

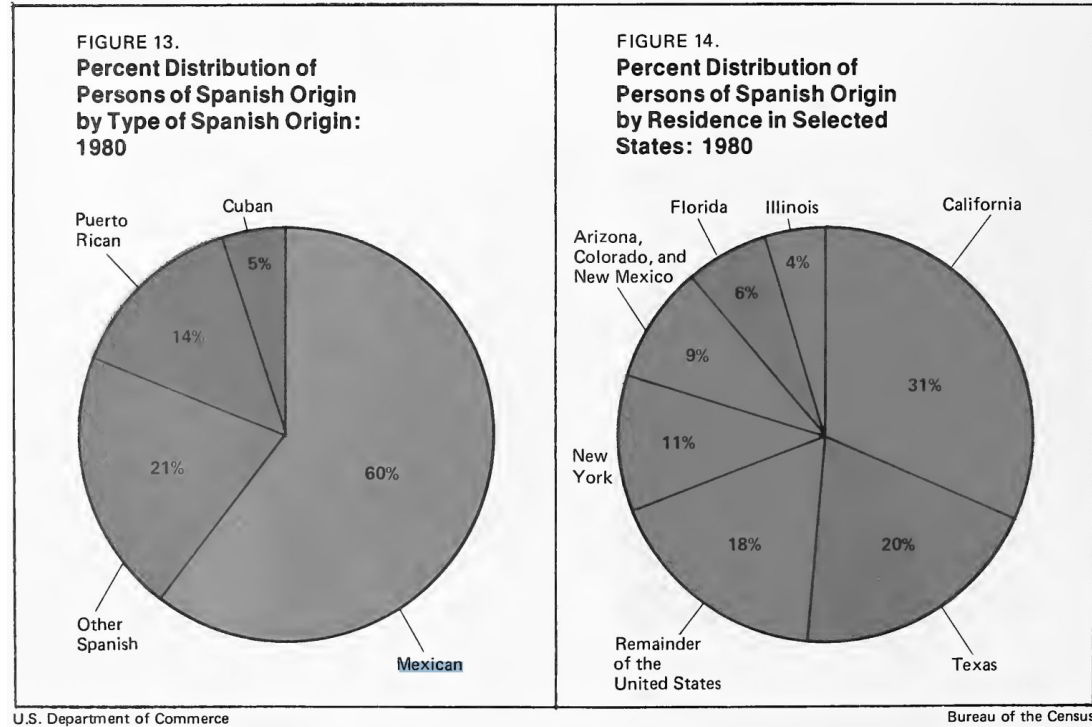
# Afro-Latinx Experiences through Data Disaggregation

Michelle Bueno Vásquez  
Presented at UCLA LPPI Panel, September 3, 2024

# 1980 OMB: the birth of the “Hispanic” category

In response to outcries from leading Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban activists, the OMB included a measure for “Hispanic” origin on the basis that **Spanish-speaking populations** were undercounted in the 1970 Decennial Census

This had **nothing to do with racial or discrimination**, only focused on **language**



# 1997 OMB, Dir. 15: the birth of the “Big 5” race categories

- This change, however, was meant to acknowledge racial and ethnic discrimination
- **Yet, caution was not taken to address discrepancies in the conflation with Spanish-speaking and Latino identity**

**SUMMARY:** By this Notice, OMB is announcing its decision concerning the revision of Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting. OMB is accepting the recommendations of the Interagency Committee for the Review of the Racial and Ethnic Standards with the following two modifications: (1) the Asian or Pacific Islander category will be separated into two categories -- "Asian" and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander," and (2) the term "Hispanic" will be changed to "Hispanic or Latino."

The revised standards will have five minimum categories for data on race: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White. There will be two categories for data on ethnicity: "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino."

# Remembering the purpose of federal race reporting per the 1997 OMB: ensuring civil rights protections for marginalized populations

*Federal Uses of Race and Ethnicity Data:* When providing comment regarding proposed areas for possible revision, it may be helpful to keep in mind how the standard is used. The standard not only guides information collected and presented from the decennial census and numerous other statistical collections, but also is used by Federal agencies for **civil rights enforcement** and for program (📄 print page 67401) administrative reporting. These include, among others:



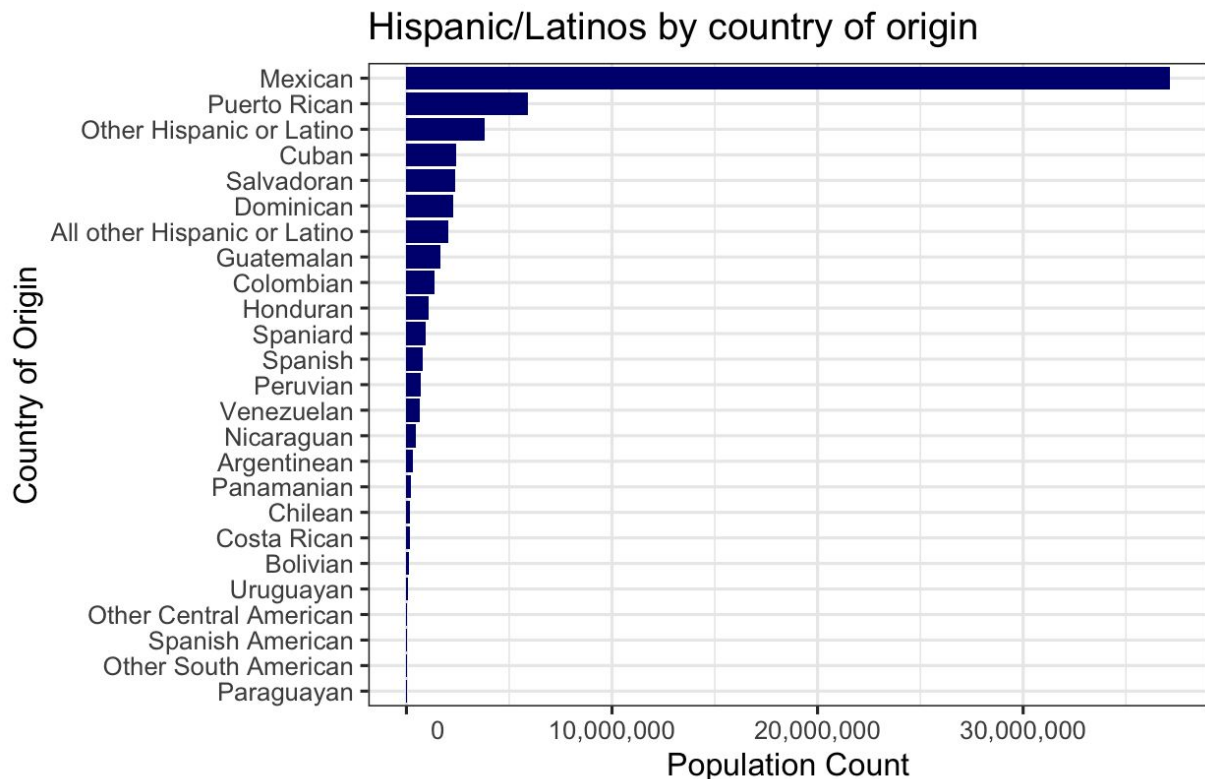
# This Census inclusion of “Spaniard” as an example for Hispanic/Latino is political

- The Census Bureau added these examples to the race and Census questions, claiming to include the top 5 Latino origin groups in the examples

From the Census Bureau regarding the 2020 additions:

- The example groups were revised from “Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.” to “Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.” in order to represent the **largest Hispanic origin population groups** and the geographic diversity of the Hispanic or Latino category, as defined by OMB’s 1997 standards.

# Yet by their own calculations Spaniards are not even in the top 10



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau 2018-2022 5-year ACS Data.  
Figure by Michelle Bueno Vásquez







# How a coding error provided a rare glimpse into Latino identity among Brazilians in the U.S.

BY JEFFREY S. PASSEL AND JENS MANUEL KROGSTAD

Many Brazilians [say they are Latino](#), but the exact number has long been a mystery because surveys rarely explore this question. An error in how the U.S. Census Bureau processed data from a recent national survey provided a rare window into how Brazilians living in the United States view their identity.

Officially, Brazilians are not considered to be Hispanic or Latino because the [federal government's definition of the term](#) – last revised in 1997 – applies only to those of “Spanish culture or origin” such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American or other origins, regardless of race. In practice, this means that in most cases people who report their Hispanic or Latino ethnicity as Brazilian in Census Bureau surveys are later recategorized – or “back coded” – as *not Hispanic or Latino*. The same is true for people from other groups as well, such as those with origins in Belize, the Philippines and Portugal.



# Survey weighting often depends on the ACS

- Even for survey firms like Pew that are trying their best to include measures of street-race into their questionnaires fall back on ACS for sampling of Latinos
- This means that all Latinos are “weighted” equally, so most surveys over-represent Southwestern states and Latinos of Mexican descent while underrepresenting Eastern states and Latinos of Caribbean descent
- Not to mention, fully excluding Haitian, Brazilians, and other non-Spanish speakers

## Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age x Gender	2019 American Community Survey
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
U.S. citizenship	
Place of birth (U.S., Puerto Rico, Cuba, Mexico, Central America, Dominican Republic, elsewhere)	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Hispanic origin	
Hispanic origin (Mexican, Central American, all others) x Education	
Census region	2019 CPS March Supplement
Metro/Non-metro	
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Mexican origin x Voter registration	2016 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	2020 National Public Opinion Reference Survey
Frequency of internet use	
Religious affiliation	

Note: All estimates are based on Hispanics. Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. The 2016 CPS was used for voter registration targets for this wave in order to obtain voter registration numbers from a presidential election year. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population. The 2020 National Public Opinion Reference Survey featured 1,862 online completions and 2,247 mail survey completions.

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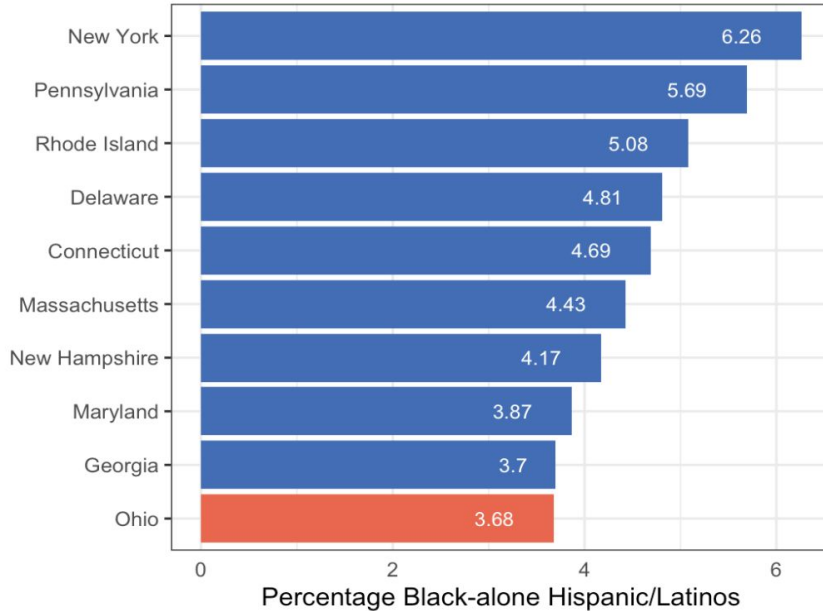
# Downstream effects of messy Census demographics

**3** **In New Mexico, 45% of all eligible voters are Latino, the highest share of any state.** New Mexico is also the only state in which Latinos make up a higher share of the total eligible voter population than any other racial or ethnic group. This includes Americans who are White alone and non-Hispanic, who account for 40% of New Mexico's eligible voters.

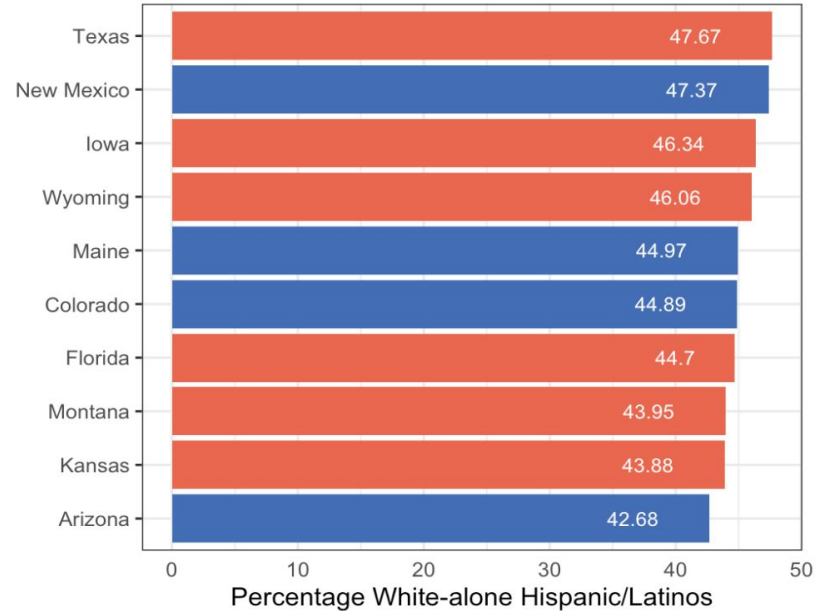
- Example from a Pew Research article on New Mexico. NM also happens to be the second state with most Latinos who identified as White-only, surpassed only by Texas

# Single-race selection may be connected to state politics

Top 10 states by Black-only Hispanic/Latinos as % of total Latino population



Top 10 states by White-only Hispanic/Latinos as % of total Latino population



2020 Presidential Election Result ■ Blue ■ Red

# Why am I only focusing on those who identified as White-only or Black-only?

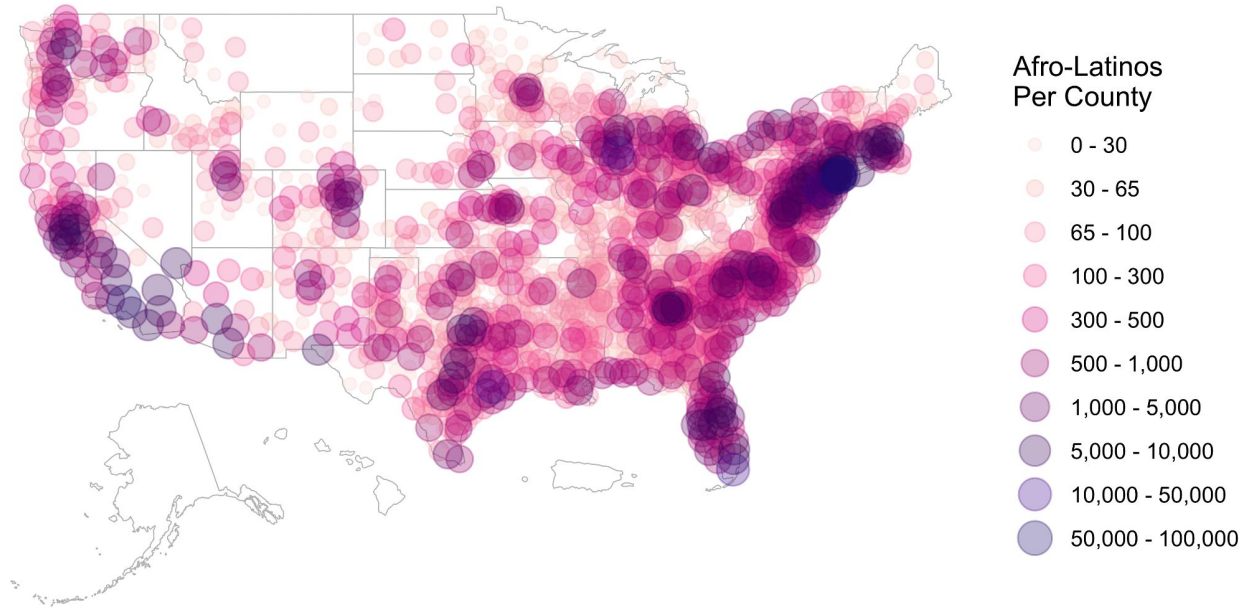
- I don't have a choice: the American Community Survey (ACS) is the Census' most powerful and extensive survey
- **Yet it does not allow for racial disaggregation for those who select Hispanic/Latino**
- That means that the **only** way to consider race for Latinos in the ACS is by observing those who chose one race *only*
- **Research demonstrates that this is not how most Latinos see their race**



# Other survey instruments, such as the Census population estimates and PUMS do allow for disaggregation

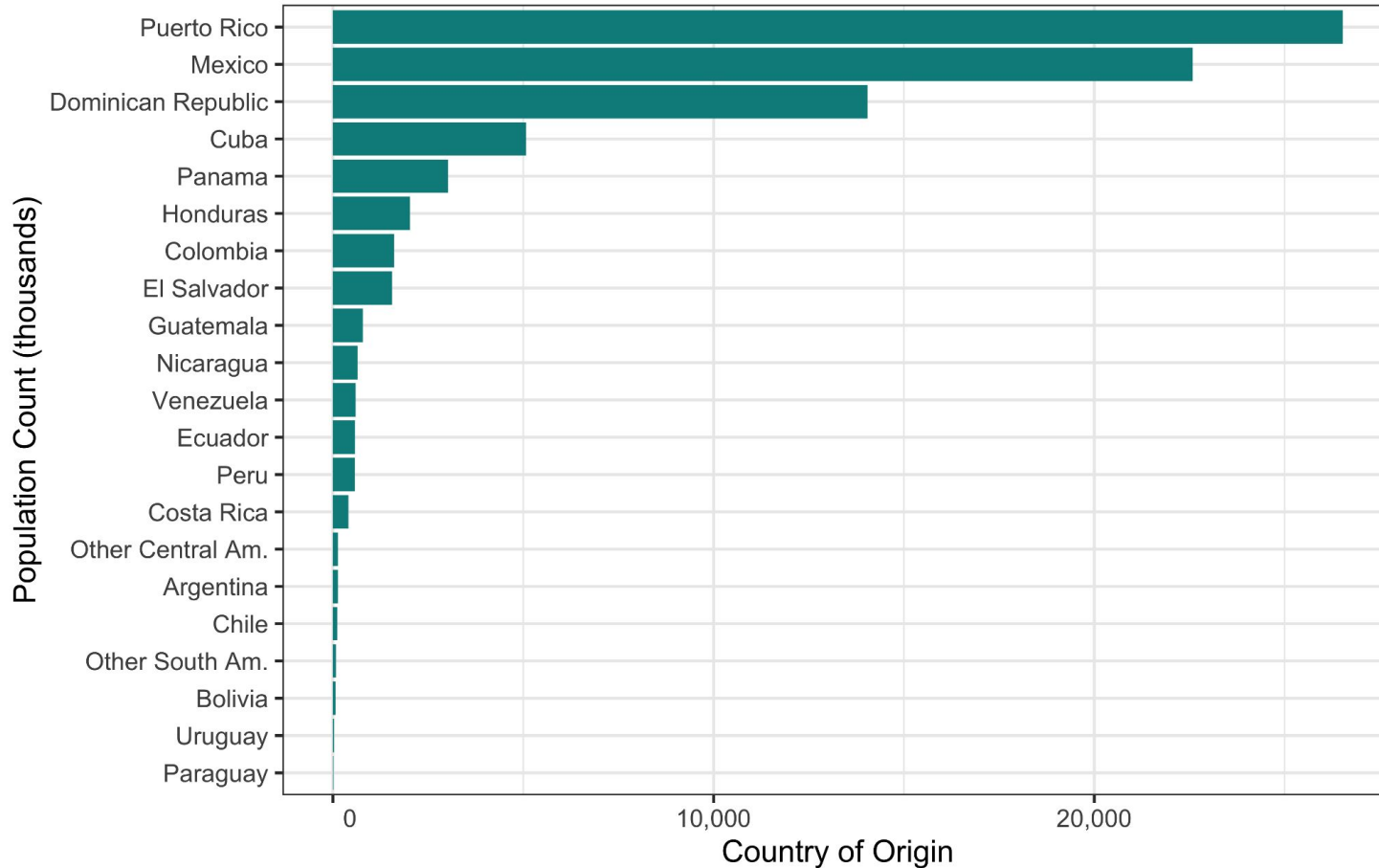
## U.S. Afro-Latino Population Per County

Individuals who identified as Hispanic and Black alone or in combination with other races (total 2.5 million)





## Afro-Latinos by country of origin



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau 2018-2022 PUMS Data.

Figure by Michelle Bueno Vásquez