

# Exploring the Challenges of Biracial & Multiracial Latino/as in the U.S.

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## BACKGROUND & PROBLEM

- In Latin America, multiracialism is recognized “openly”
  - Embrace “mestizaje,” or “race-mixing,” and the existence of races of multiracial individuals
- In the U.S., being a biracial/multiracial Latino/a has been “covert, hidden, latent” (Morales 57)
  - U.S. maintains a monoracial view of race
- Due to this “covertness,” biracial/multiracial individuals have been seen as “inferior” by the monoracial society (Morales 50)
  - They will face several challenges because of this

## INTRODUCTION

### Meaning of Biracial & Multiracial Latinidad

According to a 2015 Pew Research study, biracial/multiracial Latino/as define their “multiracial identity” in two different ways (Parker).

1. According to the U.S. Census...
  1. You check Hispanic/Latino as an ethnicity
  2. You check two other races in the race category
    - a. Ex: Hispanic/Latino | White | Black or African American
2. According to a 2015 Pew Research study...
  1. You check Hispanic/Latino as an ethnicity
    - a. Ex: Hispanic/Latino | White
  2. These Latino/as view Latinidad as part of their racial identity
3. Multiracial Latinidad...
  1. Many Latino/as are multiracial, but might not fill out the census to reflect this
    - a. History of “race-mixing” in Latin America

## DISCUSSION

Biracial and multiracial Latino/as face several unique challenges when developing their multiracial identity...

1. Monoracism/Racial Essentialization
  1. When students are pressured into choosing one race to fit into, especially when they are filling out racial or ethnic forms (Townsend, et al. 193).
2. Assimilation (& Acculturation)
  1. Pressure to assimilate because “whiteness” is commonly associated with progress (Acuña 39).
  2. “Linguistic assimilation” posits you must speak English to “participate in society” (Espinoza 17; Lipski 5; Montoya 438).
3. Microaggressions
  1. Examples include the “What are you? Where are you from?” question, racial jokes, and misidentification (Museus et al.; Stites et al.).
4. Discrimination
  1. Examples include culture policing and stereotypes (e.g., illegal immigrant or criminal) (Christophe et al. 26).
5. The Chameleon Effect
  1. Students attempt “to develop strategies to help them fit in with more than one racial or cultural group,” but still feel as though they “don’t fit in” (Miville et al. 512).
6. 5-Stage Biracial Identity Development\*

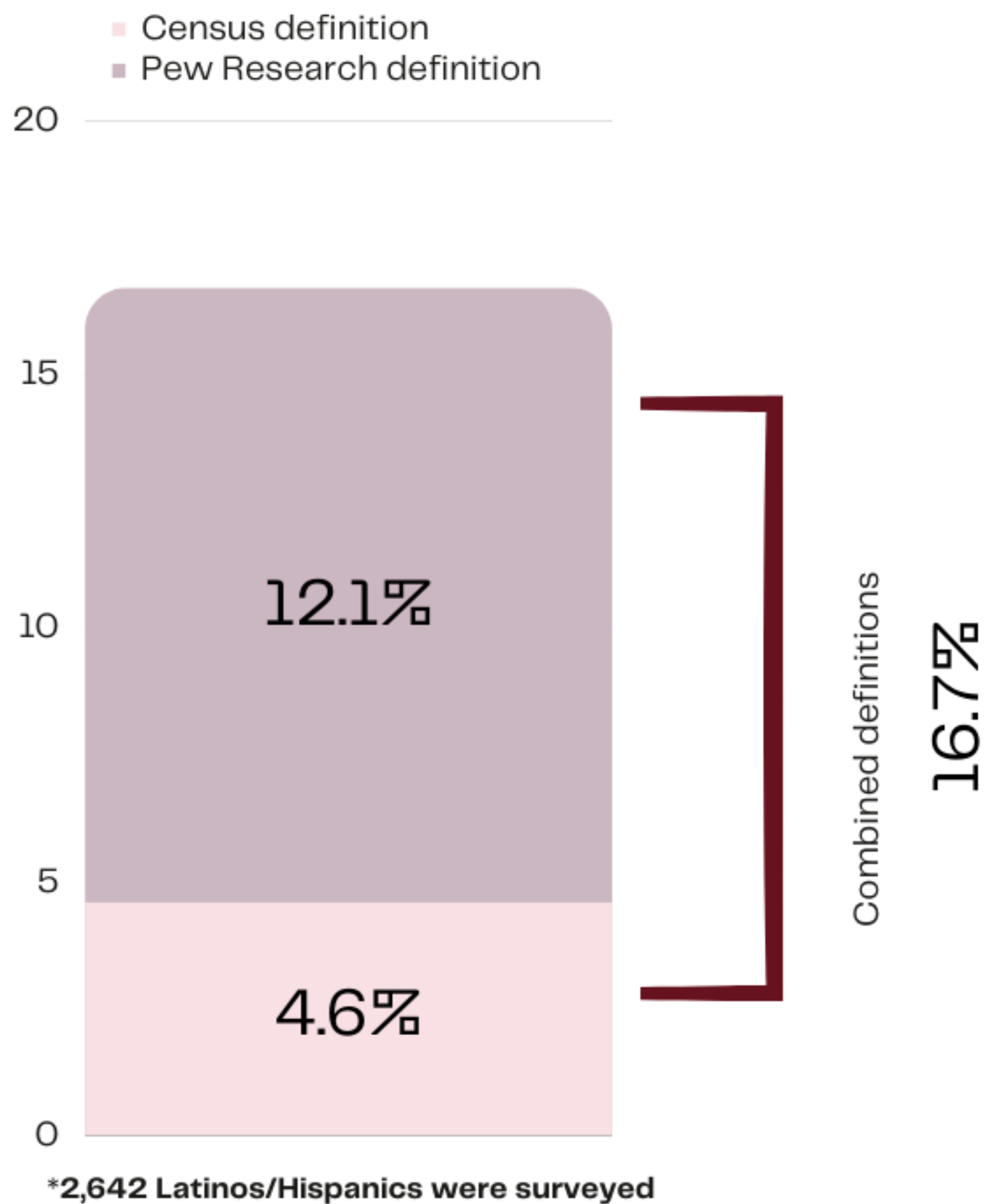
## FINDINGS

According to a 2015 Pew Research study, 67% of Latino/as viewed their ethnicity as part of their racial background. These Latino/as identify differently than the U.S. Census allows, suggesting that the true number of biracial and multiracial Latino/as is underreported.

## STATISTICAL DATA

### Latino/as Identifying as Multiracial

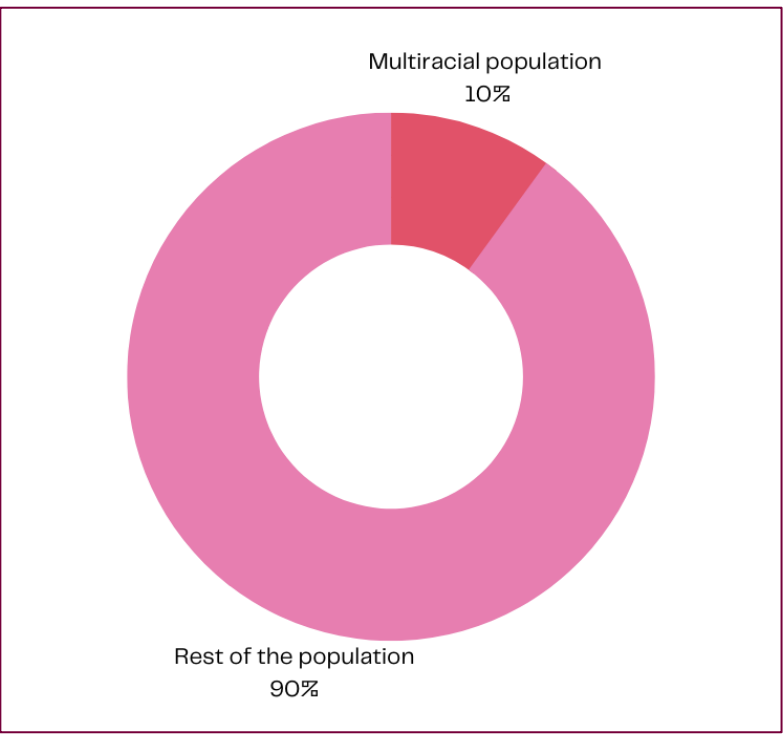
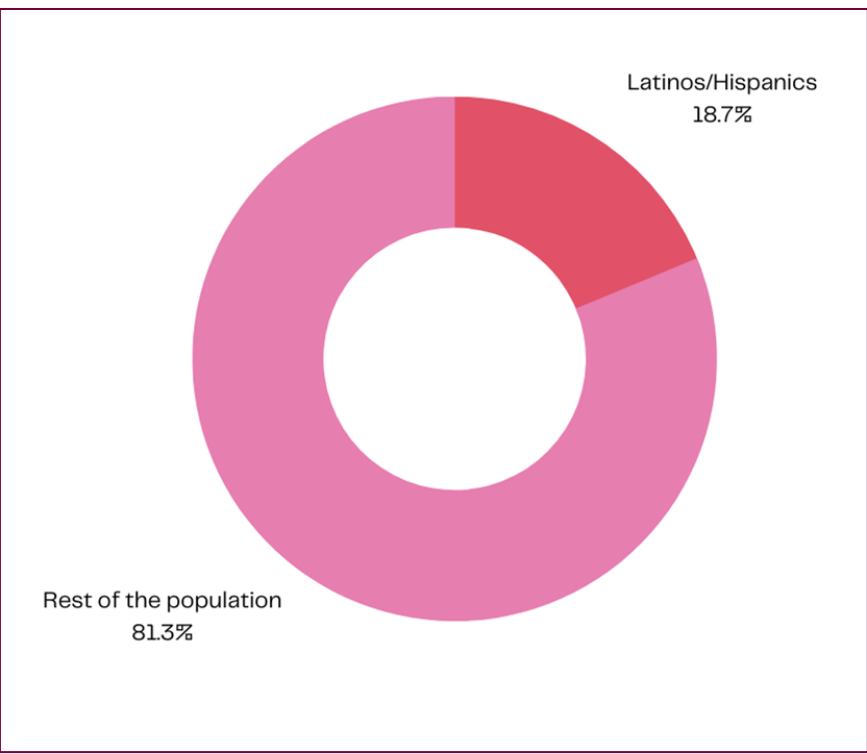
#### Latino/as that identify as multiracial



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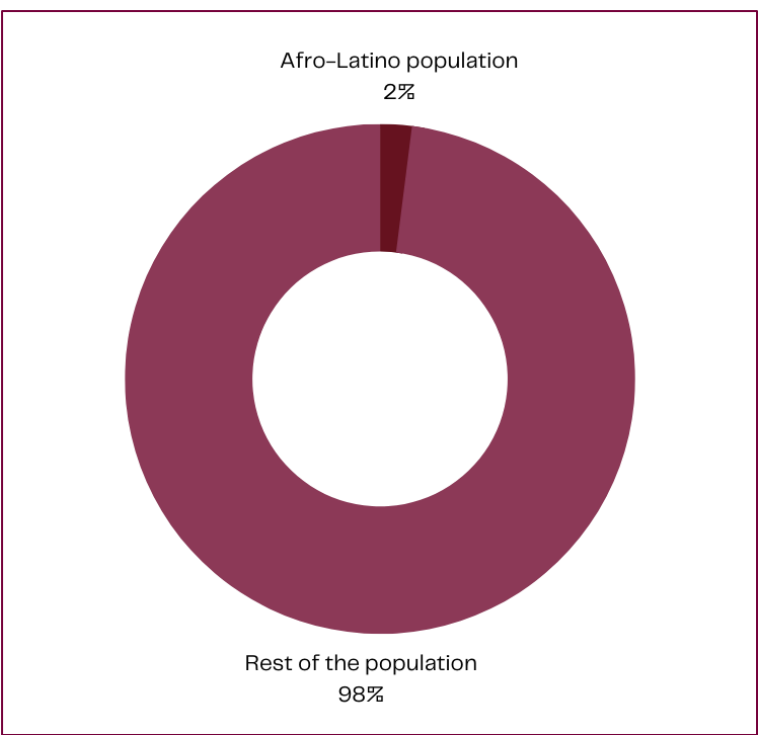
### Population of Biracial & Multiracial Latino/as

Latino/a Population in the United States.  
Latinos/Hispanics account for 62.1 million and 18.7% of the U.S. population.



Multiracial Population in the United States.  
The multiracial population represents 33.8 million people (including non-Latino/as), a 276% increase in the multiracial population since 2010.

Afro-Latino/a Population in the United States.  
Afro-Latino/as represent 6 million of the U.S. population. They make up 2% of the U.S. population and 12% of the Latino/a population.



## DISCUSSION CONT...

### \*5-Stage Biracial Identity Development

1. Personal Identity - Occurs in childhood. Not aware of their biracial/multiracial identity.
2. Choice of Group Categorization - Students feel pressured into choosing one racial group to fit into.
3. Enmeshment/Denial - Students choose a single racial group and feel guilty about the choice.
4. Appreciation - Students begin exploring other racial groups that make up their identities and experience awareness of their heritage.
5. Integration - Students begin integrating their second, third racial background and adopt a multiracial identity

## CONCLUSIONS

How can biracial and multiracial Latino/as overcome the challenges they face, and how can others help them?

### Don’t Assimilate, Become Multicultural

- Gloria Anzaldúa, Mexican-American, talks about embracing the “borderland.”
  - The borderland literally represents the border between U.S. and Mexico, but figuratively represents the place where two cultures, two races can coexist (Anzaldúa).
- Telemundo, an NBCUniversal television network, says you have to be a “200%er.”
  - Students do not have a fractionalized identity. They are not “half this and part that.” They are 100% of both cultures/races.

### Become an Advocate or Mentor

- Engage in personal discussions with students.

### Normalize the Existence of Biracial & Multiracial Students

- Understand that multiracial students are not an “anomaly.”
- Multiracial students do not have to choose sides.
- Be aware of your words, actions, and prejudices.

