

**Portrait of the
Latin American
Populations in Canada:**
Diversity and
Socioeconomic Outcomes



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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

Note to readers

Data sources

This analysis was conducted principally using data from the 2021 Census of Population (long-form questionnaire). Data were also used from the 2001 to 2016 Census of Population long-form questionnaires, the 2011 National Household Survey and the 2020 General Social Survey – Social Identity.

In 2021 and 2016, a sample of 25% of Canadian households received the long-form census questionnaire. In 2011, 33% received the voluntary National Household Survey, and, in 2006 and 2001, 20% received the long-form census questionnaire.

The long-form questionnaire covers the population in private households (excluding those in collective dwellings such as nursing homes, rooming houses, military bases or prisons). The target population of the portrait when using census data was the population in private households in occupied private dwellings, meaning that the portrait also excluded people who were living outside Canada on government, military or diplomatic postings.

The long-form census questionnaire includes Canadian citizens (by birth and naturalization), permanent residents, and non-permanent residents (NPRs) and their families living with them in Canada. NPRs are people who hold a work or student permit or who have claimed refugee status (asylum claimants, protected persons and related groups).

Foreign residents, such as representatives of a foreign government assigned to an embassy, high commission or other diplomatic mission in Canada, as well as residents of another country who are visiting Canada temporarily, are not covered by the census.

The 2020 General Social Survey – Social Identity covered non-institutionalized people (i.e., people in private households in occupied private dwellings) aged 15 years or older, excluding residents of the territories and of First Nations reserves.

Methods

This portrait provides descriptive analysis of the characteristics of Latin American populations in Canada. Data from the 2020 General Social Survey – Social Identity are tested for statistical significance using 95% confidence intervals.

Random rounding: To ensure confidentiality, the values, including totals, are randomly rounded either up or down to a multiple of '5' or '10.' To understand these data, you must be aware that each individual value is rounded. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the individual values since totals and sub-totals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentages, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Definitions

The Caribbean: In this portrait, the term “the Caribbean” refers to the geographical region of “the Caribbean and Bermuda.”

Canadian-born: In this portrait, this term refers to people born in Canada, irrespective of their immigrant status. There are some non-immigrants born outside Canada (for example, children of Canadian citizens who were living abroad or travelling when their child was born) and a small number of immigrants born in Canada (for example, children of foreign diplomatic personnel).

Economic immigrant: This refers to an immigrant who has been selected for their ability to contribute to Canada's economy by meeting labour market needs, owning and managing or building a business, making a substantial investment, creating their own employment, or meeting specific provincial or territorial labour market needs.

Educational attainment: “Educational attainment,” “level of education” and “highest level of education” refer to the highest level of education that a person has successfully completed, using the classification of [highest certificate, diploma or degree](#). The general hierarchy used in deriving this variable (high school, trades, college, university) is loosely tied to the “in-class” duration of the various types of education.

Employment rate: The employment rate for a particular group (age, gender, marital status, geographic area, etc.) is the number of people in that group who were employed in the week of Sunday, May 2, to Saturday, May 8, 2021, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that group. It is applicable to the population aged 15 years and older. The employed population includes people who did any paid work as an employee or a self-employed person; did unpaid work contributing directly to the operation of a farm, business or professional practice owned and operated by a related member of the same household; or had a job but were not at work because of factors such as their own illness or disability, personal or family responsibilities, a vacation, or a labour dispute.

Ethnic or cultural origin: This refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of a person’s ancestors. Ancestors may have Indigenous origins, origins that refer to different countries or other origins that may not refer to different countries. Often referred to as a person’s ancestral “roots,” ethnic or cultural origins should not be confused with citizenship, nationality, language or place of birth.

Gender: This refers to an individual’s personal and social identity as a man, woman or non-binary person (a person who is not exclusively a man or a woman) and includes the following concepts:

- gender identity, which refers to the gender that a person feels internally and individually
- gender expression, which refers to the way a person presents their gender, regardless of their gender identity, through body language, aesthetic choices or accessories (e.g., clothes, hairstyle and makeup) that may have traditionally been associated with a specific gender.

A person’s gender may differ from their sex at birth and from what is indicated on their current identification or legal documents such as their birth certificate, passport or driver’s licence. A person’s gender may change over time. Some people may not identify with a specific gender.

The sex variable in census years before 2021 and the two-category gender variable in the 2021 Census are combined in this analysis to make historical comparisons. Although sex and gender refer to two different concepts, the introduction of gender in 2021 is not expected to have a significant impact on data analysis and historical comparability, given the small size of the transgender and non-binary populations. For additional information on changes of concepts over time, please consult the [Age, Sex at Birth and Gender Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021](#).

Given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses. In these cases, individuals in the category “non-binary people” are distributed into the other two gender categories. Unless otherwise indicated, the category “men” includes men, boys and some non-binary people, while the category “women” includes women, girls and some non-binary people.

Generation status: This refers to whether a person or their parents were born in Canada.

- The term “first generation” includes people who were born outside Canada.
- The term “second generation” includes people who were born in Canada and had at least one parent born outside Canada.
- The term “third generation or more” includes people who were born in Canada and whose parents were both also born in Canada.

Immigrant: This refers to a person who is, or has been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group. The 2021 Census of Population includes immigrants who were admitted to Canada on or prior to May 11, 2021.

Immigrant sponsored by family: This refers to an immigrant who was sponsored by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident and was granted permanent resident status based on their relationship either as the spouse, partner, parent, grandparent, child or other relative of this sponsor. The terms “family class” or “family reunification” are sometimes used to refer to this category.

Latin American populations: In this portrait, Latin American populations are defined as those who responded to the population group question with “Latin American”; a write-in response that was considered consistent with “Latin American” only, such as “Colombian” or “Chilean”; both of the above; or “Latin American” and “White.” The inclusion of those who responded “Latin American” and “White” differs from the standard definition of the Latin American populations from the “visible minority” variable. This inclusion is used in this portrait to be consistent with methods for other racialized groups in this portrait series (e.g., South Asian, Chinese, Black and Filipino) and to more fully reflect the characteristics of the Latin American populations in Canada. (For more information, see the “Population of interest” section).

The definition of the Latin American populations excludes 1,195 Latin Americans who reported being both Latin American and White, along with certain write-in responses. This population cannot be identified in a comparable way across census cycles.

The definition of the Latin American populations also excludes 57,010 people who reported being both Latin American and in one or more other racialized groups. These populations cannot be identified in a comparable way across census cycles. Details on these populations were provided in a highlight box within the portrait.

Location of study: This refers to the country of the institution from which a person obtained their highest certificate, diploma or degree. It refers to the location of the institution granting the certificate, diploma or degree, not the location of the person at the time they obtained the qualification or were attending the institution.

Mother tongue: This refers to the first language a person learned at home in childhood and still understands. If the person no longer understands the first language learned, the mother tongue is the second language learned. For a person who learned more than one language at the same time in early childhood, the mother tongue is the language this person spoke most often at home before starting school. The person has more than one mother tongue only if they learned these languages at the same time and still understands them. For a child who has not yet learned to speak, the mother tongue is the language spoken most often to this child at home. A child who has not yet learned to speak has more than one mother tongue only if these languages are spoken to them equally often so that the child learns these languages at the same time.

Non-immigrant: This refers to a person who is a Canadian citizen by birth.

Non-permanent resident: This refers to a person from another country with a usual place of residence in Canada and who has a work or study permit or who has claimed refugee status (asylum claimant, protected person and related groups). Family members living with work or study permit holders are also included, unless these family members are already Canadian citizens or landed immigrants or permanent residents.

Non-racialized non-Indigenous population: In this portrait, the non-racialized non-Indigenous population is defined as those who were not categorized as a “visible minority” using the visible minority variable; were not categorized as “White and Arab,” “White and Latin American” or “White and West Asian” using the population group variable; and did not report a First Nations, Métis or Inuit identity in the question on Indigenous identity. In contrast to the standard definition, it excludes people who reported being both Arab and White, both Latin American and White or both West Asian and White. For more information on the visible minority and population group variables, consult the [Visible Minority and Population Group Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021](#).

Occupation: This refers to the kind of work performed in a job—a job being all the tasks carried out by a particular worker to complete their duties. An occupation is a set of jobs that are sufficiently similar in work performed. In the 2021 Census of Population, occupations are classified according to the [National Occupational Classification 2021](#).

Overqualification rate: This refers to the proportion of people with a bachelor's degree or higher who are working in an occupation that typically requires, at most, a high school diploma (defined as occupations in training, education, experience and responsibilities [TEER] categories 4 or 5 in the National Occupational Classification 2021). People in managerial occupations (TEER 0) are excluded from the calculation, as are those who did not have an occupation.

Place of birth: This refers to the name of the geographic location (in this portrait, the country or area of interest) where the person was born. The geographic location is specified according to the geographic boundaries at the time of data collection, not the geographic boundaries at the time of birth.

Racialized populations: In this portrait, "racialized populations" or "racialized groups" are defined as people categorized as "visible minorities" ("South Asian"; "Chinese"; "Black"; "Filipino"; "Latin American"; "Arab"; "Southeast Asian"; "West Asian"; "Korean"; "Japanese"; "multiple visible minorities"; and "visible minority, not included elsewhere") according to the visible minority variable, as well as those categorized as "White and Arab," "White and Latin American" or "White and West Asian" according to the "population group" variable. The inclusion of the "White and Arab," "White and Latin American" and "White and West Asian" populations as part of the racialized populations is a departure from the standard concept of racialized populations. In this analysis, the racialized populations exclude Indigenous respondents. For more information about the derivation of the racialized populations, consult the [Visible Minority and Population Group Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021](#).

Refugee: This refers to an immigrant who was granted permanent resident status based on a well-founded fear of returning to their home country.

Religion: This refers to a person's self-identified connection to or affiliation with any religious denomination, group, body, or other religiously defined community or system of belief. Religion is not limited to formal membership in a religious organization or group. For infants or children, religion refers to the specific religious group or denomination, if any, in which they are being raised.

Unemployment rate: The unemployment rate for a particular group (age, gender, marital status, geographic area, etc.) is the number of people in that group who were unemployed in the week of Sunday, May 2, to Saturday, May 8, 2021, expressed as a percentage of the labour force in that group. It is applicable to the population aged 15 years and older. The unemployed population includes people who, during the above reference period, were without work but had looked for work in the past four weeks ending with the reference period and were available for work; were on temporary layoff because of business conditions and were available for work; or were without work, had a job to start within four weeks from the reference period and were available for work. The labour force refers to people who were either employed or unemployed.

Year of immigration: This refers to the year in which a person obtained permanent residency in Canada. This may not be the same as the year that they first arrived in Canada.

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Portrait of the Latin American Populations in Canada: Diversity and Socioeconomic Outcomes

by **Dorcas Hindir** and **Katherine Wall**

Introduction

The *Portrait of the Latin American Populations in Canada: Diversity and Socioeconomic Outcomes* is part of a portrait series that Statistics Canada developed to inform the initiatives under [Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy](#),¹ which seeks to address racism and discrimination faced by racialized groups and Indigenous Peoples. This analytical paper aligns with the [Disaggregated Data Action Plan](#), a whole-of-government approach led by Statistics Canada to enhance data collection, analysis and dissemination that are representative of the diverse populations in Canada. The topics explored in this portrait were shaped by informal consultations and engagement with Latin American community groups and subject-matter experts across Canada. The main data source used is the Census of Population, along with the 2020 General Social Survey – Social Identity.

The portrait has two main goals. First, it aims to give an understanding of how the various immigration histories and countries of origin of Latin American populations in Canada relate to their growth, geographic distribution and sociocultural characteristics. Second, it outlines the socioeconomic outcomes of various groups of Latin Americans, including their achievements and the challenges and barriers they may face, in relation to factors such as education, employment, occupations, income, housing and discrimination. The portraits in this series are vital first steps in informing inclusive decision making, guiding the process from initial conception to effective implementation.

An intersectional approach is used to explore the relationships between multiple diversity measures (e.g., place of birth, ethnic and cultural origins, period of immigration, religion). Gaining insights into the diversity of these growing populations is an important step toward understanding their unique characteristics and experiences. Understanding the differences between groups can inform programs and services geared toward Latin American populations in Canada and highlight their contributions in Canada.

When analyzing data by region of birth, this portrait will use the geographical groupings of Mexico, Central America (excluding Mexico), the Caribbean and South America.² Over 95% of Latin Americans born outside Canada were born in these regions. Mexico is analyzed separately from the rest of the Central American region because it is one of the most common countries of birth of Latin Americans in Canada and has very different characteristics from the rest of Central America. In many cases, data by specific country of birth are also provided.

1. This portrait series on racialized groups was funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage, Government of Canada.

2. Regions used in the portrait follow the [Standard Classification of Countries and Areas of Interest 2019 – Countries and Areas of Interest for Social Statistics](#), with the following exceptions: Mexico is analyzed separately from the rest of Central America, and the term “Caribbean” is used instead of “Caribbean and Bermuda” to simplify terminology.

A brief history of Latin Americans in Canada

There is little information on when the first Latin American immigrants arrived in Canada, and the concept of “Latin American” currently used did not exist on the Canadian census until 1996.

Place of birth and ethnic origins variables can help establish the historic presence of Latin American immigrants in Canada. There have been Latin American populations in Canada since at least the 1930s.

The 1971 Census of Population (the earliest census with detailed information on people born in Central and South American countries) showed nearly 1,400 people in Canada who were born in Central or South America and had immigrated prior to 1931. While most of these pre-1931 immigrants reported European origins other than Spanish or Portuguese—German, English, Scottish and Italian origins were among the most common—smaller numbers reported Spanish or Portuguese origins.

From 1931 to 1945, immigration to Canada was at a historically low level (Boyd and Vickers, 2000) and was largely restricted to British subjects, United States citizens and Canadian residents (Kelley and Trebilcock, 1998). Immigration numbers rose following the Second World War as Canada gradually broadened its immigration policies in the late 1940s and 1950s (Boyd and Vickers, 2000; Kelley and Trebilcock, 1998).

The impact of these changes can be seen in the statistics. The 1971 Census counted approximately 700 people born in Central or South America who immigrated to Canada from 1931 to 1945, followed by over 12,000 from 1946 to 1964. In both periods, the most common ethnic origins of these immigrants continued to be English and German, with fewer than 10% reporting Spanish origins. The share reporting Portuguese origins rose from around 2% in the period before 1945 to nearly 9% in the period from 1946 to 1964.

Most immigration from Central and South America to Canada occurred in the latter half of the 20th century. Changes to Canadian immigration policy in 1962 and 1967 shifted the selection criteria from national origin to a points system that assessed immigrants on characteristics such as age, education, language skills and other economic factors (Boyd and Vickers, 2000; Kelley and Trebilcock, 1998). This was followed by a higher rate of immigration: the 1971 Census counted over 20,000 immigrants born in Central or South America who had immigrated from 1965 to 1971, more than in the entire period from 1931 to 1964, and the most common ethnic origin of these immigrants was Spanish.

There was an increase in immigration by Chilean refugees following the 1973 military coup of Augusto Pinochet (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2024; Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, 2025). The Canadian government created a special immigration program for Chileans in 1974 and expanded it in 1976 to include refugees from any country in South America (Statistics Canada, 1990). According to the 2021 Census, over 1,000 Latin Americans born in Chile immigrated in each year from 1974 to 1978, compared with fewer than 100 in each year preceding 1973.

Latin American immigration in 1973 was also affected by specific Canadian government policies. The ability of visitors to apply for permanent resident status while in Canada, and to appeal to the Immigration Appeal Board if status was not granted, had produced a large number of appeal cases. In 1973, the government abolished the ability of visitors to Canada to apply for permanent resident status but implemented a 60-day Adjustment of Status Program to enable many of these visitors—who were already in Canada—to obtain permanent residency. This produced an increase in immigrant admissions in 1973, including for Latin Americans, among others (Statistics Canada, 1990; Economic Council of Canada, 1991; Kelley and Trebilcock, 1998).

In 1979, a military-led coup d'état in El Salvador resulted in civil war, and, in 1981 and 1982, the Canadian government responded by bringing in special refugee policies for Salvadoreans (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, 2025; Kelley and Trebilcock, 1998; Economic Council of Canada, 1991). From 1983 to 1986, El Salvador was the third most common country of birth of refugees admitted to Canada (Statistics Canada, 1990). Higher rates of immigration from Central America continued through the 1980s until the early 1990s, according to 2021 Census data. Specifically, the 2021 Census counted over 2,000 Latin Americans born in Central America (excluding Mexico) who had immigrated in each year from 1983 to 1994, with a peak of over 9,000 in 1991.

From 2000 to 2021, the most common admission category of Latin American immigrants was economic immigrants, and the most common places of birth of Latin American immigrants were Colombia and Mexico.

Population of interest

In this portrait, Latin American populations were defined and measured through the population group question in the Census of Population. Since the 1996 Census, “Latin American” has been one of the population groups listed on the census questionnaire, based on the *Employment Equity Act* and its regulations. Respondents can choose to mark one or more population groups or specify another group.³

This portrait includes respondents who selected only the “Latin American” category or provided a write-in response corresponding to that category (e.g., “Costa Rican,” “Colombian” or “Chilean”), or both, as well as those who selected both the “Latin American” and “White” categories. The inclusion of those who selected both “Latin American” and “White” is a departure from the standard definition and methods used in support of the *Employment Equity Act*. This is done to be consistent with methods used for other racialized groups in this portrait series (e.g., South Asian, Chinese, Black and Filipino) and to more fully reflect the characteristics of Latin American populations in Canada. The inclusion of those who selected both “Latin American” and “White” increases the size of Latin American populations in 2021 from 580,235 to 726,820. For this reason, statistics reported in this paper will differ from those shown in other Statistics Canada publications and in data tables from the 2021 Census. Following this methodology, when reference is made to other population groups in this paper, people who selected both “Arab” and “White” are counted as Arab, and people who selected both “West Asian” and “White” are counted as West Asian. The non-racialized non-Indigenous population consists of those who self-reported neither as a racialized group nor as First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

Details on populations who reported being both Latin American and in one or more other racialized groups are provided in a highlight box. These populations are not included in the population of interest analyzed in this portrait because they cannot be identified in a comparable way across census cycles. This approach is consistent with the methodology used in the rest of the portrait series. As of the 2021 Census, there were 57,010 people in Canada who reported being both Latin American and in another racialized group.

Executive summary

- The Latin American populations in Canada nearly tripled from 251,585 in 2001 to 726,820 in 2021, accounting for 2.0% of the population in 2021.
- Among Latin Americans in Canada in 2021, the most common countries of birth were Canada (27.8%) and Mexico (13.2%). Another 38.6% were born in South America, with the most common countries of birth being Colombia (12.9%) and Brazil (7.4%). Additionally, 13.8% were born in Central America (excluding Mexico), about half of whom were born in El Salvador (7.0%).
- The main admission category of Latin American immigrants has changed over time. For example, from 1983 to 1992, the most common admission category was refugees, while from 2008 to 2021, the most common admission category was economic immigrants.
- In 2021, more than 7 in 10 Latin Americans in Canada (71.8%) lived in Ontario (42.9%) or Quebec (28.9%). Nearly half lived in either Toronto (26.5%) or Montréal (22.9%).

Figure 1
Question 25, Census of Population 2A-L questionnaire

This question collects information in accordance with the *Employment Equity Act* and its Regulations and Guidelines to support programs that promote equal opportunity for everyone to share in the social, cultural and economic life of Canada.

25 Is this person:

Mark “X” more than one circle or specify, if applicable.

- ☐ White
- ☐ South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Filipino
- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Latin American
- ☐ Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)
- ☐ West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Japanese

Other group — specify:

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population 2A-L questionnaire.

3. For more information on the population group question and its derivation, refer to the [Visible Minority and Population Group Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021](#).

- Over half (51.1%) of Latin Americans were of core working age (25 to 54 years) in 2021, a higher proportion than any other racialized groups in Canada.
- Those aged 65 and older made up 7.5% of Latin Americans, with higher shares among those born in Guyana (27.7%) and Chile (26.5%).
- In 2021, 7 in 10 Latin Americans (71.0%) were Christian, including half (50.1%) who were Catholic.
- In 2021, over three-quarters (78.3%) of Latin Americans born outside Canada reported Spanish as their only mother tongue. The main exception to this pattern was that most Latin Americans born in Brazil reported Portuguese as their only mother tongue (94.2%). Just over half (54.5%) of Canadian-born Latin Americans reported English, French or both as their only mother tongues.
- In 2021, Latin American women aged 25 to 54 had a lower employment rate (70.5%) than their non-racialized non-Indigenous counterparts (78.8%). This pattern existed across most levels of education.
- Latin American men aged 25 to 54 who were born in Central America (excluding Mexico) were more likely to work in trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (40.4%) than those born in South America (24.9%). Those born in South America were more than twice as likely to work in natural and applied sciences and related occupations (23.3%) relative to those born in Central America (excluding Mexico) (9.5%).
- In 2021, Latin Americans had higher overqualification rates than non-racialized non-Indigenous workers, even when their degrees were earned in Canada. For example, the overqualification rate was 26.7% for Latin Americans with a degree from outside Canada, 12.7% for Latin Americans with a Canadian degree and 9.9% for the non-racialized non-Indigenous population with a Canadian degree.
- As of 2021, 4 in 10 Latin Americans (40.2%) lived in housing that was unaffordable, overcrowded or in need of major repairs, compared with 21.7% of the non-racialized non-Indigenous population.
- Latin Americans reported better self-rated health than either other racialized groups or the non-racialized non-Indigenous population in 2020.
- As of 2020, nearly 7 in 10 Latin Americans born outside Canada (69.5%) reported a very strong sense of belonging to Canada, a higher proportion than among their non-racialized non-Indigenous counterparts (56.8%).
- As of 2020, more than 4 in 10 Latin Americans (44.7%) reported having experienced discrimination in the past six years, most commonly because of language (29.4%), ethnicity or culture (27.9%), and race or colour (18.4%).

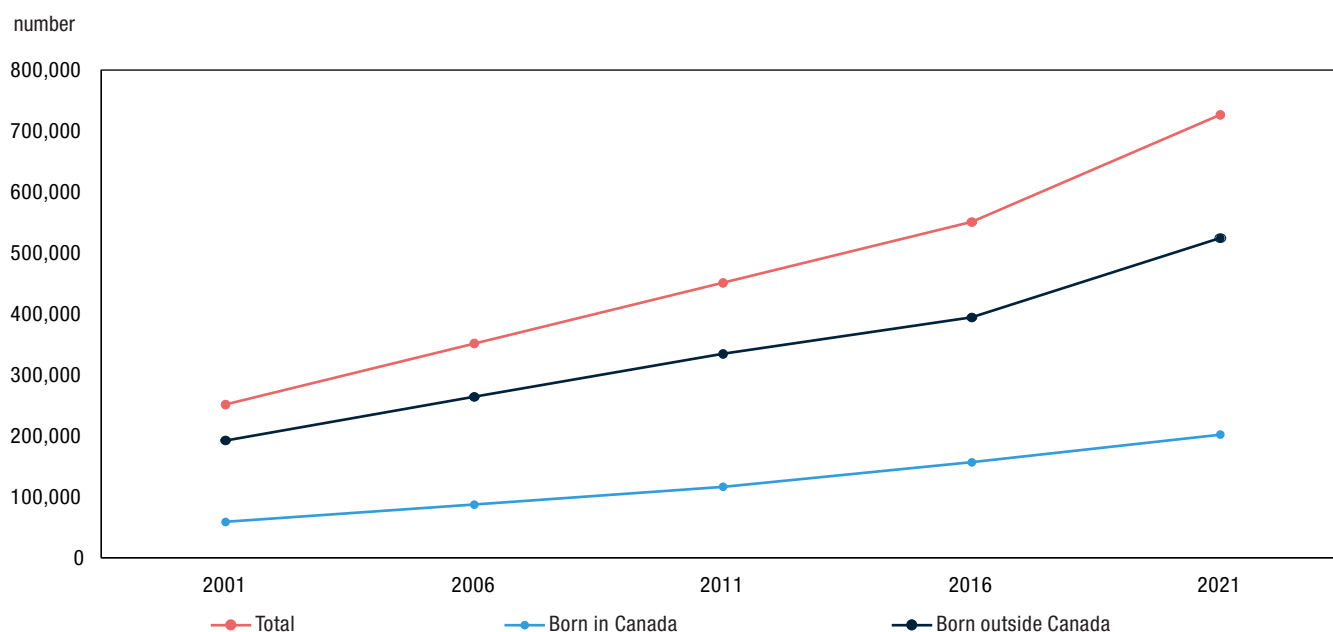
Section 1: Demography, geography and immigration

The Latin American populations in Canada nearly tripled from 2001 to 2021

In 2021, 726,820 Latin Americans lived in Canada, nearly three times as many as in 2001, when their population was 251,585.⁴ They made up 2.0% of the population of Canada in 2021, more than twice their share in 2001 (0.9%). Latin Americans were the sixth-largest racialized group in Canada in 2021, after the South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino and Arab populations.

4. Data on the Latin American populations have been collected by the Census of Population since 1996, but the definition of the Latin American populations used in this portrait (which includes the population who reported being both Latin American and White) cannot be replicated with 1996 data.

Chart 1
Latin American populations by place of birth, Canada, 2001 to 2021



Sources: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2001, 2006, 2016 and 2021; and National Household Survey, 2011.

According to the [latest available population projections by racialized group](#), and based on the low-growth and high-growth scenarios, Latin American populations in Canada could number 870,000 to 1.2 million people by 2041, making up 2.0% to 2.3% of the population. People who reported being both Latin American and White were not included in the Latin American populations in these projections, so this is likely a lower bound for the Latin American populations as defined in this portrait.

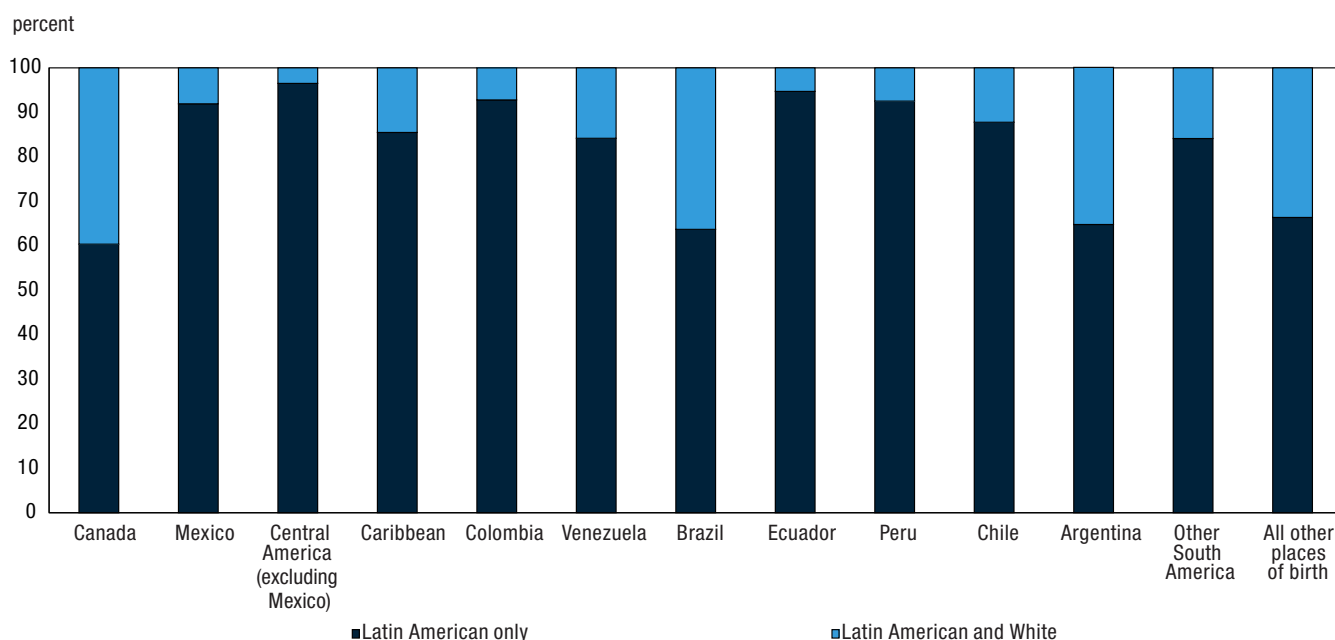
The most common places of birth of Latin Americans in Canada were Canada, Mexico and Colombia

As of 2021, 38.6% of Latin Americans in Canada were born in South America, 27.8% in Canada, 13.8% in Central America (excluding Mexico), 13.2% in Mexico, 3.9% in the Caribbean and 2.7% in other places of birth (Chart 2). Their most common places of birth in South America were Colombia (12.9%), Brazil (7.4%), Peru (4.2%), Chile (3.9%), Venezuela (3.8%), Ecuador (2.4%) and Argentina (1.9%). In Central America, their most common places of birth were El Salvador (7.0%), Guatemala (2.8%), Nicaragua (1.6%) and Honduras (1.3%), while most Latin Americans with a birthplace in the Caribbean were born in Cuba (2.0%) or the Dominican Republic (1.6%). The United States (1.8%) was the most common place of birth outside Canada that was not in Central and South America and the Caribbean. The most frequently reported ethnic or cultural origin for Latin Americans born in the United States was Mexican, but origins also included Colombian, Salvadorean and others. In total, 95.7% of Latin Americans in Canada were born in the aforementioned 16 most common places of birth.

Chart 2**Distribution of Latin American populations in Canada by place of birth, 2021**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

The Latin American populations analyzed in this portrait include people who reported being Latin American (580,240) and people who reported being both Latin American and White (146,580; see the “Population of interest” section). This differs from the [standard definition](#) of this population, which does not include the Latin American and White population. Places of birth differ by the share of the population who reported being Latin American and White, and this can relate to other findings on ethnic and cultural origins. The Latin American and White population made up one-fifth of the overall Latin American populations (20.2%) and over one-third of Latin Americans born in Canada (39.6%), Brazil (36.3%), Argentina (35.3%), or places of birth outside Canada other than Central and South America and the Caribbean (33.6%) (Chart 3). They also made up 31.1% of the Latin American population born in Uruguay and 25.2% of those born in Paraguay (both included in “Other South America” in Chart 3).

Chart 3**Latin American populations by place of birth and selected combination of population groups, Canada, 2021**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

The Latin American and White population made up 12.7% of the first-generation Latin American population (those born outside Canada), 37.3% of the second-generation Latin American population (those born in Canada, with at least one parent born outside Canada), and 62.4% of the third-generation or more Latin American population (those born in Canada, with both parents born in Canada). This is consistent with overall patterns: people who report being in multiple population groups (White and a racialized group, or multiple racialized groups) are comparatively more likely to be born in Canada than those who report being in one racialized group. The pattern is likely attributable to intermarriage between population groups within Canada.

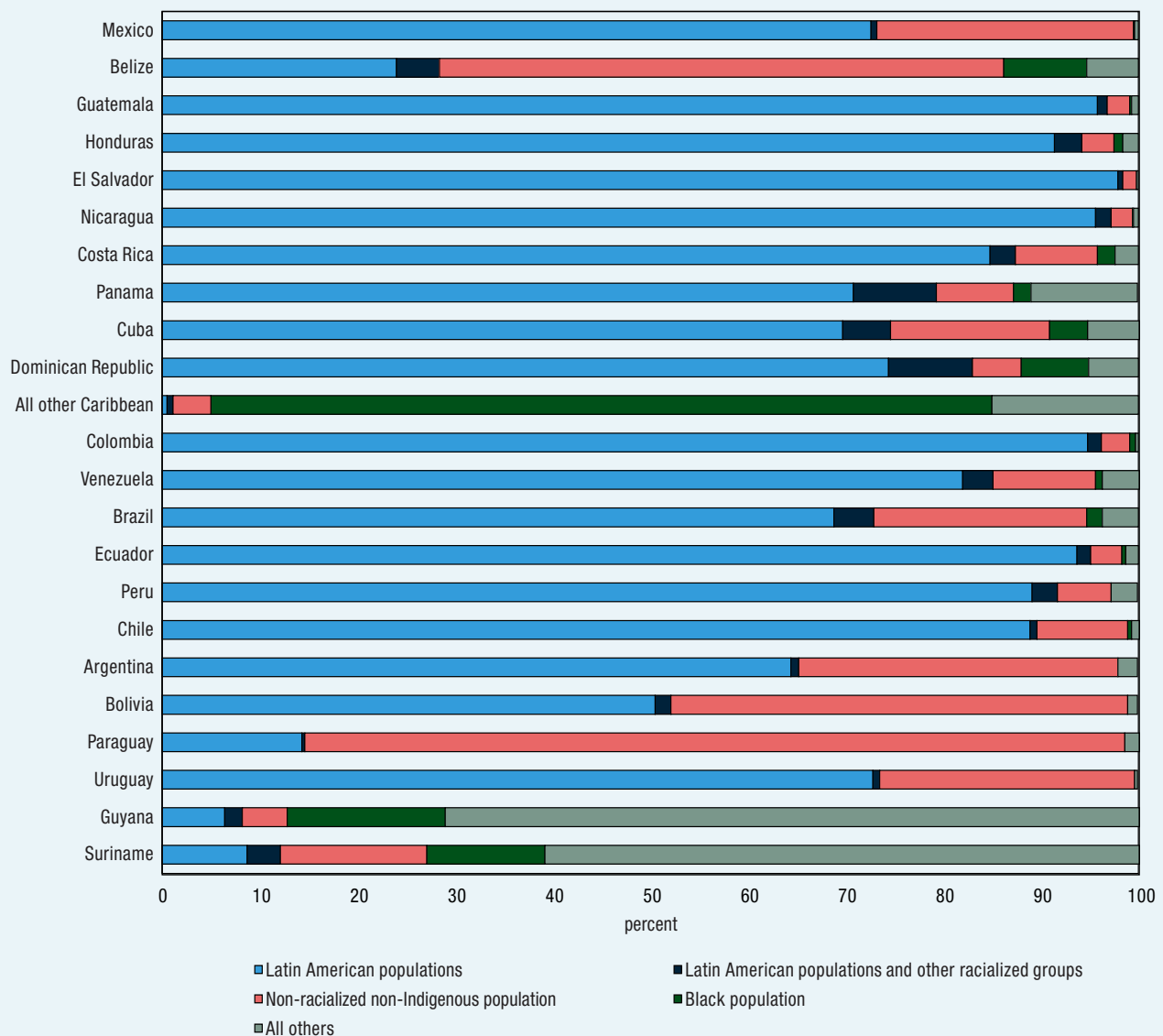
Populations of Central and South America and the Caribbean

While most Latin Americans born outside Canada were born in Central and South America and the Caribbean, this region is large and varied, and it includes many other population groups in addition to Latin Americans. The characteristics of people in Canada who were born in this region reflect this. Spanish and Portuguese were the main mother tongues of Latin Americans born outside Canada; people born in Central and South America and the Caribbean who had other languages as their mother tongues were generally less likely to identify as Latin American in the population group question.

Most prominently, nearly three-quarters (73.8%) of people in Canada who were born in the Caribbean reported being Black⁵ in the 2021 Census, totalling 325,460 people. The majority of people born in the Dominican Republic (74.4%) or Cuba (69.7%) reported being Latin American, while 80.0% of people born everywhere else in the Caribbean (including Jamaica, Haiti and many other places) reported being Black. Spanish was the mother tongue of 93.3% of people born in Cuba and of 88.7% of people born in the Dominican Republic, while it was the mother tongue of 0.3% of people born in the rest of the Caribbean.

Among people born in Central and South America, 71.5% (476,450) reported being Latin American, 1.7% (11,215) reported being both Latin American and in one or more other racialized groups, 13.2% (88,270) were in other racialized groups, and 13.5% (90,135) were non-racialized non-Indigenous (i.e., reported being White in the census or had a similar write-in response). This distribution varied greatly by country (Chart 4).

5. Additionally, among those born in Puerto Rico, 60.0% reported being Latin American. The total population of Latin Americans in Canada who were born in Puerto Rico was less than 500.

Chart 4**Distribution of populations born in Central and South America and the Caribbean, by population group, Canada, 2021**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Most people from racialized populations other than Latin Americans who were born in Central or South America (76,255, or 86.4%) were born in Guyana. They included South Asian people, Black people, people who gave write-in responses (mainly “Guyanese”) and people who reported being in multiple racialized groups (for example, both Black and South Asian). Guyana has a diverse population, with the two largest groups being South Asian and Black; there are also large multiracial and Indigenous populations (Guyana Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The Black population is largely descended from enslaved people brought to the area through the transatlantic slave trade to work on sugar plantations (Guyana Bureau of Statistics, 2007; Rothermund, 2006). The South Asian population is largely descended from indentured labourers from India brought to work on the sugar plantations following the abolition of slavery in 1838, when Guyana was a British colony (Richmond, 1989; Rothermund, 2006). The total Guyana-born population in Canada was 87,370; for comparison, the population of Guyana as of 2012 was approximately 750,000 (Guyana Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Most Guyana-born people in Canada immigrated prior to 2001 (69,320) (Statistics Canada, 2022a). Nearly all people born in Guyana (99.0%) reported English as their mother tongue.

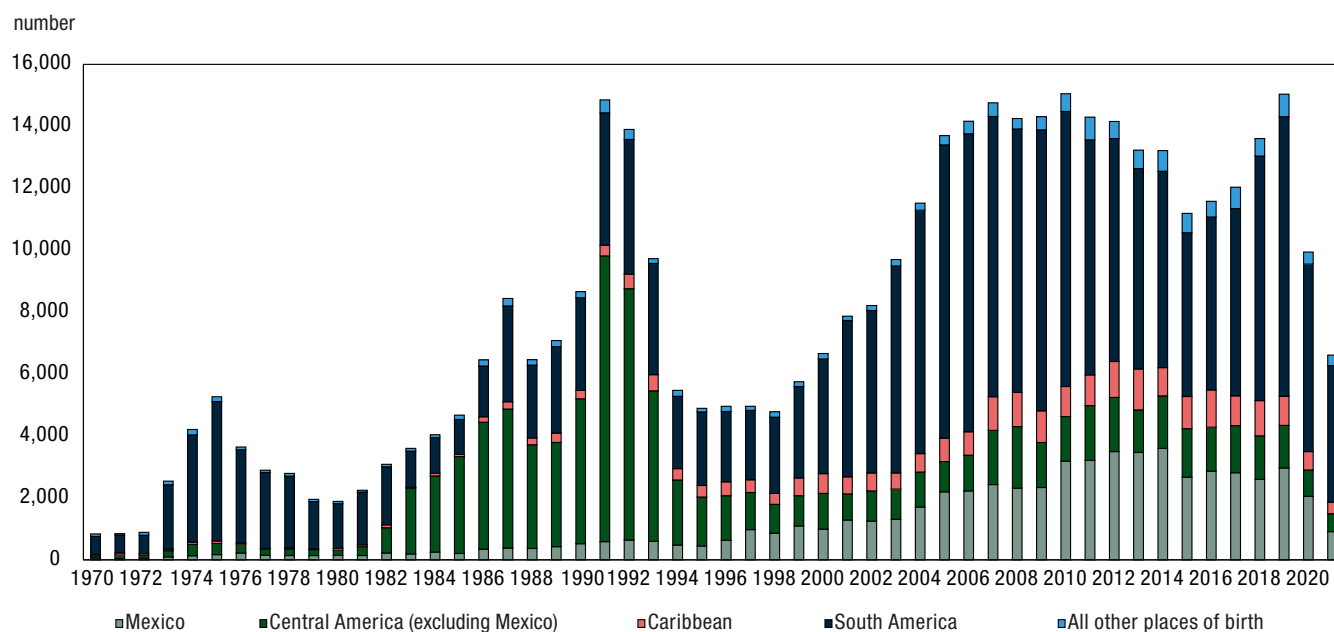
Non-racialized non-Indigenous individuals born in Central or South America came from a range of countries, with the largest numbers being born in Mexico (34,825), Brazil (16,915), Argentina (7,035) and Paraguay (6,655). They were comparatively more likely than Latin Americans to report European ethnic or cultural origins other than Spanish or Portuguese. Mennonite ethnic or cultural origins were the most common origins reported by the non-racialized non-Indigenous population born in Paraguay (38.7%) and Mexico (35.0%), as well as Bolivia (45.8%) and Belize (40.6%). Those born in Brazil were slightly more likely to report Italian origins (25.3%) than Portuguese origins (24.4%), while 12.6% reported German origins. Those born in Argentina were more likely to report Italian origins (37.1%) than Spanish origins (20.5%). The most common mother tongues among the non-racialized non-Indigenous population born in Central or South America (including those with multiple mother tongues) were Spanish (22.9%), German (22.6%), English (20.4%), Portuguese (15.9%) and Plautdietsch (13.7%).

Common places of birth of Latin American immigrants varied over time and were often influenced by events in source countries

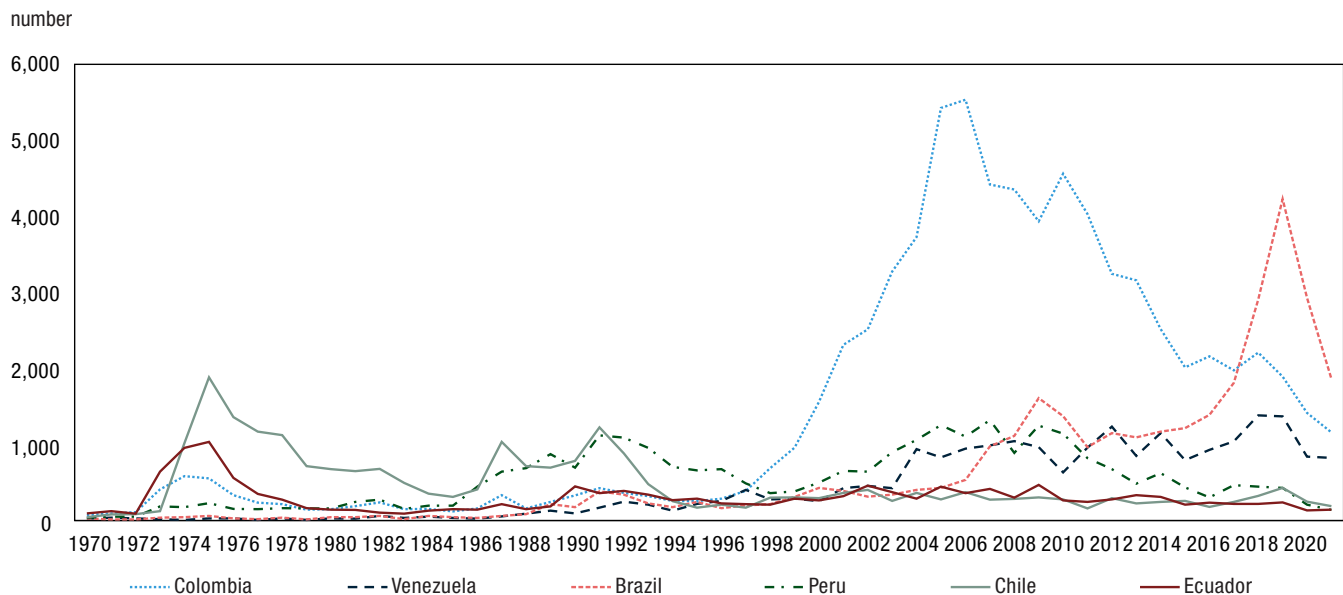
Patterns of Latin American immigration to Canada are complex, with the main countries of birth of immigrants changing over time (charts 5 and 6). Among Latin American immigrants living in Canada in 2021, the most common places of birth for those who had immigrated from 1970 to 1979 were Chile (29.4%) and Ecuador (16.6%). About half (50.6%) of those who had immigrated from 1980 to 1989 were born in Central America (excluding Mexico), particularly El Salvador (32.4%), as well as Guatemala (9.2%) and Nicaragua (6.4%). For those who had immigrated from 2000 to 2021, the most common places of birth were Colombia (25.4%) and Mexico (19.6%), along with 11.0% from Central America (excluding Mexico), 10.8% from Brazil, 7.3% from Venezuela and 7.2% from the Caribbean.

Chart 5

Latin American immigrants who immigrated from 1970 to 2021, by year of immigration and region of birth, Canada, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Chart 6**Latin American immigrants who immigrated from 1970 to 2021, by year of immigration and selected place of birth in South America, Canada, 2021**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Latin American immigration was often affected by events in Central and South America and the Caribbean, as well as by specific Canadian immigration programs. Latin American immigrants born in Chile who were living in Canada in 2021 had mainly immigrated from 1974 to 1993, with the most common years of immigration being 1974 to 1978 (Chart 6). Following the military coup of Augusto Pinochet in Chile, Canada created a special immigration program for Chilean refugees in 1974 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2016a; Statistics Canada, 1990; Kelley and Trebilcock, 1998). Democracy was restored in Chile in 1990, and Chilean immigration to Canada decreased a few years later (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2016a).

The most common years of immigration for Latin American immigrants born in Central America (excluding Mexico) were 1983 to 1994 (Chart 5). The most common country of birth for these immigrants was El Salvador, followed by Guatemala, reflecting the political violence and civil war both countries experienced during this time (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2016b; Economic Council of Canada, 1991). Canada established a designated refugee class for people from El Salvador and Guatemala escaping political violence, as well as additional special humanitarian measures to facilitate immigration from El Salvador and Guatemala (Economic Council of Canada, 1991).

Latin American immigrants in Canada in 2021 who were born in Colombia mainly immigrated from 1998 to 2021, particularly from 2005 to 2011. Similarly, Latin American immigrants from Mexico mainly arrived from 1999 to 2021. The 21st century also saw higher immigration from Venezuela from 2004 to 2021 and from Brazil from 2018 to 2020.

The main admission categories of Latin American immigrants have changed over time, with economic immigrants making up the largest share in the past decade

Of Latin Americans living in Canada in 2021 who had immigrated from 1980 to 2021,⁶ 37.5% were economic immigrants, 31.1% were sponsored by family, 28.8% were refugees and 2.6% were in other immigrant classes.⁷

6. Census data on immigrant class are not available for years of immigration before 1980.

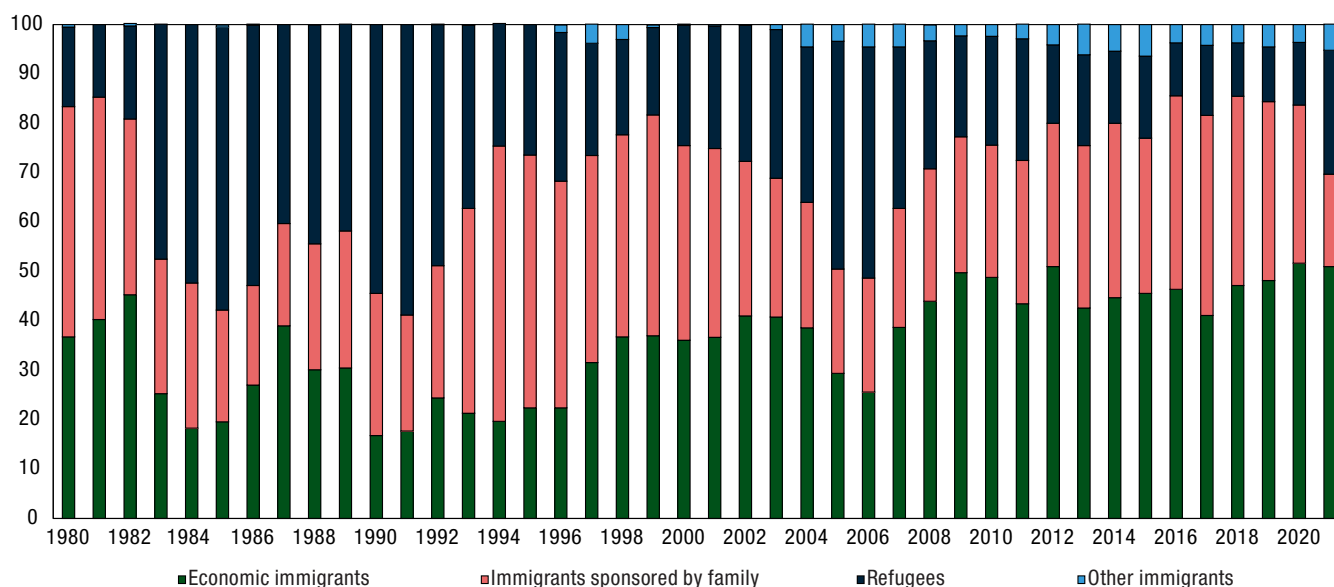
7. In Canada, immigrants are selected according to three broad objectives: to enhance and promote economic development, to reunite families, and to fulfill the country's international obligations and uphold its humanitarian tradition. Changes to immigration policies and programs, along with global events, have played a key role in shaping immigration trends in Canada, including those related to Latin American populations.

This mix varied by year of immigration. Broadly speaking, over 40% of Latin Americans who had immigrated in each year from 1983 to 1992 were refugees, mainly born in Central America. Over 40% of those who had immigrated in each year from 1993 to 1999, a period of reduced immigration of Latin Americans, were sponsored by family. From 2000 to 2007, admission categories were more mixed, while in every year from 2008 to 2021, over 40% of Latin American immigrants were economic immigrants (Chart 7).

Chart 7

Latin American immigrants who immigrated from 1980 to 2021, by year of immigration and admission category, Canada, 2021

percent



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Refugees made up the majority (71.3%) of Latin Americans born in Central America who immigrated during the peak period from 1983 to 1993. Latin American immigration from Central America was lower from 1994 to 2021, but admission categories were more varied—44.1% were sponsored by family, 27.9% were refugees and 23.1% were economic immigrants.

Most Latin American immigrants born in Mexico who immigrated from 1980 to 2021 were either economic immigrants (41.6%) or sponsored by family (36.9%), with the numbers of both increasing through the first decade of the 2000s and remaining steadily high from 2010 to 2019. By contrast, the number of refugees was highest from 2004 to 2015; from 2005 to 2007, there were nearly as many refugees from Mexico as economic class immigrants, though there were generally fewer outside this period.

The increase in Latin American immigrants from Colombia from 2000 to 2006 was largely driven by refugees. However, after 2006, the number of refugees decreased, and in each year from 2012 to 2020, economic immigrants from Colombia outnumbered refugees.

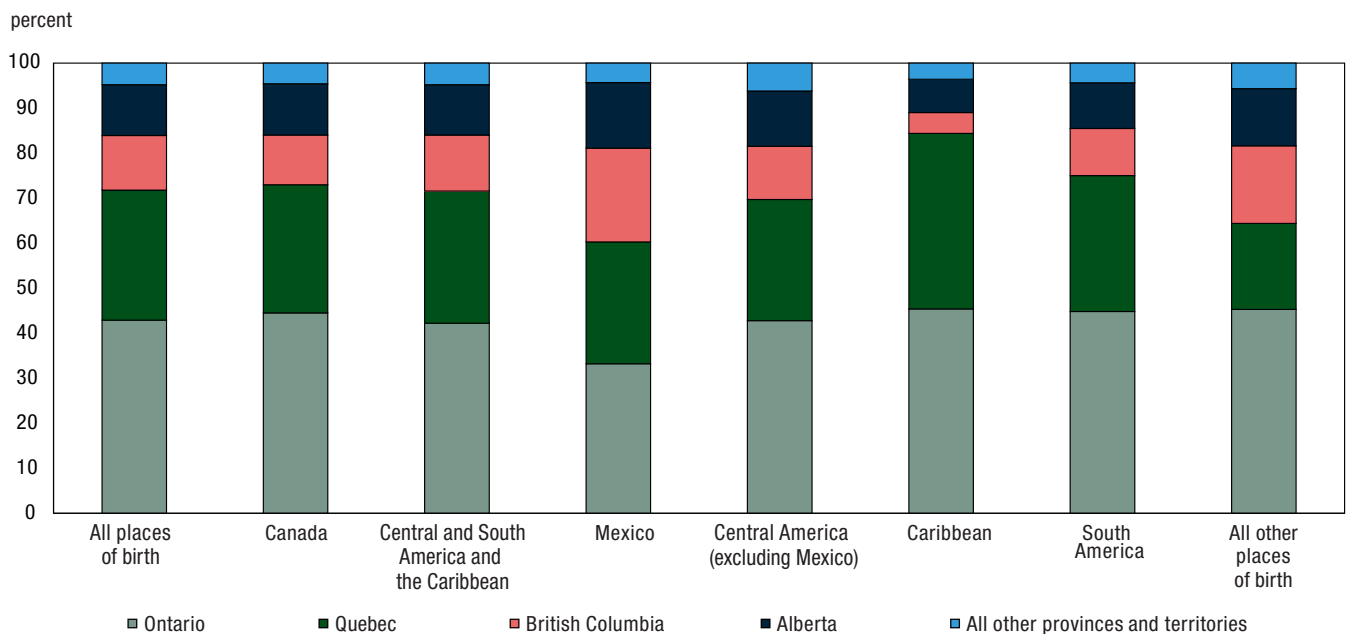
The majority of Latin Americans who immigrated from Brazil (72.0%) or Venezuela (60.6%) from 1980 to 2021 were economic immigrants, and most of them immigrated in the 2000s.

More than 7 in 10 Latin Americans in Canada lived in Ontario or Quebec

The most common provinces of residence of Latin Americans in Canada were Ontario (42.9%) and Quebec (28.9%), followed by British Columbia (12.1%) and Alberta (11.3%). Over 95% of Latin Americans in Canada lived in these four provinces. However, the province of residence differed between Latin Americans with different places of birth (Chart 8). For example, 75.2% of Latin Americans born in Ecuador lived in Ontario, while 33.2% of those born in Mexico did. The proportion of Latin Americans living in Quebec was highest among those born in the Dominican Republic (48.1%), Peru (45.7%) or Colombia (37.6%). British Columbia was home to about one-fifth of Latin Americans born in Mexico (20.8%) or Brazil (20.7%), and Alberta was home to nearly one-fifth of those born in Venezuela (18.2%).

Chart 8

Province of residence of Latin American populations, by place of birth, Canada, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Toronto was home to over one-quarter of all Latin Americans in Canada

In 2021, more than 9 in 10 Latin Americans in Canada (92.8%) lived in urban centres with populations of 100,000 or more, also known as census metropolitan areas (CMAs). However, the proportion of Latin Americans who lived outside CMAs (7.2%) was the third highest of any racialized group, after the Japanese (11.3%) and Filipino (10.3%) populations.

Nearly half of all Latin Americans in Canada lived in the CMAs of Toronto (26.5%, or 192,255 people) or Montréal (22.9%, or 166,510 people). Other CMAs with large Latin American populations included Vancouver (9.2% of Latin Americans), Calgary (5.8%), Ottawa–Gatineau (3.8%) and Edmonton (3.7%). Together, more than 7 in 10 Latin Americans in Canada (71.9%) lived in these six CMAs.

The share of Latin Americans who lived in Toronto was highest among those born in South America (29.8%), the Caribbean (28.9%) or Canada (26.7%). Meanwhile, Montréal was home to over one-third of Latin Americans born in the Caribbean (32.5%).

Latin Americans made up 4.0% of the population in the CMA of Montréal, more than in any other CMA. This was followed by Toronto (3.1%), London (3.0%), Calgary (2.9%), Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo (2.8%) and Vancouver (2.6%). Within Montréal, the census subdivision (municipality) where the Latin American share of the population was highest was the suburb of Brossard, at 6.1%. Brossard is a diverse community, with over half of the population (52.7%) in racialized groups.

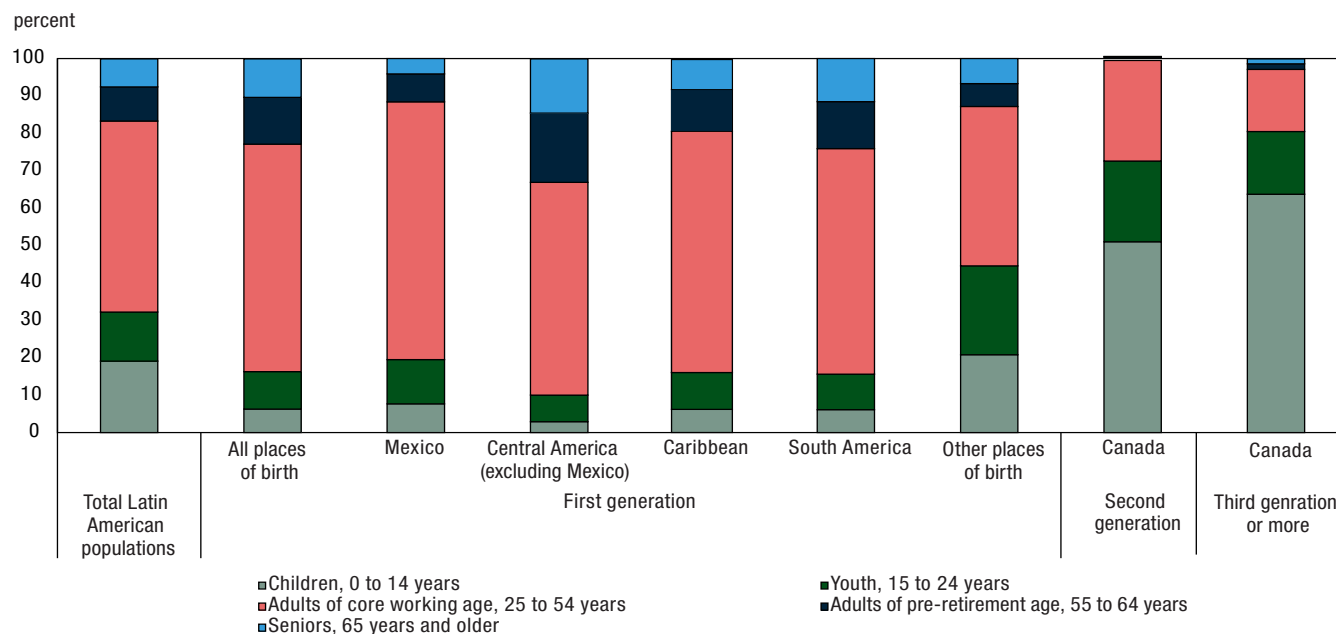
While major cities had the largest numbers of Latin Americans, certain smaller communities had notably high proportions of Latin American residents. In the census subdivision of Leamington, located in the Windsor CMA, 8.0% of people were Latin American, more than in any other census subdivision with a population of 5,000 or more. Among census agglomerations (urban areas with over 10,000 people but fewer than 100,000 people), Latin Americans made up over 4% of the population in Brooks (4.9%), Alberta, and Brandon (4.3%), Manitoba. This concentration can be partly linked to the presence of large food processing facilities in Brooks and Brandon, which have attracted immigrant and temporary workers, including individuals from Latin American countries (Bragg, 2024). Overall, people in racialized groups made up 49.1% of the population of Brooks and 20.6% of the population of Brandon, higher shares than in most other census agglomerations.

Over half of Latin Americans in Canada were aged 25 to 54, a larger percentage than among any other racialized group

In 2021, a little over half (51.1%) of Latin Americans in Canada were aged 25 to 54, an age group also referred to as the core working-age population (Chart 9). This was a larger percentage than among any other racialized group and larger than that among the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (37.4%). It was driven by the age distribution of the first-generation Latin American population (those born outside Canada), 60.8% of whom were aged 25 to 54—again, a larger share than among any other racialized group or the non-racialized non-Indigenous population.

Chart 9

Age distribution of Latin American populations, by generation status and place of birth, Canada, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Children younger than 15 made up 6.3% of the first-generation Latin American population, indicating that there has been little recent immigration of Latin American families with children. By contrast, children younger than 15 made up just over half (51.0%) of the second-generation Latin American population, and nearly two-thirds (63.7%) of the population in the third generation or more. In addition, over half of Latin Americans born in the United States were either children younger than 15 (23.0%) or youth aged 15 to 24 (29.1%).

Overall, 7.5% of Latin Americans were aged 65 or older. This was a smaller share than in the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (22.1%) and most other racialized groups, except the Arab (6.1%) and Black (7.4%) populations. The share of Latin Americans aged 65 and older was highest among those born in Guyana (27.7%), Uruguay (27.1%) and Chile (26.5%). This was because of immigration patterns; for example, immigration of Latin Americans born in Chile occurred mostly in the 1970s and 1980s, so adults who immigrated then have grown older.

Latin American immigrants were slightly more likely to be women than men

The Latin American populations in Canada in 2021 included slightly more women (51.4%) than men (48.6%). Among Latin American immigrants, women represented the majority (53.3%). Similarly, women made up 50% to 55% of immigrants among the South Asian, Chinese, Black, Korean and non-racialized non-Indigenous populations. Women constituted larger shares of Southeast Asian (55.5%), Filipino (57.5%) and Japanese (72.6%) immigrants and smaller shares of Arab (47.9%) and West Asian (49.9%) immigrants.

Among Latin Americans who immigrated from 1980 to 2021, the gender distribution varied by admission category. The gender distribution of economic immigrants was relatively balanced, with men accounting for 50.1% and women for 49.9%, and this was relatively consistent across all periods of immigration from 1980 to 2021. This was similar to the findings for economic immigrants overall (50.0% men and 50.0% women). Women represented the majority of Latin American immigrants sponsored by family (59.1%), similar to their share of all immigrants sponsored by family (59.3%).

Women accounted for 51.1% of all Latin American refugees. Among Latin American refugees who immigrated from 1980 to 2000, slightly over half were men (51.0%), while more than half of those who immigrated from 2001 to 2021 were women (52.9%). In line with the data by period of immigration, men made up over half of refugees born in countries that had higher numbers of refugees in the 1980s and 1990s, like Chile (52.1%), El Salvador (51.2%) and Guatemala (51.2%), while women made up over half of refugees born in countries that had higher numbers of refugees in the 2000s, like Colombia (53.1%) and Mexico (53.0%).

Over 2,000 Latin Americans were transgender or non-binary

The introduction of the gender question and the specification of “at birth” in the sex question in the 2021 Census allows for the cisgender, transgender and non-binary populations in Canada to be counted. The term “transgender” refers to people whose gender does not correspond to their sex at birth, while the term “non-binary” refers to people who are not exclusively men or women, such as those who are agender, gender fluid, queer or Two-Spirit.

In 2021, 2,195 Latin Americans in Canada were transgender or non-binary, including 700 transgender women, 605 transgender men and 890 non-binary people. The transgender and non-binary populations represented 0.4% of the Latin American populations aged 15 and older, similar to their proportion among the non-racialized non-Indigenous population and the Black populations, and significantly higher⁸ than their proportion among many other racialized groups, including the South Asian (0.2%), Chinese (0.2%), Filipino (0.2%) and Arab (0.2%) populations.

Over time, the understanding of gender and sexual diversity has evolved. Further, there has been social and legislative recognition of Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people, and those who use other terms related to gender or sexual diversity (2SLGBTQI+) (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Younger people may be more comfortable reporting their gender identity than older people (Statistics Canada, 2022b). The proportion of Latin Americans who were transgender or non-binary was 0.6% among those aged 15 to 34, while it was 0.2% among those aged 35 and older. This was similar to the proportions for these age groups in the total population (0.7% of those aged 15 to 34 and 0.2% of those aged 35 and older).

Non-permanent residents

A non-permanent resident (NPR) is someone who usually lives in Canada with a work or study permit or who has claimed refugee status. Family members living with them are included unless they are Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

8. This figure is at a 95% level of confidence.

There are several considerations to keep in mind regarding 2021 Census data on NPRs. First, the 2021 Census provides data on people who were residing in Canada as of May 11, 2021. NPRs who entered Canada later in 2021 are not part of the census target population. Second, NPRs may be less likely to respond to the census than other groups. They tend to be more mobile and have less contact information, making it more difficult for census personnel to reach them (Statistics Canada, 2024). Among those for whom contact information is available, some may not regard the place they are living in Canada as their “usual place of residence” and may therefore think that the census does not apply to them, particularly if their permit is short-term or they arrived in Canada shortly before Census Day (Tuey and Bastien, 2023). Other reasons may include being reluctant to complete a government form or having language difficulties that make it hard to fill out the form (Statistics Canada, 2023).

NPRs made up 12.7% of Latin American populations in Canada in the 2021 Census, a larger share than among any other population group except Koreans (13.2%). Additionally, non-permanent residency was a common pathway to immigration for Latin Americans. Among Latin American immigrants admitted since 1981, 42.0% had initially come to Canada as NPRs prior to obtaining permanent resident status, compared with 25.2% among the total immigrant population. Disaggregated results further show that, within this group, 18.0% had been refugee claimants (asylum claimants, protected persons or related groups) prior to immigrating, while 14.3% had been work permit holders (without a study permit).

The 2021 Census recorded 92,265 Latin American NPRs, for whom the most common countries of birth were Mexico (30,310), Brazil (20,695) and Colombia (16,465). This included 38.3% (or 35,315) who had a work permit only, 28.0% (25,820) who were asylum claimants (including protected persons and related groups), 25.5% (or 23,565) who had a study permit (with or without a work permit) and 8.2% (or 7,560) who were other types of NPRs.

Notably, in the census data, the proportion of Latin American NPRs aged 25 to 54 who had a bachelor’s degree or higher was larger (56.5%) than that among Latin Americans aged 25 to 54 overall (42.1%). This was true for NPRs with a study permit (75.0%) and those with a work permit only (59.5%), though not for asylum claimants (32.3%).

Among Latin American NPRs aged 25 to 54 with a work permit only who worked in 2020 or 2021, the most common sector was professional, scientific and technical services (14.4%), followed by manufacturing (11.8%) and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (10.0%). Professional, scientific and technical services was the most common sector for those with a bachelor’s degree or higher; manufacturing was the most common one for those with a postsecondary certificate or diploma below the bachelor level; and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting was the most common sector for those with no postsecondary credential.

The Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) can provide additional information on NPRs, including people who were not part of the target population of the census (for example, who were not in Canada as of May 11, 2021). The IMDB contains data on work permits and immigration processes of NPRs and immigrants over time, along with data from tax files on industry of work and income. The IMDB does not contain data on population groups, so it does not record whether someone is Latin American, but it does contain data on place of birth.

In the 2021 Census, Latin Americans made up more than half of all people born in the following 18 countries: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. NPRs who were born in these countries, had a permit to be in Canada at some point in 2021 and had a linked tax file were analyzed using the IMDB. The IMDB counted 120,745 of them. The numbers of people who were born in Mexico (51,295) or Guatemala (17,735) were considerably higher than in the 2021 Census. Of the 85.2% who had a recorded industry of work, 29.4% worked in agriculture, forestry, fishing or hunting, and the share in that sector was much higher for those born in Mexico (40.7%) or Guatemala (73.4%).

This indicates a sizable population of Latin American NPR agricultural workers in 2021 who may have come to Canada at some point after early May of that year and so were not part of the census population.⁹ This accords with other Statistics Canada data showing that, in 2023, a little over two-thirds of temporary foreign workers in agriculture came from Mexico (41.6%) or Guatemala (26.2%) (Statistics Canada, 2025b). This highlights the value of using multiple sources of data when analyzing NPRs.

9. Based on the Labour Force Survey, the period of highest employment in agriculture runs from approximately May to October (Statistics Canada, 2025a).

Section 2: Ethnocultural, religious and linguistic diversity

Most Latin Americans reported ethnic or cultural origins associated with their place of birth

The most common ethnic or cultural origins reported by Latin Americans were those associated with their place of birth (e.g., a person born in Mexico reporting “Mexican”), either as a single response or along with other origins. Among Latin Americans born in Central and South America and the Caribbean, the share reporting origins associated with their place of birth was highest for those born in Mexico (78.4% of whom reported Mexican as an ethnic or cultural origin) or Colombia (72.1%) and lowest for those born in Uruguay (45.8%). Mexico and Colombia were also the two most common countries of birth for Latin Americans born outside Canada. For Latin Americans with most other places of birth in Latin America, the share reporting an ethnic or cultural origin associated with their place of birth was generally 50% to 70%.

Other common ethnic and cultural origins of Latin Americans were Spanish (16.7%); regional origins such as “Latin American,” “Central American” or “South American” (11.7%); Indigenous origins from Latin, South or Central America or the Caribbean (6.5%); Italian (5.9%); and Hispanic (4.9%, but 9.9% for Latin Americans born in the United States). The population who reported being both Latin American and White were more likely than the overall Latin American populations to report Spanish ethnic or cultural origins, at 20.7%, and less likely to report regional ones (e.g., “Latin American”), at 8.3%.

Latin Americans born in Central America (excluding Mexico) were comparatively more likely to report regional ethnic and cultural origins (such as “Central American” or “Latin American”), with 17.0% to 19.0% of Latin Americans born in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama doing so. They were also more likely than most other Latin Americans to report “Hispanic” origins (7.0% to 9.0% for those born in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama). In addition, 16.1% of Latin Americans born in Guatemala reported Indigenous origins from Latin, Central or South America or the Caribbean, with 12.1% reporting Mayan origins.

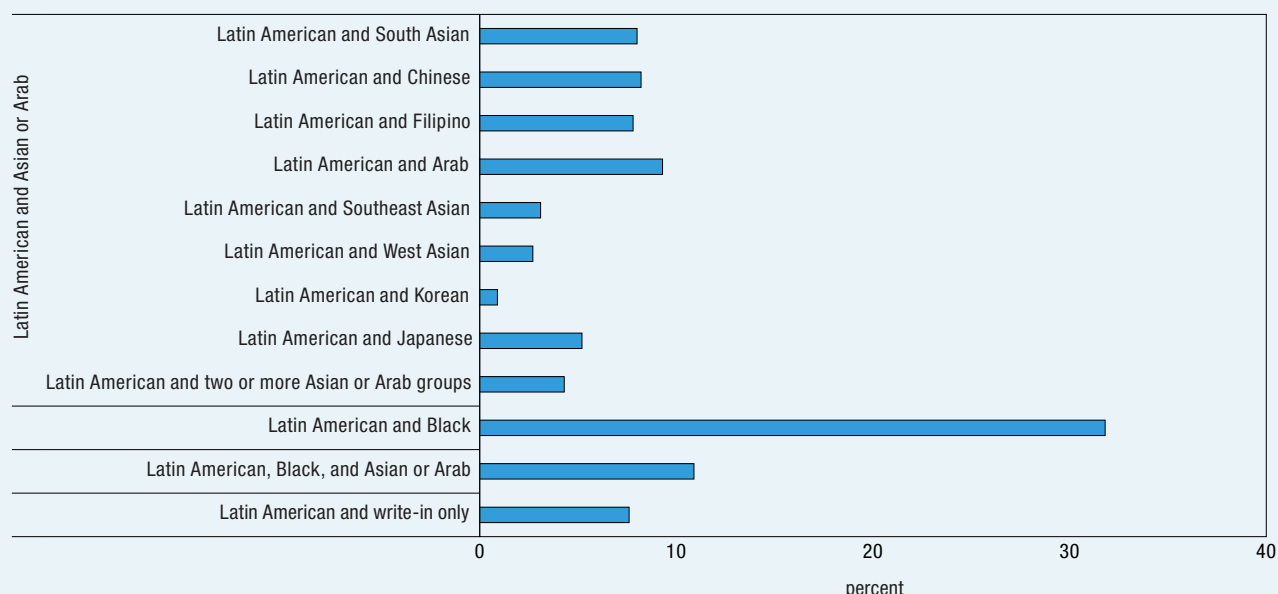
By contrast, Spanish origins were most commonly reported by Latin Americans born in the southern South American countries of Uruguay (41.2%), Argentina (33.6%) and Chile (26.6%), as well as those born in Cuba (31.6%). Additionally, 28.8% of Latin Americans born in Brazil reported Portuguese origins. Italian origins were also commonly reported by Latin Americans born in Argentina (33.6%), Uruguay (27.8%) and Brazil (22.5%), while this was not the case for most other Latin Americans.

The most common ethnic or cultural origins reported by Latin Americans in the third generation or more (that is, Latin Americans born in Canada with both parents born in Canada) were Canadian (16.9%), Spanish (13.2%), Chilean (11.1%), Salvadorean (11.1%), Italian (11.0%), English (10.9%), Scottish (10.9%), Irish (10.5%) and French (9.8%). The majority (62.4%) of Latin Americans in the third generation or more reported being both Latin American and White in the population group question.

Latin Americans who were also in other racialized groups

In 2021, 57,005 people in Canada reported being both Latin American and in one or more other racialized groups, making up 7.3% of all people who reported being Latin American in the population group question. They are not included in the population of interest for this portrait, but they are analyzed here to provide a more complete understanding of the diversity of Latin American populations.

People who reported being both Latin American and in other racialized groups included diverse combinations of groups (Chart 10). About half (49.7%) were Latin American and in one or more Asian or Arab groups; 31.8% were Latin American and Black; and 10.9% were Latin American, Black and in one or more Asian or Arab groups. Another 7.6% were Latin American and provided a write-in response for another group, with some of the most common write-in responses being “West Indian,” “Brazilian,” “Caribbean,” “mestizo,” and Central and South American Indigenous groups.

Chart 10**Latin American populations who were also in other racialized groups, by combination of groups, Canada, 2021**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

The places of birth of these populations, as well as those of their parents, also varied widely. More than 6 in 10 people who were Latin American and in one or more other racialized groups (63.3%) were born in Canada, with the proportion being highest among those who were Latin American and Filipino (87.9%). The only populations where a minority were born in Canada were those who reported being Latin American along with a write-in response (49.7%), and those who were Latin American and Japanese (39.3%). Nearly 4 in 10 people who were Latin American and Japanese (38.8%) were born in Brazil.

Half of people who were Latin American and Black had parents who were both born in the Caribbean or Central or South America (50.0%); some of the most common combinations were both parents born in the Caribbean (19.9%), in Brazil (7.0%) or in Colombia (5.7%). Another 20.0% had one parent who was born in the Caribbean or Central or South America and one who was born in Canada, and 14.7% had parents who were both born in Canada.

By contrast, nearly half (48.9%) of people who were Latin American and in one or more Asian or Arab groups had at least one parent who was born in Asia, with this proportion being highest among those who were Latin American and West Asian (73.9%) or Latin American and Filipino (71.5%). Less than one-fifth (18.5%) had parents who were both born in the Caribbean or Central or South America; this proportion was comparatively higher among those who were Latin American and Japanese (55.8%), Latin American and South Asian (24.6%), or Latin American and Chinese (22.9%).

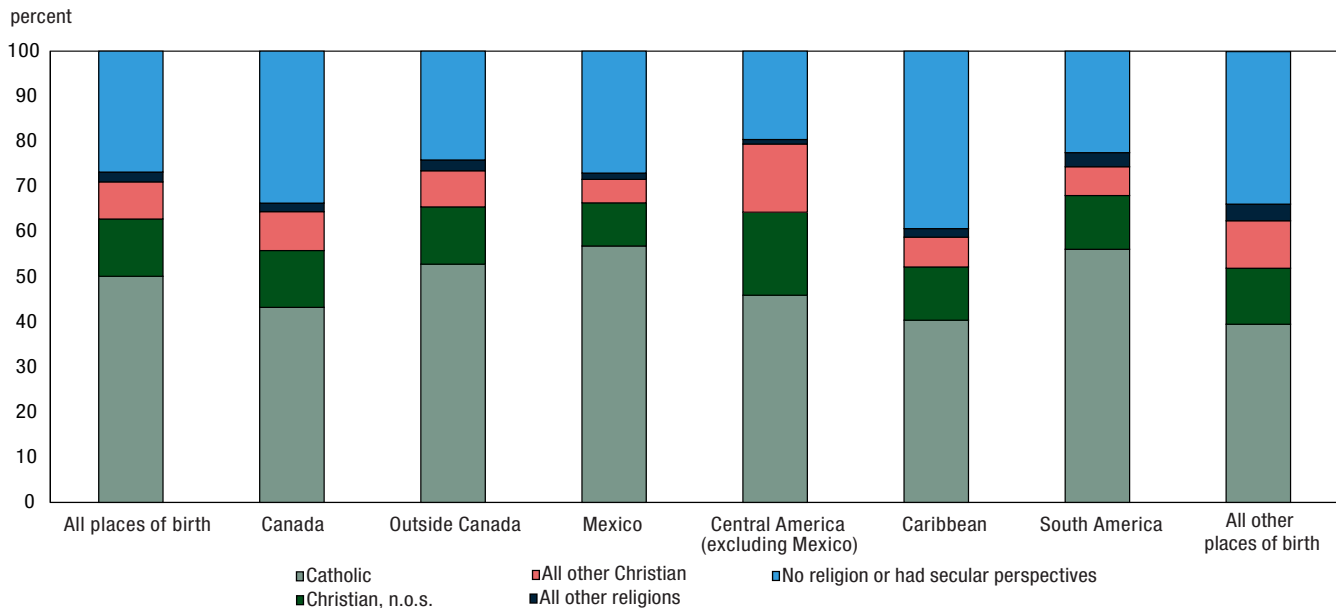
Seven in 10 Latin Americans were Christian

The most common religion among the Latin American populations in Canada was Christianity, with 7 in 10 Latin Americans in Canada being Christian (71.0%), higher than among the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (60.1%) and other racialized groups (35.0%). More specifically, half of Latin Americans were Catholic (50.1%), while 12.7% reported being “Christian” without providing details on a denomination¹⁰ and 8.2% reported other Christian denominations (Chart 11). Meanwhile, 26.8% of Latin Americans reported having no religion or having secular perspectives,¹¹ and about 0.8% identified with other religions or spiritual traditions.

10. This corresponds to the category “Christian, n.o.s.” in census data, with “n.o.s.” meaning “not otherwise specified.” The category includes responses such as “Christian” or “Christianity.”

11. Respondents with no religion or with secular perspectives are those who selected the “No religion” option or entered other responses, such as “Atheist” (does not believe in the existence of God) or “agnostic” (believes nothing can be known about the existence of God) in the “Specify one denomination or religion only” box on the Census of Population.

Chart 11
Religion of Latin American populations by place of birth, Canada, 2021



Note: n.o.s. = not otherwise specified.

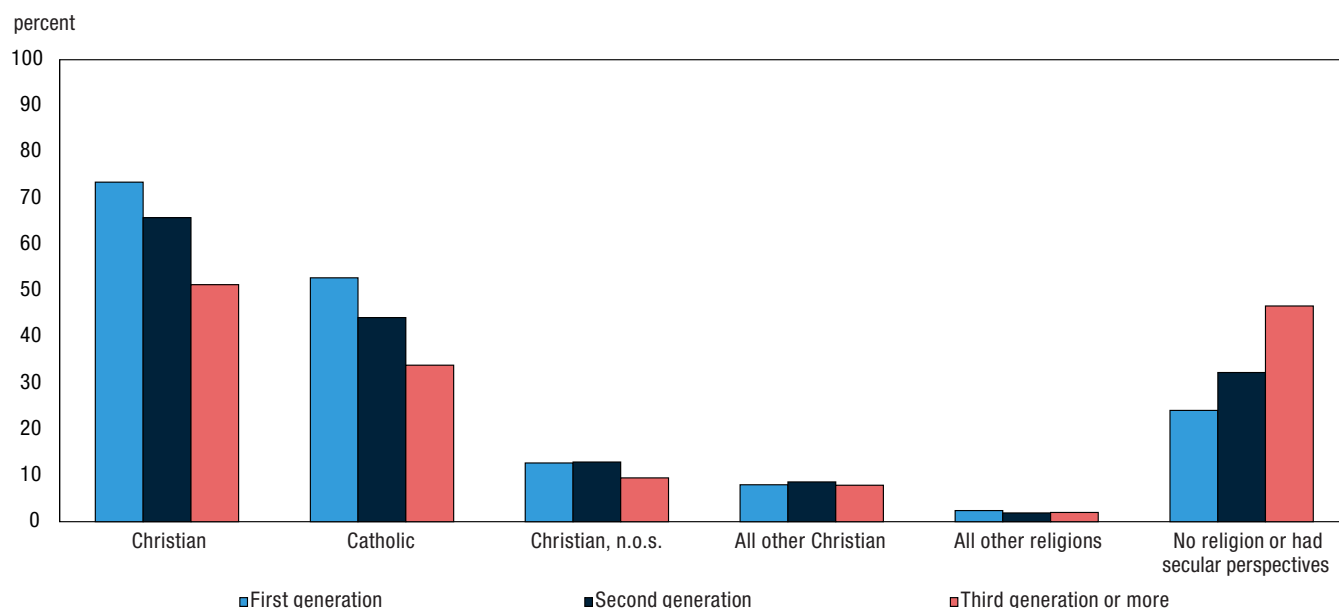
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Religious affiliation varied by place of birth. The proportions of Christians were highest among those born in Central America (excluding Mexico) (79.4%), South America (74.3%) and Mexico (71.6%). Catholic affiliation was also more common in these groups, reaching 56.8% among those born in Mexico and 56.1% among those born in South America. Latin Americans born in Central America (excluding Mexico) were more likely than other Latin Americans to report affiliation with non-Catholic denominations of Christianity (15.1%), with the most common being Pentecostal (5.0%). By contrast, over half of Latin Americans born in Cuba had no religion or had secular perspectives (53.4%), as did approximately one-third of those born in Canada (33.7%).

Among the Latin American populations, religious affiliation decreased with each generation established in Canada

Religious affiliation among Latin American populations in Canada decreased with each successive generation, while the reporting of no religion or of secular perspectives increased (Chart 12). The first-generation Latin American population (born outside Canada) had the highest proportion with a religious affiliation (73.5%), followed by those in the second generation (65.8%) and those in the third generation or more (51.3%). The proportion of individuals who had no religion or had secular perspectives rose from 24.1% among first-generation Latin Americans to 32.3% among the second generation and reached 46.7% among the third generation or more.

Chart 12
Religion of Latin American populations by generation status, Canada, 2021



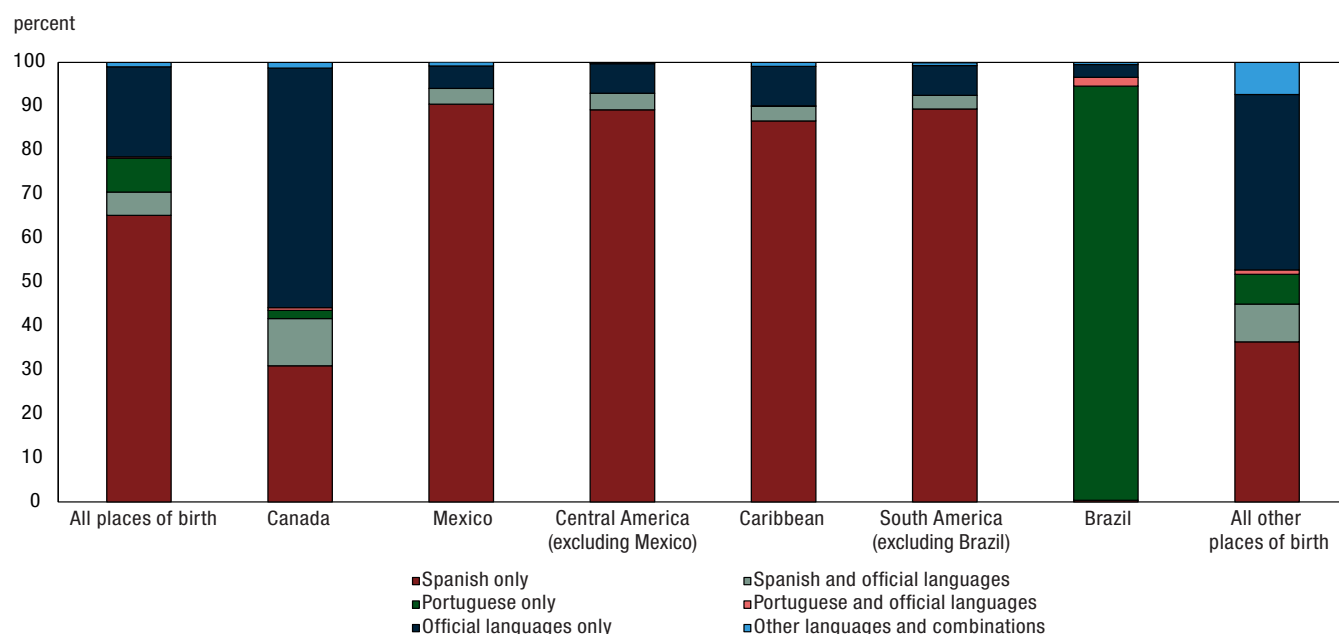
Note: n.o.s. = not otherwise specified.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Spanish was the main mother tongue of Latin American populations born outside Canada, except in Brazil, where the main mother tongue was Portuguese

Over 85% of Latin Americans born in Mexico, the rest of Central America, the Caribbean or South America (excluding Brazil) had Spanish as their only mother tongue, while 94.2% of those born in Brazil had Portuguese as their only mother tongue. By contrast, the majority of Latin Americans born in Canada (54.5%) had Canada's official languages (English, French or both) as their only mother tongues (Chart 13).

Chart 13
Mother tongue of Latin American populations by place of birth, Canada, 2021



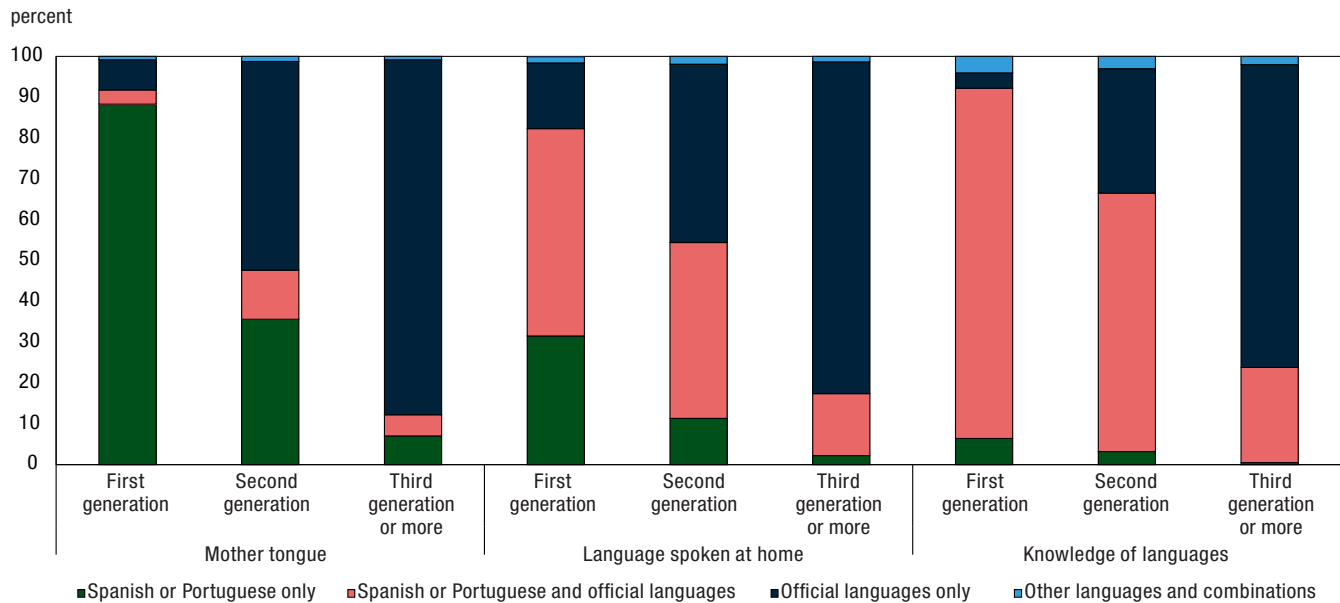
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Mother tongues, languages spoken at home and knowledge of languages differed across generations of Latin Americans

The linguistic characteristics of Latin Americans shifted across generations. The share of people who had Spanish or Portuguese as a mother tongue, spoke at least one of these languages at home on a regular basis and knew at least one of these languages well enough to have a conversation in it was highest among those in the first generation and lowest among those in the third generation or more. The reverse was true in relation to Canada's official languages (English and French) (Chart 14).

Chart 14

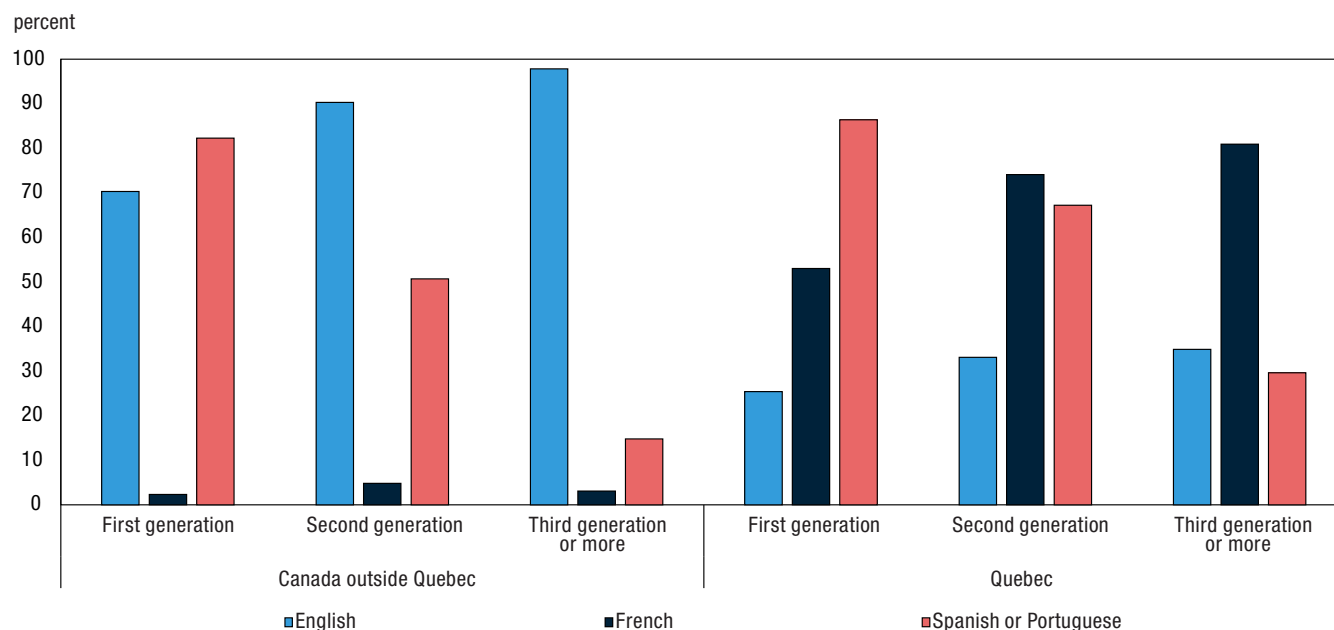
Mother tongue, language spoken at home and knowledge of languages for Latin American populations, by generation status, Canada, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

While most first-generation Latin Americans had only Spanish or Portuguese as their mother tongues (88.3%), most of those in the third generation or more had one or both of Canada's official languages as their only mother tongues (87.0%). By contrast, a greater proportion of Latin Americans in the second generation and the third generation or more knew Spanish and Portuguese or spoke either of these languages at home. For example, over half (55.5%) of Latin Americans in the second generation and 18.2% of those in the third generation or more spoke Spanish or Portuguese at home.

Languages spoken on a regular basis at home also differed between Latin Americans living in Quebec and those living in Canada outside Quebec. Use of Spanish or Portuguese at home by the populations in the second generation and the third generation or more was more common among Latin Americans living in Quebec than those living in Canada outside Quebec (Chart 15). For example, among Latin Americans in the third generation or more, 29.6% of those living in Quebec spoke Spanish or Portuguese at home, compared with about half as many (14.8%) of those living in Canada outside Quebec.

Chart 15**Selected languages spoken at home by Latin American populations, by area of residence, Canada, 2021**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

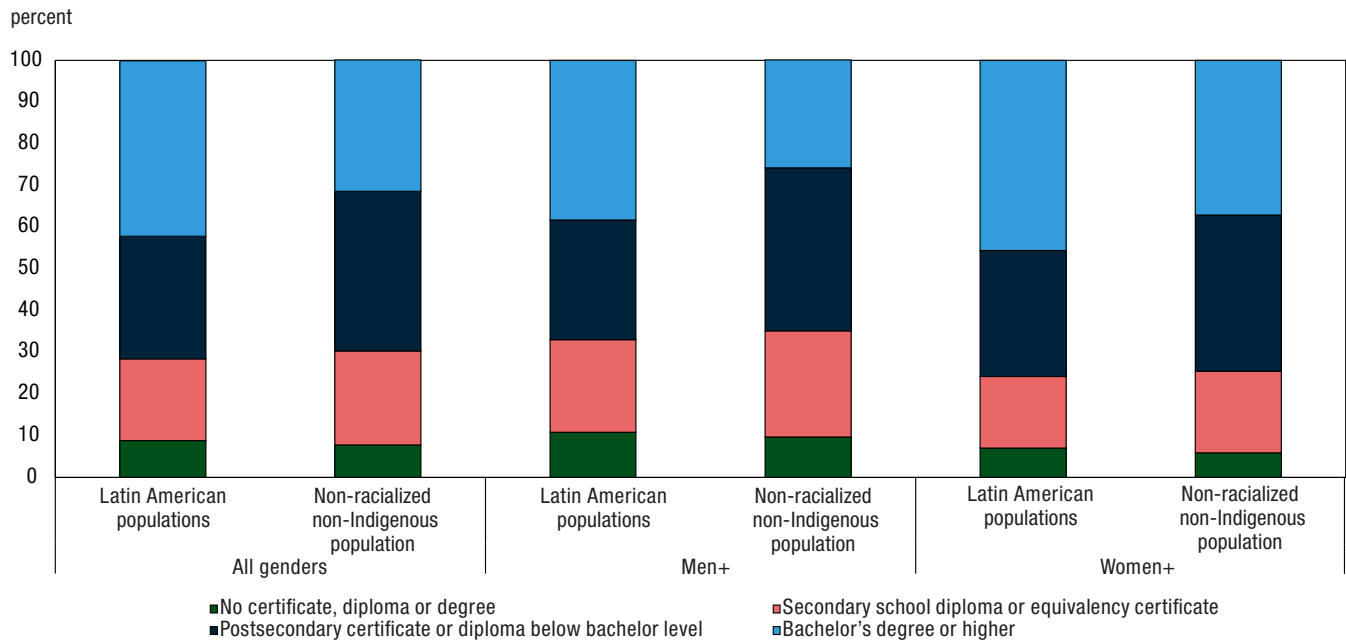
Latin Americans in Quebec were also more likely to speak both English and French at home (with or without Spanish or Portuguese): 16.1% in the first generation, 24.3% in the second generation and 20.3% in the third generation or more. By comparison, among Latin Americans living in Canada outside Quebec, less than 5% of those in each generation spoke both English and French at home.

Section 3: Education and economic outcomes

A little more than 4 in 10 Latin Americans had a bachelor's degree or higher

A little over 4 in 10 Latin Americans aged 25 to 54 (42.1%) had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with just over 3 in 10 people in the same age group among the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (31.5%) (Chart 16). However, this was lower compared with most other racialized groups (51.3%).

At the same time, the share of Latin Americans who had no certificate, diploma or degree (i.e., had not completed either high school or a trades, college or university credential) was slightly higher for both Latin American women (7.0%) and Latin American men (10.8%) than for non-racialized non-Indigenous women (5.9%) and men (9.7%).

Chart 16**Educational attainment of Latin American populations and non-racialized non-Indigenous population aged 25 to 54, Canada, 2021**

Notes: Given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses. In these cases, individuals in the category "non-binary persons" are distributed into the other two gender categories and are denoted by the "+" symbol. The category "Women+" includes women, as well as some non-binary persons. The category "Men+" includes men, as well as some non-binary persons.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Among Latin Americans aged 25 to 54 who were born outside Canada, nearly half (44.4%) had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 32.0% earned their degree outside Canada and 12.5% earned their degree in Canada.

Among Latin Americans born in Canada, over one-quarter (27.9%) had a bachelor's degree or higher, while 38.6% had a postsecondary certificate or diploma below the bachelor level. In all other Canadian-born racialized populations except for the Black populations, having a bachelor's degree or higher was more common than having a postsecondary certificate or diploma below the bachelor level.

Educational characteristics of Latin Americans varied depending on place of birth

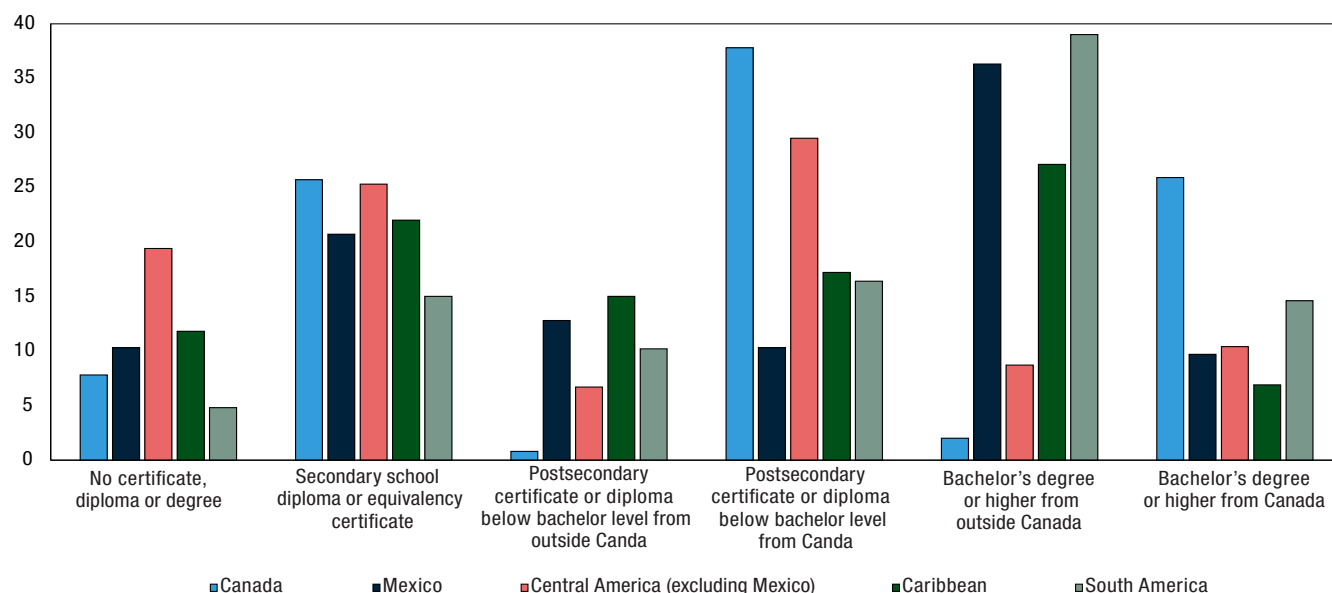
In terms of place of birth, the data show that educational attainment among Latin Americans in Canada varies widely. Having a bachelor's degree or higher was more than twice as common among Latin Americans born in South America (53.6%) or Mexico (46.0%) than among those born in the rest of Central America (19.1%).

Location of study also varied. Latin Americans born in South America (39.0%), Mexico (36.3%) and the Caribbean (27.1%) were more likely to have completed a bachelor's degree or higher outside Canada than in Canada. By contrast, those born in Central America were the only group born outside Canada who were more likely to have earned their degree in Canada (10.4%) (Chart 17).

When looking at postsecondary certificates or diplomas below the bachelor level, individuals across all Latin American groups were more likely to have earned these credentials in Canada rather than outside Canada, except those born in Mexico, where the proportions were nearly equal (12.8% earned their credentials outside Canada and 10.3% earned them in Canada).

Chart 17**Educational attainment and location of study of Latin American populations, by place of birth, Canada, 2021**

percent

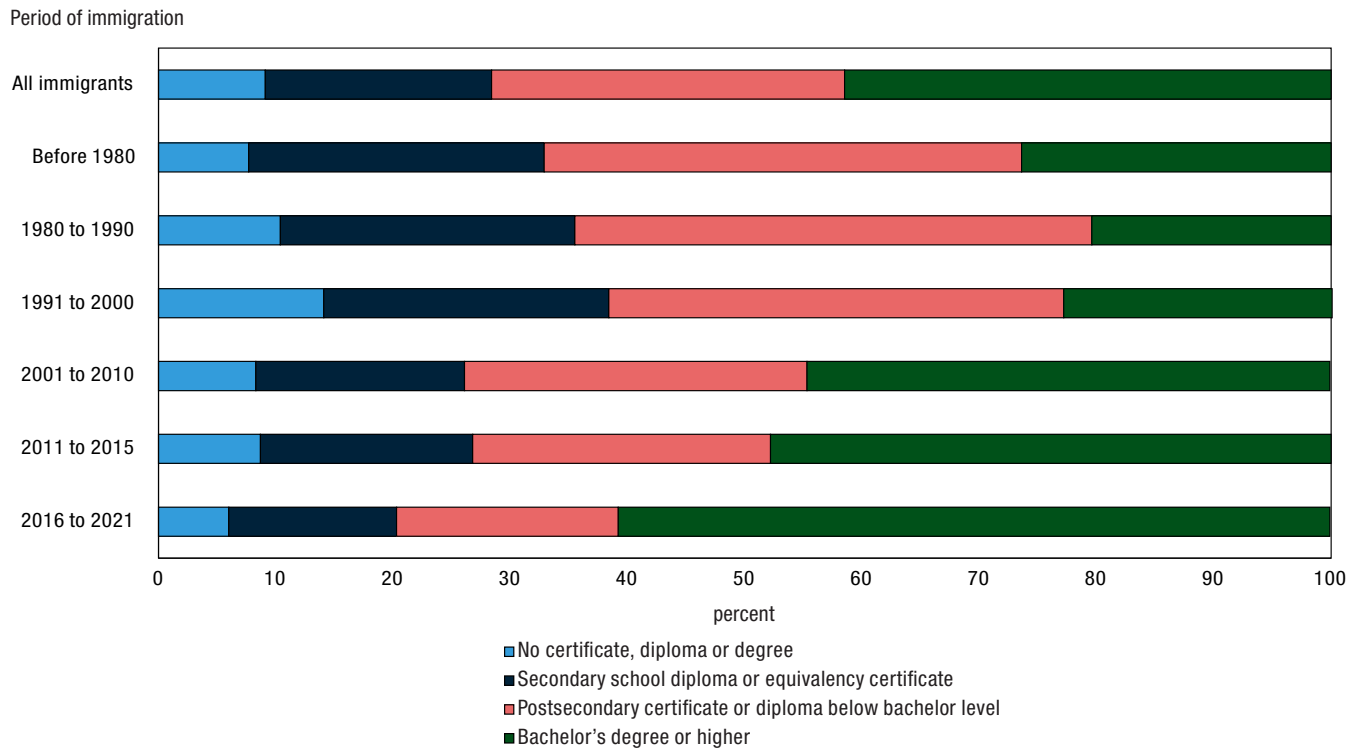


Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Educational attainment was higher among more recent Latin American immigrants, particularly women

Educational attainment among Latin American immigrants aged 25 to 54 varied by period of immigration (Chart 18). Among Latin American immigrants admitted from 2016 to 2021, the share who held a bachelor's degree or higher was, at 60.7%, nearly three times higher than that among those admitted from 1980 to 1990 (20.4%). For every period of immigration, women were more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher than men; for example, among Latin American immigrants admitted from 2016 to 2021, 63.0% of women and 58.1% of men had a bachelor's degree or higher.

The shift toward higher educational attainment among recent Latin American immigrants aged 25 to 54 can be explained by changing immigration patterns and regional differences in educational backgrounds. Earlier waves of immigrants from Central America, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, were more likely to have lower levels of formal education. By contrast, more recent immigrants from South America (especially Colombia and Brazil) and Mexico, who were admitted from 2001 to 2021, tended to have higher levels of education. This shift was partly because of the increased number of immigrants from these areas in economic admission categories, which prioritize skilled and educated applicants. For instance, 66.4% of Latin American economic immigrants held a bachelor's degree or higher in 2021.

Chart 18**Latin American immigrants aged 25 to 54, by period of immigration and highest certificate, diploma or degree, Canada, 2021**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Despite having higher educational attainment than the non-racialized non-Indigenous population, core-aged Latin Americans had lower employment rates, particularly Latin American women

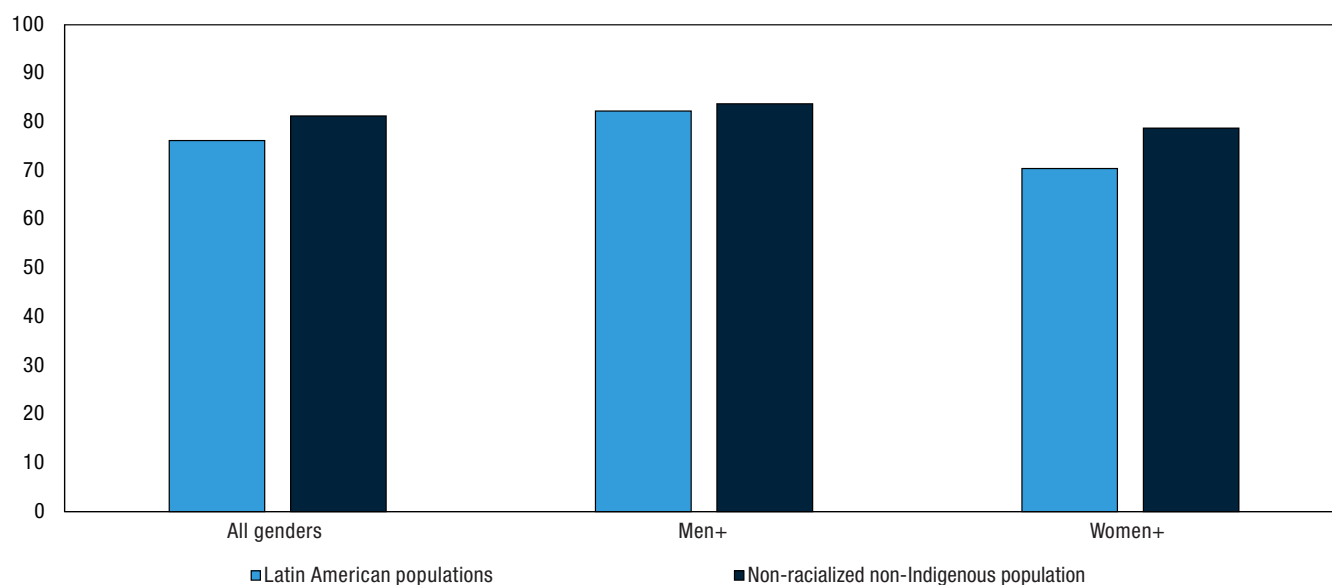
Latin Americans, especially Latin American women, had lower employment rates compared with the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (Chart 19).¹² The employment rate of core-aged Latin American women (25 to 54 years) was 70.5% as of May 2021,¹³ compared with 78.8% for non-racialized non-Indigenous women in the same age group—a difference of 8.3 percentage points. There was also a gap in the employment rate among core-aged men, though a smaller one, at 1.5 percentage points. Employment rates were comparatively higher for Latin Americans who reported being both Latin American and White (74.3% for women and 84.7% for men; the employment rate for men was also higher than that among the non-racialized non-Indigenous population) than for other Latin Americans (69.9% for women and 81.9% for men).

12. A detailed examination of all the factors that may relate to employment rates is not in scope for this portrait, which serves as an overview of the Latin American populations. This section does not consider differences in immigrant status or admission category, which may play a role in explaining some of these differences.

13. The reference week for labour force status (employed, unemployed or not in the labour force) in the 2021 Census was May 2 to 8, 2021.

Chart 19**Employment rate of Latin American populations and non-racialized non-Indigenous population aged 25 to 54, by gender, Canada, 2021**

percent



Notes: Given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses. In these cases, individuals in the category "non-binary persons" are distributed into the other two gender categories and are denoted by the "+" symbol. The category "Men+" includes men, as well as some non-binary persons. The category "Women+" includes women, as well as some non-binary persons.

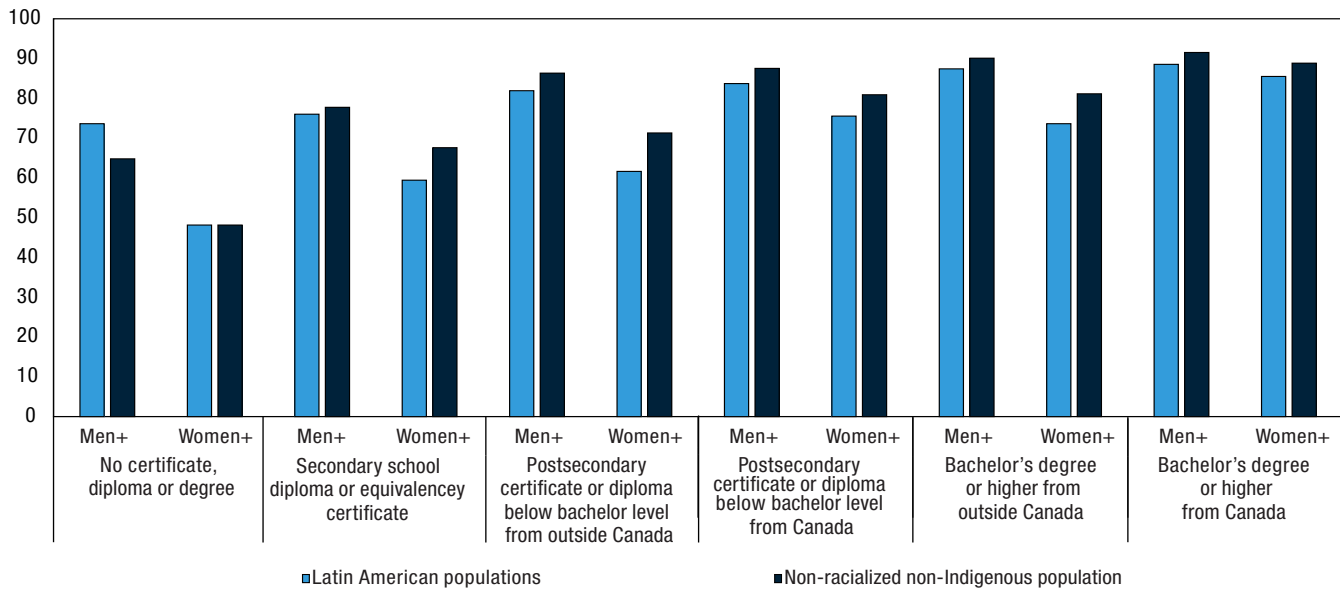
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Differences in employment rates between the core-aged Latin American populations and the non-racialized non-Indigenous population existed at all levels of education, even after accounting for location of study (Chart 20). These differences were largest for core-aged Latin American women without a postsecondary credential and for those with a postsecondary credential obtained outside Canada. For example, core-aged Latin American women with a postsecondary certificate or diploma below the bachelor level completed outside Canada had an employment rate of 61.6%, which was 9.7 percentage points lower than that of non-racialized non-Indigenous core-aged women with the same level of education (71.3%).

Chart 20

Employment rate of Latin American populations and non-racialized non-Indigenous population aged 25 to 54, by gender, educational attainment and location of study, Canada, 2021

percent



Notes: Given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses. In these cases, individuals in the category "non-binary persons" are distributed into the other two gender categories and are denoted by the "+" symbol. The category "Men+" includes men, as well as some non-binary persons. The category "Women+" includes women, as well as some non-binary persons.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

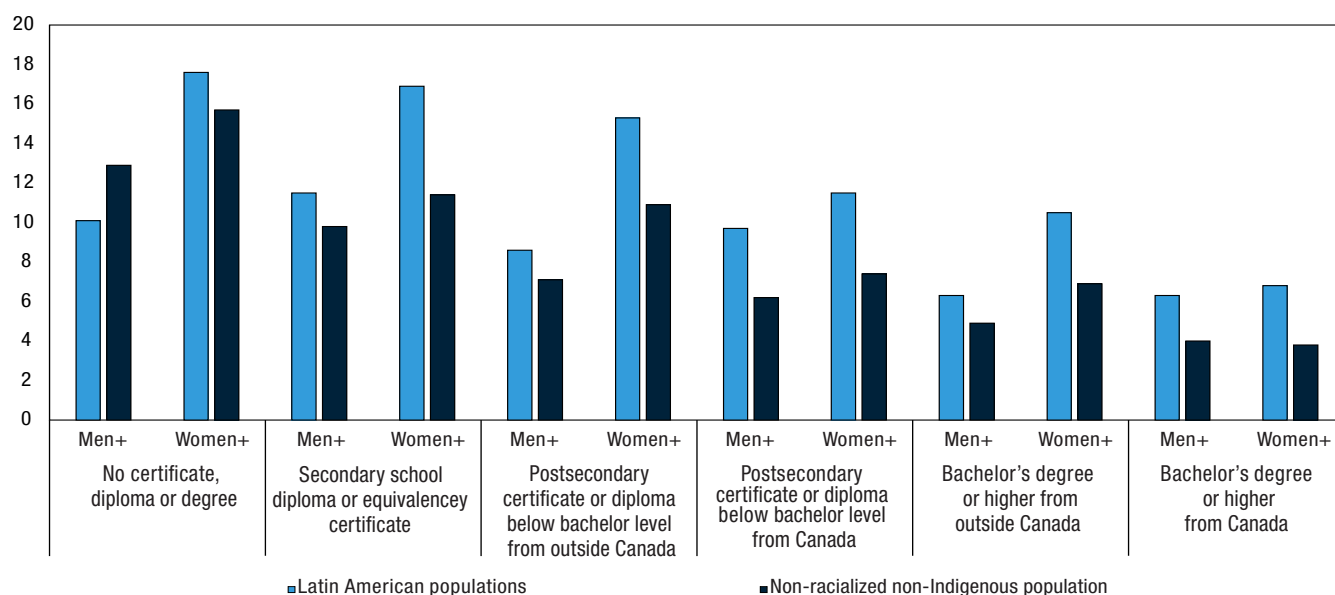
Highly educated immigrant members of racialized groups who studied overseas can face challenges related to credential recognition in Canada (Houle and Yssaad, 2010), and this was also the case for Latin Americans. Among Latin Americans aged 25 to 54 who were born outside Canada and held a bachelor's degree or higher, 72.0% had completed their highest level of education outside Canada. Latin American women aged 25 to 54 with a bachelor's degree or higher obtained outside Canada faced barriers to employment. For example, the employment rate of Latin American women in this age group who had obtained their degree outside Canada was 73.6%, compared with 81.1% of non-racialized non-Indigenous women in the same age group with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Even Latin American women with a Canadian bachelor's degree or higher had a lower employment rate, and a higher unemployment rate, compared with their non-racialized non-Indigenous counterparts. Their unemployment rate was 6.8% in 2021, almost twice as high as that of non-racialized non-Indigenous women with a Canadian bachelor's degree or higher (3.8%). In all cases, the unemployment rate difference between core-aged Latin Americans and the non-racialized non-Indigenous population was larger for women than for men, and it was widest among women who either had no postsecondary credential or had a postsecondary credential obtained outside Canada (Chart 21).

Chart 21

Unemployment rate of Latin American populations and non-racialized non-Indigenous population aged 25 to 54, by gender, educational attainment and location of study, Canada, 2021

percent



Notes: Given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses. In these cases, individuals in the category "non-binary persons" are distributed into the other two gender categories and are denoted by the "+" symbol. The category "Men+" includes men, as well as some non-binary persons. The category "Women+" includes women, as well as some non-binary persons.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

The occupational distribution of Latin American men varied widely by place of birth

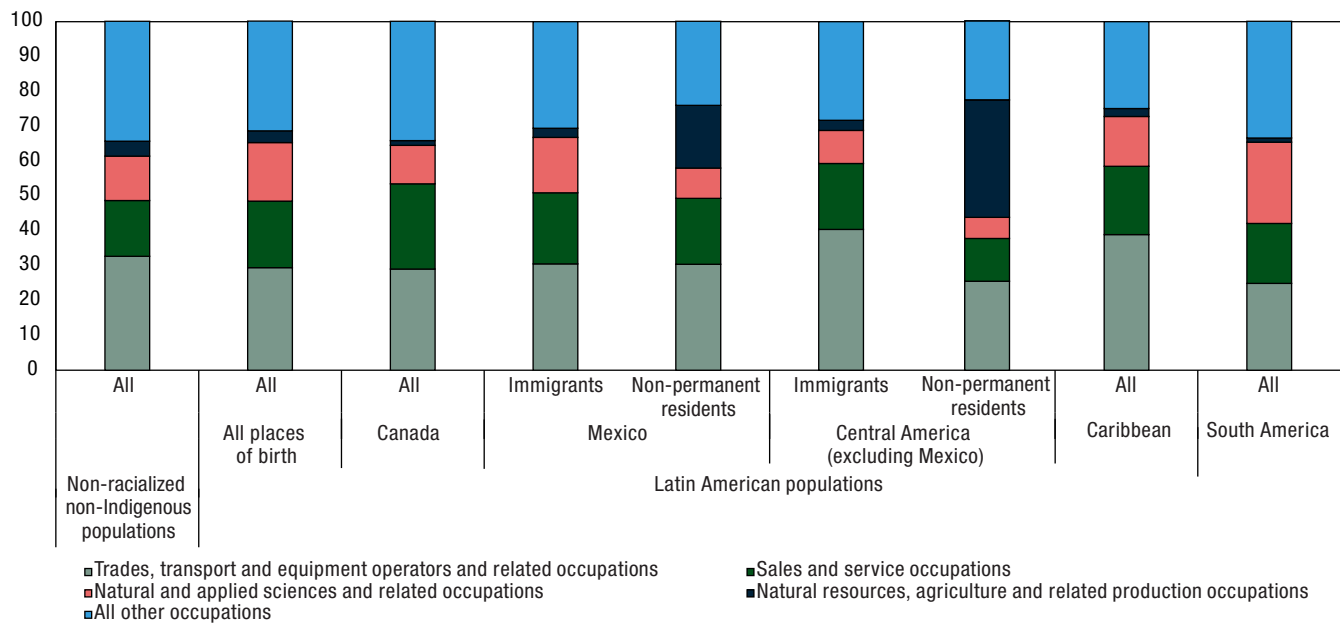
The overall occupational distribution of Latin American men aged 25 to 54 who worked in 2020 or 2021 was similar to that of non-racialized non-Indigenous men. The main differences were that Latin American men were more likely to work in natural and applied sciences and related occupations (16.8%) than non-racialized non-Indigenous men (12.7%) and also more likely to work in sales and service occupations (19.1%, compared with 16.0% of non-racialized non-Indigenous men). However, these overall numbers mask some major differences between various groups of Latin American men.

Latin American men born in South America were over 10 percentage points more likely to work in natural and applied sciences and related occupations (23.3%) than non-racialized non-Indigenous men (12.7%). This difference also existed, to a lesser extent, for Latin American immigrant men born in Mexico (15.9%) or the Caribbean (14.3%).¹⁴ However, the reverse was true for Latin American men born in Canada (11.0%) and Latin American immigrant men born in Central America (excluding Mexico) (9.5%), who were less likely than non-racialized non-Indigenous men to work in natural and applied sciences and related occupations (Chart 22). Three of the five most common occupations of Latin American men born in South America were in natural and applied sciences and related occupations: software developers and programmers, software engineers and designers, and information systems specialists. These did not appear in the top five occupations for Latin American men born in any other region.

14. The occupational characteristics of Latin American men born in South America were similar between immigrants and NPRs. Additionally, fewer than 1,000 Latin American men born in the Caribbean were NPRs. This is why data specific to NPRs are provided for Mexico and the rest of Central America and not for other regions of birth.

Chart 22**Selected occupations of men aged 25 to 54 who worked in 2020 or 2021, by selected racialized group, place of birth and immigrant status**

percent



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

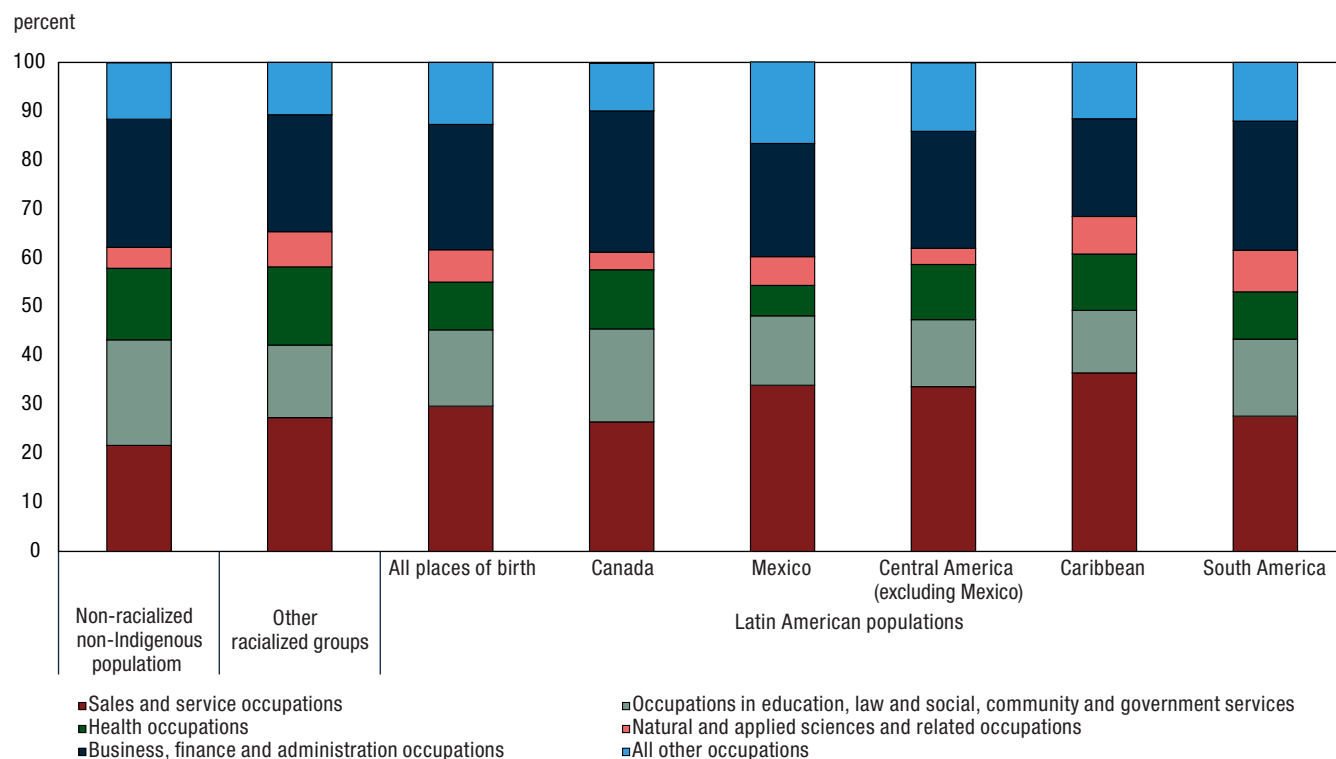
Latin American men aged 25 to 54 who were born in Canada were more likely to work in sales and service occupations (24.5%) than either non-racialized non-Indigenous men (16.0%) or any other group of Latin American men. Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations were more common among Latin American immigrant men born in Central America (excluding Mexico) (40.4%) or the Caribbean (38.9%) than among non-racialized non-Indigenous men (32.7%). By contrast, they were less common for Latin American men born in Canada (29.0%) or South America (24.9%). The most common single occupation for Latin American men overall was construction trades helpers and labourers, and this was also the case for Latin American men from each region (Canada, Mexico, the rest of Central America, the Caribbean and South America).

Finally, core-aged Latin American men overall were less likely to work in natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations (3.4%) than non-racialized non-Indigenous men (4.3%). The exception was that working in these occupations was much more common for Latin American NPR men born in Mexico (18.0%) or the rest of Central America (33.7%). The top five occupations for Latin American NPR men born in Mexico or Central America included specialized livestock workers and farm machinery operators, and nursery and greenhouse labourers, as well as livestock labourers (among those born in Central America [excluding Mexico]) and harvesting labourers (among those born in Mexico). These occupations were not in the top five for any other group of Latin American men.

Latin American women were more likely than non-racialized non-Indigenous women to work in sales and service occupations

The differences in occupational distribution between groups of core-aged Latin American women were smaller than those between groups of core-aged Latin American men.

For example, Latin American women aged 25 to 54 were more likely to work in sales and service occupations (29.7%) than non-racialized non-Indigenous women (21.7%) in the same age group. This was the case for Latin American women across all places of birth, but the proportion who worked in sales and service occupations was higher among those born in the Caribbean, Mexico or the rest of Central America and comparatively lower among those born in Canada (Chart 23).

Chart 23**Selected occupations of women aged 25 to 54 who worked in 2020 or 2021, by selected racialized group and place of birth**

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

This pattern was partly attributable to the higher proportion of Latin American women who worked as cleaners (7.3%), relative to the share of non-racialized non-Indigenous women in the same occupation (2.0%). In particular, the share of Latin American women who worked as cleaners was higher among those born in the Caribbean (11.8%) or in Central America (excluding Mexico) (11.3%). By contrast, it was low among Latin American women born in Canada (1.7%). Latin American women born in Canada were more likely than non-racialized non-Indigenous women to work as retail salespersons and visual merchandisers (3.6% versus 2.6%) or as customer and information services representatives (3.2% versus 2.0%).

Latin American women were comparatively less likely than non-racialized non-Indigenous women to work in occupations in education, law and social, community and government services or in health occupations. The lower proportion of Latin American women working in education, law and social, community and government services primarily reflected the fact that they were less likely to work as secondary, elementary and kindergarten school teachers (1.6%) than non-racialized non-Indigenous women (6.0%). These patterns existed to varying degrees for all populations of Latin American women regardless of place of birth (Canada, Mexico, the rest of Central America, the Caribbean and South America). However, Latin American women born in Canada were more likely than other Latin American women to work as secondary, elementary and kindergarten school teachers (3.7%).

Additionally, as was the case with men, core-aged Latin American women born in South America were the most likely to work in natural and applied sciences and related occupations (8.5%), while those born in Central America (excluding Mexico) (3.3%) or in Canada (3.6%) were the least likely to do so. By comparison, 4.3% of non-racialized non-Indigenous women worked in these occupations.

Core-aged Latin American women born in Canada were more likely to work in business, finance and administration occupations than either non-racialized non-Indigenous women or other groups of Latin American women.

Latin Americans had higher overqualification rates than the non-racialized non-Indigenous population, whether they studied in Canada or outside Canada

Among Latin Americans aged 25 to 54 with a bachelor's degree or higher who worked in 2020 or 2021, 21.8% were overqualified¹⁵ for their jobs. This was more than twice as high as the overqualification rate for the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (10.4%).

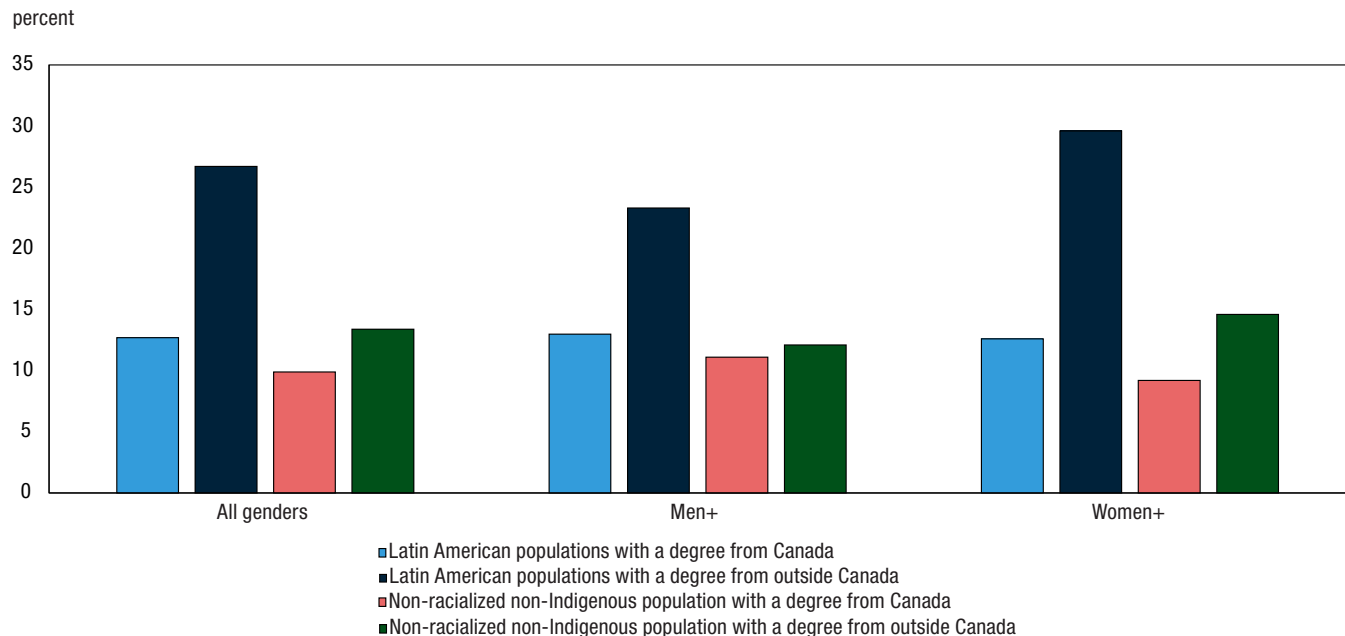
This gap was observed among both men and women. Among men, 19.9% of Latin Americans were overqualified, compared with 11.3% of their non-racialized non-Indigenous counterparts. The gap was particularly pronounced between Latin American women (23.4%) and non-racialized non-Indigenous women (9.8%). One contributing factor is that Latin Americans with a bachelor's degree or higher were more likely to have studied outside Canada (27.7%) than their non-racialized non-Indigenous counterparts (4.4%). However, the disparities remained even after taking location of study into account.

Latin Americans who obtained their degree outside Canada and worked in 2020 or 2021 were more likely to be overqualified (26.7%) than non-racialized non-Indigenous individuals who also studied outside Canada (13.4%) and worked during the same period (Chart 23). Their overqualification rate was also higher than those of people in certain other racialized groups who studied outside Canada, such as West Asians (25.1%), Arabs (23.8%) and Chinese people (20.2%), but lower than those of Filipinos (41.1%), Southeast Asians (31.0%) and South Asians (27.9%) (Chart 24).

Even among those who earned their degree in Canada, Latin Americans (12.7%) remained more likely to be overqualified for their jobs than non-racialized non-Indigenous individuals (9.9%).

Chart 24

Overqualification rate of Latin American populations and non-racialized non-Indigenous population aged 25 to 54 with a bachelor's degree or higher who worked in 2020 or 2021, by gender and location of study, Canada, 2021



Notes: Given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses. In these cases, individuals in the category "non-binary persons" are distributed into the other two gender categories and are denoted by the "+" symbol. The category "Men+" includes men, as well as some non-binary persons. The category "Women+" includes women, as well as some non-binary persons.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

15. For the purposes of this portrait, a person is overqualified if they have a bachelor's degree or higher and are working in an occupation that typically requires, at most, a high school diploma. This refers to occupations in training, education, experience and responsibilities (TEER) categories 4 or 5 in the National Occupational Classification 2021. People in managerial occupations (TEER 0) are excluded from the calculation.

Latin Americans had lower incomes than the non-racialized non-Indigenous population

Adjusted after-tax economic family income for all people

In this section, the income concept refers to a person's income measured as the income of their economic family (people who are related to each other and live in the same household), after accounting for taxes and government transfers, adjusted for the number of people in the economic family. The adjustment for family size is because of economies of scale. For example, two people living together would typically have lower expenses for items such as housing than two people living separately. The adjustment for family size is done by dividing the after-tax income of the economic family by the square root of the number of people in the economic family. For example, in a four-person economic family with an after-tax income of \$60,000, each person in the family would have an adjusted after-tax economic family income of \$30,000. This variable is used in this portrait series to allow income to be measured and analyzed in a comparable way between population groups with different family sizes. on population groups, so it does not record whether someone is Latin American, but it does contain data on place of birth.

In 2020, Latin Americans had a lower median adjusted after-tax economic family income (\$46,400), compared with non-racialized non-Indigenous individuals (\$53,600). The same was true in 2015, when Latin Americans had a median income of \$39,390, almost \$10,000 less than non-racialized non-Indigenous individuals (\$49,346).

These figures are affected by the inclusion of NPRs, who may not have had a complete year in Canada in 2020. For the Latin American population excluding NPRs, the median adjusted after-tax economic family income was \$48,800. It was moderately higher for Latin American immigrants who were born in South America, at \$50,800, and lower for those born in the Caribbean (\$45,200)—particularly the Dominican Republic (\$42,400). Median income (excluding NPRs) was also higher among Latin Americans who reported being both Latin American and White on the population group question (\$52,000), compared with other Latin Americans (\$48,000).

Based on 2020 data, 12.9% of Latin Americans were living in poverty (measured by the Market Basket Measure), compared with 6.2% of non-racialized non-Indigenous individuals and 8.1% of the overall population. This represents a significant improvement compared with 2015, when 22.1% of Latin Americans were living in poverty—placing them among the groups with the highest poverty rates at that time—while the overall poverty rate for the population was 14.5%. Data from the [Canadian Income Survey](#) show that, in the overall population, the poverty rate declined from 2015 to 2019 and [decreased even more substantially in 2020](#). The decline in 2020 was associated with the benefits provided as part of the COVID-19 pandemic response, such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. The end of these benefits, coupled with inflation and housing price increases since 2020, means that the statistics from 2020 should not be considered representative of the current situation in 2026.

As with the income statistics, data on poverty were affected by the inclusion of NPRs, who may not have been in Canada for a full year in 2020. Excluding NPRs, the poverty rate in 2020 was 9.0% for the Latin American populations, compared with 6.1% for the non-racialized non-Indigenous population and 7.2% for the overall population. It was comparatively lower for the population who reported being both Latin American and White (7.8%), compared with the rest of the Latin American population (9.4%).

Indigenous people from Central and South America and the Caribbean

In total, 73,765 people reported Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean in the 2021 Census. This section covers all people who reported Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean, regardless of whether they reported being Latin American in the population group question.

Indigenous origins from Central and South America and the Caribbean included the following responses to the “ethnic or cultural origins” question on the 2021 Census: Mayan (11,715); Carib (4,565); Arawak (2,355); Mapuche (1,645); Quechua (1,470); Pipil (1,335); or Indigenous origins from Latin, Central and South America, not included elsewhere (54,160). These were based on write-in responses, and multiple responses were possible. “Indigenous origins from Latin, Central and South America, not included elsewhere” included regional responses (e.g., “South American Indigenous,” “Central American Indigenous”), general responses (e.g., “mestizo”) and specific responses that were not listed (e.g., “Inca,” “Aztec”).¹⁶

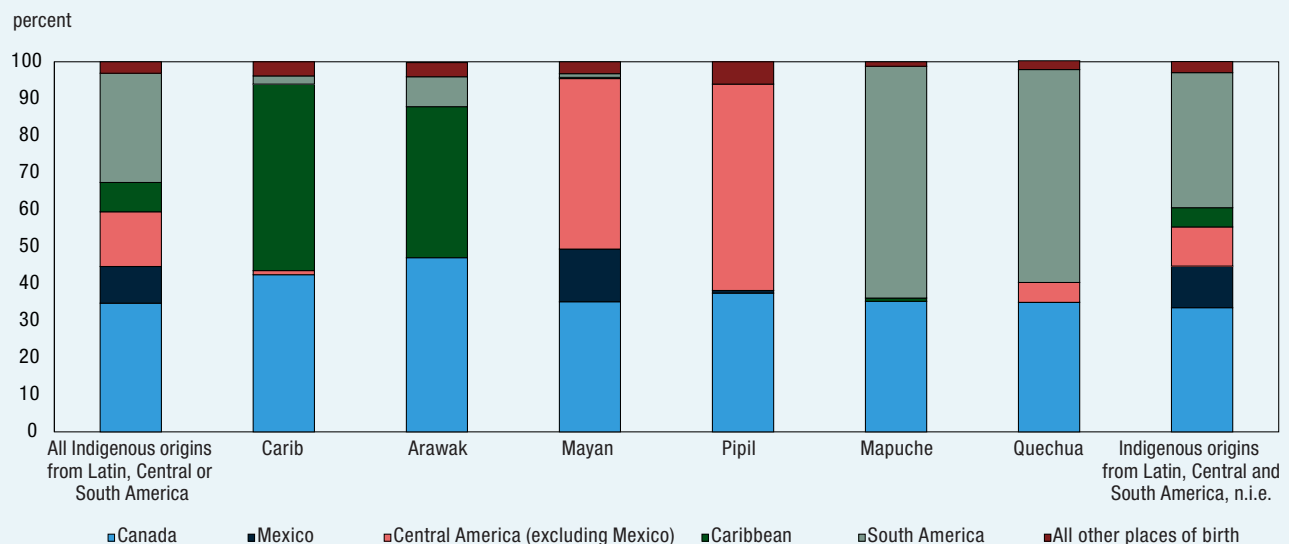
Nearly two-thirds (64.3%) of people reporting Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean reported being Latin American in the population group question, including over 80% of those reporting Pipil, Mapuche or Mayan origins; over 75% of those reporting Quechua origins; and 66.2% of those reporting Indigenous origins from Latin, Central and South America, not included elsewhere. By contrast, the majority of people reporting Carib origins (61.4%) or Arawak origins (58.0%) reported being Black in the population group question.

The places of birth of people who reported Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean were varied. Overall, 65.3% were born outside Canada and 34.7% were born in Canada, with the latter including 26.8% who were second generation and 7.9% who were third generation or more.

By detailed ethnic or cultural origin, the proportion born in Canada ranged from 33.6% of people reporting Indigenous origins from Latin, Central and South America, not included elsewhere to 47.1% of people reporting Arawak origins. Among those born outside Canada, people reporting Arawak or Carib origins were mainly born in the Caribbean, people reporting Mayan or Pipil origins were mainly born in Central America, and people reporting Mapuche or Quechua origins were mainly born in South America (Chart 25).

Chart 25

Populations with Indigenous origins from Latin, Central or South America or the Caribbean, by ethnic or cultural origin and place of birth, Canada, 2021



Note: n.i.e. = not included elsewhere.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

16. The ethnic and cultural origins listed in census data are based on the frequency of write-in responses given in the previous census.

More specifically, the most common places of birth aside from Canada were as follows: for those reporting Carib origins, Trinidad and Tobago (16.8%), and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (12.8%); for those reporting Arawak origins, Jamaica (18.5%), Trinidad and Tobago (7.0%), and Guyana (6.8%); for those reporting Mayan origins, Guatemala (22.0%), El Salvador (17.2%) and Mexico (14.2); for those reporting Pipil origins, El Salvador (55.1%); for those reporting Quechua origins, Peru (41.8%); and for those reporting Mapuche origins, Chile (60.5%). Among people reporting Indigenous origins from Latin, Central and South America, not included elsewhere, the most common places of birth outside Canada were Mexico (11.2%), Brazil (8.8%), Colombia (8.3%), Peru (5.5%) and El Salvador (5.3%).

The most common mother tongues of people reporting Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean were Spanish (51.9%), English (35.4%), French (9.8%) and Portuguese (7.0%).

People who reported Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean largely had similar characteristics to the Latin American populations overall (Table 1), with a few exceptions. They were comparatively less likely to be Catholic (39.4%, compared with 50.1% for the Latin American populations). They were more likely to be non-immigrants (37.0%, compared with 29.5% for the Latin American populations).

People who reported Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean were moderately less likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher (38.5%) than the Latin American populations (42.1%) and more likely to have a postsecondary certificate or diploma below the bachelor level (32.9%, compared with 29.4% for the Latin American populations). Their occupations were also similar to those of the Latin American populations, although they were comparatively less likely to work in natural and applied sciences and related occupations (9.4% versus 11.8%) and more likely to work in occupations in education, law and social, community and government services (13.7% versus 10.8%). The latter difference was primarily driven by people who reported Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean being more likely to work in professional occupations in law, education, social, community and government services (7.6%) than the Latin American populations (5.6%).

Table 1
Selected sociodemographic and economic characteristics of Latin American populations and populations with Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean

Selected sociodemographic and economic characteristics	Populations reporting Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean	
	percent	Latin American populations
Total — Age group	100.0	100.0
0 to 14 years	18.0	19.1
15 to 24 years	13.0	13.1
25 to 54 years	49.7	51.1
55 years and older	19.3	16.6
Total — Gender	100.0	100.0
Men+	47.2	48.6
Women+	52.8	51.4
Total — Province or territory of residence	100.0	100.0
Quebec	27.3	28.9
Ontario	44.6	42.9
Alberta	9.1	11.3
British Columbia	12.7	12.1
All other provinces and territories	6.3	4.7
Total — Immigrant status and period of immigration	100.0	100.0
Non-immigrants	37.0	29.5
Immigrants	54.3	57.8
Before 1980	5.8	4.0
1980 to 1990	9.5	7.8
1991 to 2000	10.8	10.5
2001 to 2010	13.4	17.0
2011 to 2021	14.8	18.6
Non-permanent residents	8.8	12.7

Table 1**Selected sociodemographic and economic characteristics of Latin American populations and populations with Indigenous origins from Central or South America or the Caribbean**

Selected sociodemographic and economic characteristics	Populations reporting Indigenous origins from Latin, Central or South America or the Caribbean	
	Latin American populations	percent
Total — Religion	100.0	100.0
Christian	66.1	71.0
Catholic	39.4	50.1
Christian, not otherwise specified	13.5	12.7
All other Christian	13.2	8.2
All other religions	5.0	2.2
No religion or had secular perspectives	29.0	26.8
Total — Highest certificate, diploma or degree of population aged 25 to 54	100.0	100.0
No certificate, diploma or degree	9.2	8.8
Secondary school diploma or equivalency certificate	19.4	19.6
Postsecondary certificate or diploma below bachelor level	32.9	29.4
Bachelor's degree or higher	38.5	42.1
Total — Occupation of population aged 25 to 54 with an occupation	100.0	100.0
Legislative and senior management occupations	0.9	0.7
Business, finance and administration occupations	17.8	18.6
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	9.4	11.8
Health occupations	7.0	6.0
Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services	13.7	10.8
Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	5.2	4.1
Sales and service occupations	23.5	24.3
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	16.1	16.7
Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	1.8	2.1
Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	4.7	4.9

Notes: Given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses. In these cases, individuals in the category "non-binary persons" are distributed into the other two gender categories and are denoted by the "+" symbol. The category "Men+" includes men, as well as some non-binary persons. The category "Women+" includes women, as well as some non-binary persons.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

As of 2021, 4 in 10 Latin Americans lived in housing that was either unaffordable, crowded or in need of major repairs

Acceptable housing, as defined by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), meets each of the three indicator thresholds: shelter costs are less than 30% of a household's total before-tax income,¹⁷ the dwelling has suitable bedrooms for the household's size and composition,¹⁸ and the dwelling does not require major repairs.

Based on these thresholds, 6 in 10 Latin Americans (59.8%) were living in acceptable housing at the time of the 2021 Census, compared with nearly 8 in 10 (78.3%) among the non-racialized non-Indigenous population. This was one of the highest rates among racialized groups, with only the Japanese population reporting a higher proportion (70.0%).

In the CMA of Montréal, the share of Latin Americans living in acceptable housing was higher than in the CMAs of Toronto and Vancouver, and gaps between the Latin American populations and the non-racialized non-Indigenous population were smaller. In Montréal, 63.3% of Latin Americans lived in acceptable housing, compared with 78.3% among the non-racialized non-Indigenous population. In Toronto, the proportions were 50.1% of Latin Americans and 71.3% of the non-racialized non-Indigenous population, and the figures were similar for Vancouver (53.2% and 71.9%, respectively).

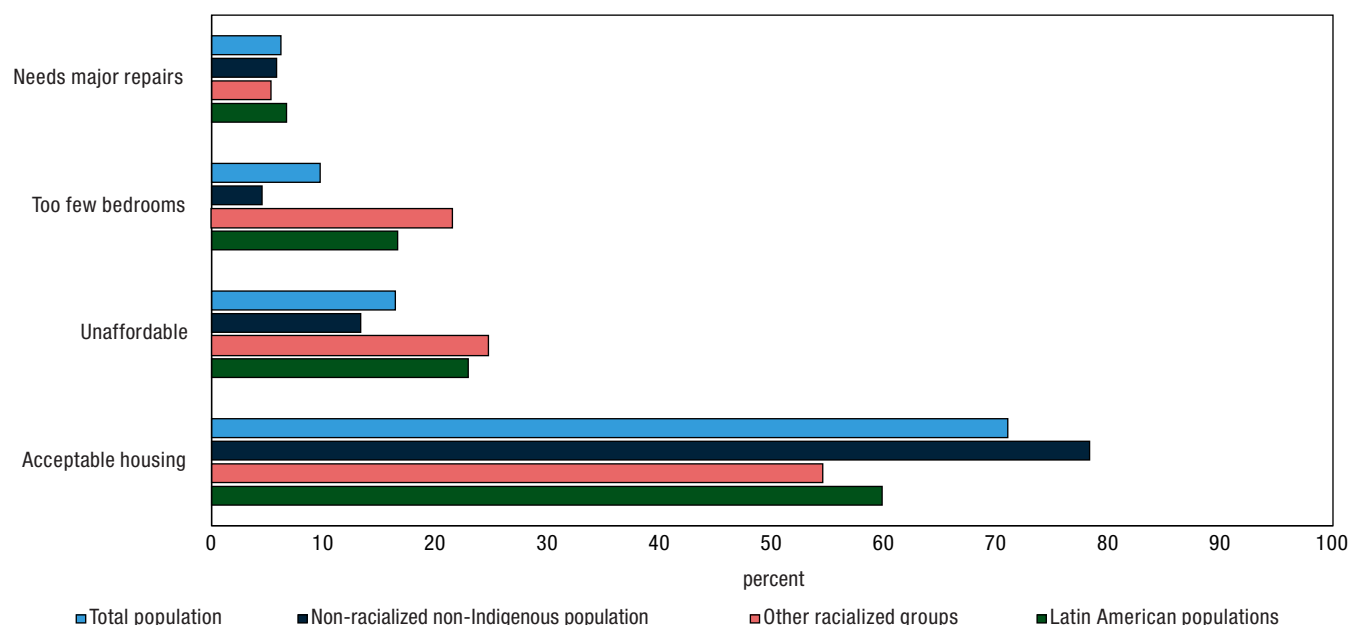
17. This indicator is referred to as housing affordability. Housing affordability is assessed for owner and tenant households with household total income greater than zero in non farm, non reserve private dwellings.

18. This indicator is referred to as housing suitability and is defined by CMHC's National Occupancy Standard. In a household made up of a couple and their children, the standard is that the couple will share a bedroom, two children younger than 5 of any sex will share a bedroom and two children aged 5 to 17 of the same sex will share a bedroom. In all other situations, people will each have their own bedroom. Housing with too few bedrooms to allow this is considered unsuitable (for example, where the number of bedrooms means a child needs to share a room with the parents, three or more children need to share a room, or children aged 5 to 17 of opposite sexes need to share a room).

Among Latin Americans living in unacceptable housing, the most common issues were unaffordability (22.9%) and too few bedrooms (16.6%) (Chart 26). These figures include individuals whose housing fell short of the acceptability criteria in multiple respects (5.6%). For example, 3.2% lived in homes that were both unaffordable and overcrowded.

Chart 26

Housing acceptability by selected population group, Canada, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021.

Section 4: Social inclusion and well-being

Latin Americans had higher self-reported health than other racialized groups and the non-racialized non-Indigenous population

More than 7 in 10 Latin Americans had excellent or very good self-reported health (72.5%) in 2020, significantly higher than among other racialized groups (59.1%) or the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (56.7%).¹⁹ Because health can be related to age, the population aged 15 to 44 was analyzed, and the pattern was the same: 73.2% of Latin Americans had excellent or very good self-reported health, significantly higher than for other racialized groups (61.2%) or the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (57.5%).

The “healthy immigrant effect” refers to the tendency of immigrants to Canada to have better health than non-immigrants, partly because of the specifics of the immigration process that may discourage people with lower levels of health from applying to immigrate (Lu and Ng, 2019). To account for this, self-reported health was analyzed for populations born outside Canada. Among people born outside Canada, Latin Americans remained significantly more likely to have excellent or very good self-reported health (73.8%) than other racialized groups (60.4%) and the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (56.9%).

Overall, Latin American populations were also significantly more likely to self-report excellent or very good mental health (71.2%) than the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (62.7%). When only the population born outside Canada was analyzed, there was no significant difference between the share of Latin Americans who reported excellent or very good mental health (74.7%) and the share of the non-racialized non-Indigenous population who did so (67.9%).

19. All data in “Section 4: Social inclusion” are from the 2020 General Social Survey – Social Identity.

Latin Americans had higher reported life satisfaction than other racialized groups and the non-racialized non-Indigenous population

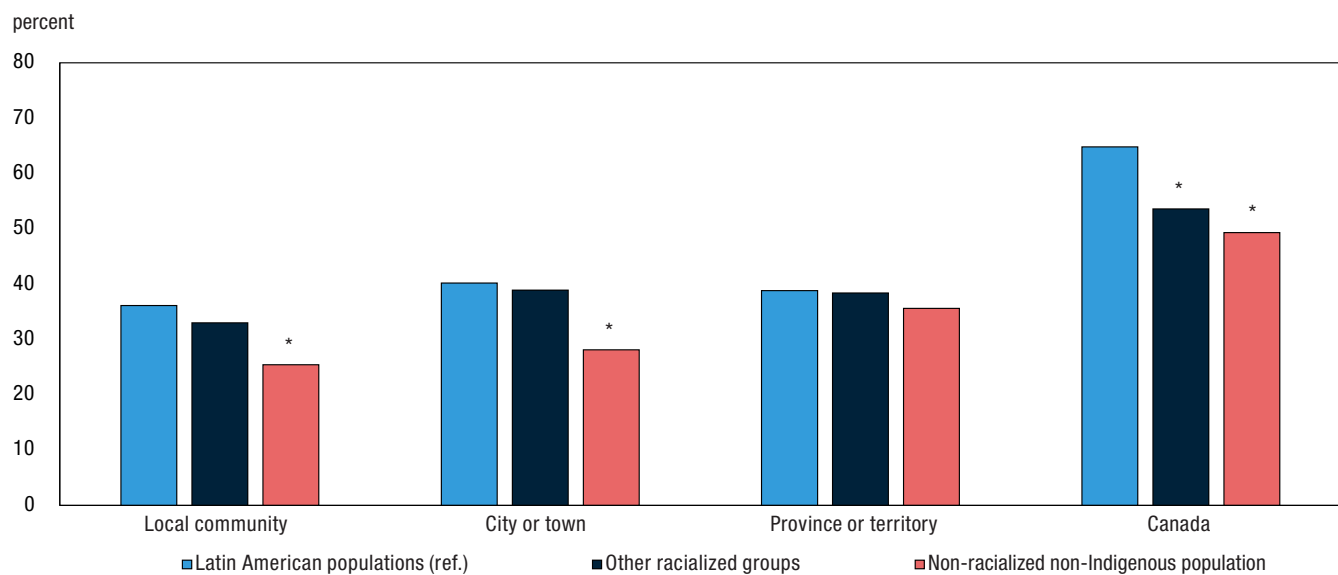
Latin Americans were more likely to report high life satisfaction²⁰ (62.9%) in 2020 than the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (56.1%) or other racialized groups (52.8%). Part of this difference may be attributable to contrasts between populations born in Canada and outside Canada. Overall, people born outside Canada were significantly more likely to report high life satisfaction (57.3%) than those born in Canada (54.3%). When Latin Americans born outside Canada were compared with other racialized groups and the non-racialized non-Indigenous population born outside Canada, there were no significant differences in life satisfaction.

Latin Americans were more likely to report a very strong sense of belonging to their local community than the non-racialized non-Indigenous population

Latin Americans were significantly more likely to report a very strong sense of belonging to their local community (36.1%) in 2020 than the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (25.4%). They were also significantly more likely to report a very strong sense of belonging to Canada (64.8%) compared with other racialized groups (53.6%) or the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (49.3%) (Chart 27).

Chart 27

Proportion of people with a very strong sense of belonging to selected communities, by selected population group, Canada, 2020



* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey – Social Identity, 2020.

The proportion of Latin Americans who were born outside Canada likely played a role in these results. Overall, individuals born outside Canada were significantly more likely than those born in Canada to report a very strong sense of belonging to their local community (by 9.1 percentage points), their city or town (by 11.8 percentage points), their province (by 4.7 percentage points) and Canada (by 9.4 percentage points). Latin Americans born outside Canada remained significantly more likely to report a very strong sense of belonging to Canada (69.5%) than the non-racialized non-Indigenous population born outside Canada (56.8%), but there was no significant difference between these two groups in the share reporting a very strong sense of belonging to their local community, city or town, or province.²¹

20. This refers to reported life satisfaction of 8 to 10 on a scale where 0 is lowest and 10 is highest.

21. The sample size of Latin Americans born in Canada was not sufficient for analysis using the General Social Survey – Social Identity.

More than 4 in 10 Latin Americans reported having experienced discrimination in the past six years

In the 2020 General Social Survey – Social Identity, 44.7% of Latin Americans reported having experienced discrimination at some point in the past six years, compared with 32.4% of the non-racialized non-Indigenous population.²² The most common forms of discrimination Latin Americans experienced were discrimination based on language (29.4%), ethnicity or culture (27.9%), or race or colour (18.4%). In addition, 12.4% of Latin American women reported having experienced discrimination based on sex.

The proportion of Latin Americans who experienced discrimination based on language (29.4%) was similar to the finding for the Chinese populations (26.6%) but higher than for all other racialized groups (17.1%). By contrast, Latin Americans were less likely to report having experienced discrimination based on race or colour (18.4%) than other racialized groups (41.5%). The most common forms of discrimination experienced by the non-racialized non-Indigenous population were discrimination based on age (14.2%), sex (11.9%; 19.3% among non-racialized non-Indigenous women) and physical appearance (11.4%). This highlights that the forms of discrimination faced by different groups vary.

The most common circumstances in which Latin Americans experienced discrimination were at work or when applying for a job or promotion (26.9%) or in a store, bank or restaurant (24.8%). In addition, 8.5% reported having experienced discrimination when attending school or classes, 6.3% when crossing the border into Canada, 2.8% when dealing with the police, 1.7% when dealing with the courts and 6.4% in any other situation.

Experiencing discrimination was associated with both lower life satisfaction and a weaker sense of belonging to one's local community. The share of Latin Americans reporting high life satisfaction was significantly lower among those who had experienced discrimination (51.7%) than among those who had not (72.6%). Latin Americans who had experienced discrimination were also significantly more likely to report a weak sense of belonging to their community (28.0%) than Latin Americans who had not (14.3%). Similar patterns were also observed among other racialized groups and the non-racialized non-Indigenous population.

Conclusion

The Latin American populations in Canada have experienced remarkable growth over the past two decades, nearly tripling from just over 250,000 in 2001 to more than 760,000 in 2021. Representing 2.0% of the total Canadian population in 2021, Latin Americans have become a key part of Canada's demographic landscape. This growth reflects evolving immigration patterns, with a shift from refugee-dominant migration in the 1980s and 1990s—particularly from conflict-affected regions in Central America—to an increasing number of economic immigrants since 2008.

Latin Americans in Canada came from a wide variety of countries, primarily in South and Central America and the Caribbean. The most common countries of birth outside Canada included Mexico, Colombia, Brazil and El Salvador, while nearly 30% were born in Canada. In 2021, nearly half of Latin Americans in Canada lived in Toronto or Montréal. The population was relatively young, with over half being of core working age (25 to 54 years), the highest share among all racialized groups.

In terms of socioeconomic outcomes, many Latin Americans in Canada were highly educated, with 42.1% of those aged 25 to 54 holding a bachelor's degree or higher, surpassing the rate for the non-racialized non-Indigenous population (31.5%). Their socioeconomic outcomes were shaped by important differences in educational attainment and place of study across regions of birth. For example, having a bachelor's degree or higher was significantly more common among those born in South America (53.6%) and Mexico (46.0%) than among those from other parts of Central America (19.1%).

22. The specific reference periods of the questions asked on the 2020 General Social Survey – Social Identity, carried out from August 2020 to February 2021, were "in the five years before the Covid-19 pandemic" and "since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic." The two reference periods were combined in this portrait's analysis (an experience of discrimination in either reference period was treated as having experienced discrimination, an answer of "Did not experience discrimination" for both reference periods was treated as not having experienced discrimination, and combinations of "Did not experience discrimination" for one reference period and non-response for the other were treated as non-response and excluded from the analysis).

Despite their qualifications, many Latin Americans with a bachelor's degree or higher faced challenges in the labour market, including high rates of overqualification. These challenges were especially acute for women educated outside Canada, but also for Latin American women with Canadian postsecondary credentials. Latin American women and men from all places of birth were more likely than the non-racialized non-Indigenous population to work in sales and service occupations. Along with occupational differences, Latin Americans faced broader socioeconomic difficulties, including low income and housing instability, with 4 in 10 Latin Americans living in unaffordable, overcrowded or unsuitable dwellings.

In 2020, Latin Americans reported high levels of health and life satisfaction and a strong sense of belonging. They were more likely to rate their health as excellent or very good than other racialized groups or the non-racialized non-Indigenous population, and more likely to report high life satisfaction. They were also more likely than the non-racialized non-Indigenous population to report a very strong sense of belonging to their local community and to Canada. However, more than 4 in 10 reported having experienced discrimination, mainly related to language, ethnicity or race. While these experiences of discrimination were associated with lower levels of life satisfaction and belonging, the data also underscore the resilience and engagement of Latin Americans in building inclusive communities.

Data gaps remain in some areas related to the Latin American populations in Canada. For instance, the sample size in surveys does not currently allow for analysis of many aspects of social inclusion among Canadian-born Latin Americans specifically. Additionally, there is scope for further research using existing data. This research could help shed light on how socioeconomic outcomes such as income levels, employment and housing conditions vary among Latin Americans who arrived as economic immigrants, as refugees or initially as NPRs. These distinctions are particularly relevant, given the number of Latin Americans who first arrived in Canada under temporary status.

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