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Racial and Ethnic Composition among Latinos in the United States (1990-2017)

Sebastian F. Villamizar-Santamaría
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Racial and Ethnic Composition among Latinos in the United States (1990- 2017)

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The Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies is a research institute that works for the advancement of the study of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the United States in the doctoral programs at the CUNY Graduate Center. One of its major priorities is to provide funding and research opportunities to Latino students at the Ph.D. level.

The Center established an interdisciplinary specialization in Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies in the Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies program.

The Latino Data Project was developed with the goal of making information available on the dynamically growing Latino population of the United States and especially New York City through the analysis of extant data available from a variety of sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Institute for Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and state and local-level data sources.

All Latino Data Project reports are available at <http://clacls.gc.cuny.edu>

For additional information, you may contact the Center at 212-817-8438 or by e-mail at clacls@gc.cuny.edu.

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Executive Summary

In a country with clear racial and ethnic hierarchies such as the United States, the issue of being mixed-race or multi-ethnic becomes a salient question. Latinos, who have diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds themselves, are all classified under a single umbrella category in the general U.S. population. Latinos can be self-declared ‘white,’ Afro- or Indigenous Latinos, mixed-race, or even ‘mestizos’ which literally means ‘mixed blood.’

This report examines the socioeconomic trends and differences among not only the four major racial and ethnic groups in the country (non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks, Latinos, and Asians) but also *within* the Latino population from 1990 to 2017.¹ The different racial and ethnic groups among the Latino population were derived using the self-identification question about race and ethnic group from the American Community Survey among the sample’s Latinos. For example, if someone answered they were Hispanic/Latino, but checked the “White” category on the racial question, they were classified as white Latinos. The same process was followed for the “Black, African American, Negro” category—classified as Afro-Latinos. Indigenous Latinos were those who answered “American Indian” in the survey, while mixed-race Latinos were all the other (including those who answered any of the Asian categories, or more than one category).

The Latino population, compared to the other three major racial and ethnic groups, is the youngest. Moreover, it holds the lowest socioeconomic position along with non-Hispanic blacks—in terms of educational attainment, income, and poverty status. Finally, this group grew from 8.3% of the total US population in 1990 to 18.7% in 2017.

That said, when examined closely, the four major racial and ethnic groups within the Latino population present a high variety. The majority of Latinos in the U.S. identify as white (65% in 2017), followed by mixed-race (31.8%); Afro-Latinos (2.2%) and Indigenous Latinos (1.0%) are very few in comparison.

There were no stark differences in socioeconomic performance in terms of sex among these four Latino sub-groups.

Latinos are the youngest racial and ethnic group in the country, but it is Afro-Latinos who are the youngest of them—in 2017, 20.6% of Afro-Latinos were aged 0-9 years old.

In terms of education, high-school non-completion decreased significantly between 1990 and 2017 among Latinos in general. This was a trend experienced by all sub-groups: from 47.0% to 29.3% among white Latinos, from 57.1% to 36.1% among mixed-race Latinos, from 47.8% to 20.3% among Afro-Latinos, and from 42.3% to 30.8% among Indigenous Latinos.

¹ This study uses the American Community Survey PUMS (Public Use Microdata Series) data for all years considered here released by the Census Bureau and reorganized for public use by the Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota, IPUMSusa, (<https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>). See Public Use Microdata Series Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas, and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 9.0 [2000, 2010, 2017]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V9.0>

A similar decreasing trend was found in terms of the lowest income strata. The proportion of white Latinos earning less than \$10,000 a year (in 2017 dollars) decreased from 15.7% in 1990 to 4.8% in 2017. The sharpest decline was experienced among Afro-Latinos, that went from 23.7% to 7.7% over the same period. And although all Latino sub-groups experienced a decline in poverty rates, it was the mixed-race Latinos who had the sharpest drop: from 32.7% in 1990 to 20.5% in 2017.

Finally, while the foreign-born white and mixed-race Latino population decreased slightly in this period (about one percentage point difference), it was the foreign-born Afro-Latinos who experienced the largest drop, from 38.2% to 26.4%. In contrast, the proportion of Indigenous Latinos grew substantially over this period, from 15.4% in 1990 to 27.6% in 2017.

Race and ethnic composition

The number of Latinos in the United States has steadily increased in the last thirty years. Between 1990 and 2017, this group almost tripled from 20,185,546 people to 58,671,302. (See table 1). The Asian population also experienced a significant growth, going from 6,977,447 to 18,414,398 people (a 163.9% increase) over the same period. Non-Hispanic blacks went from 29,188,456 in 1990 to 40,127,928 in 2017—a much more modest 37.5% increase. Finally, although non-Hispanic whites were the largest group, they experienced marginal growth going from 188,013,404 to 197,297,394—a 4.9% increase.

Table 1
Total Population by Race and Ethnicity
United States, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
Non-Hispanic White	188,013,404	194,527,123	196,931,448	197,297,394
Non-Hispanic Black	29,188,456	33,706,554	37,936,978	40,127,928
Asian	6,977,447	10,427,889	15,019,346	18,414,398
Latinos	20,185,546	35,336,969	50,486,058	58,671,302
Total	244,364,853	273,998,535	300,373,830	314,511,022

Figure 1
Percentage of Total Population by Race/Ethnicity
United States, 1990-2017

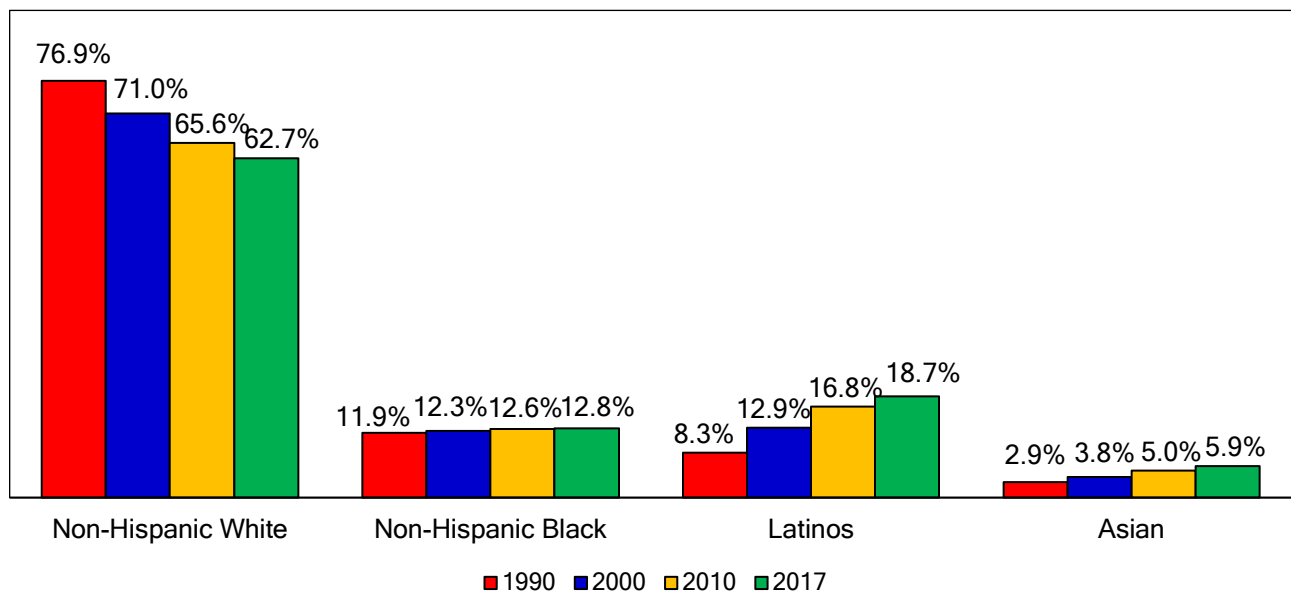


Figure 1 shows the percentages of the total population by the four major racial and ethnic groups. The share of the Latino population more than doubled—from 8.3% to 18.7%, which reflects the staggering growth from the previous table. The Asian population’s proportion also doubled from 2.9% to 5.9%. In contrast, and despite an increase in the total numbers, the non-Hispanic white share of the general U.S. population decreased from 76.9% to 62.7% over the same period. Similarly, despite an increase in absolute numbers, non-Hispanic blacks remained relatively stable between the years analyzed in this study (they represented 11.9% of the total US population in 1990 and 12.8% in 2017). In other words, the country is becoming more diverse.

Although the Latino population has experienced a consistent growth in the country, when examined closely, Latino sub-groups had disparate trends. White and mixed-raced Latinos represented more than 95% of the population, followed by Afro-Latinos and Indigenous Latinos. (See table 2 and figure 2). These proportions mirror the national populations of many Latin American countries where Black and Indigenous groups are the smallest.²

Between 1990 and 2017, the proportion of white Latinos grew from being almost half (51.7%) to about two-thirds (65.0%) of all Latinos in the country. Mixed-race Latinos, the second highest group, dropped from 44.8% to 31.8% over the same period. This decline does not mean that Latinos are not mixing³; rather, it might be the result of more Latinos self-identifying as “white” and not as “mestizo.” Despite increases in the absolute numbers, the share of Afro-Latinos slightly dipped from 2.9% to 2.2%, while Indigenous Latinos went from 0.6% to 1.0%. (See figure 2).

² The racial categories used in the U.S. are specific to the country, which prevents a full comparison with Latin American countries. However, the share of the population of Indigenous or African descent as defined in the five largest Latino nationalities in the U.S. is as follows:

Mexico: The census office does not record official statistics on race and ethnicity, but 6.6% of the population 5 years or older speaks an Indigenous language (INEGI, 2015, <https://www.inegi.org.mx/temas/lengua/>). There is no proxy for Afro-Mexicans.

Cuba: The census office (ONEI) does not record official statistics on race and ethnicity.

Puerto Rico: It follows the U.S. classification system. Black Puerto Ricans are 12% of the total population and Indigenous Puerto Ricans are 1% (SDC-PR, 2010, <https://censo.estadisticas.pr/censo-decenal>).

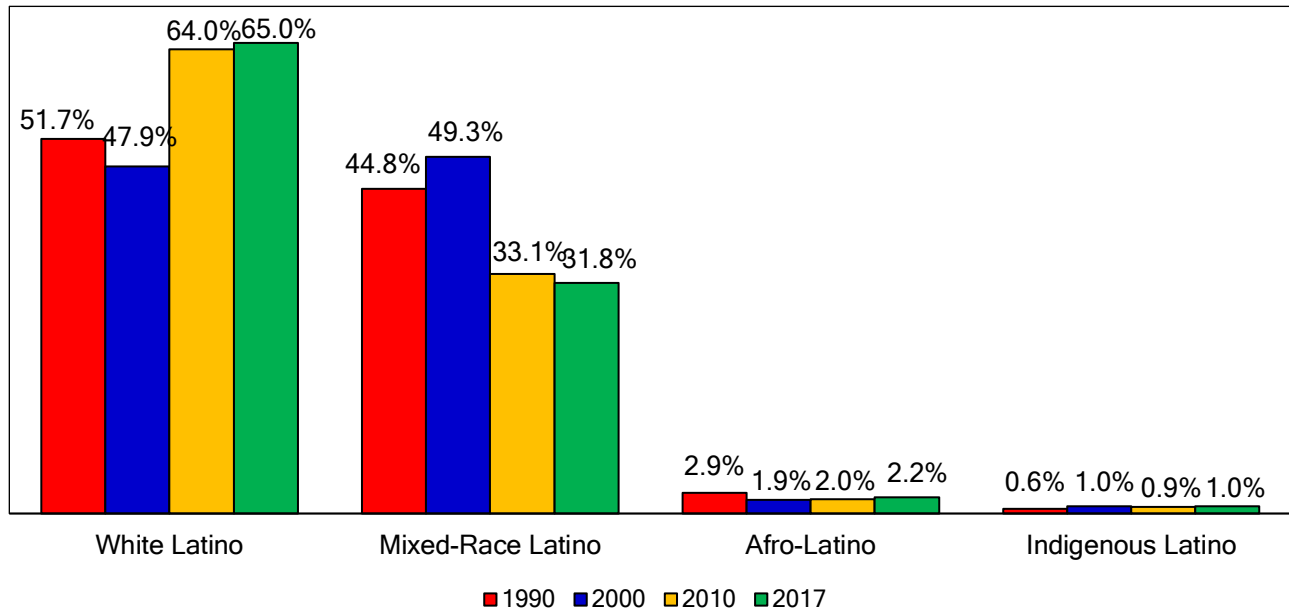
Dominican Republic: The census office (ONE) does not record official statistics on race and ethnicity. *El Salvador:* Indigenous (0.23%) and Black (0.13%) (DIGESTYC, 2007, <http://www.digestyc.gob.sv/servers/redatam/htdocs/CPV2007S/index.html>).

³ See CLALCLS report #77 on ancestry rates and mixing among Latinos in the U.S.

Table 2
The Latino Population by Race/Ethnic Group
United States, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
White Latino	10,435,569	16,920,644	32,334,163	38,121,345
Mixed-Race Latino	9,042,729	17,405,651	16,694,749	18,671,242
Afro-Latino	583,779	655,665	994,094	1,313,369
Indigenous Latino	123,469	355,009	463,052	565,346
Total	20,185,546	35,336,969	50,486,058	58,671,302

Figure 2
Percentage of the Latino Population by Race/Ethnic Group
United States, 1990-2017



Sex

No significant changes in the distribution of the population by sex were observed in the period studied in this report. Among all racial/ethnic groups except Latinos, women had a slightly higher share in the population composition. For example, non-Hispanic white men accounted for 48.7% of the total non-Hispanic whites in 1990, while women represented 51.3%. In 2000, the distribution between men and women among non-Hispanic blacks was 47.3% to 52.7%. Among Asians, men accounted for 47.6% of the population in 2010, while women represented 52.4%. In contrast, there were a few more men than women among the Latino population across all years of study—a share that marginally declined from 50.9% in 1990 to 50.4% in 2017. (See table 3).

Table 3
Percentage of Total Population by Race/Ethnicity and Sex,
United States, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
Non-Hispanic White				
Men	48.7%	48.9%	49.2%	49.3%
Women	51.3%	51.1%	50.8%	50.7%
Non-Hispanic Black				
Men	47.1%	47.3%	47.6%	47.7%
Women	52.9%	52.7%	52.4%	52.3%
Latino				
Men	50.9%	51.2%	50.7%	50.4%
Women	49.1%	48.8%	49.3%	49.6%
Asian				
Men	48.7%	48.1%	47.6%	47.4%
Women	51.3%	51.9%	52.4%	52.6%

Among Latinos, every racial/ethnic group reflected the general trend: there were slightly higher proportions of men in the total population compared to women. While the percentages of men and women among white and Afro-Latinos was relatively equal over this period, the bigger differences were

found among the mixed-race and Indigenous groups. In 1990, mixed-race Latinas accounted for 48.4% of this group; this proportion remained almost the same in 2017 (48.6%). Among Indigenous Latinas, the share of the population was 47.5% in 1990 and it rose marginally by 2017 (48.4%). (See table 4).

Table 4
Percentage of the Latino Population by Race/Ethnic Group
and Sex, United States, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
White Latino				
Men	50.3%	50.7%	50.3%	50.0%
Women	49.7%	49.3%	49.7%	50.0%
Mixed-Race Latino				
Men	51.6%	51.7%	51.5%	51.4%
Women	48.4%	48.3%	48.5%	48.6%
Afro-Latino				
Men	50.6%	49.1%	48.4%	50.0%
Women	49.4%	50.9%	51.6%	50.0%
Indigenous Latino				
Men	52.5%	51.8%	52.6%	51.6%
Women	47.5%	48.2%	47.4%	48.4%

Age

Latinos were younger than other racial and ethnic groups in the US in the period analyzed in this report. In 1990, 20.7% of the Latino population was 9 years of age or younger, followed by non-Hispanic blacks (18.0%), Asians (15.9%), and non-Hispanic whites (13.3%). In 2017, Latinos in that same age group represented 17.4% of the total Latino population—four points higher than non-Hispanic blacks (13.2%) and seven percentage points higher than non-Hispanic whites (10.0%) and Asians (10.5%). Importantly, this slight decrease among Latinos in this age group means that the population is getting older.

Latinos aged 19 or less amounted for about one third of the total Latino population in the country (34.8% in 2017). In contrast, non-Hispanic whites and Asians in this same age category were almost one fifth each (21.2% and 22% respectively), and non-Hispanic blacks comprised a little over one fourth (27.8%).

Conversely, the non-Hispanic white population was the oldest among the racial and ethnic groups, followed by Asians, and non-Hispanic blacks. In 2017, 8.5% of the non-Hispanic white population was between the ages of 70 and 79; 5.1% of Asians; 4.7% of non-Hispanic blacks, and 3.0% of Latinos in the same age category. (See table 5 for the rest of the age distribution among these groups).

Table 5
Percentage of Total Population by Race/Ethnicity and Age
United States, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017		1990	2000	2010	2017
Non-Hispanic White					Latino				
0-9	13.3%	12.1%	10.7%	10.0%	0-9	20.7%	20.7%	19.6%	17.4%
10-19	12.9%	13.1%	12.0%	11.2%	10-19	18.1%	17.8%	17.9%	17.4%
20-29	15.3%	12.1%	12.5%	12.4%	20-29	20.8%	19.1%	17.0%	16.2%
30-39	16.9%	14.9%	11.9%	12.3%	30-39	17.0%	17.2%	16.0%	15.2%
40-49	13.3%	16.0%	14.5%	12.2%	40-49	10.1%	11.8%	12.9%	13.3%
50-59	9.4%	12.2%	15.4%	14.7%	50-59	6.2%	6.5%	8.4%	9.9%
60-69	9.3%	8.3%	11.5%	13.8%	60-69	4.2%	3.7%	4.6%	6.0%
70-79	6.5%	7.0%	6.7%	8.5%	70-79	1.9%	2.3%	2.3%	3.0%
80-89	2.8%	3.5%	4.0%	3.9%	80-89	0.7%	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%
90-99	0.5%	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%	90-99	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%
Non-Hispanic Black					Asian				
0-9	18.0%	17.1%	14.6%	13.2%	0-9	15.9%	13.0%	12.3%	10.5%
10-19	17.6%	17.4%	16.5%	14.6%	10-19	15.7%	14.0%	12.7%	11.5%
20-29	17.3%	14.7%	15.0%	15.9%	20-29	17.9%	17.2%	15.7%	15.4%
30-39	16.8%	15.8%	13.5%	13.8%	30-39	19.4%	18.5%	17.3%	17.3%
40-49	11.2%	14.7%	14.4%	12.6%	40-49	14.0%	16.1%	15.4%	15.3%
50-59	7.5%	8.9%	12.6%	12.8%	50-59	8.0%	10.2%	12.3%	12.3%
60-69	6.2%	5.6%	7.5%	10.0%	60-69	5.4%	5.8%	8.1%	9.9%
70-79	3.8%	3.8%	3.9%	4.7%	70-79	2.8%	3.6%	4.1%	5.1%
80-89	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	80-89	0.8%	1.3%	1.8%	2.2%
90-99	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	90-99	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%

Following the national trend, all racial and ethnic groups within the Latino population became older. In 1990, 47.1% of Indigenous Latinos were aged 0-19, but only 32.6% of Indigenous Latinos were in the same group in 2017 (a 15-point difference compared to 1990). Mixed-race Latinos younger than 20 comprised 40.3% of that sub-group in 1990, but 35.7% were so in 2017 (almost five percentage points

less). The share of Afro-Latinos in the same age group was 39.4%, which dipped slightly to 38.7% over the same period. Finally, 34.7% of white Latinos were aged 0-19 in 1990, dropping three percentage points to 34.4% in 2017. (See table 6 for the rest of the age distribution among these groups).

Table 6
Percentage of the Latino Population by Race/Ethnic Group and Age
United States, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017		1990	2000	2010	2017
White Latino					Afro-Latino				
0-9	20.0%	19.5%	19.3%	17.1%	0-9	22.0%	22.7%	21.6%	20.6%
10-19	17.4%	16.7%	17.7%	17.3%	10-19	17.4%	18.8%	19.4%	18.1%
20-29	19.3%	17.4%	16.4%	15.8%	20-29	19.4%	17.1%	17.3%	18.8%
30-39	16.6%	17.1%	15.7%	15.0%	30-39	17.2%	15.6%	13.8%	14.3%
40-49	10.6%	12.3%	13.0%	13.2%	40-49	10.3%	11.7%	11.5%	10.6%
50-59	7.1%	7.6%	8.6%	10.1%	50-59	6.3%	6.9%	7.9%	8.3%
60-69	5.2%	4.9%	5.0%	6.3%	60-69	4.4%	3.8%	4.9%	5.3%
70-79	2.6%	3.2%	2.7%	3.3%	70-79	2.2%	2.5%	2.3%	2.4%
80-89	1.0%	1.1%	1.2%	1.5%	80-89	0.7%	0.9%	1.1%	1.2%
90-99	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	90-99	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Mixed-Race Latino					Indigenous Latino				
0-9	21.3%	21.9%	20.2%	17.9%	0-9	26.5%	21.8%	18.2%	15.2%
10-19	19.0%	18.8%	18.1%	17.8%	10-19	20.6%	19.2%	19.6%	17.4%
20-29	22.6%	20.8%	18.2%	17.0%	20-29	19.7%	18.0%	17.2%	15.4%
30-39	17.5%	17.3%	16.7%	15.7%	30-39	15.6%	16.9%	16.3%	16.3%
40-49	9.5%	11.4%	12.7%	13.6%	40-49	9.1%	12.9%	12.7%	12.9%
50-59	5.2%	5.5%	8.0%	9.4%	50-59	4.2%	6.1%	9.5%	11.4%
60-69	3.1%	2.6%	3.7%	5.3%	60-69	2.7%	2.8%	4.0%	6.7%
70-79	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%	2.2%	70-79	1.1%	1.6%	1.7%	2.9%
80-89	0.5%	0.4%	0.7%	0.9%	80-89	0.3%	0.5%	0.7%	1.3%
90-99	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	90-99	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.4%

Education

Overall, the U.S. population experienced an increase in education levels across the board during the period analyzed in this report. However, out of all major racial and ethnic groups, Latinos have the lowest educational attainment. In 1990, almost half of the Latino population aged 25 or higher (51.3%) had not completed high school. But they are getting more educated. In 2017, the proportion of Latinos that did not graduate from high school decreased to almost a third (31.2%). Conversely, Latinos with a BA or higher increased exponentially, from 905,007 people to 5,366,445 (among the total U.S. population, doubling from 8.8% in 1990 to 16.1% in 2017). (See table 7).

In contrast, only 20.9% of non-Hispanic whites aged 25 or more did not complete high school in 1990, decreasing significantly to 7.1% in 2017. The proportion of non-Hispanic blacks who did not graduate high school decreased more than half (from 36.7% to 13.9%) over the same period, and among Asians, the decline was from 22.3% to 13.0%. On the other side of the education spectrum, the proportion of non-Hispanic whites with a BA degree or higher increased from 22.0% in 1990 to 35.8% in 2017, from 11.4% to 21.6% among non-Hispanic blacks, and from 37.0% to more than half among Asians (53.2%).

Table 7
 Percentage of Total Population (Aged 25+) by Race/Ethnicity and Educational Attainment. United States, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
Non-Hispanic White				
Did Not Graduate High School	20.9%	14.6%	9.3%	7.1%
High School Graduate	31.4%	30.0%	29.3%	27.2%
Some College No Degree	19.3%	21.8%	21.9%	20.9%
Associates Degree	6.3%	6.6%	8.1%	9.0%
BA or Higher	22.0%	26.9%	31.4%	35.8%
Non-Hispanic Black				
Did Not Graduate High School	36.7%	27.5%	17.8%	13.9%
High School Graduate	28.1%	29.8%	31.8%	31.7%
Some College No Degree	18.5%	22.6%	24.9%	24.3%
Associates Degree	5.3%	5.8%	7.5%	8.5%
BA or Higher	11.4%	14.3%	17.9%	21.6%
Latino				
Did Not Graduate High School	51.3%	47.5%	37.8%	31.2%
High School Graduate	21.2%	22.1%	26.5%	28.2%
Some College No Degree	13.9%	15.6%	17.2%	18.0%
Associates Degree	4.8%	4.3%	5.4%	6.5%
BA or Higher	8.8%	10.6%	13.1%	16.1%
Asian				
Did Not Graduate High School	22.3%	19.5%	14.3%	13.0%
High School Graduate	18.6%	16.3%	16.6%	15.4%
Some College No Degree	14.4%	14.2%	13.4%	11.7%
Associates Degree	7.7%	6.6%	6.5%	6.7%
BA or Higher	37.0%	43.4%	49.2%	53.2%

The low educational attainment among mixed-race Latinos is what drives the low education levels among the overall Latino population. In 1990, 57.1% of this Latino sub-group did not graduate from high-school, compared to white Latinos (47.0%), Afro-Latinos (47.8%), and Indigenous Latinos (42.3%). It is surprising that this latter sub-group had the lowest proportion of non-high school graduates because the Indigenous populations in Latin America are among the least educated in the formal system. By 2017, the proportion of people without a high school diploma dropped to 36.1%, 29.3%, 20.3% and 30.8% respectively—all significant decreases of more than 15 percentage points. (See table 8).

In turn, the increase in the “BA or higher” category among the total Latino population is mostly explained by the increase of white Latinos college graduates. In 2017, 17.7% of white Latinos had completed college, while only 12.4% of mixed-race Latinos and 13.3% of Indigenous Latinos did so that year. Afro-Latinos experienced an increase in college completion rates—going from 9.3% to 20.8% over the same period—but they were a small share of the total Latino population to have driven the overall increase.

Table 8
Percentage of the Latino Population (Aged 25+) by Race/Ethnic Group
and Educational Attainment, United States, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
White Latino				
Did Not Graduate High School	47.0%	43.3%	35.8%	29.3%
High School Graduate	21.9%	22.2%	26.3%	27.9%
Some College No Degree	14.9%	16.5%	17.5%	18.3%
Associates Degree	5.1%	4.7%	5.7%	6.8%
BA or Higher	11.1%	13.4%	14.7%	17.7%
Mixed-Race Latino				
Did Not Graduate High School	57.1%	52.5%	42.5%	36.1%
High School Graduate	20.2%	21.8%	26.9%	28.9%
Some College No Degree	12.5%	14.4%	16.1%	17.0%
Associates Degree	4.3%	3.8%	4.8%	5.7%
BA or Higher	5.8%	7.5%	9.6%	12.4%
Afro-Latino				
Did Not Graduate High School	47.8%	37.5%	27.0%	20.3%
High School Graduate	21.8%	25.2%	26.0%	27.3%
Some College No Degree	16.0%	19.0%	22.3%	22.4%
Associates Degree	5.2%	5.6%	6.6%	9.2%
BA or Higher	9.3%	12.8%	18.0%	20.8%
Indigenous Latino				
Did Not Graduate High School	42.3%	45.2%	37.4%	30.8%
High School Graduate	23.7%	23.0%	25.8%	26.0%
Some College No Degree	19.6%	18.9%	21.4%	21.9%
Associates Degree	6.2%	4.9%	5.0%	7.9%
BA or Higher	8.2%	8.0%	10.4%	13.3%

Income

Between 1990 and 2017, all four major racial and ethnic groups experienced a decrease in the proportion of households earning less than \$10,000 (in 2017 dollars). Over this period, the non-Hispanic white households in this income bracket declined from 9.3% to 3.8%, among non-Hispanic

black households from 23.7% to 8.5%, among Latinos from 17.0% to 5.1%, and among Asians from 8.6% to 3.3%. Despite this overall decline in the least wealthy households, most non-Hispanic blacks and Latinos appeared in the lowest income categories. (See table 9).

Table 9
Percentage of Total Population by Race/Ethnicity and Income
United States, 1990 - 2017 (in 2017 dollars)

	1990	2000	2010	2017		1990	2000	2010	2017
Non-Hispanic White					Latino				
Less than 10,000	9.3%	5.3%	4.8%	3.8%	Less than 10,000	17.0%	9.5%	7.6%	5.1%
10,000-19,999	14.3%	9.3%	8.2%	6.3%	10,000-19,999	21.7%	16.3%	14.0%	9.6%
20,000-29,999	15.8%	10.9%	8.9%	7.2%	20,000-29,999	18.2%	16.1%	14.1%	11.4%
30,000-39,999	15.3%	11.3%	9.0%	7.6%	30,000-39,999	14.0%	13.5%	12.3%	11.1%
40,000-49,999	12.6%	10.7%	8.6%	7.4%	40,000-49,999	9.7%	10.6%	10.1%	9.7%
50,000-74,999	18.1%	21.6%	18.6%	16.9%	50,000-74,999	11.6%	16.8%	17.6%	18.5%
75,000-99,999	6.4%	12.1%	13.5%	13.4%	75,000-99,999	3.3%	7.6%	9.6%	12.0%
100,000 - 199,999	4.6%	12.5%	20.1%	25.4%	100,000 - 199,999	1.7%	5.9%	10.9%	17.0%
200,000 +	3.6%	6.2%	8.3%	12.0%	200,000 +	2.8%	3.6%	3.8%	5.7%
Non-Hispanic Black					Asian				
Less than 10,000	23.7%	14.2%	11.4%	8.5%	Less than 10,000	8.6%	5.6%	4.1%	3.3%
10,000-19,999	20.0%	15.7%	14.6%	11.6%	10,000-19,999	12.5%	8.4%	6.6%	4.9%
20,000-29,999	15.8%	14.5%	13.2%	11.8%	20,000-29,999	13.2%	9.3%	7.4%	6.1%
30,000-39,999	12.2%	11.8%	11.1%	10.5%	30,000-39,999	13.0%	9.5%	7.5%	6.1%
40,000-49,999	8.5%	9.3%	8.6%	8.7%	40,000-49,999	11.6%	9.3%	7.2%	6.0%
50,000-74,999	10.5%	15.3%	15.6%	16.4%	50,000-74,999	20.7%	20.3%	17.1%	14.1%
75,000-99,999	3.2%	7.2%	8.9%	10.4%	75,000-99,999	9.5%	13.5%	13.5%	12.1%
100,000 - 199,999	1.4%	5.7%	10.2%	14.4%	100,000 - 199,999	7.3%	17.7%	26.1%	29.5%
200,000 +	4.7%	6.4%	6.4%	7.7%	200,000 +	3.6%	6.5%	10.6%	17.7%

When examined by racial and ethnic sub-groups, the Latino population also experienced a similar decline among the least wealthy households in relative terms. In 2017, 4,518,146 white Latino households earned less than \$10,000 (in 2017 dollars), representing 4.8% of the total white Latinos—compared to 1,619,409 or 15.7% in 1990. (See table 10.)

Although the absolute numbers of Latino households in the other three groups also increased, they experienced a more dramatic decrease in relative terms. Between those years, the share of mixed-race Latino households earning less than \$10,000 declined from 18.1% to 5.4%, Afro-Latinos went from 23.7% to 7.7%, and Indigenous Latinos dropped from 20.2% to 7.2%. Despite that generalized decrease, however, the proportion of Afro-Latino and Indigenous Latino households in this income bracket was the highest among all racial and ethnic groups.

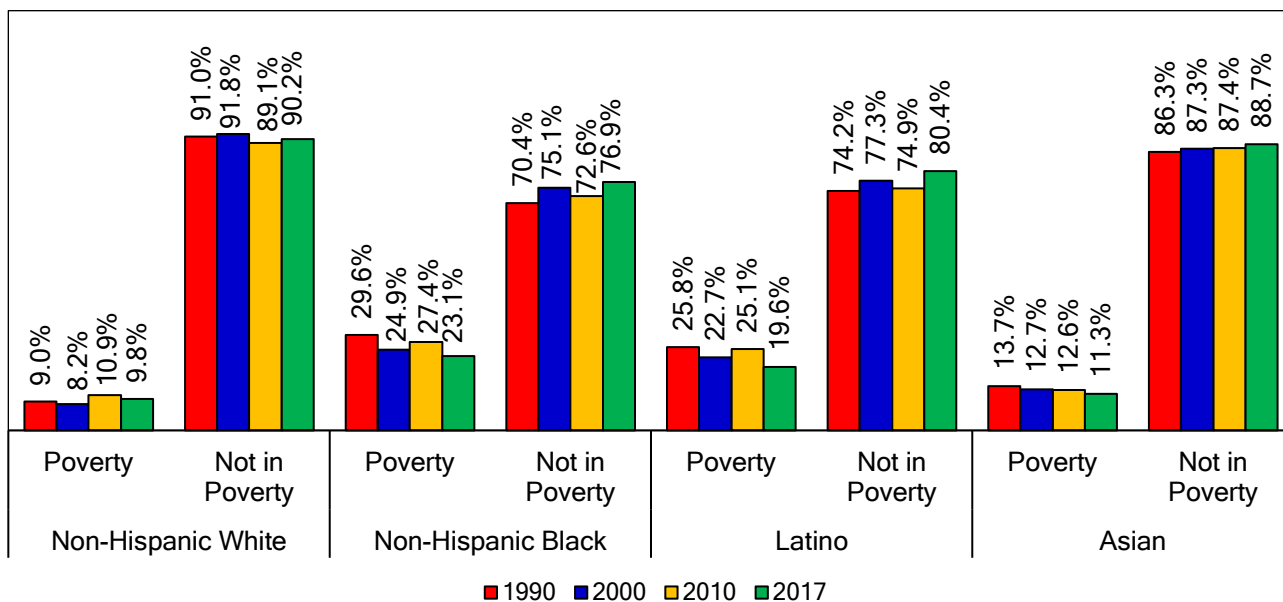
Table 10
 Percentage of the Latino Population by Race/Ethnic Group
 and Income, United States, 1990 - 2017 (in 2017 dollars)

	1990	2000	2010	2017		1990	2000	2010	2017
White Latino					Afro-Latino				
Less than 10,000	15.7%	9.0%	7.0%	4.8%	Less than 10,000	23.7%	15.2%	13.6%	7.7%
10,000-19,999	20.6%	15.7%	13.4%	9.3%	10,000-19,999	20.1%	16.6%	14.9%	11.2%
20,000-29,999	17.7%	15.5%	14.0%	11.1%	20,000-29,999	15.9%	15.5%	12.0%	11.9%
30,000-39,999	14.1%	13.1%	12.2%	10.8%	30,000-39,999	11.9%	11.9%	11.2%	9.9%
40,000-49,999	10.2%	10.5%	10.0%	9.5%	40,000-49,999	6.7%	9.7%	8.9%	7.9%
50,000-74,999	12.9%	17.1%	17.9%	18.5%	50,000-74,999	9.5%	14.4%	15.5%	17.6%
75,000-99,999	4.0%	8.2%	10.0%	12.3%	75,000-99,999	2.5%	6.0%	8.1%	10.4%
100,000 - 199,999	2.2%	7.0%	11.6%	17.7%	100,000 - 199,999	1.4%	4.6%	9.6%	15.3%
200,000 +	2.7%	3.8%	4.0%	6.0%	200,000 +	8.2%	6.2%	6.1%	8.2%
Mixed-Race Latino					Indigenous Latino				
Less than 10,000	18.1%	9.8%	8.4%	5.4%	Less than 10,000	20.2%	12.4%	9.0%	7.2%
10,000-19,999	23.2%	16.9%	15.0%	10.0%	10,000-19,999	21.0%	16.5%	16.6%	10.5%
20,000-29,999	19.0%	16.7%	14.4%	11.9%	20,000-29,999	16.4%	16.5%	13.9%	12.2%
30,000-39,999	14.0%	14.0%	12.4%	11.8%	30,000-39,999	13.6%	13.0%	11.3%	11.4%
40,000-49,999	9.4%	10.8%	10.4%	10.1%	40,000-49,999	9.5%	10.3%	10.1%	8.9%
50,000-74,999	10.2%	16.7%	17.3%	18.7%	50,000-74,999	9.4%	15.2%	15.8%	17.9%
75,000-99,999	2.5%	7.0%	8.9%	11.5%	75,000-99,999	2.5%	6.9%	9.3%	11.0%
100,000 - 199,999	1.2%	4.9%	9.8%	15.8%	100,000 - 199,999	1.2%	4.6%	10.1%	13.8%
200,000 +	2.4%	3.2%	3.4%	4.9%	200,000 +	6.2%	4.6%	4.0%	7.0%

Poverty

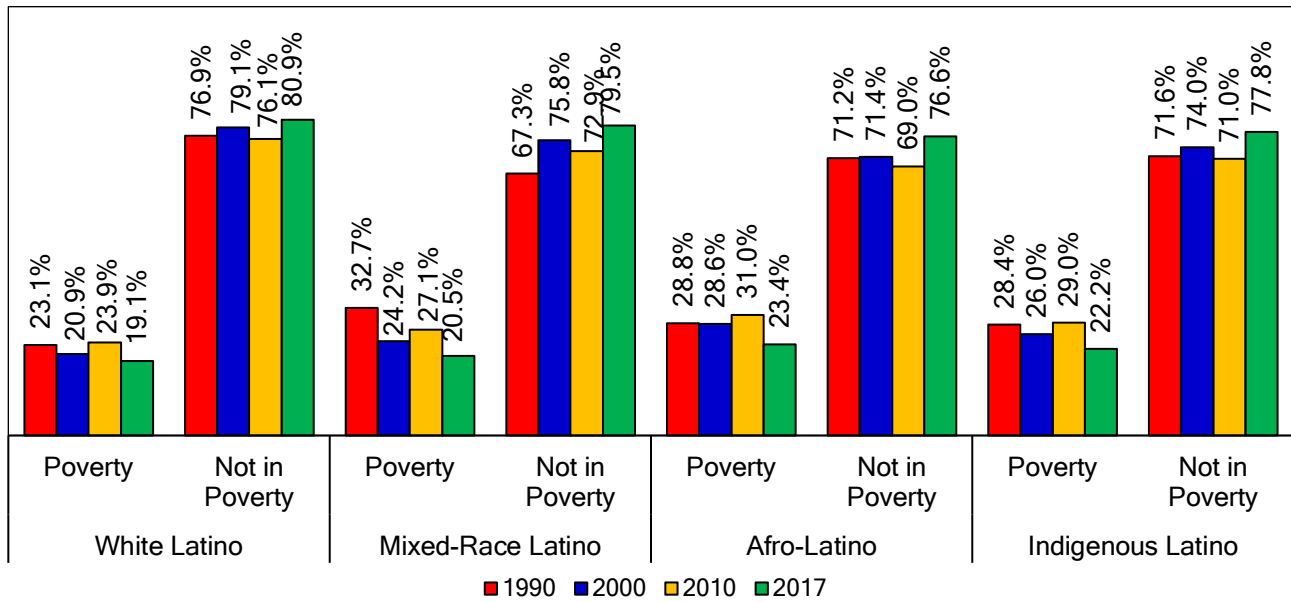
In general, Latinos and non-Hispanic blacks had the highest poverty rates among all four major racial and ethnic groups. In 1990, for example, 25.8% of Latinos and 29.6% of non-Hispanic blacks lived in poverty. These numbers decreased slightly by 2017: to 19.6% and 23.1% respectively. Non-Hispanic whites had the lowest poverty rates overall: 9.0% in 1990 and 9.8% in 2017. Finally, the Asian population was in the middle, with a poverty rate that decreased from 13.7% to 11.3% over the same period. (See figure 3).

Figure 3
 Percentage of Total Population by Race/Ethnic Group
 and Poverty Status, United States, 1990-2017



Among the Latino ethnic groups, white Latinos also had the lowest poverty rates. In 1990, there were 23.1% of white Latinos living in poverty—a figure that decreased to 19.1% in 2017, mirroring the average Latino poverty rates in the same period. In contrast, mixed-race, Indigenous, and Afro-Latinos had higher percentages of people living under this condition. In 1990, almost a third of all mixed-race Latinos lived in poverty (32.7%), but this proportion decreased almost 12 percentage points by 2017 (20.5%). Indigenous Latinos also experienced a drop in poverty rates from 28.4% to 22.2% over the same period. Finally, Afro-Latinos had slightly higher poverty rates than non-Hispanic blacks but those also decreased during these years: from 28.8% in 1990 to 23.4% in 2017. (See figure 4).

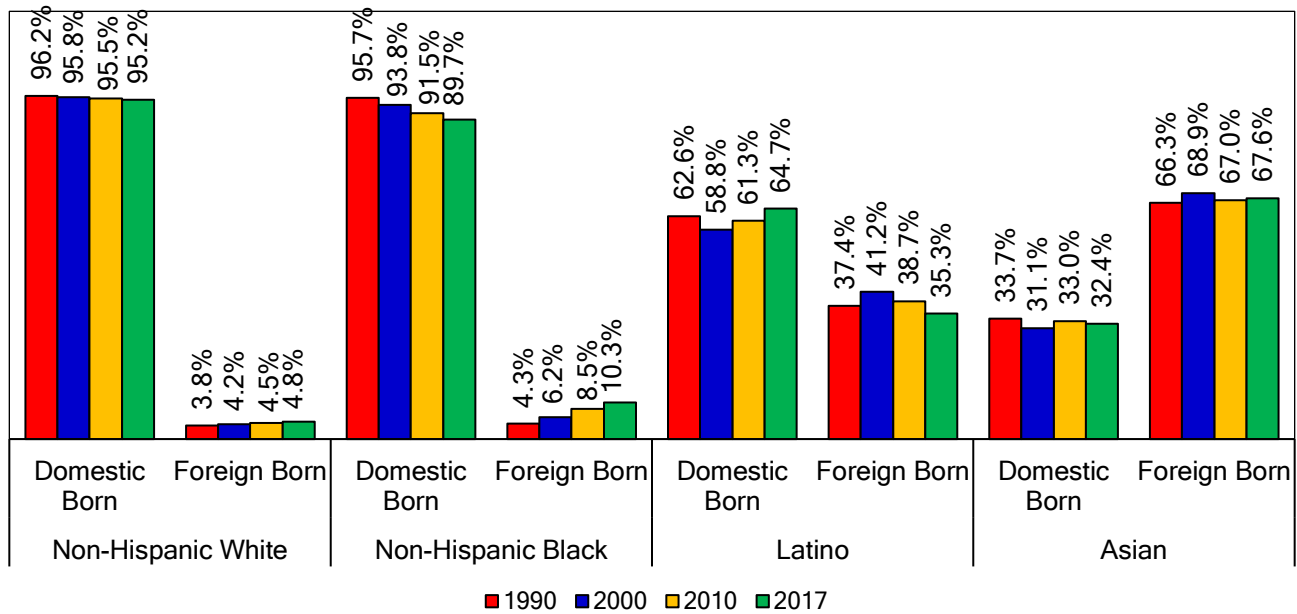
Figure 4
 Percentage of the Latino Population by Race/Ethnic Group
 and Poverty Status, United States, 1990-2017



Nativity

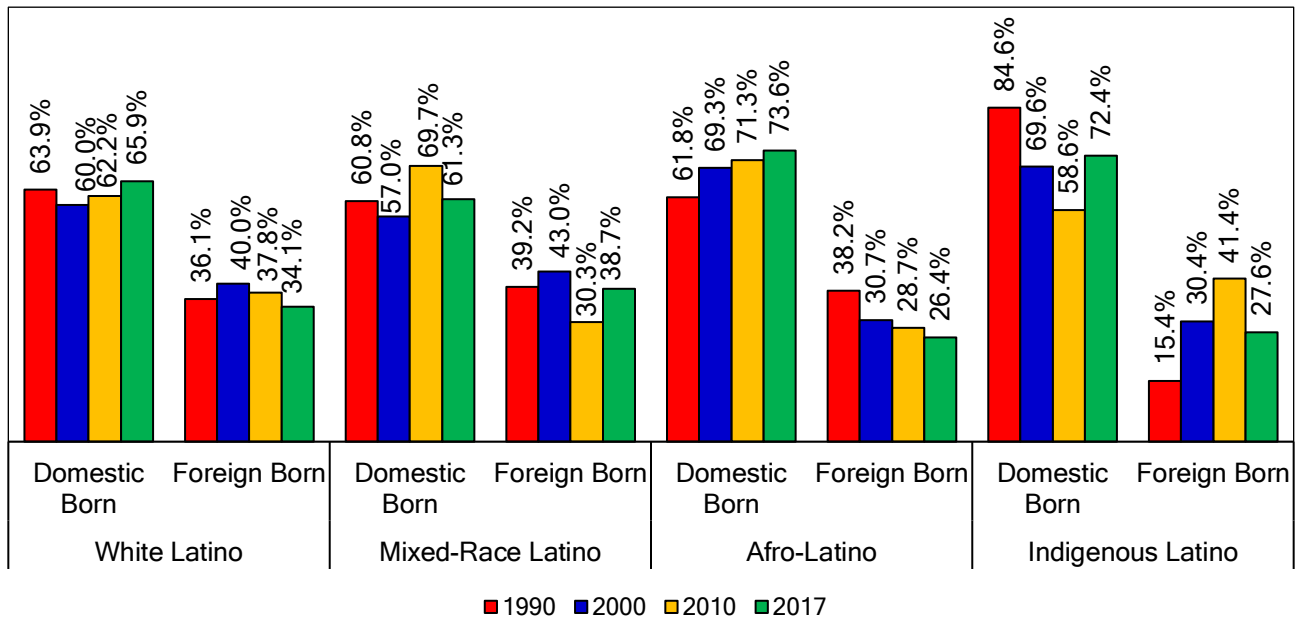
Given the immigrant history of the United States, it is not surprising that Latinos and Asians have higher percentages of foreign-born status than the non-Hispanic white and black populations over this recent period. On the one hand, about two-thirds of all Asians in the country were born abroad between 1990 and 2010 (66.3% and 67.6% respectively), and an important share of Latinos were also foreign born (from 37.4% in 1990 to 25.2% in 2017). On the other hand, the non-Hispanic black population born outside the US has increased from 4.3% to 10.3% between 1990 and 2017, most likely as a consequence of migration patterns from African and Caribbean countries. Finally, among non-Hispanic whites, the percentage of foreign-born people had just a minor increase over this period (from 3.8% in 1990 to 4.8% in 2017). (See figure 5).

Figure 5
Percentage of Total Population by Race/Ethnic Group and Birthplace, United States, 1990-2017



The foreign-born white Latino population experienced a slight decrease from 36.1% in 1990 to 34.1% of all white Latinos in 2017; similarly, the foreign-born mixed-race Latino sub-group saw a minor decline from 39.2% to 38.7% over the same period. The sharpest decline in the foreign-born population was among Afro-Latinos, who went from 38.2% in 1990 to 26.4% in 2017. Finally, and contrary to the other three groups, the foreign-born Indigenous Latino population increased from 15.4% to 27.6% over the same period, most likely as a result from higher numbers of migrants from Central America with Indigenous backgrounds. It is important to note that the domestic-born Afro-Latino population rose from 61.8% to 73.6%, which might be the result of an increase in the Dominican and Puerto Rican populations, which have higher levels of mixing with African-Americans. (See figure 6).

Figure 6
 Percentage of the Latino Population by Race/Ethnic Group
 and Birthplace, United States, 1990-2017



Concluding Remarks

This report analyzed sociodemographic trends among the four major racial and ethnic groups in the United States as well as the racial and ethnic groups within the Latino population between 1990 and 2017. One of the most important results is that the Latino groups are not homogeneous in terms of their sociodemographic status—in other words, not all Latinos are the same.

Given that race is such a salient inequality marker in this country, it is important to understand how racial hierarchies affect populations as diverse as Latinos. Moreover, as time went on, Latinos have formed mixed unions with people from other racial and ethnic groups, thus complicating the strict racial lines that were put in place before in the country.

Yet white-passing Latinos are not very different from Afro-Latinos, mixed-race or Indigenous Latinos in many categories except among income and nativity. These two variables, though, are key to understand economic access and labor opportunities, which affect the socioeconomic status of the population. Another key topic that future research can assess is the effect of age in the self-determination of race and ethnicity, and how the growing numbers of mixed households might affect how younger generations experience different racial hierarchies in the country.