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Hispanic Identity Fades Across Generations as Immigrant Connections Fall Away

11% of American adults with Hispanic ancestry do not identify as Hispanic

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Terminology

The terms **Hispanic** and **Latino** are used interchangeably in this report as well as the terms “self-identified Hispanic” and “self-identified Latino.”

Self-identified Hispanics are U.S. residents who self-report that they are of Hispanic or Latino background. **Self-identified non-Hispanics** are U.S. residents who *do not* self-identify as Hispanic, but also say they have a parent or grandparent who are of Hispanic heritage.

Americans of **Hispanic ancestry** are those who either self-identify as Hispanic or Latino or say they have Hispanic ancestors but do not self-identify as Hispanic.

U.S. born refers to persons born in the United States and those born in other countries to parents at least one of whom was a U.S. citizen.

Foreign born refers to persons born outside of the United States to parents neither of whom was a U.S. citizen. For the purposes of this report, foreign born also refers to those born in Puerto Rico. Although individuals born in Puerto Rico are U.S. citizens by birth, they are included among the foreign born because they are born into a Spanish-dominant culture and because on many points their attitudes, views and beliefs are much closer to Hispanics born abroad than to Hispanics born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, even those who identify themselves as being of Puerto Rican origin.

First generation refers to foreign-born people. The terms “foreign born,” “first generation” and “immigrant” are used interchangeably in this report.

Second generation refers to people born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, with at least one first-generation, or immigrant, parent.

Third generation refers to people born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, with both parents born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia and with at least one immigrant grandparent.

Third and higher generation refers to people born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, with both parents born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia.

Fourth or higher generation refers to people born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, with both parents and all four grandparents born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia.

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Hispanic Identity Fades Across Generations as Immigrant Connections Fall Away

11% of American adults with Hispanic ancestry do not identify as Hispanic

More than 18% of Americans identify as Hispanic or Latino, the nation's second largest racial or ethnic group. But two trends – a long-standing high intermarriage rate and a decade of declining Latin American immigration – are distancing some Americans with Hispanic ancestry from the life experiences of earlier generations, reducing the likelihood they call themselves Hispanic or Latino.

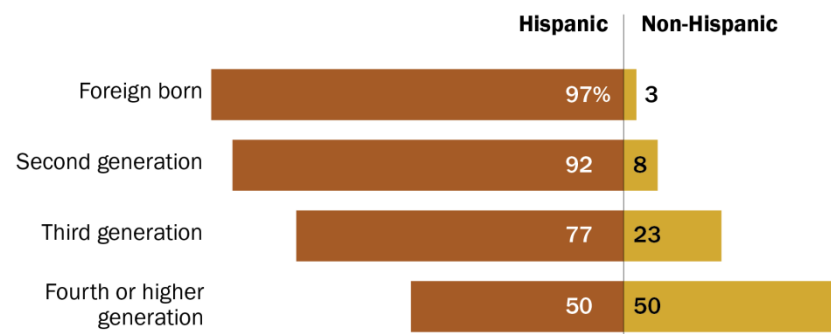
Among the estimated 42.7 million U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry in 2015, nine-in-ten (89%), or about 37.8 million, self-identify as Hispanic or Latino. But another 5 million (11%) do not

consider themselves Hispanic or Latino, according to Pew Research Center estimates. The closer they are to their immigrant roots, the more likely Americans with Hispanic ancestry are to identify as Hispanic. Nearly all immigrant adults from Latin America or Spain (97%) say they are Hispanic. Similarly, second-generation adults with Hispanic ancestry (the U.S.-born children of at least one immigrant parent) have nearly as high a Hispanic self-identification rate (92%), according to Pew Research Center estimates.

By the third generation – a group made up of the U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents and immigrant grandparents – the share that self-identifies as Hispanic falls to 77%. And by the fourth

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

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry who self-identify as ____



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage.

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).

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or higher generation (U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents and U.S.-born grandparents, or even more distant relatives), just half of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry say they are Hispanic.¹

Among adults who say they have Hispanic ancestors (a parent, grandparent, great grandparent or earlier ancestor) but do not self-identify as Hispanic, the vast majority – 81% – say they have never thought of themselves as Hispanic, according to a Pew Research Center survey of the group. When asked why this is the case in an open-ended follow-up question, the single most common response (27%) was that their Hispanic ancestry is too far back or their background is mixed.

These findings emerge from two Pew Research Center national surveys that explored attitudes and experiences about Hispanic identity among two populations. The first survey, conducted Oct. 21-Nov. 30, 2015, in English and Spanish, explored the attitudes and experiences of a nationally representative sample of 1,500 self-identified Hispanic adults. The second is a first-of-its-kind national survey of 401 U.S. adults who indicated they had Hispanic, Latino, Spanish or Latin American ancestry or heritage (in the form of parents, grandparents or other relatives) but did not consider themselves Hispanic. It was offered in English and Spanish from Nov. 11, 2015-Feb. 7, 2016, but all respondents took the survey in English. Both surveys were conducted by SSRS for Pew Research Center. Together, these two surveys provide a look at the identity experiences and views of U.S. adults who say they have Hispanic ancestry.

Defining self-identified Hispanic and self-identified non-Hispanic

This report explores the attitudes and experiences of two groups of adults. The first are those who are self-identified Hispanics. This is the usual group of Hispanics that are profiled in Pew Research Center and Census Bureau reports and are reported on as a distinct racial/ethnic group. Throughout the report, this group is labelled as “Self-identified Hispanics.”

The second are those who have Hispanic ancestry but do not consider themselves Hispanic – i.e., self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry. This is the first time this group’s opinions, attitudes and views have been studied in depth. Throughout the report, this second group is referred to as “self-identified non-Hispanics” or “self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry.”

Racial and ethnic identity on surveys and in the U.S. decennial census is measured by respondents’ self-reports. Any survey respondent who says they are Hispanic is counted as Hispanic, and those who say they are not Hispanic are not counted as such. This practice has been in place on the census since 1980 for Hispanic identity and since 1970 for racial identity.

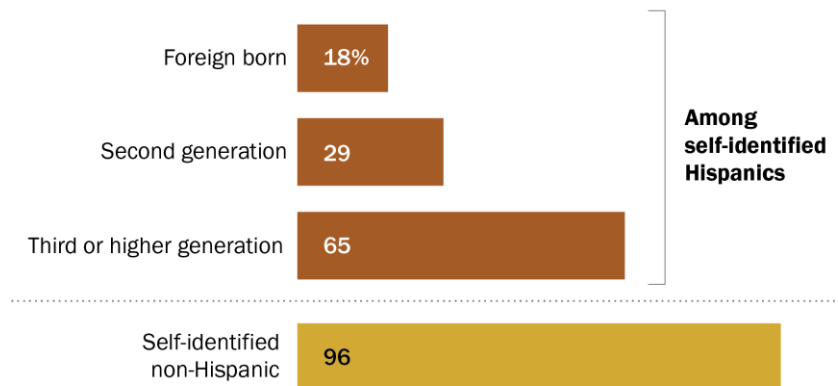
¹ Measurement of racial and ethnic identity in the U.S. relies on survey respondents to self-identify their background. In the case of Hispanics, anyone who says they are Hispanic is counted as Hispanic. It also means some Americans may not self-identify as Hispanic even though they say they have Hispanic ancestors.

Declining immigration, high intermarriage rates

Immigration from Latin America played a central role in the U.S. Hispanic population's growth and its identity during the 1980s and 1990s. But by the 2000s, [U.S. births overtook the arrival of new immigrants](#) as the main driver of Hispanic population dynamics. And the Great Recession,² coupled with many other factors, significantly [slowed the flow of new immigrants into the country, especially from Mexico](#). As a result, the U.S. Hispanic population is still growing, but at [a rate nearly half of what it was over a decade ago](#) as fewer immigrants arrive in the U.S. and the [fertility rate among Hispanic women has declined](#).

Non-Hispanic heritage more common among higher generations of those with Hispanic ancestry

% saying they have a parent or grandparent who is NOT Hispanic or Latino



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage.

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).

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Over the same period, the Latino intermarriage rate remained relatively high and changed little. In 2015, 25.1% of Latino newlyweds married a non-Latino spouse and 18.3% of all married Latinos were intermarried;³ in 1980, 26.4% of Latino newlyweds intermarried and 18.1% of all married Latinos had a non-Latino spouse, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of government data. In both 1980 and 2015, Latino intermarried rates were [higher than those for blacks or whites](#).⁴ Intermarriage rates also vary within the Latino population: 39% of married U.S.-born adults had a non-Latino spouse while just 15% of married immigrant Latinos did.

² The [Great Recession](#) began in December 2007 and lasted until June 2009, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research's Business Cycle Dating Committee, which defines national recessions.

³ Intermarriage rates in 2015 are based on the universe of different-gender married couples. In 1980, all marriages in government data are different-gender marriages.

⁴ Even though the intermarriage rate among Latinos is little changed, the number of Latinos married to non-Latinos has risen as the group's population has grown, according to Pew Research Center estimates. In 1980, 931,000 married Latinos had a spouse who was not Latino. In 2015, that number had climbed to 2.9 million.

As a result of high intermarriage rates, some of today's Latinos have parents or grandparents of mixed heritage, with that share higher among later generations. According to the surveys, 18% of immigrants say that they have a non-Latino parent or grandparent in their family, a share that rises to 29% among the second generation and 65% among the third or higher generation, according to the Pew Research Center survey of self-identified Latino adults. And for those who say they have Latino ancestry but do not identify as Latino, fully 96% say they have some non-Latino heritage in their background.

A similar pattern is present among those who are married, according to the two surveys. Some 78% of all married Hispanics have a spouse who is also Hispanic, according to the survey of self-identified Hispanics. But that share declines across the generations. Nearly all married immigrant Hispanics (93%) have a Hispanic spouse, while 63% among second-generation married Hispanics and just 35% among married third-generation Hispanics have a Hispanic spouse. Meanwhile, only 15% of married U.S. adults who say they are not Hispanic but have Hispanic ancestry have a Hispanic spouse.

These trends may have implications for the shape of Hispanic identity today. With so many U.S.-born Hispanics of Hispanic and non-Hispanic heritages, their views and experiences with Hispanic culture and identity vary depending on how close they are to their family's immigrant experiences.

These trends also have implications for the future of Hispanic identity in the U.S. Lower immigration levels than in the past and continued high intermarriage rates may combine to produce a growing number of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestors who may not identify as Hispanic or Latino. And even among those who do self-identify as Hispanic or Latino, those in the second and third or higher generations may see their identity as more tied to the U.S. than to the origins of their parents, a pattern observed in many previous⁵ Pew Research Center Latino surveys.

As a result, even estimates of the number of Americans who self-identify as Hispanic could be lower than currently projected. The latest population projections emphasize the size and speed of Hispanic population growth – according to [Pew Research Center projections](#), the nation's Hispanic population will be 24% of all Americans by 2065, compared with 18% in 2015. But these projections assume that many current trends, including Hispanic self-identity trends, will continue. If they change, growth in the population of self-identified Hispanics could slow even

⁵ Past Pew Research Center National Surveys of Latinos surveys [have found similar results](#). A majority of immigrant Latinos say they identify most with their country of origin. But by the third generation, about half say they identify most often as American.

further and [the nation's own sense of its diversity](#) could change as fewer than expected Americans of Hispanic ancestry self-identify as Hispanic.

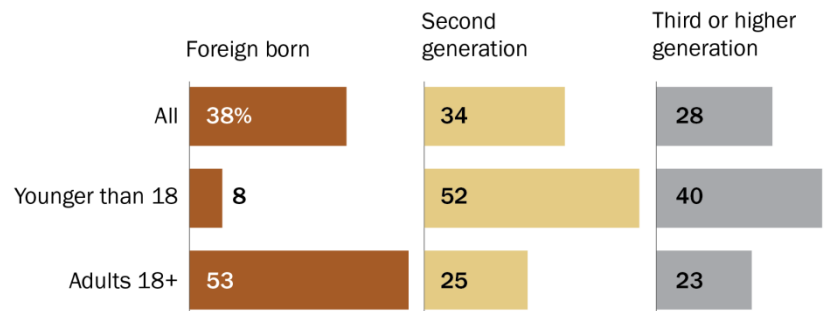
What is Hispanic identity?

When it comes to describing themselves and what makes someone Hispanic, there is some consensus across self-identified Hispanics. However, not all Hispanics agree, with views often linked to immigrant generation.

The immigrant experience is an important part of the U.S. Hispanic experience. Roughly four-in-ten self-identified U.S. Hispanics (38%)⁶ are immigrants themselves, a share that rises to 53% among adult Hispanics, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data. Meanwhile, 62% of Hispanics are U.S. born, a share that falls to 48% among adult Hispanics.

Immigrant generations and U.S. Latinos

% of ____ self-identified Hispanics that are ...



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Foreign born refers to people born outside of the United States to parents neither of whom was a U.S. citizen. Although individuals born in Puerto Rico are U.S. citizens by birth, for the purposes of this report, they are included among the foreign born because they are born into a Spanish-dominant culture.

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).

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Some U.S.-born Latinos have direct links to their family's immigrant roots – 34% are the U.S.-born children of at least one immigrant parent, or part of the second generation. Others are more distant from those roots – 28% are the U.S.-born children of U.S.-born Latino parents, or of the third or higher generation.

Terms used most often to describe identity

The terms that self-identified Hispanics use to describe themselves can provide a direct look at their views of identity and the link to their countries of birth or family origin. Among all Hispanic adults, for example, half say they most often describe themselves by their family's country of origin or heritage, using terms such as Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican or Salvadoran. Another 23% say

⁶ This estimate differs from that published in [other Pew Research Center reports](#) on immigrant generations among Hispanics, since Puerto Ricans are considered foreign born in this report, but as U.S. born elsewhere.

they most often call themselves American. The other 23% most often describe themselves as “Hispanic” or “Latino,” the pan-ethnic terms used to describe this group in the U.S., according to the survey of self-identified Hispanics.⁷

However, the use of these terms varies widely across immigrant generations and reflects the different experiences of each group of Hispanics.

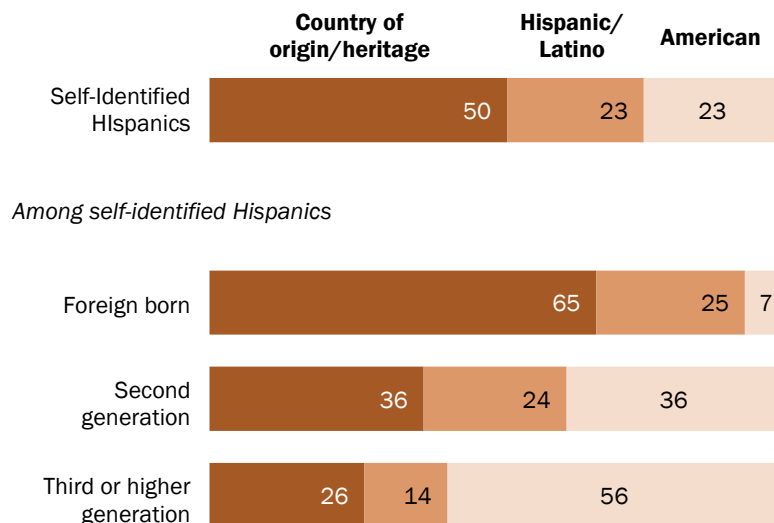
Two-thirds (65%) of immigrant Latinos most often uses the name of their origin country to describe themselves, the highest share among the generations. That share falls to 36% among second-generation Latinos and to 26% among third or higher generation Latinos.

Meanwhile, the share that says they most often use the term “American” to describe themselves rises from 7% among immigrants to 56% among the third generation or higher, mirroring, in reverse, the use pattern for country of origin terms. Third or higher generation Latinos were born in the U.S. to U.S.-born parents, and these findings show that for this group, their ties to their U.S. national identity are strong.

Another measure of identity is how much Hispanics feel a common identity with other Americans. Overall, U.S. Hispanics are divided on this question: Half (50%) consider themselves to be a typical American while 44% say they are very different from a typical American. But this finding

Nationality labels used most often among Latinos to describe their identity

% of self-identified Hispanics saying they describe themselves most often as ...



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Voluntary responses of “Don’t know,” “Refused,” “Depends” and “Other/Refused to lean” not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center 2015 National Survey of Latinos (Oct. 21-Nov. 30, 2015). “Hispanic Identity Fades Across Generations as Immigrant Connections Fall Away”

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⁷ These findings are little changed in 15 years of surveys of U.S. Hispanics. In 2002, 54% said they first use their country of origin term to describe their identity, 24% first used “Hispanic” or “Latino,” and 21% say they first used American. In 2011, 51% said they most often use their family’s country of origin term to describe themselves, 24% said “Hispanic” or “Latino” and 21% said American.

masks large differences across the generations. Some 36% of immigrant Hispanics consider themselves a typical American. That share rises to 63% among second-generation Hispanics and to 73% among third or higher generation Hispanics, reflecting their birth country (the U.S.) and their lifetime experiences.

Does speaking Spanish or having a Spanish last name make one Hispanic?

Speaking Spanish is a characteristic often linked to Latino identity. For example, some say that you cannot be Latino unless you happen to speak Spanish, or that someone is “more Latino” if they speak Spanish than someone who does not speak Spanish but is also of Latino heritage.

This came up during a debate [in the 2016 presidential campaign](#), when Republican candidate U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio questioned whether Ted Cruz, another senator and GOP candidate, spoke Spanish.

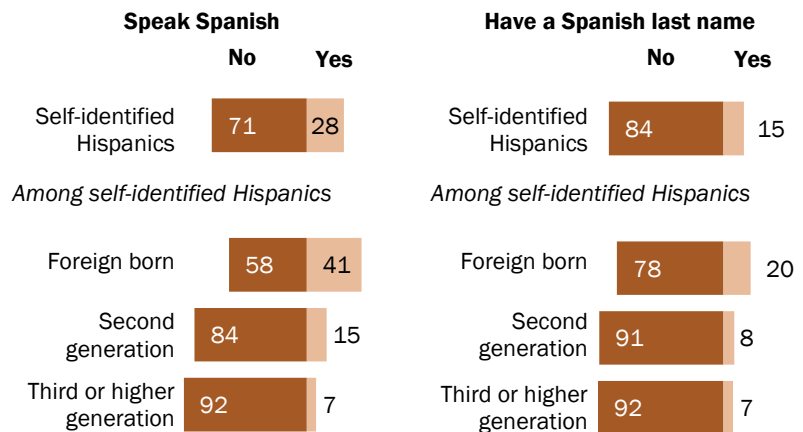
Yet, when directly asked about the link between Latino identity and speaking Spanish, seven-in-ten (71%)

Latino adults say speaking Spanish is not required to be considered Latino. Even among immigrant Latinos, a majority (58%) holds this view about Spanish and Latino identity. And among U.S.-born Latinos, higher shares say the same: 84% of second-generation Latinos and 92% of third or higher generation Latinos (the group farthest from their family’s immigrant roots) say speaking Spanish does not make someone Latino.

Another characteristic that for some is seen as important to Hispanic identity is having a Spanish last name. However, here too, the vast majority (84%) of self-identified Hispanics say it is not

Neither speaking Spanish nor having a Spanish last name makes one Hispanic

% of self-identified Hispanics saying that a person needs to ____ to be considered Hispanic/Latino



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Volunteered responses of “Don’t know” and “Refused” not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center 2015 National Survey of Latinos (Oct. 21-Nov. 30, 2015). “Hispanic Identity Fades Across Generations as Immigrant Connections Fall Away”

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necessary to have a Spanish last name to be considered Hispanic, no matter their immigrant generation.

Not all Americans with Hispanic ancestry self-identify as Hispanic

Racial and ethnic identity in the U.S. since the 1960s has been based on self-reports: [You are what you say you are](#). This is how [race and ethnicity is measured in government surveys](#), as well as in surveys by Pew Research Center and other research groups. As a result, there are some Americans who say they have Hispanic ancestry but do not consider themselves Hispanic.

Overall, this group represents 2% of the national adult population, amounting to 5 million adults, according to the Center's estimates. Or, looked at another way, among the 42.7 million U.S. adults who say they have Hispanic ancestry, 11% do not identify as Hispanic.

This group also has distant immigrant roots. Some 38% are fourth or higher generation, i.e., the U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents, U.S.-born grandparents and likely other U.S. born ancestors. Another 23% are third generation (the U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents), 17% are second generation (the U.S.-born children of at least one immigrant parent), and just 12% are immigrants, according to the Pew Research Center survey of self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry.

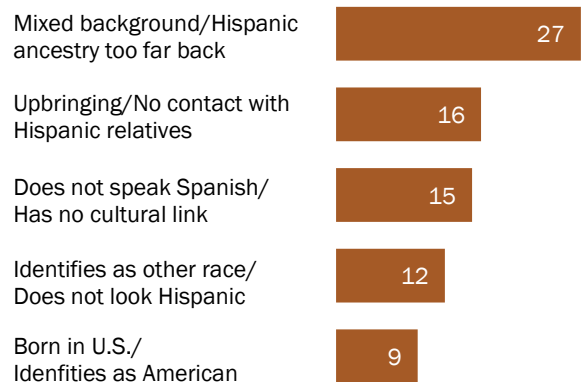
For adults with Hispanic ancestry who do not self-identify as Hispanic, 81% say they have never considered themselves Hispanic or Latino. The reasons for this are many and are often linked to

Eight-in-ten non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry have never thought of themselves as Hispanic

% of self-identified non-Hispanics who ever considered themselves Hispanic or Latino



Among those who say no, the main reasons include ...



Note: Voluntary responses of "Don't know" and "refused" not shown. "Other" (30%) not included as reason why self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry don't identify as Hispanic. This open-ended question allowed for multiple mentions per response. Percentages were calculated using the total and thus add up to greater than 100%.

Source: Survey of self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry or heritage only (Nov. 11, 2015-Feb. 7, 2016).

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mixed backgrounds, limited contact with Hispanic relatives and few Hispanic cultural links, according to a follow-up open-ended question. For example, some 27% said they do not consider themselves Hispanic because they have a mixed Hispanic and non-Hispanic background or that their Hispanic ancestry is too distant. Another 16% said they do not consider themselves Hispanic despite their Hispanic ancestry because of their upbringing or that they have little contact with their Hispanic relatives; 15% said the reason they say they are not Hispanic is because they do not speak Spanish or have no link to Hispanic culture; 12% said they do not look Hispanic or they identify as another race; and 9% said they were born in the U.S. and consider themselves American.

Latino cultural traditions, Spanish use and connections to family's origin country

The conversations parents have with their children and the cultural cues they provide while their children are growing up can have a large impact on their children's identity in adulthood. However, the number of Hispanic cultural activities experienced by Americans with Hispanic ancestry declines across the generations, mirroring the finding that Hispanic self-identity also fades across generations.

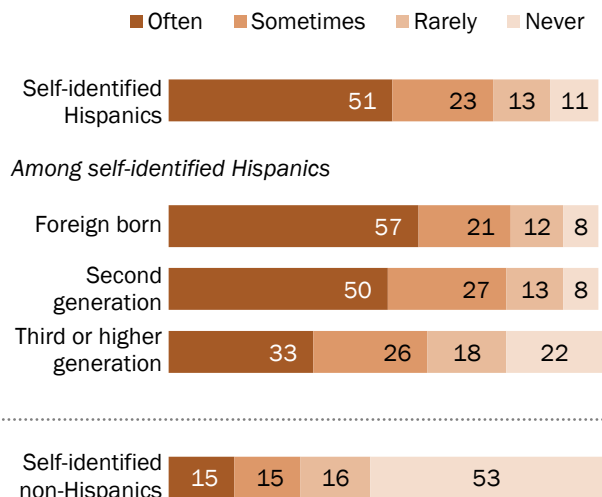
Parents and their pride in their Latino origins

Immigrant and second-generation self-identified Hispanics (57% and 50% respectively) are most likely to say their parents talked often about their pride in their country of origin roots. But by the third generation, only 33% say their parents talked often about their pride in their roots while growing up.

For self-identified non-Hispanics, the majority of whom are of the third or higher immigrant generation, just 15% say they often heard their

Across generations, fewer say parents talked about their pride in their roots

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry saying their parents ____ talked about their pride in being [country of origin] when growing up



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Voluntary responses of "Don't know" and "Refused" not shown. 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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parents talk often about their pride in their ancestor's country of origin.

Attending Hispanic cultural celebrations in childhood

Across immigrant generations, reports of childhood experiences with Hispanic cultural celebrations, such as *posadas* or *quinceañeras*, decline for Americans with Hispanic ancestry the farther they are from their immigrant roots.

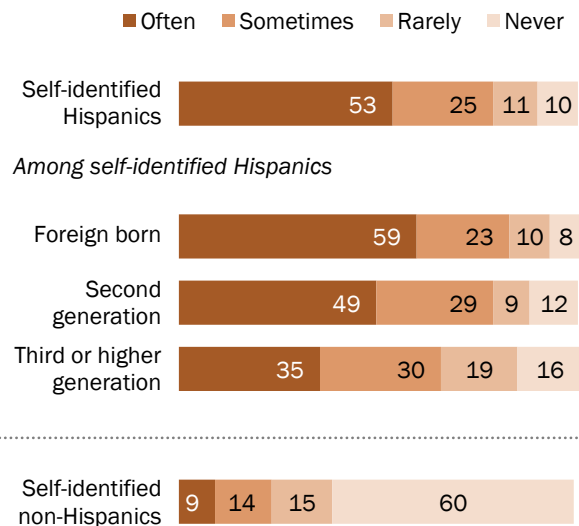
Among immigrant self-identified Hispanics, 59% say that when they were growing up, their parents took them to Hispanic cultural celebrations often, reflecting that the majority of this group grew up outside the U.S.

Second-generation self-identified Hispanics were about as likely to say this happened during their childhood. Half (49%) report that when they were growing up, their immigrant parents took them often to Hispanic cultural celebrations. A smaller share (35%) of third or higher generation self-identified Hispanics report the same about their childhoods.

By comparison, among Americans who say they have a Latino ancestry, but do not self-identify as Latino, just 9% report that when they were growing up, their parents took them to Latino cultural celebrations. Meanwhile, 60% say this never happened.

Childhood experiences at Latino cultural celebrations decline across generations

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry saying their parents ____ took them to Hispanic/Latino cultural celebrations when growing up



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Voluntary responses of "Don't know" and "Refused" not shown. 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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Parents encouraged Spanish

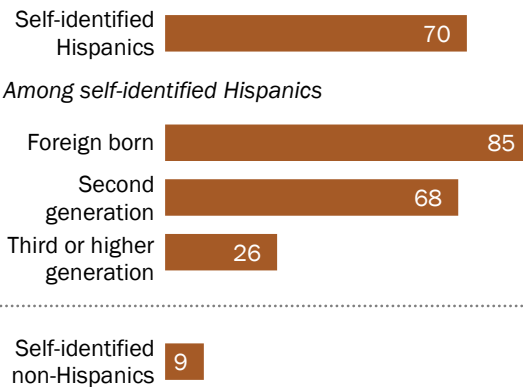
Another important way that parents can encourage their children's Hispanic self-identity is through their use of language. However, the two surveys reveal that the childhood experiences with Spanish fade quickly across the generations, even though there is [wide support](#) for the language among Hispanics.

Fully 85% of foreign-born self-identified Hispanics say that when they were growing up, their parents often encouraged them to speak Spanish. But that share falls to 68% among the U.S.-born second generation and to just 26% of the third or higher generation Hispanics.

By contrast, just 9% of self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry say their parents often encouraged them to speak Spanish, again reflecting the distance this group has from its immigrant roots.

Immigrant, second-generation Latinos most likely to say their parents encouraged them to speak Spanish

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry saying their parents 'often' encouraged them to speak Spanish when growing up



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Voluntary responses of "Don't know" and "Refused" not shown. 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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Spanish use declines across the generations even as Latinos say it is important to speak it

About 40 million people in the U.S. say they speak Spanish in their home today, making Spanish the second most spoken language in the U.S. But while the number of Spanish speakers nationally is rising, among self-identified Hispanics the share who speak it at home is in decline.

The two Pew Research Center surveys explored how respondents rated their own ability to speak and read Spanish and to speak and read English.

Among self-identified Hispanics, 61% of immigrants are Spanish dominant, meaning they are more proficient in speaking and reading in Spanish than they are in English. By comparison, only 6% of the second generation is Spanish dominant and essentially none of the third generation is Spanish dominant, according to the Center's estimates.

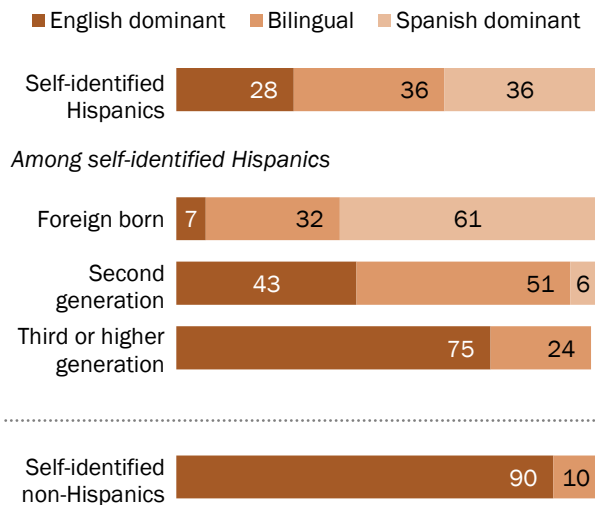
While a small share of U.S.-born Latinos are Spanish dominant, a larger share is bilingual. Among second-generation self-identified Latinos – i.e., the U.S.-born children of immigrant parents – about half (51%) are bilingual. Among third or higher generation self-identified Latinos, that share is 24%.

Meanwhile, English dominance rises across the generations. Among foreign-born self-identified Hispanics, only 7% say they mostly use English. This share rises to 43% in the second generation, and 75% in the third or higher generation.

The language profile of self-identified non-Hispanics who have Hispanic ancestry is different. Fully 90% say they are English dominant and just 10% are bilingual.

English becomes dominant language among later immigrant generations as Spanish declines

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



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. 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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Despite a decline in Spanish use across generations, there is widespread support for its use in the future. Overall, 88% of self-identified Hispanics and 64% of self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry say it is important that future generations of Hispanics living in the U.S. speak Spanish.

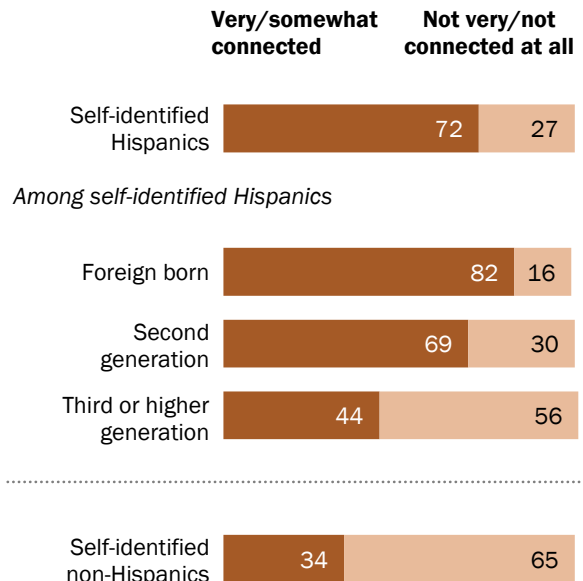
Connections to family's country of origin fade across generations

Among self-identified Hispanics, connections with ancestral national origins decline as immigrant roots become more distant. Eight-in-ten immigrants (82%) who identify as Hispanics say they feel very or somewhat connected with their country of origin. About seven-in-ten (69%) second-generation Hispanics – the children of at least one immigrant parent – say the same. However, by the third generation, only 44% feel very or somewhat connected to their family's country of origin.

Connections to the home country decline even further among non-Hispanic adults with Hispanic ancestry. Only about a third of them (34%) say they feel very or somewhat connected to their family's country of origin, while two-thirds (65%) say they feel not very or not connected at all to these countries.

Foreign-born and second-generation Hispanics feel more connected to family's country of origin

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry saying they feel very/somewhat connected to their country of origin



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Voluntary responses of "Don't know" and "Refused" not shown. 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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The Hispanic experience today

The contemporary experiences linked to the Hispanic background of self-identified Hispanics and non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry vary across generations in much the way their childhood and cultural experiences do.

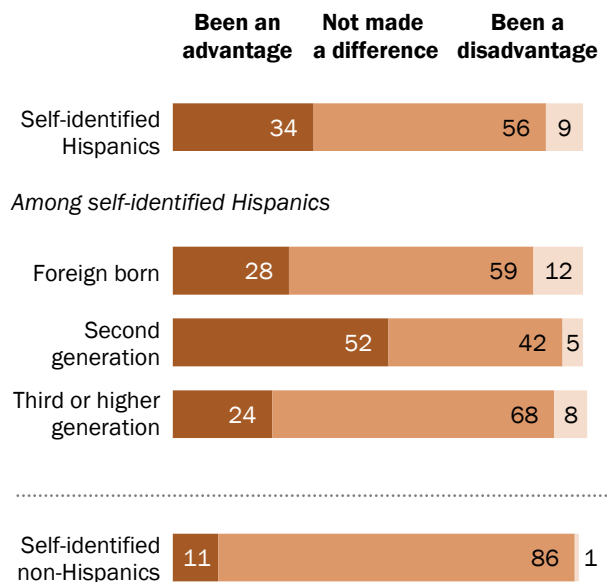
Does having a Hispanic heritage create advantages or disadvantages in life?

The two Pew Research Center surveys asked respondents whether their Hispanic heritage has made a difference in their life. Overall, Hispanic heritage has had the greatest impact on the lives of second-generation Hispanics, half of whom (52%) say their Hispanic background has been an advantage in their lives. By contrast, just 28% of immigrant Hispanics and 24% of third or higher generation Hispanics say the same.

By contrast, just 11% of self-identified non-Hispanics say their Hispanic background has been mostly an advantage for them while 86% say it has not made a difference in their lives.

Majority says Hispanic heritage hasn't made much of a difference in their lives

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry saying being Hispanic/Latino has ____ mostly in their life



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Voluntary responses of "Don't know" and "Refused" not shown. 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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Majority of non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry think others see them as white

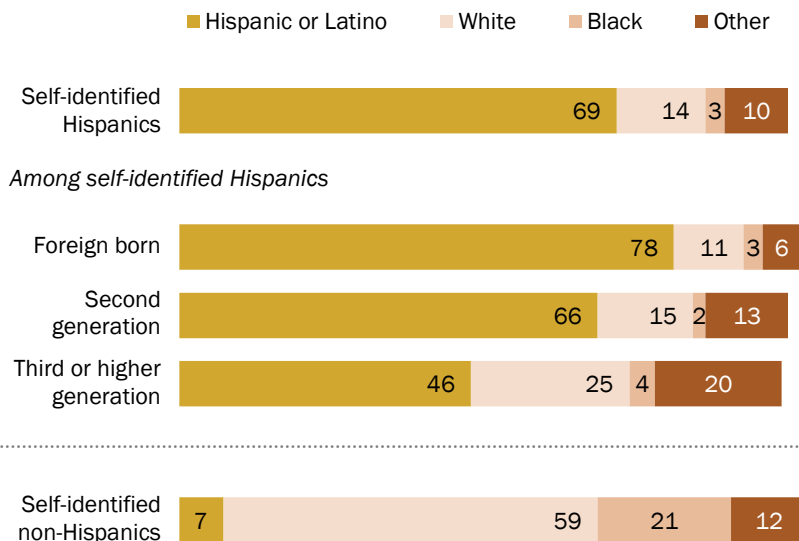
How do adults with Hispanic ancestry think strangers walking past them on the street would describe their background?

Among self-identified Hispanics, 78% of immigrants say strangers on the street would think they were Hispanic or Latino. That share falls to two-thirds among second-generation Hispanics and 46% among third or higher generation Hispanics.

The share falls even further, to just 7%, among U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry who do not self-identify as Hispanic. Meanwhile, 59% say passersby on the street would describe them as white, and not Hispanic or Latino.

Most Hispanics say passersby see them as Hispanic, though that share falls across generations; 59% of self-identified non-Hispanics say they're seen as white

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry saying most people, if they walked past them on the street, would describe them as ...



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Voluntary responses of "Don't know" and "Refused" not shown. "Other" includes "American Indian or Indigenous," "Asian or Asian-American," "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander" and "Mixed race or multiracial" (volunteered).

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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Experience with discrimination

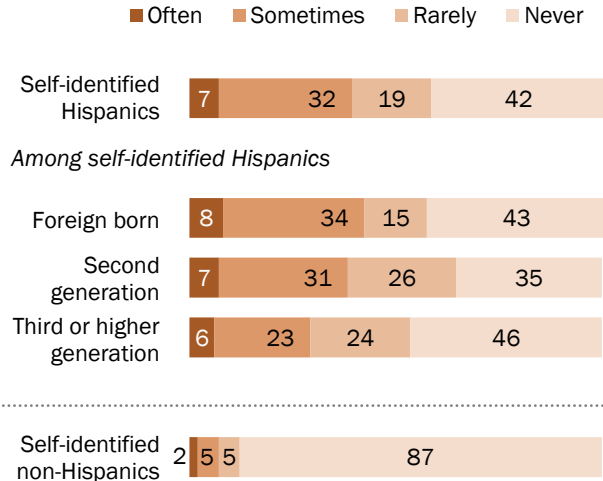
The two surveys explored experiences with discrimination related to being Hispanic. And just as with other measures, experiences with discrimination are less frequent among higher generations of adults with Hispanic ancestry. Even so, 39% of self-identified Hispanics say they have felt discriminated against because of their Hispanic or Latino background.

Some 42% of self-identified Latino immigrants say they have experienced discrimination often (8%) or sometimes (34%) because of their Latino background. A similar share (38%) of second-generation Latinos say the same. Meanwhile 29% of third or higher generation Latinos say they have experienced the same level of discrimination.

By contrast, few self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry (7%) say they have experienced discrimination while 87% say they have never been discriminated against because of their Hispanic background.

Experience with discrimination more common among self-identified Latinos

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry saying they have ___ felt discriminated against because of their Hispanic/Latino/Latin American or Spanish background



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Voluntary responses of "Don't know" and "Refused" not shown. 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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How many Hispanic friends?

The composition of networks of friends varies widely across immigrant generations. Most (77%) immigrant Latinos say all or most of their friends are Latinos. But this share drops to 55% among second-generation self-identified Latinos and only 37% among third or higher generation self-identified Latinos.

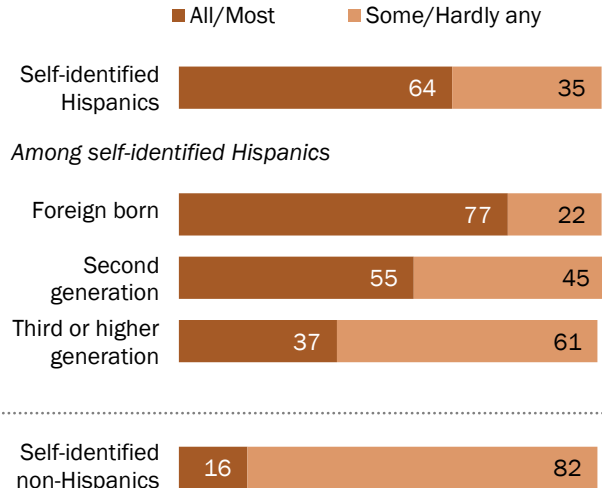
Among self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry, 16% say all or most of their friends are Hispanic.

Living in Hispanic neighborhoods

The nation's Hispanic population has become more dispersed in the past few decades and has grown to 58 million. As a result, in 500 of the nation's more than 3,000 counties, Hispanics make up at least 15.0% of the local population. Yet, Hispanics are often living in neighborhoods that are largely Hispanic, especially in the South and in the West. The two surveys asked self-identified Hispanics and self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry about their neighborhoods.

Foreign-born Hispanics most likely to say they have Hispanic friends

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry saying ___ of their close friends are Hispanic/Latino



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Voluntary responses of "None of them," "Don't know" and "Refused" not shown.

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"

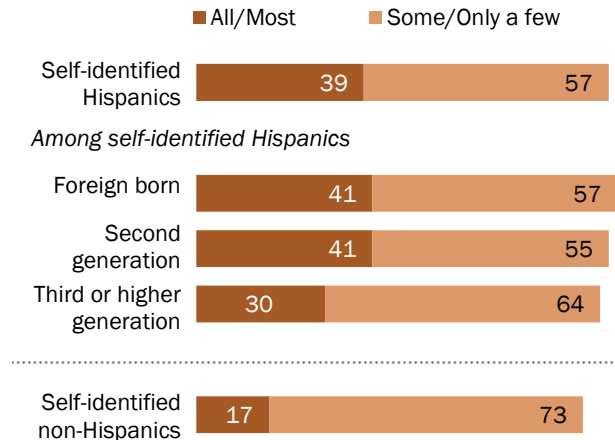
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Four-in-ten (39%) self-identified Hispanics say that “all” (10%) or “most” (30%) of their neighbors are Hispanics. By comparison, just 17% of self-identified non-Hispanics say the same, showing that non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry are more dispersed across the country than their Hispanic counterparts.

Among self-identified Latinos, the foreign born and the second generation are most likely to say that all or most of their neighbors share their heritage. Some 41% of both groups say this. The share that lives in largely Latino neighborhoods falls to 30% among third or higher generation self-identified Latinos.

Living in Latino neighborhoods

% of U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry saying ___ of the people in their neighborhood are Hispanic/Latino



Note: Self-identified Hispanics are those who say they are Hispanic. Self-identified non-Hispanics are those who say they are not Hispanic or Latino but say they have Hispanic ancestry or heritage. Voluntary responses of “None of them,” “Don’t know” and “Refused” not shown.

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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Charts for the report were produced by López; Brown; Antonio Flores, research assistant, Global Migration and Demography; Jynnah Radford, research assistant, Global Migration and Demography; and Michael Keegan, information graphics designer. López and Stepler produced the survey’s topline. López and Radford number-checked the report. Ariana Rodriguez-Gitler was the digital producer. David Kent copy edited the report.

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Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on two Pew Research Center national surveys that explored attitudes and experiences about Hispanic identity among two, mutually exclusive populations. The first survey, the 2015 National Survey of Latinos, was conducted from Oct. 21 through Nov. 30, 2015, in English and Spanish, and explored the attitudes and experiences of a nationally representative sample of 1,500 adults who self-identify as Hispanic. The second is a first of its kind national survey of 401 U.S. adults who indicated they had Hispanic ancestry (in the form of parents, grandparents or other relatives) but did not consider themselves Hispanic. It was conducted in English and Spanish from Nov. 11, 2015 through Feb. 7, 2016, though all respondents chose to take the survey in English. Both surveys were conducted by SSRS, an independent research company, for Pew Research Center. Together, these two surveys provide a look at the identity experiences and views of U.S. adults who say they have Hispanic ancestry.

Defining Hispanic ancestry

For the purposes of this report, Americans of Hispanic ancestry are made up of two groups. The first are those who self-identify as Hispanic when asked about their Hispanic identity. The second is Americans who self-identify as non-Hispanic but also say they have a Hispanic parent or Hispanic grandparent. Together, these two groups represent the U.S. adult population that self-reports Hispanic ancestry and is the universe used throughout this report.

U.S. adults with Hispanic ancestry are identified through a series of questions asked on both of the surveys used in this report.

The survey of self-identified Hispanics used the following screening questions:

- Are you Hispanic or Latino?
- Just to confirm, are you, yourself of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent? (If necessary: such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central or South American, Caribbean or some other Latin American background.)

The survey of self-identified non-Hispanics with Hispanic ancestry used the following screening questions to determine Hispanic ancestry:

- Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent?
- Now thinking about your parents ... is your MOTHER of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent, or not?
- How about your FATHER, is your FATHER of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent, or not?

- How about your grandparents, as far as you know, are any of them of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent, or not?
- Thinking about your family history, as far as you know were any of your GREAT GRANDPARENTS or EARLIER ANCESTORS from Latin American or Spanish ancestry, or not?

Combining the two surveys

Some analyses in this report relied on combining data from both surveys. This was done by merging the two data files and adjusting the weights to that the two groups were proportional to their share of the total population. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, self-identified Hispanics make up 16% of the nation's non-institutionalized adult population, or account for 37.8 million adults. The share that do not identify as Hispanic, but say they have a Hispanic parent or grandparent was estimated to be just under 2% of all U.S. adults⁸, or 4.9 million. Consequently, the weights were scaled so that individuals who self-identify as Hispanic made up 89% of the combined sample and those who do not identify as Hispanics but say they have Hispanic ancestry made up 11%.

The 2015 National Survey of Latinos

Results for this study are partially based on telephone interviews conducted by SSRS for Pew Research Center among a nationally representative sample of 1,500 Latino respondents ages 18 and older. It was conducted on cellular and landline telephones from Oct. 21 through Nov. 30, 2015.

For the full sample, a total of 705 respondents were U.S. born (including Puerto Rico), and 795 were foreign born (excluding Puerto Rico). For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3.3 percentage points.

For this survey, SSRS used a staff of bilingual English- and Spanish-speaking interviewers who, when contacting a household, were able to offer respondents the option of completing the survey in Spanish or English. A total of 679 respondents (45%) were surveyed in Spanish, and 821 respondents (55%) were interviewed in English. Any person ages 18 or older who said they were of Latino origin or descent was eligible to complete the survey.

⁸ The share of all adults who say they have Hispanic ancestry but do not self-identify was estimated using all of the cases that were screened for the survey regardless of whether or not they were eventually determined to be eligible.

To ensure the highest possible coverage of the eligible population, the study employed a dual-frame landline/cellular telephone design. The sample consisted of a landline sampling frame (yielding 449 completed interviews) and a cellphone sampling frame (1,051 interviews).⁹ Both the landline and cellphone sampling frames used a stratified sampling design, oversampling areas with higher densities of Latino residents. Overall the study employed six strata. Landline and

2015 National Survey of Latinos details

		Margin of error
	Sample size	95% confidence level
Total Latinos	1,500	+/- 3.3% points
U.S. born (incl. PR)	705	+/- 4.8% points
Foreign born (excl. PR)	795	+/- 4.4% points
Second generation	369	+/- 6.6% points
Third or higher generation	247	+/- 8.4% points
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cellphone samples were provided by Marketing Systems Group (MSG).

For the landline sampling frame, the sample was compared with InfoUSA and Experian landline household databases, and phone numbers associated with households that included persons with known Latino surnames were subdivided into a surname stratum. The remaining, unmatched and unlisted landline sample was used to generate a stratum with a high incidence of Latinos, based upon the share of Latinos in the sample telephone exchange.

It is important to note that the existence of a surname stratum does not mean the survey was exclusively a surname sample design. The sample is random digit dial (RDD), with the randomly selected telephone numbers divided by whether or not they were found to be associated with a Spanish surname. This was done to ease administration by allowing for more effective assignment of interviewers and labor hours, as well as increase the efficiency of the sample.

MSG's GENESYS sample generation system was used to generate cell phone sample, which was divided into High and Medium strata, based upon the share of Latinos in the sample telephone area code.

⁹ According to calculations by the National Center for Health Statistics National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), from January to June 2015, 59% of Hispanic adults were living in wireless-only households and 15% were in wireless-mostly households ([Blumberg and Luke, 2015](#)).

Samples for the low-incidence landline and low-incidence cell strata were drawn from previously interviewed respondents in SSRS's weekly dual-frame Excel omnibus survey. Respondents who indicated they were Latino on the omnibus survey were eligible to be re-contacted for the present survey. Altogether, a total of 293 previously interviewed respondents were included in this sample.

A multi-stage weighting procedure was used to ensure an accurate representation of the national Hispanic population.

- An adjustment was made for all persons found to possess both a landline and a cellphone, as they were more likely to be sampled than were respondents who possessed only one phone type. This adjustment also took into account the different sampling rate in the landline and cellphone samples.
- The sample was corrected for a potential bias associated with re-contacting previously interviewed respondents in low-incidence strata.
- The sample was corrected for within-household selection in landline interviews, which depended upon the number of Latino adults living in the household.
- The sample was corrected for the oversampling of telephone number exchanges known to have higher densities of Latinos and the corresponding undersampling of exchanges known to have lower densities of Latinos.

Interviews by Strata

	Landline		Cellphone	
	Total Interviews	Estimated % among U.S. Latino population	Total Interviews	Estimated % among U.S. Latino population
Surname	224 (50%)	27%		
High	90 (20%)	30%	630 (60%)	33%
Medium			263 (25%)	33%
Low	135 (30%)	43%	158 (15%)	33%
Total	449		1,051	

Note: "Total Interviews" include the prescreened omnibus interviews that were not subject to geographic stratification. The estimated population breakdown is based on counts from the 2013 American Community Survey. The over- or under-sampling of strata was corrected in weighting.

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- Finally, the data were put through a post-stratification sample balancing routine. The post-stratification weighting utilized estimates of the U.S. adult Hispanic population based on the 2013 U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, on gender, age, education, census region, heritage and years in the U.S. Phone status of the U.S. adult Hispanic population (i.e., cellphone only, dual/landline only) is based on estimates from the January-June 2015 Centers for Disease Control’s National Health Interview Survey and density of the Latino population is from the 2010 Census.
- Weights are then trimmed to avoid any particular case having too much influence on the overall estimates.

Survey of self-identified non-Hispanics with self-reported Hispanic ancestry

Results for this study are also based on telephone interviews conducted by SSRS for Pew Research Center, among a nationally representative sample of 401 respondents ages 18 and older who do not identify as Latino or Hispanic, but report having Hispanic, Latino, Latin American or Spanish ancestry or heritage (“self-identified non-Hispanics”). The interviews were conducted in English on cellular and landline telephones from Nov. 11, 2015, through Feb. 7, 2016. (Respondents were offered the opportunity to complete the survey in Spanish, but all surveys were completed in English.)

For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 5.9 percentage points.

This sample of “self-identified non-Hispanics” (i.e., they did not self-identify as Hispanic or Latino, but identified a parent, grandparent, great-grandparent as having Hispanic, Latino, Spanish or Latin American heritage or ancestry), is a very low incidence population. In order to collect an adequate number of interviews to allow for analysis of this group, SSRS used their Excel Omnibus Survey (OS) – a dual-frame survey offered in English and Spanish which they conduct on a weekly basis. Every week, the OS produces a nationally representative sample of adults ages 18 and older.

During the field period, whenever a respondent on the OS was determined to be 18 years or older, and a “self-identified non-Hispanic” that respondent was administered the module of questions which are analyzed in this report. The analytical sample is comprised of all of the “self-identified non-Hispanic” respondents who were compiled over multiple weeks of the OS.

For the OS, SSRS used a staff of bilingual interviewers who, when contacting a household, were able to offer respondents the option of completing the survey in Spanish or English. However, all 401 “self-identified non-Hispanic” respondents opted to complete the survey in English.

The OS employs a dual-frame landline/cellular telephone design. It includes a fully-replicated, single-stage, random digit dialing sample of landline telephone households, as well as randomly generated cell numbers. The landline sampling frame yielded 150 completed “self-identified non-Hispanic” interviews, and the cell phone sampling frame yielded 251 interviews.

There are no known reliable population estimates for the “self-identified non-Hispanic” population, as it is defined in this survey. As such, SSRS developed a self-weighted sample technique in which the full population of the OS was first weighted to be nationally representative, and then only those respondents who qualified as “self-identified non-Hispanics” were retained for analysis.

First, in order to create the nationally-representative sample of the full population, SSRS implemented the following procedures:

- An adjustment was made for all persons found to possess both a landline and a cell phone, as they were more likely to be sampled than were respondents who possessed only one phone type. This adjustment also took into account the different sampling rate in the landline and cellphone samples.
- An additional adjustment was made to account for the number of phones within the household that are actually answered by the respondent or another member of the household.
- The sample was corrected for within-household selection in landline interviews, which depended upon the number of adults living in the household.
- The data were put through a post-stratification sample balancing routine. The post-stratification weighting utilized estimates of the U.S. adult population based on the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey March 2015 Supplement, on gender by age, gender by Census region, education, race/ethnicity, Hispanic nativity and marital status. The data were also weighted by population density from the 2010 census and phone usage estimates (i.e., cellphone only, landline only, both) from the January to June 2015 Center for Disease Control’s National Health Interview Survey.

- Finally, the weights were truncated so they do not exceed 4.0 or fall below 0.25. This is necessary to ensure the consistency of the estimates across time and to avoid any particular case having too much influence on the overall estimates.

Then, those 401 respondents from that nationally representative sample who did not identify as Hispanic or Latino, despite having a Hispanic ancestor were retained for analysis.

Pew Research Center undertakes all polling activity, including calls to mobile telephone numbers, in compliance with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act and other applicable laws.

Pew Research Center is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization and a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

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