

# [***Asian American, Pacific Islander Latinos in the US see exponential growth, new analysis says***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C33-24C1-JC5B-G2YH-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

The number of people of both Latino and Asian American or Pacific Islander heritage has more than doubled in the last 20 years yet it remains an often ignored demographic, researchers at UCLA said Wednesday.

[*The UCLA Latino Policy and* ***Politics*** *Institute analyzed*](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flatinodatahub.org%2F%23%2Fresearch%2Faapi-latinos-in-the-united-states-an-overview-of-the-growing-demographic&data=05%7C02%7CTTang%40ap.org%7Caa4b3962d1e645869ea208dc79cc4563%7Ce442e1abfd6b4ba3abf3b020eb50df37%7C1%7C0%7C638519165480451742%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=SFmUuscoG5xL78uapexsk6QgLb37wwPd4zN%2Fu537e2I%3D&reserved=0) Census Bureau data within the last two decades. This included the 2000 census count as well as American Community Survey 5-year estimates on population characteristics from 2010 and 2022. Their analysis indicates people in the United States who identify as Latino and Asian American or Pacific Islander, or “AAPI Latinos,” rose from 350,000 to 886,000 in that period.

“We looked at people who identify themselves as Latino, who are of Latino ethnicity and then among all these people, we looked at when they fill out the race question, which race did they specify,” said Jie Zong, a senior research analyst. “If they specify they are of (an) Asian race, we considered these individuals AAPI and Latinos.”

This shows mixed-race Asians and Latinos are a more typical occurrence now, said Kevin Kandamby, a graduate student in Chicano/a and Central American Studies and a member of the research team. Part of the reasoning in pursuing this was because this population remains understudied.

“This is still a very niche topic. I’m happy to see that there’s more and more people now understanding that this community is growing,” said Kandamby, who is Mexican and Sri Lankan.

Asian or Pacific Islander Latinos primarily tended to be either Asian immigrants from Latin America or American-born citizens with both Latino and Asian American or Pacific Islander parents, the analysis found.

The population's trajectory has roots in a lengthy history of Latino and Asian or Pacific Islander citizens interacting while meeting a labor demand in the U.S., according to Kandamby. There are records of Chinese immigrants, targeted by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, settling in towns on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border and Punjabi and Mexican farmworkers intermarrying in California’s Imperial Valley in the early 1900s.

In fact, grouped by state, a third of Asian Latino Americans reside in California, the data brief states. Texas and Hawaii are the next highest.

That doesn't surprise Hawaii Democratic state Rep. Sonny Ganaden, whose father is Filipino and mother is Mexican. The 43-year-old self-described “Mexipino” got constant ribbing growing up in Orange County, California, that he wasn't truly Latino or Asian. In 2018, he lost his first bid for the Statehouse but came away with an invaluable and “decolonizing” experience. Residents in his district, which includes the heavily Filipino Kalihi neighborhood, embraced him.

“I was feeling like I was out of place in the American experience and then I ran for office. Then I felt so like both accepted and accepting,” Ganaden said. “It’s like a community chose me and I chose a community and that was it.”

Having two cultures resulting in the irony of feeling less visible is a common thread. Olivia Yuen, 29, and a middle school art teacher and well-known artist in Phoenix, has a Chinese father and a Mexican mother. When it came to which culture was more dominant in her household, it was more of a draw.

“It definitely felt like ... I wasn’t Mexican enough to be considered Mexican or wasn’t Chinese enough to be considered Chinese," Yuen said. “And because my parents had raised me with a pretty Western approach, honestly, I felt like growing up, I identified mostly as American.”

She was either questioned about her ethnic makeup or treated as fully Asian. This led to her leaning into her Chinese side more.

“Now I acknowledge and both identify myself from both sides of my heritage,” Yuen said.

Growing up in the military city of Killeen, Texas, Isabella Chavez, 23, and the daughter of a Korean mother and Mexican father, felt lucky enough to be in a mixed community where friends helped her find her identity. Having divorced parents and being raised by her Korean grandmother had her surrounded by Korean culture. Chavez spent childhood going only to Korean churches, dry cleaners and grocery stores.

“I mostly say that I grew up as, like, an Asian American, even though I don’t look Asian, by any means," Chavez said. "Being a mixed kid a lot of the time like I found myself questioning like, well, I don’t look Asian. So is it right to identify as Asian American?”

It wasn’t until she was older that Chavez realized she did not have to pick one or the other. Living in San Antonio — with the vibrancy and pride of the Latino community — has made it easier for to connect to her Mexican heritage, she said.

There were plenty of great things about growing up Asian and Latino for Ganaden. It meant a lot of relatives on both sides including an abuela and a lola. And having Filipino or Mexican food on the table led to tasty mash-ups like “day-old adobo in a tortilla.”

“My favorite way to have adobo is with a side of rice and beans. So it’s kind of funny to me that there are like a variety of new food movements or like some random New York Times article about like, ‘Check out this new fusion.’ I’m like...'Were you in my house?'" said Ganaden, chuckling.

Other trends the data analysis found were “AAPI Latinos” placed higher than Latinos overall but lower than all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in educational attainment and homeownership. About a third, or 33%, of AAPI Latinos have a bachelor’s degree or higher. In comparison, 55% of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and 19% of Latinos are at the same level.

The UCLA analysis also states the current Latino-Asian or Pacific Islander population skews pretty young. Nearly half are age 18 or younger.

Kandamby hopes to delve beyond the data and bring more attention to the Asian or Pacific Islander and Latino identity. He also wants to show how life experience can vary within this population.

“We have very distinctly different communities and understandings and identities, but we still warrant the need to be included into the conversations, to know that we have specific needs that may be different from others," Kandamby said.

\_\_\_ Associated Press writer Fernanda Figueroa in Austin, Texas contributed to this report.

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