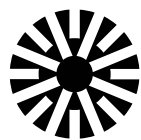




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MAY 2, 2022



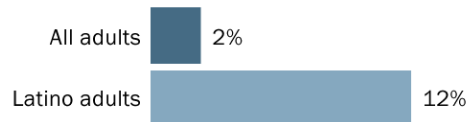
About 6 million U.S. adults identify as Afro-Latino

BY [ANA GONZALEZ-BARRERA](#)

Afro-Latino identity is a distinct one, with deep roots in colonial Latin America. As a result, it can often exist alongside a person's Hispanic, racial or national origin identities. The life experiences of Afro-Latinos are shaped by race, skin tone and other factors, in ways that differ from other Hispanics. And though most Afro-Latinos identify as Hispanic or Latino, not all do so, according to new Pew Research Center estimates based on a survey of U.S. adults conducted from November 2019 to June 2020.

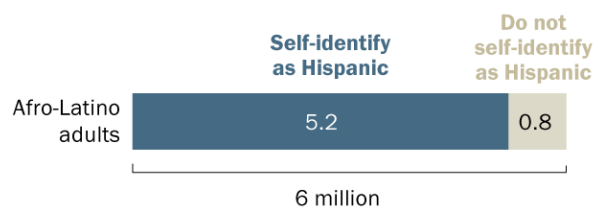
Afro-Latinos are about 2% of U.S. adult population and 12% of Latino adults ...

% saying they are Afro-Latino among ...



... but almost one-in-seven do not identify as Hispanic or Latino

In millions



Note: Estimates of the total number of Afro-Latino adults in the U.S. have a margin of error of plus or minus 600,000.
Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on a Center survey of U.S. adults conducted Nov. 19, 2019-June 3, 2020.

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In 2020, there were about 6 million Afro-Latino adults in the United States, and they made up about 2% of the U.S. adult population and 12% of the adult Latino population. About one-in-seven Afro-Latinos – or an estimated 800,000 adults – do not identify as Hispanic.

The multiple dimensions of Latino identity reflect the long colonial history of Latin America, during which mixing occurred among indigenous Americans, White Europeans, Asians and enslaved people from Africa. In Latin America's colonial period, [about 15 times as many](#) African slaves were taken to Spanish and Portuguese colonies than to the U.S. About 130 million people of African descent live in Latin America, and they make up roughly a quarter of the region's total population, according to recent estimates from the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America ([PERLA](#)) at Princeton University.

How we did this

Differences in estimates of the Afro-Latino population across surveys

Pew Research Center has included questions in previous surveys that attempt to measure the share of respondents who identify as

Afro-Latino. The results vary widely across these surveys. The most recent estimate, which found Afro-Latinos accounted for 12% of Hispanic adults, comes from an online survey of [U.S. Hispanic adults](#) conducted in 2021. This same share was found in an online survey of *all U.S. adults* conducted over more than six months in 2019 and 2020 (which is the survey used in this analysis). Meanwhile, a 2014 survey of Hispanic adults conducted by phone found Afro-Latinos accounted for 24% of U.S. Hispanic adults. The differing estimates could be due to changes in question wording across surveys, different survey modes (online vs. phone) or changes in the actual share of Hispanics who identify as Afro-Latino. The 2014 survey, which produced the largest share of Hispanic adults identifying as Afro-Latino, came from [a telephone survey](#) that asked Latino adults if they considered themselves to be Afro-Latino and listed many Afro-Latino subgroups such as Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Peruvian. By contrast, other surveys that yielded lower estimates of the Afro-Latino population were carried out on an online panel and used a shorter version of the question wording that did not include Afro-Latino subgroups.

Estimating the size of the nation's Afro-Latino population requires a different approach to capturing identity on surveys than is available from U.S. Census Bureau sources. To do this, Pew Research Center asked adults to self-identify as Afro-Latino independently from other questions on race or ethnicity. Asking directly about Afro-Latino identity yields a higher share of respondents who identify as Afro-Latino than by counting as Afro-Latino anyone who identifies as Hispanic and Black in a [two-step race question format](#) like the one used by the Census Bureau in the decennial census and its other surveys. Results from the 2020 census, for example, show 1.2 million people of all ages identified as both Hispanic and Black, substantially below the 6 million Afro-Latino adults estimated using the Center's method.

A demographic portrait of Afro-Latino adults

Afro-Latino adults are considerably younger and less likely to have attended college than the overall U.S. adult population. In 2020, three-in-ten Afro-Latino adults were ages 18 to 29, compared with two-in-ten of all U.S. adults. Among all U.S. adults, about three-in-ten have graduated college, a share about twice as high as among Afro-Latino adults.

Afro-Latino adults have different origins than Latino adults overall. Afro-Latinos are also more likely to be of Puerto Rican or Dominican origin and less likely to be Mexican than Latino adults overall.

Demographic characteristics of Afro-Latino adults

%, unless otherwise noted

	Afro-Latino adults	Latino adults	All U.S. adults
Total (in millions)	6.0	43.3	258.3
Gender			
Men	42	44	48
Women	55	55	51
Age groups			
18 to 29	31	31	20
30 to 49	35	40	33
50 to 64	20	19	25
65 and older	10	9	20
Educational attainment			
High school or less	60	52	39
Some college	25	30	31
College graduate or more	15	17	29
Nativity*			
U.S. born (including Puerto Rico)	49	51	N/A
Foreign born (excluding Puerto Rico)	48	44	N/A
Country of Hispanic origin*			
Mexico	29	59	N/A
Puerto Rico	23	9	N/A
Cuba	7	5	N/A
El Salvador	5	4	N/A
Dominican Republic	18	4	N/A
Other Hispanic origins	14	19	N/A

*Based on National Survey of Latinos conducted March 15-28, 2021. Does not include Afro-Latino adults who do not identify as Hispanic or Latino.

Note: Share of respondents who did not offer an answer not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on a Center survey of U.S. adults conducted Nov. 19, 2019-June 3, 2020, and National Survey of Latinos conducted March 15-28, 2021.

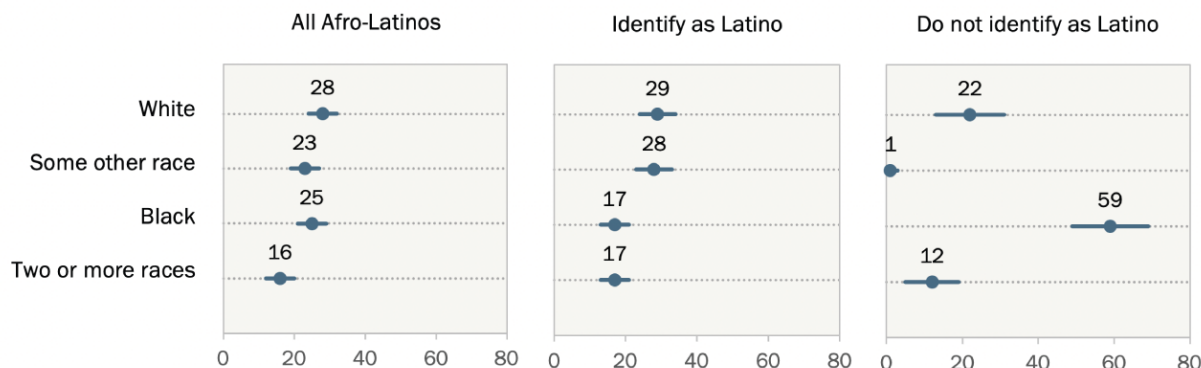
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The racial identity of Afro-Latinos

The racial groups Afro-Latinos identify with can be varied and diverse. When asked about their race on a Census Bureau-style question, about three-in-ten Afro-Latinos selected White as their race, 25% chose Black and 23% selected “some other race,” according to the Center survey. An additional 16% selected multiple races, while just 1% said they were Asian. Afro-Latinos who did not identify as Latino were more likely than those who did identify this way to mark Black as their race (59% vs. 17%).

Afro-Latinos who do not identify as Latino are more likely to select Black as their race than those who identify as Latino

% of Afro-Latino adults who say their race is ...



Note: Share of respondents who offered other responses or did not offer an answer not shown. Bars surrounding data points represent the margin of error of each estimate.

Source: Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults conducted Nov. 19, 2019-June 3, 2020.

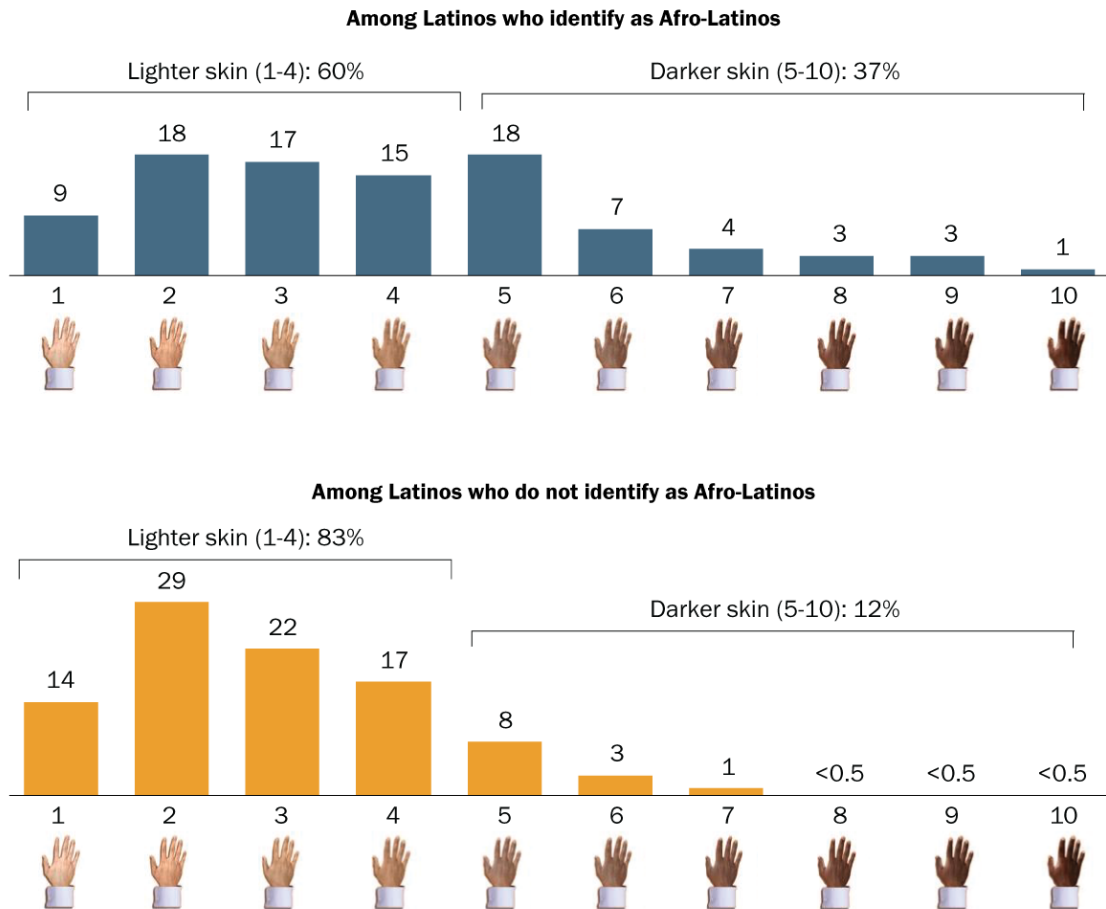
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When asked how people would describe them when walking past them on the street, Afro-Latinos who identified as Hispanic or Latino were more likely than other Latinos to say they would be seen as multiracial or mixed race (12% vs. 4%) or Black (7% vs. 1%), according to a different Pew Research Center [survey of Latino adults](#) conducted in March 2021. By contrast, Afro-Latinos were less likely than other Latinos to say they would be seen as White (7% vs. 19%)

The same March 2021 survey of Hispanics found that Afro-Latinos who identify as Hispanic or Latino are more likely to say their skin color is darker than other Hispanic adults. The survey asked Hispanic adults to identify the skin color that best resembled their own based on a version of the [Yadon-Ostfeld](#) skin-color scale in which respondents were shown 10 skin colors that ranged from light to dark. Among Afro-Latinos, 37% selected a color between five and 10 on the scale, which are darker skin colors. This compares with just 15% of Hispanics overall and 12% of those who do not identify as Afro Latino. Conversely, Afro-Latinos (60%) were less likely than other Hispanics who do not identify as Afro-Latino (83%) to select lighter skin colors – between one and four on the scale.

Afro-Latinos are more likely than other Latinos to select darker skin colors to describe their own

% of Latino adults who say ____ most closely matches their own skin color



Note: Color scale based on the Yadon-Ostfeld skin-color scale. Share of respondents who did not offer an answer not shown.
Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted March 15-28, 2021.

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Afro-Latinos report similar experiences with discrimination as other Latinos

Afro-Latinos are more likely than other Latino adults to report being unfairly stopped by police

% of Latino adults



*Asked only of those who spoke Spanish at least a little.

Note: Statistically significant differences are in **bold**. Differences calculated before rounding.

Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted March 15-28, 2021.

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For the most part, similar shares of Afro-Latinos who identify as Hispanic or Latino and other Latinos say they have experienced at least one discrimination incident. About six-in-ten Afro-Latinos (61%) say they personally experienced at least one of eight discrimination incidents asked about on the March 2021 survey of Latino adults, while 54% of Latinos who do not identify as Afro-Latino say the same. Overall, about half (54%) of U.S. Latino adults say they experienced at least one discrimination incident in the year prior to the survey. The shares of three discrimination experiences – being criticized for speaking Spanish, being told to go back to your country, and being called offensive names – are about the same as in [2019](#), the year before the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S.

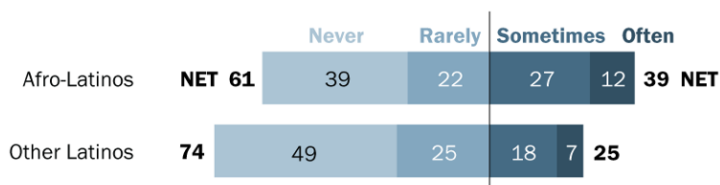
Afro-Latinos are more likely to report experiencing two of the eight discrimination experiences included in the survey. More Afro-Latinos than other Latinos say they have been unfairly stopped by police during the year prior to the survey (22% vs. 8%). Similarly, about three-in-ten Afro-Latinos say they have been criticized for speaking Spanish in public, compared with about two-in-ten Latinos who do not identify as Afro-Latino. These

are the only two discrimination experiences where the differences between Afro-Latinos and other Latinos are statistically significant.

The most reported instance of discrimination among both groups is people acting as if they thought they were not smart – 43% of Afro-Latinos say this, as do 34% of other Latinos.

Afro-Latinos more likely than other Latinos to talk with family about challenges due to their race or ethnicity

% of Latino adults who say that while growing up, their family talked to them about the challenges they might face because of their race or ethnicity ...



Note: Share of respondents who did not offer an answer not shown.

Source: National Survey of Latinos conducted March 15-28, 2021.

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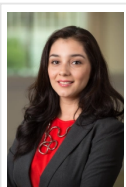
Apart from discrimination, Afro-Latinos are also more likely than other Latinos to have had conversations with family during their upbringing about the potential challenges they might face due to their race or ethnicity. About four-in-ten Afro-Latinos say their family talked to them about this when they were growing up often (12%) or sometimes (27%). Meanwhile, about a quarter of Latinos who do not identify as Afro-Latino say they talked about this topic with their families often (7%) or sometimes (18%).

Note: Here are the questions used for [our survey of Hispanic adults](#), along with responses, and [its methodology](#).

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