ([Marshall et al., 2021](#)).

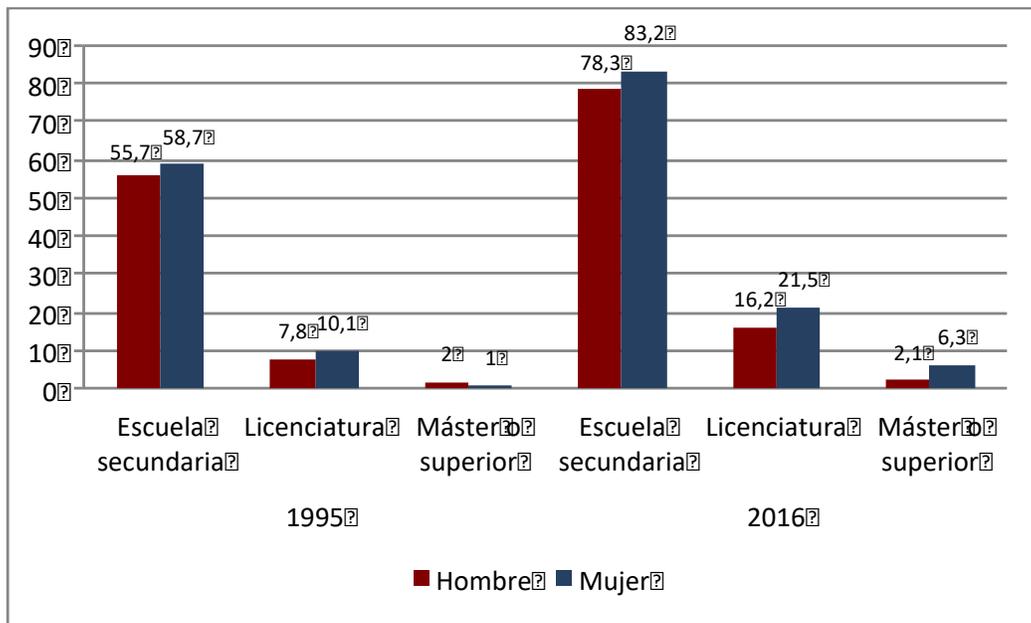
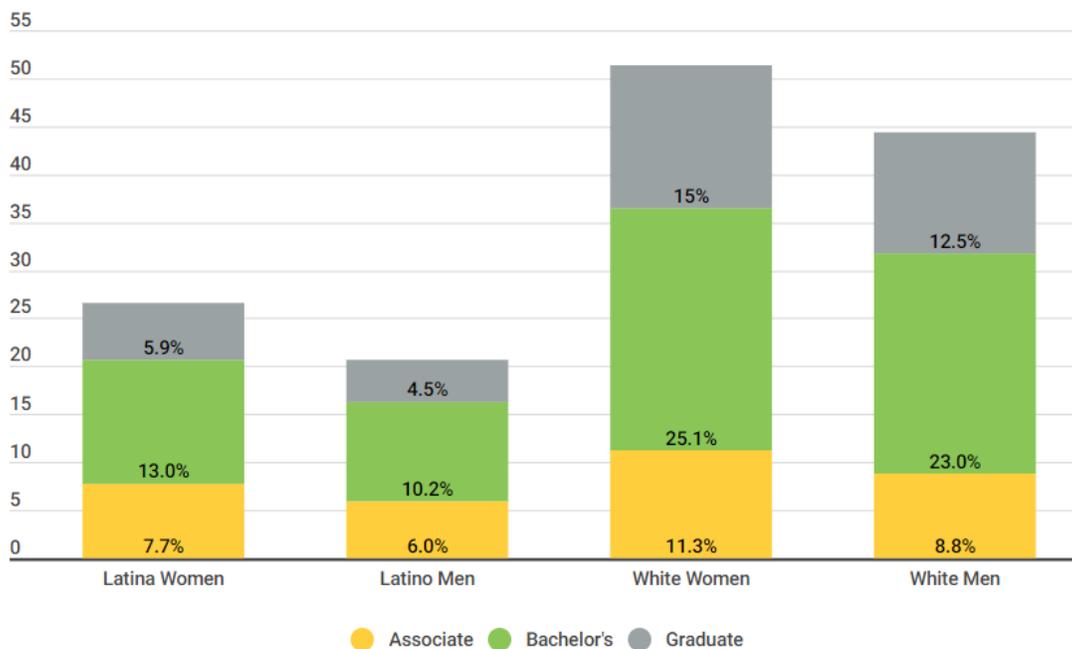


Figure 33. Educational achievement of Hispanics aged 25-29 by gender, in 1995 and 2016 (National Center for Education Statistics 2017).



Source: Ed Trust analysis of the United States Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey (all 50 states and DC included).

Figure 34. Percentage of high school graduates with post-secondary degrees, categorized by Hispanic men and women, and white men and women (The Education Trust 2021, Figure 2).

While educational achievement continues to rise, the gap between men and women may also be growing (National Center for Education Statistics 2016). For example, if we look at the white population, which, for historical reasons, has the greatest ease in academic progression, we can see that the percentage of white men and women who hold bachelor's degrees is 20% higher than for Latino men and women.

6. Socioeconomics and the Pandemic's Effects on Health

6.a Buying Power

In 2017, the U.S. Hispanic population had a buying power of \$1.4 trillion⁴ ([Weeks, 2017](#)), and by 2020 it had risen to \$1.9 trillion ([Melancon, 2021](#)). Those numbers have more than doubled from the rates reported in 1990, when Hispanic people accounted for only 5% of the total buying power of the U.S. population (\$213 billion), compared to 11.1% in 2020. According to projections by the University of Georgia's Selig Center for Economic Growth in June 2020, the U.S. Hispanic community's buying power will reach \$2.3 trillion by 2024, or 11.6% of the country's total ([Humphreys, 2019, p. 9](#)).

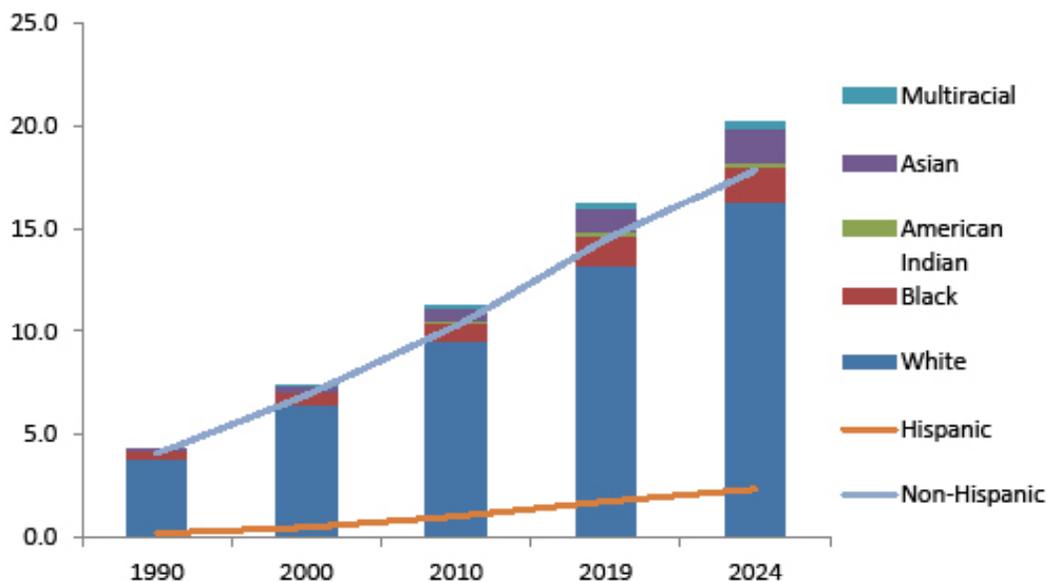
The U.S. Hispanic population's buying power increased from \$1.4 trillion in 2017 to \$1.9 trillion in 2020

⁴ In this text, we use the terms billion and trillion in their U.S. connotations, where "billion" refers to one-thousand million, while "trillion" is equivalent to one-million million. So, if Latino people have a buying power of 1.4 trillion dollars, that means they have a buying power of 1.4 million million dollars.

In the Selig Center’s Multicultural Economy Report from 2019, they note that Hispanic people primarily, and in greater proportion than the rest of the population, use their buying power to purchase cell phone services, home furniture, clothing, and gas. They also spend more money on food, housing, electricity, and second-hand cars than the rest of the country, and a similar amount of money on household tools and renovations, domestic appliances, public transport, car insurance, personal care products, and reading materials.

In interpreting this data, we must bear in mind that the average Hispanic household has expenses that equal up to 82% of its salary (higher than the average non-Hispanic home), and that Hispanic households have lower average salaries than the rest of the country. Relative to non-Hispanic, Hispanic people spend less money on health, alcohol, education, entertainment, health insurance, pensions, and social security. Additionally, they are more likely to live in rental properties than to be homeowners ([Humphreys, 2019](#)).

Based on data from the Selig Center, Figure 35 shows the buying power of the general U.S. population from 1990 to 2024, categorized by race and ethnicity, and updated in June 2019. Of the seven Hispanic nationalities on which the Selig Center gathered data (Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Central and South Americans, Cubans, Dominicans, and Spaniards), Mexican people remain at the top, accounting for approximately 57% of the total buying power of the entire U.S. Hispanic population. They’re followed by Puerto Ricans, who account for a combined 10%, and Central Americans, who account for 9%.



Source: Selig Center for Economic Growth, Terry College of Business, The University of Georgia, June 2019.

Figure 35. U.S. buying power in the 1990-2024 period, in trillions of American dollars, distributed by race and ethnicity ([The Multicultural Economy, 2019](#). [The Selig Center for Economic Growth](#)).

This continued growth in Hispanic buying power since the 1990s is principally due to the natural growth of that population, its relative youth, and its high immigration rates in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Along with those factors, we must also consider the group’s entrepreneurial activity and social mobility, which is bolstered by gains in educational achievement. Still, it is important to remember that expenses among the U.S Hispanic population vary depending on country of origin and the demographic shifts currently occurring in the country.

As for business ownership, according to the 2021 Annual Business Survey (ABS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, minorities in the U.S. owned nearly 20% of businesses with at least one employee in 2020. The number of Hispanic businesses grew 8.2% between 2019 and 2020, or from 346,836 to 375,256, accounting for 6.5% of all businesses in the U.S. ([U.S. Census Bureau 2022](#)).

According to a study published by the Joint Economic Committee Democrats in November 2021, Hispanic people owned 1 out of every 4 new small businesses. The percentage of Hispanic business owners grew 34% between 2010 and 2020, while in the non-Hispanic population, this number only rose by 1% ([Joint Economic Committee 2021](#)). However, Latino small business owners have less access to large credit lines from banks, and face structural inequalities which make them more vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the economy. For example, shortly before the recession caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, 49% of Hispanic small businesses were classified as financially “at risk,” compared to 27% of white-owned small businesses ([Joint Economic Committee Democrats 2021](#)).

The Covid-19 pandemic, which began in 2020, has significantly impacted Latino business owners, and many of them have not benefited from emergency government economic relief efforts. According to the State of Latino Entrepreneurship Report (2021), published by the Stanford Graduate School of Business in collaboration with the Latino Business Action Network, both white and Latino business owners suffered the negative impacts of the pandemic between March 2020 and the summer of 2021. However, data from Latino business owners paints a more dire portrait when compared to that of their white counterparts. Among the reported effects are a greater possibility of: temporary closure (27% vs 23%), lack of financing (16% vs 11%), layoffs (14% vs 10%), possibility of definitive closure (8% vs 6%), and inability to pay off debts (7% vs 4%) ([Orozco & Furszyfer, 2022, pp. 20-21](#)).

It is encouraging to know that from the outset of the pandemic in 2020 through the summer of 2021, the negative impact on both Hispanic and non-Hispanic business owners was reduced by 50%. In part, that reduction is thanks to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), in which the U.S. government dedicated \$800 billion of federal money to support small businesses. Employee vaccination also helped to maintain in-person jobs ([Orozco & Furszyfer, 2022](#)).

In spite of the negative consequences of the pandemic, Latino business ownership continues to rise. In 2021, the sector generated \$460 billion and employed 2.9 million workers, and the number of businesses started by Latinos is now growing more quickly than other U.S. demographic groups ([Orozco & Furszyfer, 2022](#)). However, the sector could benefit from improved credit opportunities, as there are studies which show—as mentioned earlier—that banks offer fewer credit options to Latino business owners relative to other groups. The elimination of social barriers that disadvantage Latino people would increase their likelihood of success, as well as their potential to grow their small businesses ([Bates et al., 2022](#)).

6.b Income and Poverty

During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, fewer U.S. residents responded to the American Community Survey (ACS). That reduction makes it difficult to compare 2020 to 2019 and 2021, and as such, the data presented in this section will only compare results from the latter two years.

In general, household income has risen since 2012, which saw the largest decrease in U.S. household income since the Great Recession in 2008 (ACS). In 2012, the median U.S. household income was just over \$60,000, and by 2019 and 2021 it had risen to nearly \$70,000 (specifically, \$69,717 in 2021, according to data from the Census Bureau) ([Guzman, 2022, Table 1, p. 6](#)).

The upward trend in median household income in the U.S. also holds true for Hispanic people. For example, Hispanic households had a median income of \$58,984 in 2019, which rose to \$60,566 in 2021, a 2.7% increase over two years. The increase for white households over the same period was 1.3%, rising from \$73,996 to \$74,932. Black households showed no statistically significant changes in

median income between 2019 and 2021, with a median of \$46,774. Asian households rose from a median income of \$99,362 in 2019 to \$100,572 in 2021, an increase of 1.2% ([Guzman, 2022, p. 7](#)).⁵

Although median Hispanic household income rose over those two years, it remains below the national average. It's worth noting that data collected by the American Population Survey from 1967-2021 shows an increase (although not a great one) than the ACS. As shown in Figure 36, median Hispanic household income, adjusted for inflation, known as “real median household income,” was \$57,981 in 2021 according to APS data, instead of ACS’s figure, \$60,566. In any case, both numbers are below the national average.

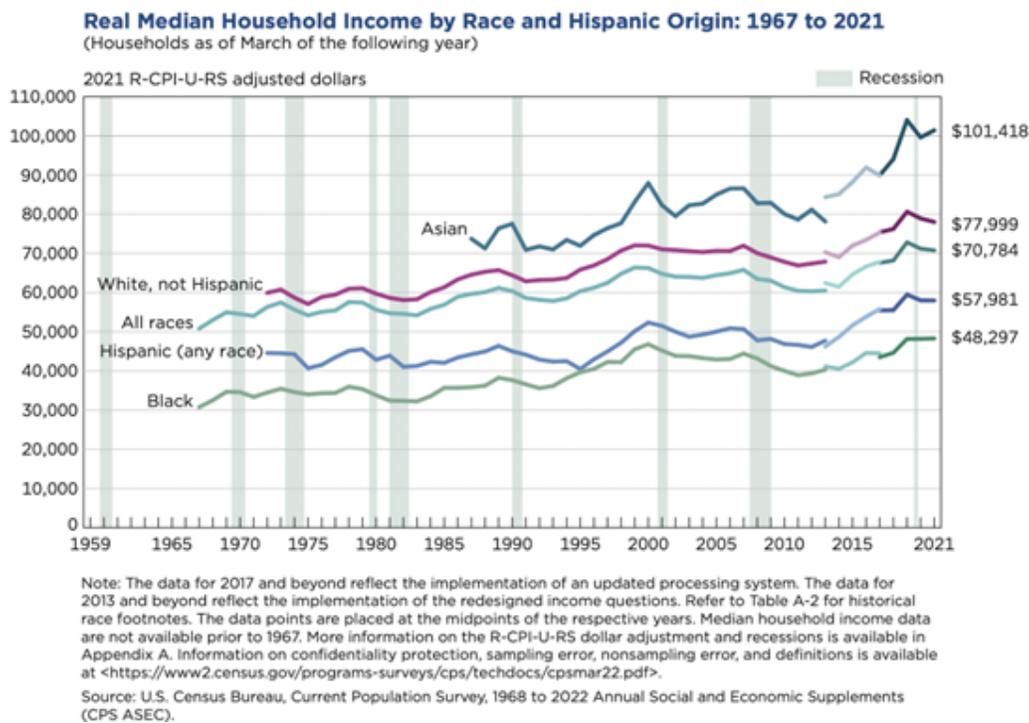


Figure 36. Median household income for U.S. households adjusted for inflation, categorized by race and ethnicity: 1967-2021 ([U.S. Income 2021, United States Census Bureau](#)). Figure 2: [Real Median Household Income by Race and Hispanic Origin.](#), September 13, 2022.

⁵ Data from the 2021 American Community Survey includes inflation in its calculations of average household income.

The per capita income of Hispanic people in the U.S. in 2021 was around \$22,000 ([America's Health Rankings 2022](#)), while in the same year the national per capita income was \$37,638 ([Census Bureau 2022](#)). Although individual Hispanic incomes have risen on average, group income levels remain *below* the national average and group poverty levels remain *above* the national average.

The Census Bureau found that 11.6% of the U.S. population lived under the poverty line in 2022. In Statistical Policy Directive Number 14 from the Office of Management and Budget ([U.S. Census Bureau, 2014](#)), the United States Census establishes how to measure the official poverty level by individual and by household. They use “thresholds” and “guidelines” in dollars to establish the numeric limit that determines whether or not a family is under the poverty line. Figure 37 shows the OMB’s guidelines for measuring national poverty in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia. According to this figure, they consider that a four-person household, for example, lives in poverty if their total household income is under \$26,500. Additionally, in study P60-277, [Poverty in the United States: 2021](#) (Creamer et al., 2022), the Census Bureau provides a table with poverty thresholds for 2021, in which the poverty level for a four-person household is \$27,740 or less; that is, there is an approximately one-thousand dollar difference in the two census sources.

Based on these poverty measurements, the Hispanic population generally accounts for 17.1% of all U.S. residents living under the poverty line, a 0.1% increase from 2020. According to the thresholds established by the 2021 guide, the total number of Hispanic families living in poverty was 15.5%, of which approximately 30% are single mother households. Although this data might not seem promising, it is nonetheless an improvement compared to previous years. That 15.5% in 2021 marked the largest decrease in Hispanic household income since 2010, when, mid-

way through the Great Recession, Hispanic people registered the highest poverty levels in the country (25.5%). The 2021 percentage is also the lowest it has been since reaching 22.3% in 1972 ([Census Bureau 2022, Table A-4](#))⁶.

Still, in 2021 Latino people accounted for more of the U.S.’s impoverished population than non-Hispanic white (8.1%) and Asian people (9.3%). The percentage of Black people living in poverty in 2021 was 19.5%, and of Native American people, 24.3% ([TableA1_pov_characteristics](#)).

| Persons in family/household | Poverty guideline |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | \$12,880 |
| 2 | \$17,420 |
| 3 | \$21,960 |
| 4 | \$26,500 |
| 5 | \$31,040 |
| 6 | \$35,580 |
| 7 | \$40,120 |
| 8 | \$44,660 |

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,540 for each additional person.

Figure 37. Poverty guidelines based on the number of persons in a family/household, applied to the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia ([Office for the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, ASPE. US Department for Health and Human Services](#)).

⁶ Table A-4: Poverty status by family relationship, race, and Hispanic origin: from 1959 to 2021.

Thanks to the data from the American Community Survey (ACS) through 2021, we have been able to examine the characteristics of the Latino population in the United States based on their place of origin. In fact, responses to these surveys have shown that place of origin is a factor in everything from educational attainment, employment type, and English proficiency, to U.S.-nativity vs. immigration, geographic residence, and race (Table [ACS 2021](#)). These are important differences because they affect those groups' potential socio-economic conditions and general well-being. For example, half of Latino people with Dominican and El Salvadorean origins have faced economic hardship in 2020, and with the exception of Colombians (7.3%) and Cubans (8.3%), Hispanic groups are 7.5% more likely than non-Hispanic ones to be food insecure ([Scherer & Mayol-García, 2022](#)).

In 2021, the Census Bureau conducted a survey called the [Survey of Income and Program Participation](#) (SIPP), which included information on income and participation in federal and state programs based on Hispanic people's place of origin. The survey measures "economic hardships" such as food insecurity, inability to pay bills, and difficulty addressing material difficulties in the home. According to the SIPP results from 2021, one in every three Hispanic people (34.8%) and one in every four non-Hispanic people in the U.S. in 2020 (24.3%) lived in a home where they faced one or more of these hardships. Roughly half of Dominican and El Salvadorean residents of the U.S. faced one or more, while Colombians, Mexicans, and Cubans, faced them in lesser degree.

There are also variations in terms of the wealth of Hispanic groups based on their place of origin, where wealth is understood as assets minus expenses or fiscal responsibilities. The median wealth value in non-Hispanic homes in 2020 was \$195,600, compared to a median of \$52,190 in Hispanic homes ([Scherer & Mayol-García, 2022](#)). More specifically, Dominicans in that year lived in households with a median wealth of \$9,430, while Cubans lived in households with a median wealth

of \$92,700. The latter have attained higher education levels than other Hispanic groups and are more likely to be business owners. These are just some examples of the variations among Hispanics based on their place of origin, which give a sense of the importance of taking subgroup into account when analyzing particular financial conditions.

Hispanic home ownership rates are another way of measuring economic capabilities. The 2017 Hispanic Map indicated that in 2016 about 46% of Hispanic people in the U.S. were homeowners, compared to 71.9% for whites, 55% for Asian people, and 42.2% for African American people (Hispanic Wealth Project 2016). Between 2010 and 2020, that percentage rose across the board. As Figure 38 demonstrates, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) reports that in 2020, 51.1% of Hispanic people in the U.S. were homeowners, a nearly 4% increase from 2010.

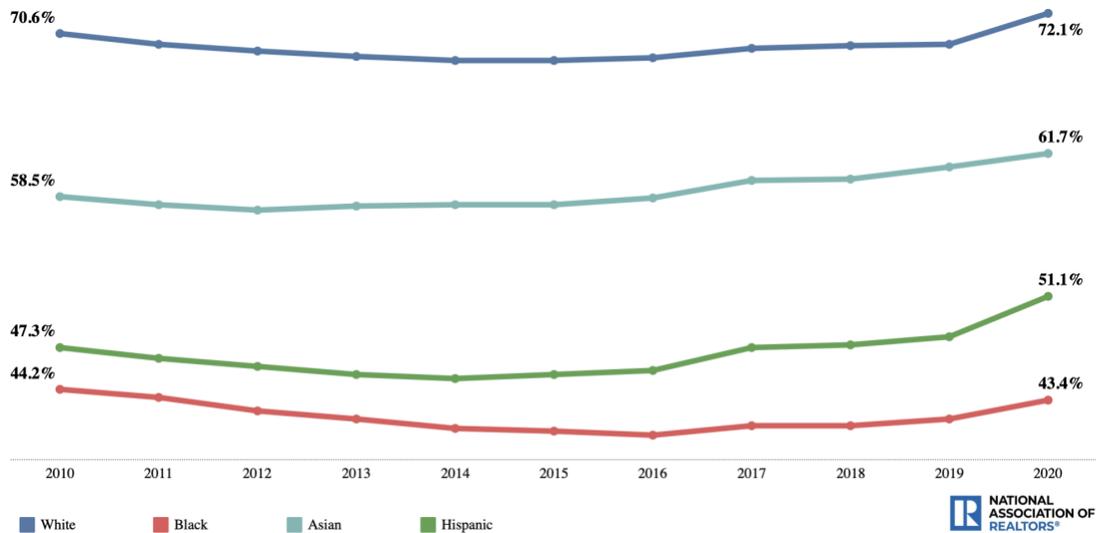


Figure 38. Homeownership rates (2010-2020) categorized by race and Hispanic origin (National Association of Realtors (Snowden and Evangelou, 2022)).

The NAR also collects statistics by state, allowing us to form a picture of how these percentages change around the country. For example, in 2020-2021, the states where a Hispanic renter is least likely to be able to buy a home are: Hawaii (where only 12% of Hispanics have the financial capability to buy a home), California (14.4%), Massachusetts (21.3%), Colorado (23.4%), and Utah (28%). The states where Hispanic people have the highest rate of potential homeownership are: Vermont (88.6%), Arkansas (71%), Indiana (69%), Oklahoma (67.6%), and Mississippi (64.6%). In the middle are states such as Illinois (54.7%), Texas (49%), Florida (43.3%), and New York (33.2%) ([Snowden & Evangelou, 2022](#)).

6.c Wage Gap and Gender

Recent data on Latino employment and income in the U.S. show improvements since the Great Recession. That improvement has been spurred by a variety of factors, among them employment policies and the economic expansion of 2010-2011. These helped to reduce unemployment levels for all American workers, until the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 ([Gamble, 2022](#)).

Figure 39 shows Latino unemployment rates from September 2018 to September 2022. Both Hispanic men and women have reached higher employment rates since the beginning of this period. In 2017, Hispanic men had a low unemployment rate, 4.7%, which remained more or less constant until March 2020, when the pandemic began. It then reached 20% by May 2020. Fortunately, after that point Hispanic unemployment rates began to fall steadily, reaching 3.8% by September 2022.

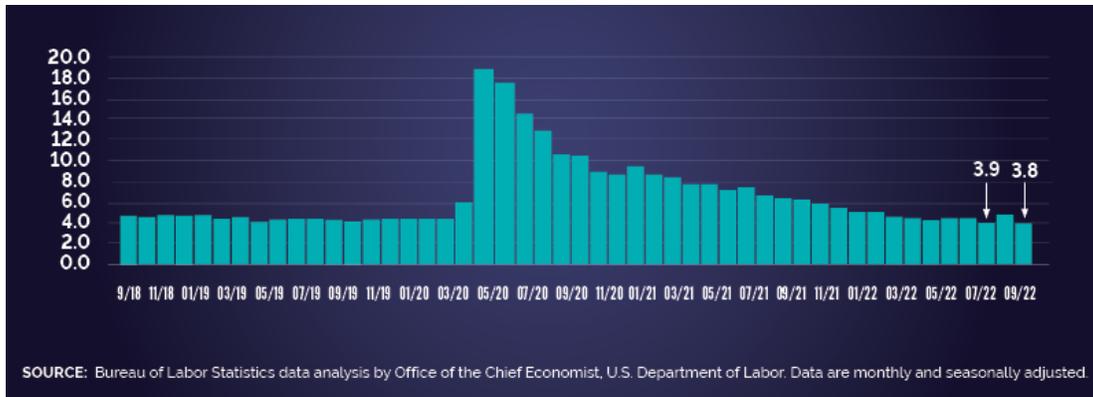


Figure 39. Hispanic unemployment rates from September 2018 to September 2022
 (US Department of Labor Blog (Gamble, 2022).

According to data on gender-based salary and unemployment differences from the Economic Policy Institute in 2018, while there were improvements for Hispanic men, the same was not true for Hispanic women. Hispanic men’s unemployment rates showed hardly any variation from that of men in other groups (4.7% for Hispanic men, compared to 4.4% for all men in the U.S. in 2017), whereas Hispanic women had an unemployment rate of 5.7% in 2017, compared to the general unemployment rate of 4.3% for all women in that same year.

The data for Hispanic women is no more promising if we examine differences in salary. When we statistically control for the factors that typically produce those “wage gaps,” such as education, work experience, migration status, generation, and regional variations in cost of living, the differences in salary between Hispanic and white men are far less pronounced, though the same is not true for Hispanic women and white men. The hourly wage gap between Hispanic women and non-Hispanic white men has remained consistent since 1979, which suggests that discrimination in its various forms (gender, ethnicity, etc.) is likely a determining factor (Mora & Dávila, 2018, p. 2). When we account for factors that reduce hourly wages and lead to wage gaps, we have what are known as “adjusted wage gaps.” These have remained consistent between white men and Hispanic people, between Hispanic men and women, and between the majority of other national subgroups since 2000.

According to Mora and Dávila (2018), in 2017, Hispanic men earned 14.9% less per hour than white men with comparable backgrounds, a 17.8% improvement from 2000. However, Hispanic women earned 33.1% less than white men, only a 2% improvement from 2000, when the wage gap was 35.1%.

6.d Health Insurance

In 2021, 17.7% of Latino people did not have health insurance ([Branch & Conway, 2022, p.2](#)). This is an increase of nearly 2% from 2016, when 16% of Hispanic people in the U.S. lacked some form of it (Hernández-Nieto & Moreno-Fernández 2017). In 2016, 6.3% of white people, 7.6% of Asian people, and 10.5% of Black people did not have health insurance (Barnett & Berchick, 2017). As shown in Figure 40, the percentages of the general population without health insurance hadn't varied much by 2021, according to data from the American Community Survey (ACS) for that year. Non-Hispanic white people lacked health insurance at a rate of roughly 5.7%, Asian people at 5.8%, and African American people at 9.6%. The only group less likely to have insurance than Hispanic people were Native American people, 19% of whom lacked some form of it. The rate for the general U.S. population without health insurance is 8.6% ([Branch & Conway, 2022, p.2](#)).

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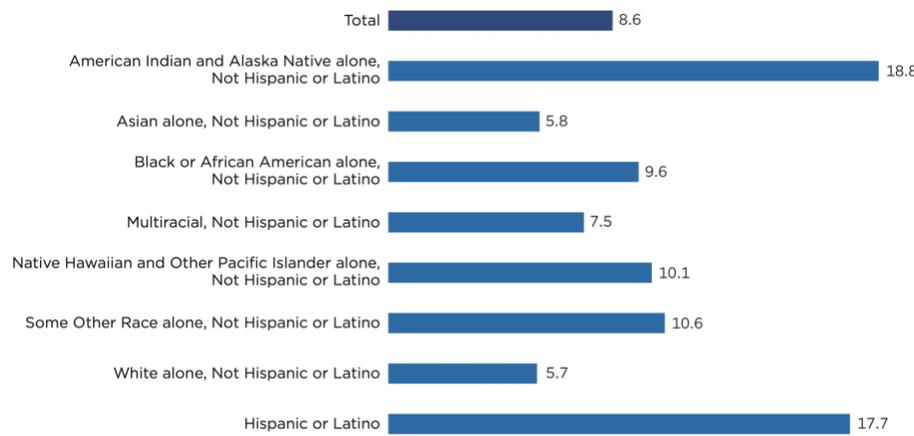


Figure 40. Percentage of people without health insurance in 2021 by race and ethnicity ([American Community Survey \[Branch & Conway, 2022\]](#)).

When it comes to private medical insurance, 72.2% of non-Hispanic white people had some form of it in 2021. American Indian/Alaska Native people had private insurance at a rate of 43.1% in that same year; 42.6% of Hispanic people aged 19 or younger have health insurance through their parents, and 56.8% of Hispanic adults aged 19-64 are covered by some form of private health insurance through their employer.

In terms of public medical coverage, according to data from the same source, 53.7% of Hispanic people aged 19 and under were insured through Medicaid, the U.S. government's public healthcare program. Being a federal and state initiative, Medicaid gives access to health insurance for people who are low-income or under the annually established poverty line. Those aged 19 and under are covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), while Medicare covers all those aged 65 and older, and VA Healthcare covers for veterans of the U.S. military. In 2021, 21.8% of Hispanic adults aged 19-64 appeared to have some form of public health insurance. These public programs cover services deemed "essential" by the U.S. Department of Health, and they include emergency services, hospitalizations, preventive care, ambulances, and medical tools, among others; they typically come with co-pays, premiums, and deductibles for which the insured person bears financial responsibility.

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6.e Life Expectancy and the Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Health

According to the census' projections, Hispanic life expectancy at birth will be 85.6 years in 2060 ([Medina et al., 2020](#)). It is estimated that Hispanic women will have a life expectancy at birth of 88.2 years, and men, 84.8 years. Meanwhile, non-Hispanic white people are estimated to have a life expectancy at birth of 85.6 years in 2060, with 87.6 years for women and 84 years for men. For comparison, data from 2017 shows a life expectancy of 79.7 years for the entire U.S. population. U.S.-born

Hispanic women had a higher life expectancy (83.3) than the national average in that same year, and this trend is projected to continue into 2060, when they reach the aforementioned 88.2.

Curiously enough, since the 1960s, the foreign-born or first-generation immigrant population has had a higher life expectancy than the U.S.-born population and this trend is expected to continue ([Bakhtiari, 2022](#)). In 2017, the foreign-born population lived 4.4 years longer than U.S. natives; by 2060, this difference is expected to decrease, so that foreign-born individuals have a life expectancy only 1.5 years higher than U.S. natives.

The Census Bureau periodically creates projections that can help adjust for upward trends that suddenly turn downwards, or reflect new demographic trends. If the Census' projections in this study were not correct, they can adjust them in the short term. For example, in the U.S., epidemics have historically led to a decrease in life expectancy. The 1968 and 1980 fever epidemics inverted the upward life expectancy trend in the short-term (NCHS 1981, cited in [Medina et al., 2020](#)), but in the long-term, life expectancy continued to rise. In the next Hispanic Map from the Observatory, we will have to analyze the coronavirus pandemic that hit the country in 2020 and its impacts on life expectancy for the U.S. population in general and the Hispanic population in particular. Current data on Covid-19 infection reflects urgent differences in the health of Hispanics as compared to other groups.

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken many lives in the U.S. and will continue to do so in the coming years, particularly among the elderly and the unvaccinated. Over the week of December 21st, 2021, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 487,367 new cases of Covid-19, out of a sum total of 100,216,983 U.S. cases since the start of the pandemic, 1,086,197 of which led to deaths ([CDC](#)

[Covid Tracker Week of December 21st, 2022](#)). In the same period, 14.6% of those aged 5 and older were fully vaccinated, and 80.8% had received at least one dose—95% of this second group was aged 65 and older ([CDC Covid Tracker 2022](#)).

In 2020, the leading cause of death in the Hispanic population was Covid-19 infection (CDC, 2022). Since the outset of the pandemic, Hispanic people have had the highest infection rates of any U.S. population group. For example, in July 2020, Hispanic people registered 180.7 weekly cases per 100,000 inhabitants, compared to 51.3 for non-Hispanic whites, 106.5 for Black people, 35.5 for Asian people, and 90.1 for American Indian/Alaska Native people over the same period. The percentage of Hispanic Covid-19 deaths in March 2020 was 5.48% of weekly cases per 100,000 inhabitants; the death rate in the Black population surpassed the Hispanic figure during that time, at 8.7%, while non-Hispanic white people registered a rate of 4.2%, non-Hispanic Asian people 4.26%, and American Indian/Alaska Native people 3.33%.

In January of 2021, Hispanics contracted 571.7 weekly cases per 100,000 inhabitants, compared to 238 for non-Hispanic Asian people and 274.7 for non-Hispanic white people. In that same month, Hispanics had a rate of 7.2% weekly deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, placing them above American Indians/Alaska Natives, at 6.45%. In January 2022, with the rise of the Omicron variant, Hispanic infections were once again higher than other groups, at 1,443 weekly cases per 100,000 inhabitants (compared to 1,067.8 for non-Hispanic Asian people and 735.6 for non-Hispanic white people). Weekly deaths in that month were roughly 4% of weekly cases per 100,000 inhabitants for Hispanic people, with only the Asian population placing lower, at approximately 2.8%. Moving to the end of that year, in the week of December 3rd, 2022, Hispanic weekly case rates were at 111.4 per 100,000 inhabitants, compared to 170.3 for non-Hispanic Asian people, 74.2 for non-Hispanic white people, 82.9 for Black people, and 122.4 for American Indian/Alaska Native people ([CDC Covid Tracker 2022](#)). In other words, case rates

are currently higher among Asians and Native Americans than Hispanics. Finally, death rates dropped in general during that period, with the Hispanic death rate per 100,000 inhabitants falling to 0.15% ([CDC Covid Tracker 2022](#)).

The fact that Covid-19 was the leading cause of death for Hispanic people in 2020 is explained, at least in part, by the broader socioeconomic conditions impacting their health. The health of the U.S. Hispanic population is impacted by linguistic and cultural factors which limit their access to preventive care, whether due to lack of information or lack of health insurance ([Funk & Lopez, 2022](#)), and their leading causes of death in general are heart disease, cancer, accidents, stroke, diabetes, and neuronal illnesses such as Alzheimer's. They also have high rates of chronic illness, such as lower respiratory infections (including asthma), the flu, pneumonia, hepatitis, kidney failure, and suicide ([CDC 1999-2020](#)). Alongside these health problems, Hispanics also have higher obesity rates than those of non-Hispanic whites ([CDC 2019](#)).

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However, that death rates were high in 2020 is also due in part to the fact that Hispanic people tend to work in the service industry, which was considered essential for the functioning of the U.S. economy and required employees to be physically present at work. Along these lines, according to a survey by Funk and López in 2022, 53% of Hispanic people believe they have worse health than other groups because of their work conditions; 48% attribute it to a lack of access to quality health services; 44% to issues with communication or cultural differences; 40% to pre-existing conditions; 38% to living in an unhealthy environment, and 30% to a lack of medical personnel who can offer advanced and specialized care in their areas ([Funk & Lopez, 2022](#)). Another factor to keep in mind is that Hispanic people generally live in urban areas with high population density, such as metropolitan Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Miami, as well as major cities in Texas. What's more, high immigration rates make it such that immigrants who are undocumented

and/or have linguistic or cultural limitations are less likely to go to hospitals and local clinics. It is worth pointing out here that only half of recent immigrants have selected a primary care doctor. This is due in part to their difficulty in understanding how the U.S. health system functions ([Funk & Lopez, 2022](#)).

All these factors, together with historical barriers to access and equity for U.S. minority populations, have caused the Covid-19 pandemic and its health complications to have a particularly strong impact on minority groups, including Hispanics. Compared to non-Hispanic white people, Hispanic people had 1.5 times more cases, 1.9 times more hospitalizations, and 1.8 times more deaths, though these numbers were surpassed by non-Hispanic Native American people and in some cases by Black people; among minority groups only Asian people fared better, with 0.8 times the cases, 0.7 times the hospitalizations, and 0.8 times the deaths of non-Hispanic white people, as shown in Figure 41, based on data from the CDC in November 2022.

| Rate ratios compared to White, Non-Hispanic persons | American Indian or Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic persons | Asian, Non-Hispanic persons | Black or African American, Non-Hispanic persons | Hispanic or Latino persons |
|---|--|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Cases ¹ | 1.6x | 0.8x | 1.1x | 1.5x |
| Hospitalization ² | 2.5x | 0.7x | 2.2x | 1.9x |
| Death ^{3, 4} | 2.1x | 0.8x | 1.7x | 1.8x |

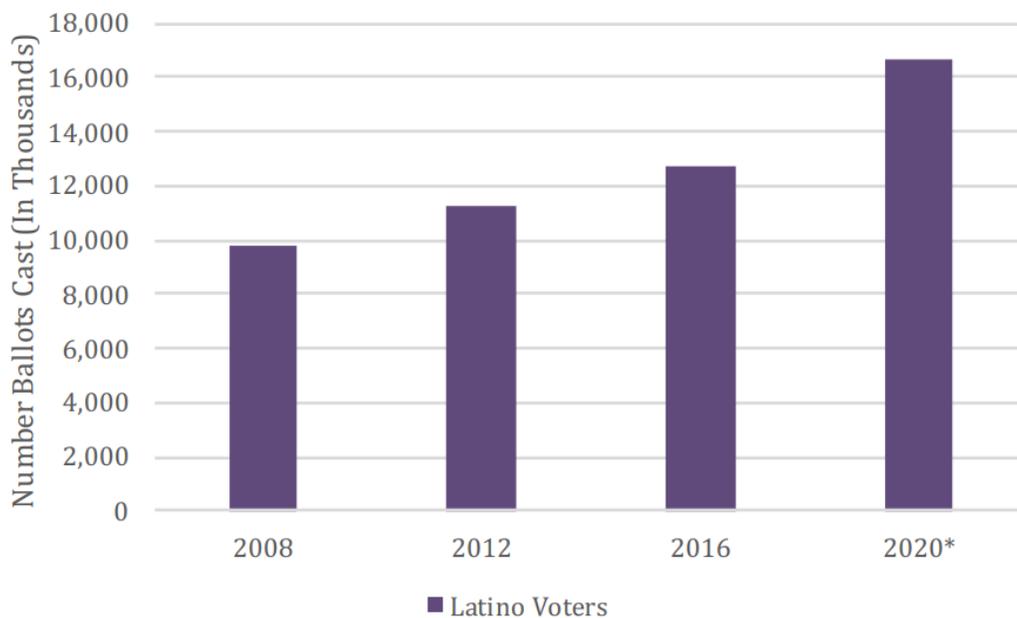
Figure 41. Risk of infection, hospitalization, and death by Covid-19, categorized by race and ethnicity ([CDC, noviembre de 2022](#)).

7. Politics

7.a Voter Registration and Turnout in the 2020 Presidential Election

Hispanic participation in U.S. politics remains a significant source of votes for political parties. To understand why, we must keep in mind the voting capability and voter registration in the electoral system. Despite the pandemic in which the November 2020 election took place, that year saw a record increase in Latino voter turnout. The Latino Policy and Politics Initiative at UCLA (California) has provided data on the number of Latino voters in the crucial 2020 elections. In their report, *Vote Choice of Latino Voters in the 2020 Presidential Election*, they estimate that 16.6 million Latinos exercised their right to vote, a 30.9% increase from the 2016 presidential election ([Domínguez-Villegas et al., 2021, p. 6](#)). These numbers are similar to those presented by Report 94 of the Latino Data Project at the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies at the City University of New York (CUNY). They estimate 16.5 million votes, a 29.8% increase from the 12.7 million in 2016 ([Bergad & Miranda, 2021, p. 5](#)). Figure 42 shows the rise in Latino voter turnout across the last four general elections.

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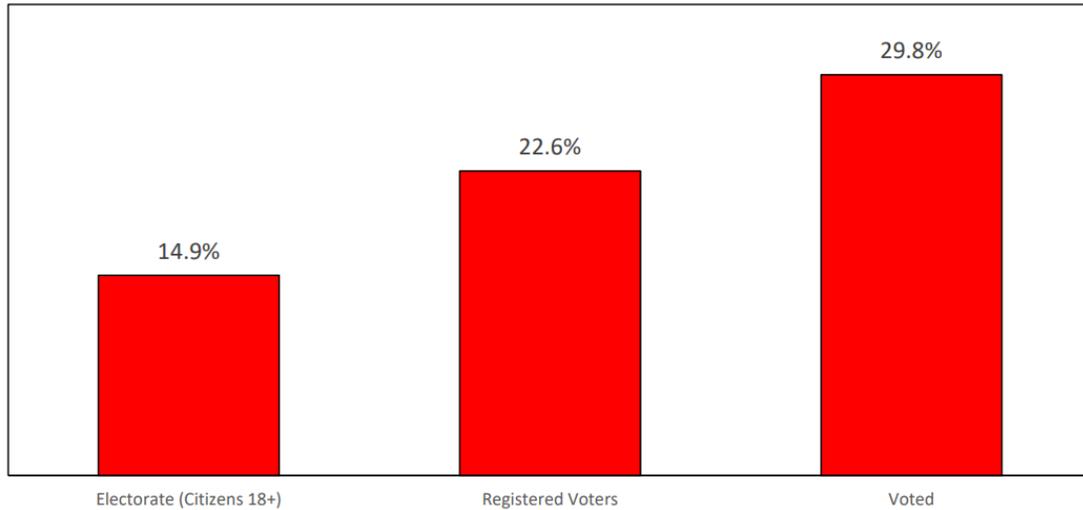
Source: Michael Herndon, Sonja Diaz, Bryanna Ruiz, and Natalie Masuoka, *The Power of the New Majority: A 10 State Analysis of Voters of Color in the 2020 Election* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Initiative, 2020), [available online](#).

Figure 42. Latino voter turnout in the past four presidential elections ([Herndon et al. 2020](#)).

There was a 15.9% increase in overall voter turnout in the U.S., which means the increase in Latino turnout was more than two times higher than the increase in the general turnout rate over the same period ([Domínguez-Villegas et al., 2021, p. 6](#)).

This increase in Latino voting numbers has been sparked by a record turnout of Latino people aged 18-44, which also reflects rising voter registration rates for U.S.-born Latino people. Specifically, 74.4% of U.S.-born Latino people exercised their right to vote, versus 25.6% of naturalized Latino citizens. The percentage of eligible Latino people who cast votes was 53.7% in 2020; prior to that year, it had never surpassed 50%. Roughly 61.1% of Latino citizens aged 18 and older were registered to vote, surpassing the 49.9% of the 2008 presidential election. Notably, Hispanic women aged 18-44 voted in greater proportion than men in the same age group (44.1% of women aged 18-25 versus 38.4% of men, and 56.6% of women aged 24-44, compared to 47.4% of men). Figure 43 shows the percent growth of the Latino

electorate (the total number of citizens aged 18 and over) from 2016 to 2020, which rose 14.9%. In that same period, the percentage of Latino registered voters increased 22.6%, and Latino voter turnout rose 29.8% ([Bergad & Miranda, 2021, p. 10](#)).



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Figure 43. Percent increase in Latino electorate, voter registration, and turnout from 2016 to 2020 ([Latino Data Project, Informe 94, CLACLS](#)).

Of the approximately 62 million Hispanic people in the country, about half are eligible to vote ([Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020](#)). While the number of Latino votes rose from 9.2% of all votes cast in the 2016 election to 10.2% in the 2020 election, we have to contrast those numbers with other national groups. Voter turnout among Latino people (53.7%) remains lower than that of non-Hispanic white (70.9%), Black (62.6%), and Asian people (59.7%) ([Bergad & Miranda, 2021, p. 15](#)).

Between 2010-2020, organizations with Latino bases have worked exhaustively to register Latino voters and remove barriers to casting their vote in elections. These initiatives are producing results. For example, Hispanic voter turnout in the 2018 midterm elections was unprecedented (midterm elections have lower

turnout rates in general). With 11.2 million ballots cast, Latino people had voted in numbers closer to a presidential election year, thanks to community organizations efforts such as Get out the Vote (GOTV). The rise in Hispanic voter turnout in districts with large Hispanic population concentrations can partly be attributed to those and similar initiatives ([UnidosUS 2020](#)).

7.b Geographic Distribution of the Hispanic Vote

Where did most Hispanic voters live at the time of the 2020 election? Two out of every three lived in five states: California (7.9 million), Texas (5.6 million), Florida (3.1 million), New York (2 million), and Arizona (1.2 million). The state with the highest population of eligible Latino voters is New Mexico, with 43% of its electorate composed of Latino people, followed by California and Texas, with roughly 30%, Arizona with 24%, and finally Florida, where 20% of eligible voters are Latino. The districts with the largest numbers of eligible Hispanic voters are in Texas and Florida, though the districts with the highest percentages are in California (District 40's electorate is 80% Latino) and Texas (District 34's is 79%) ([Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020](#)).

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The geographic concentration of Hispanic voters has an influence on American election results. As a representative democracy, presidents in the U.S. are chosen by the Electoral College. The votes cast by citizens are converted into a quantity of Electors in each state (excluding the District of Columbia). The members of the resulting College (538 electors), typically selected by an absolute majority of votes, decide who will win the presidency and vice presidency. A candidate must reach at least 270 electoral votes to claim victory. States with fewer eligible voters have fewer seats on the Electoral College, and vice versa.

In states where the population is not clearly defined as Democrat or Republican, also known as “swing states,” (states that do not vote for the same party in every election), the Electoral College seats are contested in a way that can sometimes lead to a surprise result. In the 2020 elections, swing states accounted for nearly half of the Electoral College votes (107) necessary to elect a president. Those states were: Arizona, Florida, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. Figures 44a and 44b, respectively, show swing states and general election results in 2020.

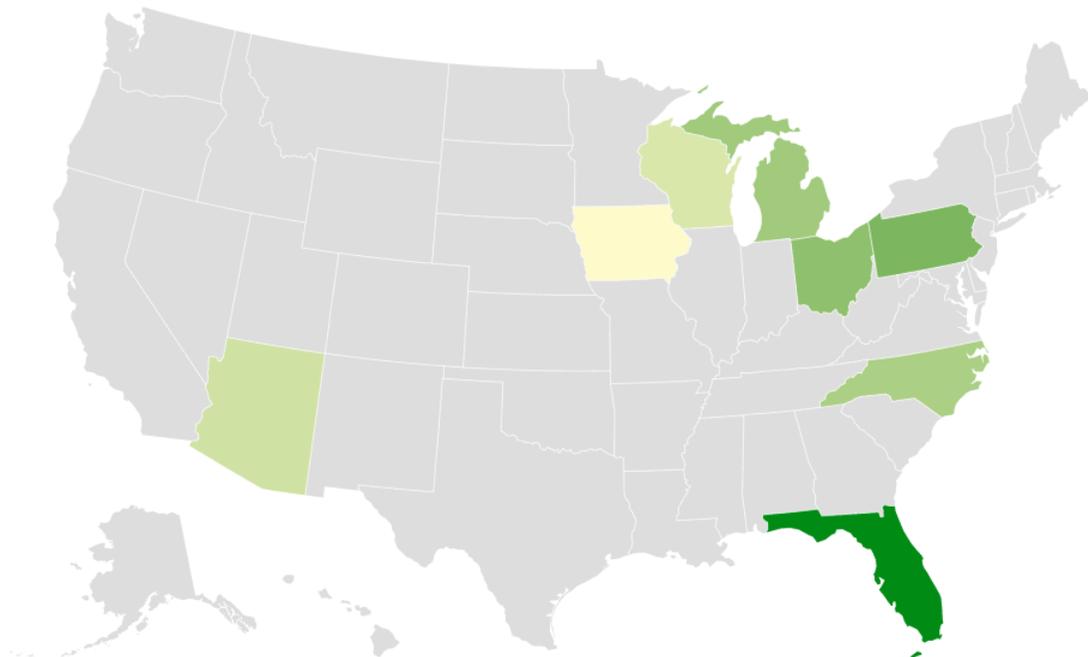


Figure 44 a. States with competitive election outcomes, or swing states, in the 2020 election ([Woodward, 2020](#)).

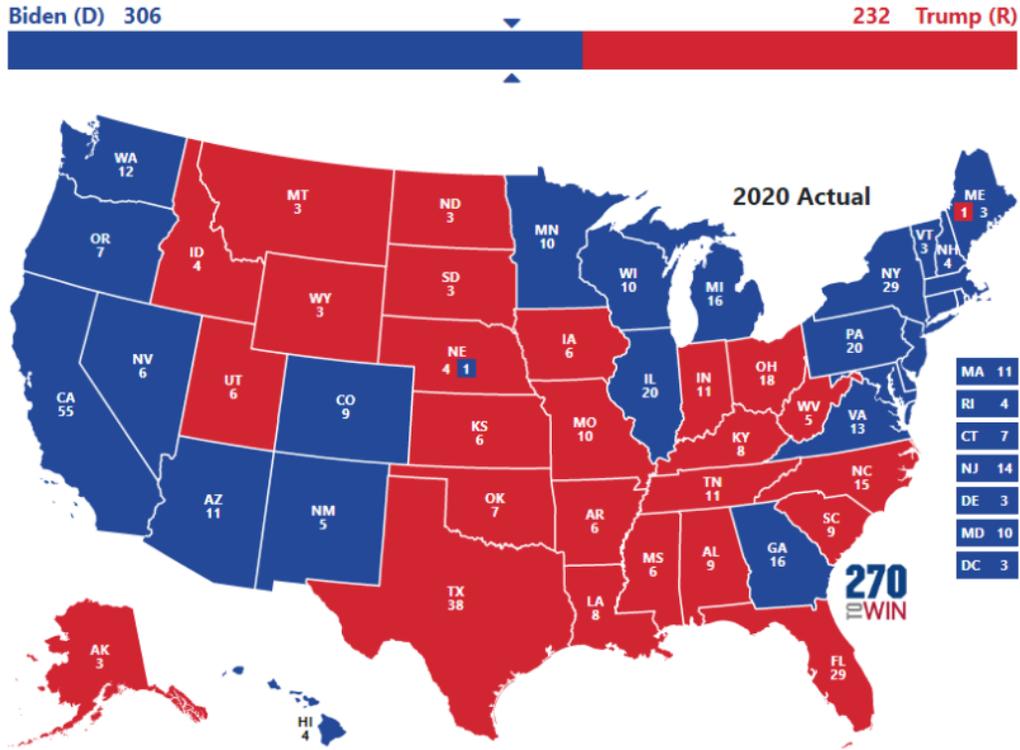
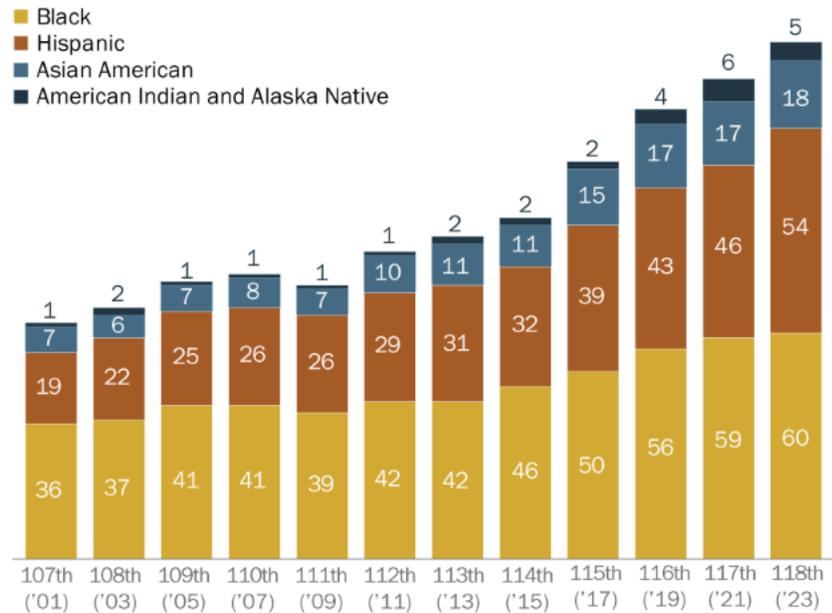


Figure 44 b. Election results in swing states in the 2020 election ([2020 presidential elections](#)).

As seen in Figure 44b, Arizona inverted its Republican tendency and gave its votes to the Democrats, who also claimed victory in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, Florida, Iowa, Ohio, and North Carolina gave their votes to the Republican candidate. In total, Joe Biden won 306 electoral votes, compared to Donald Trump's 232. As stated above, the Hispanic vote contributed to the Democratic victories in the 2020 swing states.

There are currently six Hispanic senators in the U.S. Senate: Alex Padilla (Democrat, California), Ben Ray Luján (Democrat, New Mexico), Catherine Cortez Masto (Democrat, Nevada), Ted Cruz (Republican, Texas), Marco Rubio (Republican, Florida), and Robert Menendez (Democrat, New Jersey) ([United States Senate 2022](#)). In the 117th Congress of the United States, the House of Representatives was 9.6% Hispanic, with 52 Hispanic representatives ([Congressional Research Service 2022](#)).

A report recently published by the Pew Research Center ([Schaeffer, 2023](#)), illustrates the increase in the racial and ethnic diversity of the U.S. Congress. Figure 45 shows that 54 representatives in the recently sworn-in 118th Congress are Hispanic, two more than in the previous session.



Note: The data does not include nonvoting delegates or commissioners. Figures for the 118th Congress are as of Jan. 3, 2023. Hispanics are of any race.

Figure 45. Evolution of the racial and ethnic make-up of the United States Congress, in numbers of people.

7.c 2022 Midterm Elections

On November 8th, 2022, midterm elections were held to establish the 118th Congress of the U.S. federal political system, under the presidency of Joe Biden. These elections are known as “midterm” because they take place halfway through a president’s four-year term. For Americans with the right to vote (at present, those who

have citizenship via naturalization or birth), these elections provide the ability to select and change the 435 members of the House of Representatives⁷ and 35 of the 100 (or 1/3) of the senators in the U.S. Senate. They traditionally take place on the Tuesday after the first Monday of November and they are important in that they allow citizens to elect federal representatives of the legislature, state governors, and local and municipal politicians.

Midterm elections measure the performance of the current president, in this case Joe Biden, elected in November 2020, as well as their political party, in his case, the Democratic Party. Both the 2022 midterm elections and the 2020 presidential election were heavily affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and its repercussions on health and the economy, as well as the social and political issues of the time: the economic situation outside of the pandemic, the health system, foreign policy, immigration, social, economic, racial, and ethnic inequality, gun and abortion laws, and climate change ([Pew Research Center 2020](#)). On top of these issues were the historical cultural divisions of the country ([Hunter, 1991](#); [Dionne Jr., 2006](#); [Stanton, 2021](#)).

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Though many predicted a so-called ‘red wave,’ that is, a result strongly in favor of the Republican Party, no such result materialized, with the exception of Florida. Hispanics voted in line with the national trend: 60% of their votes were for Democrats and 39% for Republicans, an increase for the Republican Party. As shown in Figure 46%, Republicans are regaining the Latino votes they lost since their peak in 2004.

⁷ Along with these 435 representatives, there is one from Washington D.C., as well as five delegates (from Guam, the Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Samoa).

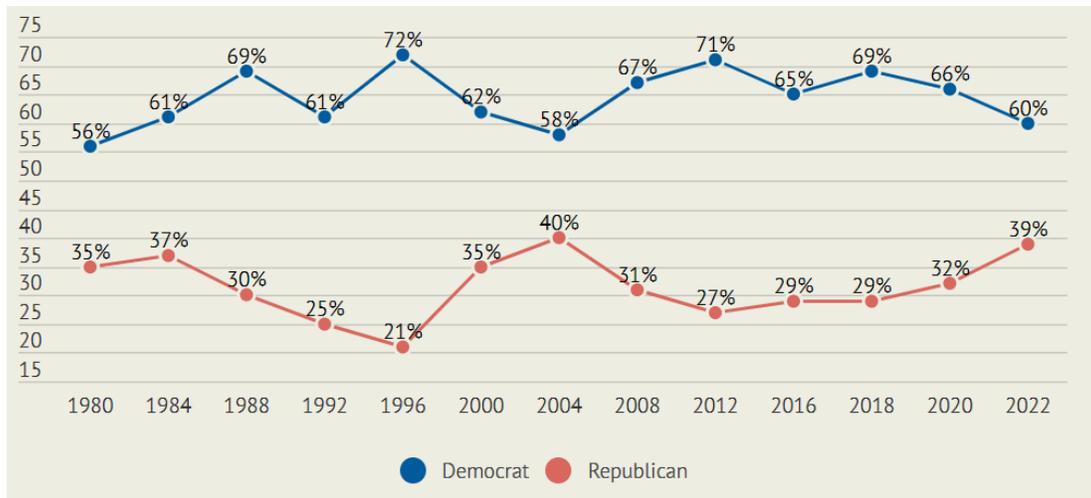


Figure 46. The national Latino vote from 1980 to 2022
 (Chart: How U.S. Latinos Voted in the 2022 Midterm Election [Vilcarino & Harrison, 2022]).

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The Florida and Texas election results stand out in particular. In Florida, the majority of Latino voters cast their ballots for a Republican senate candidate: Senator Marco Rubio, a Hispanic Republican, who had lost 2% of the Hispanic vote in 2016 but won by over 15 points in 2022, with 57.7% of the total votes, compared to the 41.3% received by Democratic candidate Val Demings (see figure 47). The only Latino group in Florida that voted for the Democratic candidate in its majority were Latino people aged 18-24.

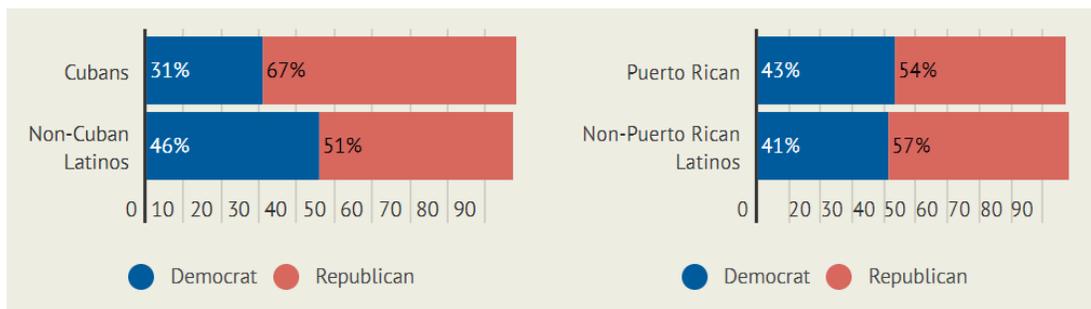


Figure 47. Votes cast by Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanics for Florida's U.S. Senate seat
 (Chart: How U.S. Latinos Voted in the 2022 Midterm Election [Vilcarino & Harrison, 2022]).

In Texas, Democrats lost votes in the gubernatorial election, but gained 7% in counties with higher Latino populations, seeing a 3% increase from 2020. Additionally, 61.2% of Texas' State Senate seats went to Republicans, while only 41.9% went to Democrats.

In nearly every state, Democrats won when they competed against Republicans in their state's gubernatorial and U.S. Senate elections. Democrats gained a governor and senators for their party in Arizona, Nevada, and Pennsylvania.

Latino voters prioritized different issues at the ballot box in 2020 than in 2022. To understand the trend highlighted by the midterm elections, we must analyze the political issues that are important to Hispanic people today.

7.d Who Latino People Vote for and Why

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The Latino vote is not homogenous. It is subject to factors ranging from state of residence, community, country of origin, and being native to the U.S. or not, to immigrant generation, language, sex and gender, race and ethnicity, age, individual and shared family values, and maybe more. Understanding these factors helps political parties mobilize Latinos ([Abrajano, 2010](#)). For example, in the 2020 election there was a tendency to speak of Hispanics as a single voting block with broad similarities across the country. However, this media portrait of Hispanic voters only served to highlight their differences when the November 2020 election results materialized ([Aguilera, 2020](#); [Carlson et al., 2020](#)). Below, we will analyze who the Latino population supported in the 2020 presidential election and to what extent.

Many predicted that Joe Biden would receive the majority of Latino votes, and he did. Following vote recounts, a more detailed look showed candidate preferences by state and electoral district. Latino voters supported Biden over Trump by a 3 to 1 margin in Arizona, California, Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico, Nevada, New York,

Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. They also supported him at least 2 to 1 in certain counties in Texas, Georgia, Washington, and Florida, excluding Miami-Dade. Arizona, a state which has not voted Democrat since 1996 (when they elected Bill Clinton) was once again Democratic in 2020 thanks to the mobilization of Latino youth. Through organizations with large memberships, they successfully undertook campaigns to encourage Latino people to vote. These mobilizations were also influenced by restrictive immigration policies, such as SB 1070, which have predominantly affected Latino people ([One Arizona 2022](#)). In states such as Georgia and Washington, Latino voters mostly supported Joe Biden. The Latino vote in Miami-Dade, Florida was 2 to 1 in favor of Donald Trump, inverting the trend in the rest of the state, where Latino people supported Biden by a similar margin ([Domínguez-Villegas et al., 2021, p. 6](#)).

Latino voters played a major role in swing states where races were more competitive. In Arizona for example, where Latino people account for 25.2% of all registered voters, their majority support helped Biden win the state. In Georgia and Wisconsin, where they make up only 5%, they nonetheless aided Biden's victory with their majority support, as he won both states by less than 1% ([Domínguez-Villegas et al., 2021, p. 6](#)).

In general, the 2020 presidential election showed no great shift in the tendency of Hispanic people to vote for one party or another. As Figure 45 shows, Hispanic people have, since the 1980 election, voted predominantly for Democrats rather than Republicans ([Sonneland, 2020](#)).

The issues debated by political candidates can sway the decisions of Latino voters. In 2020, the issues most important to Latino voters were: the economy, public health, and Covid-19, according to a poll by Pew Research Center published on September 11th, 2020, and conducted from July 27 to August 2 of that same year.

The same source indicates that Latino voters prioritized public health (76% of them vs. 68% of U.S. voters in general), coronavirus (72% vs 62%), and racial and ethnic inequality (66% vs 52%) in greater numbers than other groups in the 2020 presidential election. A concern over health and coronavirus infection comes as no surprise given that Latino people have suffered the effects of Covid-19 more acutely than whites and Asians, as was demonstrated in the previous section ([Krogstad & Lopez, 2020](#); [Pew Research Center 2020](#)).

Where Latino voters differed most from others in that survey was their view on climate change. About 60% of Latino people consider climate change an important topic when choosing who to vote for, compared to 42% of U.S. adults. There are also differences when it comes to gender. Hispanic women consider immigration policy particularly important, with 69% of women versus 50% of men claiming it affects their decision-making process. The rest of the population showed smaller differences between men (50%) and women (55%) in this respect. Hispanic women also valued economic inequality more than men (59% vs 45%), as well as abortion (48% vs 36%), in line with the national trend ([Krogstad & Lopez, 2020](#)).

By the time of the 2022 midterm elections—once the worst phases of the pandemic had passed—abortion had become the fifth-most important issue to Latino voters ([Martinez, 2022](#)), despite being at the bottom of the list in the 2020 election, in line with the national trend. The poll, which was distributed among 2,750 possible Latino voters in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, and Pennsylvania, and included both registered and unregistered voters, found that 70% of those polled felt that abortion should be legal independent of personal values. A CNN exit poll found similar results: 28% answered that abortion was their top issue, above inflation (25%), crime (15%) immigration (12%), and gun laws (9%) ([CNN, 2022 Exit Polls](#)).

7.e The White House's Spanish-language Web Page in 2022

The Spanish-language version of the White House webpage ceased to exist on January 20th, 2017. That day was the first day of former president Donald Trump's presidential term. The media immediately understood this as the political position on diversity of the incoming president and his cabinet. The official message on the White House page was that it was under maintenance. A survey conducted by Hernández-Nieto and Moreno-Fernández (2017) at the Observatory of the Cervantes Institute at Harvard University showed how Hispanics interpreted this gesture. About 55.4% saw it as a manifestation of "English-only" politics, 40.8% attributed it to Republican ideology, and 40% referenced the exclusion of diversity in the administration's policies.

The webpage, which originated with the presidency of George W. Bush (2001-2009) and continued under Barack Obama (2009-2017), disappeared for the entirety of Donald Trump's tenure (2017-2021). After the inauguration of the current president, Joseph R. Biden Jr., the page was restored and is still active as of January 2023. The public suspension of the Spanish-language White House webpage during Donald Trump's presidency solidified the impression that the exclusion of ethno-racial diversity, particularly of the Latino population, was a point of policy for the then president, though it is also one with a long history among white Americans ([Arellano, 2015](#); Chavez, 2013; Chavez, 2017; [Caputo, 2020](#)). Former president Donald Trump's behavior falls within the scope of those Americans who lobby for English to be the country's official language (Hernández 2019). With that in mind, it's worth highlighting the growing presence of the Spanish and Hispanic population in politics, including at the White House. This was evident in the recent State of the Union Address, on February 7th, 2023, when the public television and radio stations PBS and NPR offered live broadcasts in Spanish as well as English.

8. Conclusion

The 2022 Hispanic Map shows improvements for the Latino population in every area discussed, even during the difficult years of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020, there were 62.1 million people who identified as Hispanic, a 23% growth from 2010. While states like California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois continue to have the largest Hispanic populations, Latinos are also settling in new Southern states such as Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina, as well as in Northern states such as Montana and Nebraska ([Marrow, 2011](#); Waters & Pineau, 2016).

In terms of demographics, the U.S. Census Bureau has brought greater visibility to Latino diversity by reformulating the self-identification questions about race in the 2020 census. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of Hispanics who identified as more than one race rose 567%, from 6.0% to 32.7%, while 42.2% identified as 'some other race.' The change in the 2020 census question also showed a steep decline of 52.9% in the number of Hispanic people who consider themselves 'white.' Although census data that was not possible to include in this study will be available over the course of 2023, the added nuance of the new question format helps to identify Hispanic people using U.S. racial and ethnic nomenclature, and allows the federal government to see where best to allocate social resources.

Another demographic characteristic worth highlighting is the growing influence of nativity rather than immigration on the U.S. Hispanic population. The rising number of U.S.-born Hispanic people is also evident in the group's educational, social, and economic improvements. The fact that there are now more U.S.-born Hispanic people than Hispanic immigrants in a given year has significant impacts, for example in politics, where it leads to higher numbers of eligible voters, as well as in education, where Hispanic people can reach higher levels of success thanks to their greater English proficiency and familiarity with U.S. culture, among other things.

The pan-ethnic categories ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Latino’ continue to be treated as synonyms by the census due to their ability to extrapolate general characteristics of the group and highlight important sociopolitical indicators. Here, we have discussed the many attitudes towards the meaning of these terms and the great variety among how the Latino population interprets these labels in order to show the nuance that is lost by using them. In general, while Latino people are less likely to speak Spanish in later generations, they nonetheless retain a symbolic relationship with the language.

Linguistic indicators show trends arising from the increase in the number of U.S.-born Hispanics and the decrease in the influx of immigrants, which, if they remain stable, could mean the disappearance of Spanish from Hispanic homes by the third generation. Of course, the disappearance of mother tongues due to a combination of the cultural weight of English and low immigration rates is not a new phenomenon in the U.S., where linguistic diversity has always been linked to fluctuating waves of immigration ([Rumbaut & Massey, 2013, p. 2](#)). In any case, while current Latino immigration rates are much lower than in the past, we have not yet reached a zero Latino immigration scenario. Spanish remains the second-most spoken and studied language in the U.S., behind English, and it remains to be seen what will happen in a hypothetical near-zero immigration scenario.

As for other positive indicators beyond education and the maintenance of the Spanish language, it’s worth mentioning economics and the Latino population’s ability to endure the hardships brought on by Covid-19. By summer 2021, 50% of Hispanic small business owners experienced a reduced negative effect from the pandemic. What’s more, 2021 saw the highest decrease in Hispanic household poverty (15.5%) since its peak (25.5%) in 2010, though Hispanic people remain behind non-Hispanic white people (8.1%) and Asian people (9.3%) in this respect. Of course, it’s also important to keep in mind the great variety in the economic situations of the various Hispanic groups based on national origin.

It's also important to mention that both Hispanic voter registration and turnout increased in the 2020 presidential election, largely thanks to the 18-44 age group. There are at least two factors to keep in mind here: on the one hand, an increase in U.S.-born Hispanic people means more eligible voters; on the other hand, the negative policies of the former president with respect to the Latino population and immigration between 2016-2020 led organizations to mobilize against measures that negatively impacted Latino people.

In the 2022 midterm elections, Latino people once again voted in higher numbers than previous years, and the Democratic party received more support from Latino voters than ever before. However, Republicans are also regaining the Latino vote; in 2022, they received 39% of the Latino vote, one percentage point away from its 2004 peak of 40%. Latino political presence in Congress has also grown, continuing a trend which began decades ago. Finally, the Spanish-language White House webpage has been restored to inform the Spanish-speaking public about official policies relevant to the Hispanic population within and without the country.

There remain gaps to be closed with the rest of the U.S. population. For example, Latino students are less likely to graduate from competitive higher education institutions than non-Hispanic white ones. In terms of obligatory public education (K-12), Latino children and teenagers typically attend schools where most other students are also Latino or African American. This segregation has certain effects, many of them negative, when it comes to the quality of education they receive. Additionally, banks offer Latino people fewer loan options for their business ventures. Nonetheless, all of the positive indicators mentioned in the above paragraphs and throughout this study suggest that Hispanic people are in a favorable place to improve in the areas where they still lag behind.

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