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ABSTRACT

How can we more accurately measure racial identity among Latinos? Does Latinos' self-described race and/or skin color influence feelings of closeness with racial rather than ethnic groups? This article seeks to challenge the notion of Latinos as racially homogenous and examine how racial identity and skin color may play a role in self-identification and group closeness. Using a survey of Puerto Ricans living in the United States, we examine both racial self-identification and skin color, arguing for new racial categories that include mixed-race options. We employ a transnational measurement of race that recognizes the role of migration by offering an expanded set of racial categories that are relevant in Latin America and the Caribbean and, therefore, more relevant to Latinos. For Latino group closeness, we find that respondents who identify as trigueño (a mixed-race category similar to mestizo in Puerto Rico) are more likely to feel closer to other Latinos, as are respondents who have medium skin tones. We also find that respondents who identify as Black and those with darker skin tones are more likely to say they have linked fate with Black people.

Despite the racial diversity of Latinos in the United States, the ethnic group is commonly referred to in the media, scholarship, and their own communities as "brown" (E. Telles 2017). Brownness carries considerable implications, primarily the homogenization of a racially diverse group that both self-identify and are racialized as Black and White in addition to brown. As a growing number of Latinos mark "some other race" on the U.S. Census, scholars are left with uncertainty about how Latinos perceive themselves racially and how their racial group may affect socioeconomic outcomes and political behavior (I. H. Lopez 2003, 2005). Consequently, racial analysis is often left out of studies of Latino political identity, instead treating Latinos as a racial group in itself. *How can we understand racial differences among an ethnic group that is often treated as a race?* We create a new framework for how we study Latino identity that centers racial differences, and utilizes an expansive, transnational method of measurement that recognizes the role of migration.

The U.S. Census has long advocated for combining the racial and ethnic identification question so that Latino appears alongside racial categories on the form, rather than its own separate ethnicity (Matthews et al. 2017). This change will be implemented in

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2030 in response to their argument that combining racial and ethnic categories would improve the quality of the data collected by the Census because they anticipate that it would reduce the number of Latinos who are marking "some other race." We argue that this solution does not "solve" the problem of obtaining more accurate racial/ethnic data because (1) adding Latino to the race categories conflates racial identity with ethnicity and (2) including Latino as a race only shifts those who mark some other race to the Latino only category without improving our data on Latino racial identities, thus ignoring the different lived experiences of Black, Native American, Asian, and White Latinos. While the Census allows people to mark as many races/ethnicities that apply, the new format will run the risk of respondents marking Latino only without marking racial categories because they do not capture the complicated relationship of race and skin color in Latin American communities. For example, categories like mestizo and mulato that capture mixed race categories are not on the Census but represent how many Latinos self-identify. Various national Latino organizations such as NALEO and LULAC support the combined racial/ethnicity question because they believe it will increase the Latino count, but losing data on current racial disparities and racial differences among Latinos is detrimental to our knowledge and research about race and racism in the United States. There is also great concern about the existing undercount of Afro-Latinos, which would likely worsen if Latinos no longer have to choose a racial category in the Census other than "Latino." For these reasons, we argue that new methods to measure race among Latinos are necessary.

The need to include racial differences in the study of Latino political behavior is partly based on higher levels of discrimination and marginalization for Black Latinos compared to non-Black Latinos. Anti-Black attitudes among Latinos can affect perceptions of identity and group closeness and Black-linked fate. If Black Latinos experience exclusion from their ethnic counterparts, this can affect how they view ethnic and racial solidarities (Aja 2016; Benson and Clealand 2021). These disparate experiences by skin tone also lead to different political attitudes (Yadon and Ostfeld 2020). Blackness, regardless of ethnicity, continues to determine access and opportunity in the United States and thus cannot be ignored when examining the politics of Latino communities. In this context, it is necessary to understand how whiteness and mixed-race categories differ in their self-identification, political behavior, feelings of solidarity, and socioeconomic outcomes.

The process of marking race on surveys is fraught with confusion among many Latino respondents, particularly because although Latinos' brownness represents multiraciality, Black and White are often respondents' two principal choices. Latinos who see themselves in a position between Black and White or between Indigenous and White tend to choose "some other race." Moreover, the categories in the U.S. Census do not align with how race is categorized in Latin America – the foundation of the multiracial frameworks that first and even later generations use. Latinos placing themselves in the "some other race" category highlights the inability of U.S. racial categories to capture Latino realities. We argue that the racialization of Latinos remains central to their identities and experiences. We make the case for (1) the need to expand racial categories to include those found on Latin American censuses and (2) measuring skin color to examine the relationship between color, racial categorization, and racialization among Latinos living in the United States. We add the multiracial categories of moreno, and trigueño,

which are familiar in Latin America, to reduce the number of respondents that identify as "other" simply by providing respondents with more relevant racial categories.

These race measures employ transnational notions of identity to reflect realities beyond the borders of the United States. Much of the scholarship on Latino racial identity has not examined how racial self-identification among Latinos stems from existing categories and classifications in Latin America and the Caribbean, which travel in the process of migration (Roth 2012). Knowledge of racial categorization in Latin America is *central* to the conceptualization of racial identity among Latinos. The "in-between" categories that many Latinos place themselves in are recognized as separate categories in Latin America. The omission of these categories in the United States may lead Latinos to mark "other." This becomes even more complicated when we think about the role that skin tone plays in racial self-identification. Respondents with medium skin tone that may be racialized in a mixed-race category in Latin America for example, may identify as Black. In contrast, others may choose a category between White and Black. By expanding racial categories to include multiracial options and capturing skin tone, we can create a more holistic understanding of race that is necessary for studying Latino identity.[1] While many other physical characteristics shape perceptions of self, looking at skin color is the first step in trying to capture the phenotypical and psychological components of self-categorization and racialization. To our knowledge, this data is the first U.S.-based survey that uses these expanded racial categories.

The treatment of Latinos as either racially homogenous, what we call the *browning effect*, or as a racial category rather than an ethnic category also prevents us from understanding ethnoracial solidarities. Not only does skin color influence Latinos' experiences, but it can also influence group identity and how these identities are politicized. One such way this is measured is through the use of linked fate. Several studies have identified the problems with Latino linked fate with inconclusive findings and inconsistencies across groups and demographics (McClain et al. 2009; G. Sanchez, Masuoka, and Abrams 2019; G. R. Sanchez and Masuoka 2010; G. R. Sanchez and Vargas 2016). We reexamine linked fate with Black Americans, focusing on the role of racial group and skin color. If Latinos are racialized in different ways according to skin color, then we need to pay attention to the role that skin tone may have in terms of group-linked fate. This paper examines Latino feelings of linked fate with Blacks as well as group closeness with Latinos.[2] We explore how racial identity and phenotype can affect in-group acceptance (via closeness to Latinos) and Black-linked fate, finding that those with darker skin tones are associated with higher levels of Black-linked fate and feelings of closeness to Latinos. However, respondents who identify racially as Black are associated with lower levels of Latino group closeness. In this way, the paper identifies notions of Black-linked fate across ethnicity and highlights how Blackness can affect Latino identities. By centering skin tone and race in our analyses of Latino group closeness with more appropriate measures, we provide more clarity about who may express solidarity with their racial and/or ethnic group.

In this paper, we use a data set of Puerto Ricans in the United States. Puerto Ricans are the second largest Latino ethnic group in the United States, making up 9.6% of the Latino population.[3] Puerto Rico also has a larger Afro-Latino population relative to Mexican Americans, allowing for a deeper analysis of the role of Blackness within the population. Although Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States, we argue that racial identity and

the ways that Puerto Ricans are placed into ethnoracial categories here in the United States do not differ from other Latinos (Roth 2012). Data show that Puerto Ricans are similar to other Latinos in their views of identity as well as socioeconomic indicators (López and Patten 2015). This paper allows us to examine how Puerto Ricans identify as a way to understand Latino identity, but it also centers on the U.S. racial hierarchy, acknowledging that an identity such as Blackness produces similar outcomes across ethnicity and national origin. Overall, we argue for the centering of race rather than the dilution that results in scholars and institutions deeming Latinos' race too difficult to measure.

Racial identification and skin color among Latinos

Recognizing racial differences among Latinos does not mean that it is without challenges. The concepts of race, skin color, and group identification are mutually reinforcing and work together in shaping conceptions of identity. The United States has constructed an ethnic identity for Latinos in the United States that focuses on shared culture and language. Given the multiraciality of Latinos in the United States, constructing a panethnic identity rooted in culture was a way to work around the many national origins and racial differences that exist within the group (Mora 2014). However, these racial differences do still exist. Racial differences are signaled among Latinos based on physical characteristics such as phenotype and skin tone. Race is also important in determining where people sit within the racial hierarchy. While Latinos are often thought to fit as somewhere in between Whites and Blacks (Masuoka and Junn 2013), some of these pan-ethnic group members can be viewed as White due to phenotype, and others are racialized as Black even if they are Latino. Because of the way that the United States has blurred the lines between race and ethnicity for Latinos, we argue that it is necessary to have a better understanding of how Latinos view themselves within this racial hierarchy and understand how their skin color may influence the way they view their position. U.S.-based surveys have examined skin color and race (Fraga et al. 2006) but have not used racial categories that correspond to Latino/Latin American notions of race. It is not that Latinos are uncertain about their racial identity, insomuch as they are uncertain where they fit within the U.S. set of racial categories presented to them on the Census. Finally, our analysis of group closeness allows for a richer understanding of how racial identity and skin color can influence how much one feels like they are a part of Latinos as a group.

Scholars have rightly noted that the United States is organized by an ethnoracial hierarchy (Kim 1999; Masuoka and Junn 2013) that often places Latinos of varying skin colors in a disadvantaged position relative to Whites. Because of this hierarchy, there is a hesitance for some Latinos to identify as White, even if they may be White phenotypically. The use of skin color brings more clarity to the racial category question in that we can compare skin color and self-identification to better understand racial self-identification. Skin color and race should not be conflated. While a respondent may mark that they have dark skin, they could be racialized and/or self-identify as Black, Indigenous, or mixed-race. Moreover, while a lighter-skinned Black person is considered Black in the United States, they are not always considered Black in Latin America and therefore may not identify as such once they arrive in the US. The results of our analysis show that while skin color and race do correlate as we might expect in many instances,

there are very light-skinned people that do not identify as white, those with a medium tone that identify as Black and those with dark skin that identify with a mixed-race or "moreno" category which can be interpreted as lighter than the Black category. Additionally, while a Latino may be phenotypically White, they may not choose this category because they identify only as Latino and/or may also be racialized as such. In short, the combination of skin color and racial self-identification reveals far more than either measure on its own and is influenced by home country, generation, racialized experiences, and socialization. By measuring skin tone, we can gauge how light or dark a respondent is and come closer to understanding (1) how phenotype and racial categorization may contradict or complement each other, (2) how phenotype matters for identity outcomes, and (3) how Whiteness, Blackness and brownness affect notions of racial and group identity.

The devaluation of Blackness within Latino communities certainly affects how people identify and who they feel aligned with. While the U.S. Census finds that 1.9% of the Latino population identified as Black in the 2020 Census, and a Pew Research study found that 2% of Latinos self-identify as Black, Pew also found that 24% consider themselves Afro-Latino (M. H. Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, and Arditi 2021). There are several reasons that point to the undercount of Black Latinos on the Census and other surveys: (1) the racial category, Black or African American, is often interpreted by Latinos as a category for African Americans or those with ancestry in the United States, rather than Latin America and the Caribbean and (2) Latin American narratives of race that dilute Blackness and support anti-Black norms often discourage identification with the Black category (Contreras 2016; Cruz-Janzen 2007; Mitchell 2018) though there has been work suggesting that activism can increase the number of people who identify as Black (Mitchell-Walthour and Darity 2014). Previous studies found that while darker-skinned Latinos may not identify racially as Black, they do mark their skin color more accurately on surveys (Fraga et al. 2006; E. Telles 2017). Including categories that capture darker-skinned Latinos of mixed race like moreno and more familiar terms helps address the problem of Black Latinos being undercounted.

We ask how Black Latinos position themselves relative to Black Americans and challenge the notion that darker Latinos are distancing themselves from Blackness. The discrimination that Black Latinos face not only from Anglo-Whites but from lighter-skinned Latinos may produce evaluations of group identity that align more closely with Black Americans rather than Latinos. Moreover, we can analyze how Latinos in the "middle categories" identify and how this might impact their group identity when compared to those that identify as White or Black. We posit that because some darker-skinned Latinos are perceived distinctly from phenotypically lighter Latinos and are racialized as Black, they experience racial identity differently from other Latinos. We look at closeness to other Latinos and linked fate with Black Americans to see if race and skin tone impact the way that they feel about group solidarities. We expect that respondents who identify in the middle category, as *trigueño* or other are more likely to feel closer to other Latinos, because they have what can be described as a racialized "brown" identity. Furthermore, we expect that individuals who have dark complexions will also be more likely to feel closer to other Latinos due to their more racialized experiences in the United States. Respondents who identify racially as Black are more likely to report feeling less close to Latinos because they view themselves in a

different position in the racial hierarchy. We also expect that when looking at linked fate with Black people, our Black-identifying respondents will have higher levels of Black-linked fate than the rest of our sample.

We know from previous studies that perceptions of skin tone and racial identification interplay with one another. Ostfeld and Yadon (2022) find that Latinos who believe their skin to be lighter than it is measured are associated with more conservative positions, while those who believe their skin tone to be darker are associated with more liberal policy positions. Similarly, Egan (2020) notes that self-identification can be malleable depending on one's political ideology. However, there is more that goes into racial identification than perceptions of skin tone. Dowling (2014) finds that while many Mexican Americans mark White, they do not necessarily view themselves as such. Instead, it is a way to claim a sense of American identity and belonging to the United States, even if they have been racialized as "brown." Some respondents may choose a category as a way to signal their solidarities, while others may choose another category to create distance. These works note that there are many factors that go into how someone not only identifies but views their skin color. Even though these measures are imperfect, looking at expanded racial categories and skin color gives us a better sense of the broad spectrum of racial identification and group solidarity among Latinos.

Expanding the number of racial categories also mitigates the number of respondents that mark some other race and may also provide more options to those who typically select White. Latin American racial categories use what would be classified as a racial continuum rather than the one-drop rule that continues to characterize U.S. practices of racial classification (Clealand 2017; Madrid 2012; E. Telles and Paschel 2014). The categories "in between" Black and White or Indigenous and White vary by country but include *mestizo, mulato, indio, pardo, trigueño, jabao,* and *moreno*. While racial categories in Latin America and the Caribbean differ in number and construction from the United States, the racial hierarchies are the same (Clealand 2017). Whiteness in both regions is valued, whereas darker skin, indigeneity, and Blackness are devalued. Nonetheless, the differences in categorization coupled with the racialization of Latinos in the United States contribute to the unwillingness to pick a racial category. The tendency to describe Latinos as (1) a racial group and (2) racially homogeneous creates erroneous conceptions of Latinos and erases racial diversity among Latino communities. While many Latinos do indeed fall into mixed-race categories that cannot be found in the U.S. Census, there are significant numbers of Latinos that would be categorized as Black or White according to U.S. racial constructions. This means that Latinos experience racial discrimination and privilege in vastly distinct ways, and we argue that this matters for self-identity and political attitudes.

Measuring race and skin color

This article seeks to better understand, through the lens of Puerto Ricans, group identity and how race and skin color may play a role in self-identification and connections to Latinos and Blacks.

Using a survey of Puerto Ricans living in the United States conducted in 2020 by the Center for American Progress, we examine two important questions about Latino identity. The second objective is to understand how racial classification and skin tone may

influence a sense of group identity. Scholars have found that Latinos live a racialized existence in the U.S. in which skin color plays a large role (Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Portes and Rumbaut 2005), and it is important that this aspect is not overlooked. By using the case of Puerto Ricans in the United States, this paper will help us better understand the nuances of racial identification and politicized identity among a single but diverse national origin group.

Puerto Rico, although a territory[4] of the United States, categorizes race in similar ways to Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Puerto Rico's intermediate racial category is termed *trigueño* or wheat-colored, to classify those that fall between the Black and White categories. There are many terms used to mark Blackness as well as closeness to Whiteness, colloquially in Puerto Rico, but national denials of structural racism in exchange of an image of *mestizaje*, or racial mixing, fluidity and harmony, have dominated racial rhetoric (Clealand 2021). Puerto Rico specifically uses a racial triad theory to emphasize *mestizaje* through the joining of African, European and Indigenous (Taíno) ancestry. Consequently, the emphasis on multiracial identities encourages silence on the issue of racism and racial identification. This raceless narrative also conceals anti-Blackness and racial discrimination that darker skinned Puerto Ricans endure (Rivera-Rideau 2015; Rodríguez-Silva 2012).

We expect that respondents who identify as *trigueño* or other are more likely to feel closer to other Latinos because they have what can be described as a racialized "brown" identity. By this, we mean that those in the middle categories, who are neither Black nor White are racialized as Latino. Furthermore, we expect that individuals who have dark complexions will also be more likely to feel closer to other Latinos due to their more racialized experiences in the United States. Respondents who identify racially as Black are more likely to report feeling less close to Latinos because they view themselves in a different position in the racial hierarchy. Finally, when looking at linked fate with Black people in the United States, we expect that our Black-identifying respondents will have higher levels of Black-linked fate than the rest of our sample.

Closeness to Latinos and Black-linked fate

We measure feelings of closeness to other Latinos to examine how our Puerto Rican respondents of different skin tones and racial backgrounds feel about their connections to other Latinos. We also examine linked fate with Black people to examine if Puerto Ricans with darker skin tones are more likely to feel linked fate with Blacks relative to those with lighter skin tones, and if racial identification influences linked fate with Blacks. Linked fate is a utility heuristic in the study of Black politics that uses what is best for the group as a substitute for what is best for the individual (Dawson 1994). This measure is asked, "do you think that what happens to Black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life." There have been several studies that have examined Latino-linked fate, most of these studies look at linked fate with other Latinos regardless of racial category (G. Sanchez, Masuoka, and Abrams 2019; G. R. Sanchez and Masuoka 2010). Some have questioned whether we should use linked fate for other racial and ethnic groups and if we can draw conclusions about Latino or Asian linked fate because of their different lived experiences and understandings of the concept (Gay, Hochschild, and White 2016; McClain et al. 2009; Rogers

and Kim 2021). We contend that if we analyze this concept without regard for the race and/or skin color of the respondent, we are making an incomplete comparison. In fact, the original study of linked fate does not take skin color into account (Dawson 1994). We believe that this is an important dimension that is worth studying. We examine Latino-linked fate with Black people, with the expectation that the results will differ based on differences in racial identification among Latinos. This approach can provide insight into racial solidarity between minority groups and elucidate how Afro-Latinos view themselves in relation to Blacks and Latinos.

Data and methods

Our data comes from a survey from The Center for American Progress of 1,000 Puerto Rican respondents living in the United States. The survey was conducted from September 4th to 11th of 2020. Survey respondents participated either by phone or online and were able to choose whether they wished to take the survey in English or Spanish.

Our models focus on how responses differ by race by using racial identification as an independent variable. We include variables for Black, *moreno*, other, and *trigueño* in our regressions, using White, the most common category among our respondents, as the reference group. While *trigueño* is the most common racial category for mixed race or "brown" Puerto Ricans, we also used the category, *moreno*, which refers to darker-skinned complexions and can sometimes serve as another term for Black or as a category that is lighter than those who identify as Black. As racial categories are complex and never in stasis, *moreno* is sometimes used as a term for Blackness when one is avoiding the word, Black. It serves to mark Blackness and distance oneself from a Black or African American identity at the same time. For this reason, we did not see the use of Black and *moreno* in our survey categories as redundant and in fact, expect those who chose *moreno* to display different notions of group identity than those that chose to self-identify as Black.

Many respondents selected these middle racial categories rather than "other." As shown in Figure 1, 8% of respondents identified as Black, 11% as *moreno*, 10% as other, 25% as *trigueño*, and 46% identified as White. A full 35% of respondents used the alternative identifiers of *trigueño* and *moreno*. If we compare these results with the Census, there are far less respondents that chose "other" in our survey, indicating that a change in the racial categories would produce less ambiguous results.

To ensure that the expanded racial categories were used beyond first-generation respondents, we also examined racial identification categories by generation. These results are in Table 1. We see that 34% of first-generation respondents identified as *trigueño*, 7% as other, 11% as *moreno*, 6% as Black, and 42% as White. The number of respondents identifying as *moreno* does not decrease among second or third-generation respondents. We do see a decrease in the percentage of second and third-generation respondents identifying as *trigueño*, but there is still a sizable share that chooses this category. Among second-generation respondents, 22% identify as *trigueño*, whereas 8% of third-generation respondents selected *trigueño*. We find that second and third generation respondents are somewhat more likely to identify as White. While 42% of first-generation respondents identified as White, 46% of second-generation
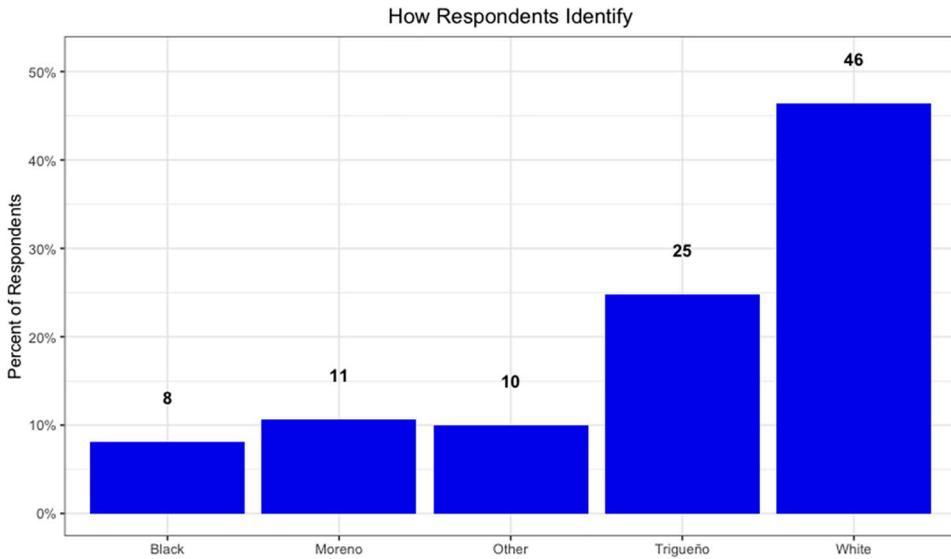
Figure 1. Racial identification among full sample.

Table 1. Racial identification by generation (each column sums to 100).

	First Gen	Second Gen	Third Gen +
White	42	46	58
Black	6	8	13
Moreno	11	11	10
Other	7	13	11
Trigueño	34	22	8

respondents, and 58% of third-generation respondents selected White as their racial identification. However, the fact that we still see respondents picking *trigueño* and *moreno* in these later generations indicates that categories found in the home country are still relevant for the Puerto Rican Latino population in the United States and can help better capture respondents who might otherwise identify as "other."

To capture skin tone, respondents in the online sample were shown the 10-point skin color scale (Figure 2). For respondents who participated via telephone ($n = 303$), they were asked to rate their skin tone from 1 to 10 with 1 being the lightest and 10 being the darkest. While we know that self-reported skin tone measures can be influenced by how respondents view themselves (Ostfeld and Yadon 2022), it also provides insights into how our respondents are racialized by others. We rescaled skin tone into three categories: light (1–3), medium (4–6) and dark (7–10). We opted to create these three categories because while there can be some variation in one's skin tone, many typically think of themselves as falling within a particular range. Based on the hand scale presented to our participants these cut points felt the most appropriate for the scale. However, we also ran our analysis using the full 10-point scale and found similar results. These can be found in the appendix.

Figure 3 shows the results for skin tone. When separated into light, medium, and dark categories, 33% of respondents chose lighter skin tones, 49% chose medium skin tones,
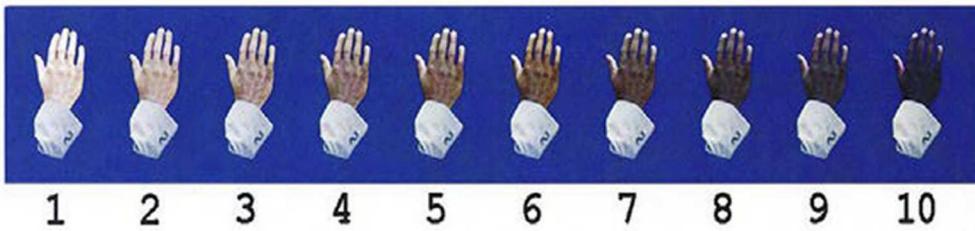
Scale of Skin Color Darkness

Figure 2. Skin tone scale.

and 17% chose dark skin tones. In our models, skin tone is treated as a continuous variable ranging from 1 to 3.[5]

Figure 4 shows how respondents of different skin tones identify racially. Unsurprisingly, respondents who are light in complexion overwhelmingly identify as White (72%). Trigeños, our middle "brown" category, make up 14% of those who report a lighter skin tone. We see fewer *moreno* and Black respondents making up the light category, but *moreno*s still make up 5% of respondents who report a lighter skin tone. The ways in which identification and skin tone don't align with common assumptions are also important to understand.

There is greater variation and less congruence between racial identification and skin tone when looking at the medium and dark categories. Whites comprise the largest share (36%) of the medium category, followed by *trigueños* (32%). *Moreno* and Black respondents also comprise 10% of the medium category. Given that Whites make up 46% of the total sample, this is not surprising. While the relationship between racial identification and skin tone is messier when compared to the light category, it is important to remember that nearly half of
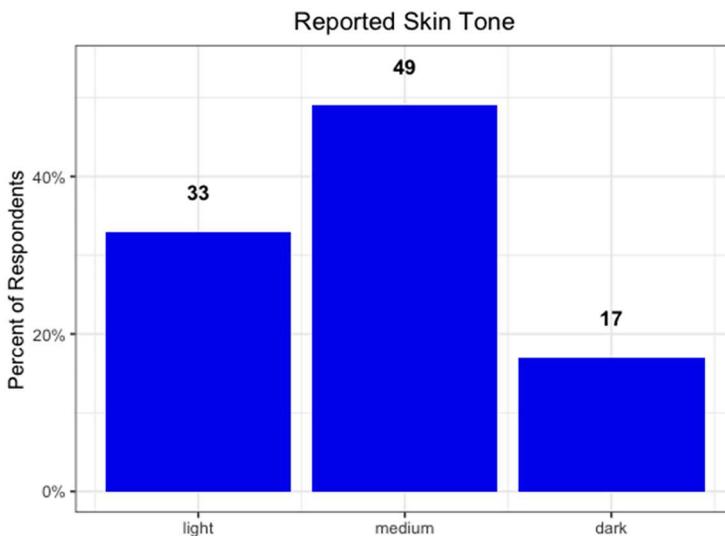

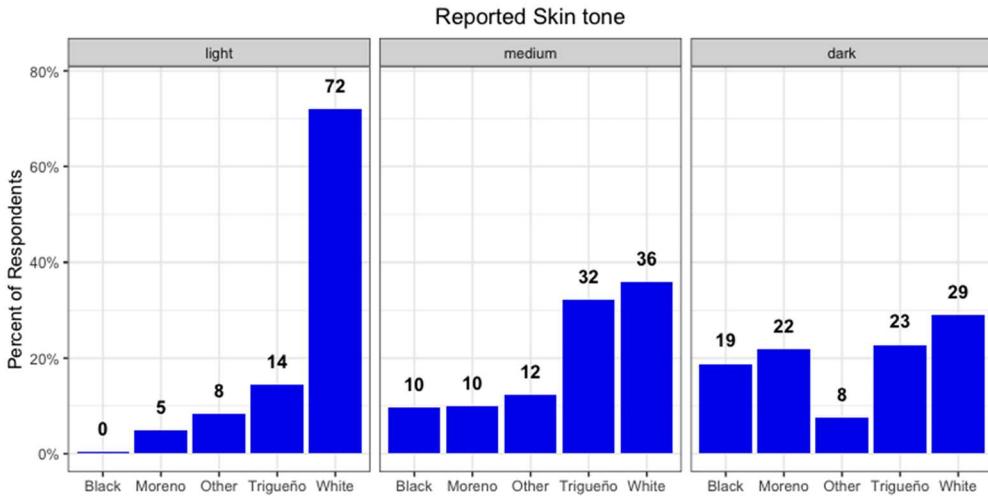**Figure 3.** Skin tone among full sample.

Figure 4. Racial identification by skin tone category.

the sample falls into the medium category, leading to greater heterogeneity in the medium group. We find that Black respondents make up 19% of the dark category while *morenos* make up 22%. However, there are still large shares of *trigueño* and White respondents who are in the dark skin tone category. This only further justifies the need to examine both race and skin tone when evaluating group identity.

Skin tone and racial identification do not have a clear one to one relationship that some may expect. This happens for a number of reasons; first, narratives of racial fluidity in Latin American and the Caribbean often allow for different ways to self-identify, especially for those who are in the medium tone category. For example, two respondents with similar medium tones may identify (and be racialized) as White or as Black depending on parentage, hair texture or other facial characteristics. Second, there can also be some distancing from the White and Black categories by respondents that may deny their Blackness or, conversely, identify as a category other than White because of experiences with discrimination as a Puerto Rican. Finally, racial categorization, as opposed to skin tone, can often be a politicized choice. While we do acknowledge there is some distancing from Blackness among Latinos, the choice of Black can also be a political statement that both reinforces solidarity with that group and reflects experiences with racialization. Likewise, the choice of *trigueño* can be a political statement made by lighter-skinned Latinos. While we can't explore the motivations of our respondents, we think this is an area of future qualitative research that scholars should consider when looking at racial identification among Latinos.

Dependent variables: group closeness and linked fate

We use feelings of Latino group closeness and Black-linked fate as our dependent variables. Latino group closeness is a measure that asks if respondents feel closer to other Latinos than to other racial and ethnic groups. This item is measured on a 7-point scale that ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree.
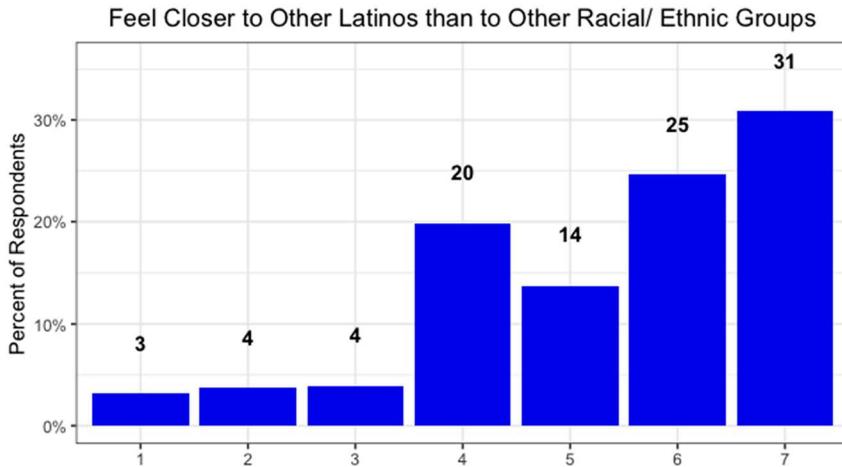
Figure 5. Closeness to other Latinos among full CAP sample.

The distribution of the closeness measure can be found in Figure 5. We find that more respondents are on the higher end of the scale, with only 11% of the sample marking 3 or below. 34% are firmly in the middle of the scale, at 4 or 5, and 56% of respondents indicated a 6 or a 7 on the closeness scale. Who are the respondents in the middle and lower end of the closeness measure and how might race and skin tone factor into closeness to other group members?

Our second variable of interest is linked fate with Black communities. This question is worded, "Do you think what happens generally to Black people in this country will have something to do with your life?". Responses range from 0 to 3, with 0 indicating no, to 3 yes, a lot, and are shown in Figure 6. The histogram shows that 29% of respondents say
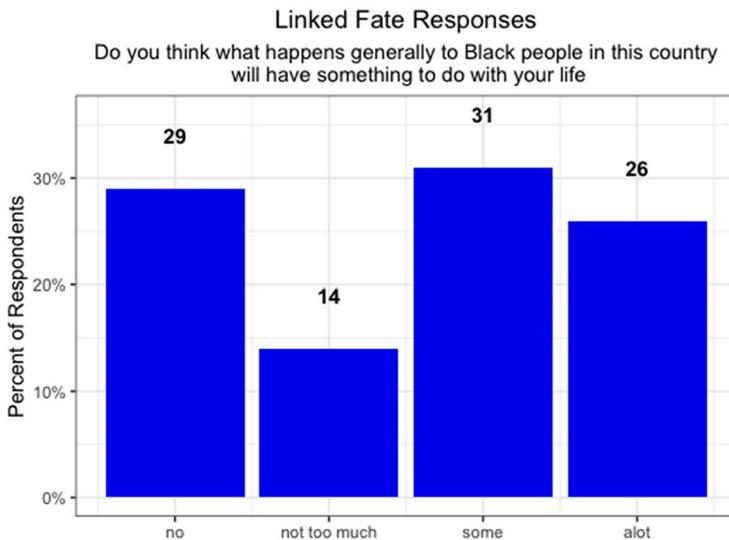

Figure 6. Linked fate responses among full sample.

they have no linked fate with Black people, while 14% responded not too much, 31% of respondents say they have some linked fate, and 26% responded that they have a lot of linked fate with Black people in the United States. For both of our dependent variables, we model our results using ordinary least squares.

Controls

When examining closeness to other Latinos, we also included the strength of respondents' Puerto Rican identity as an independent variable. The question reads, "How much is being Puerto Rican an important part of how you see yourself?". We do this so that closeness with other Latinos does more than capture the relationship with people of the same national origin group.[6] We control for a number of demographic measures such as income, education, age, and gender, as well as dummy variables for states with larger Puerto Rican populations to see if there are any geographic differences. These states are Florida, New York, and Pennsylvania, with Puerto Ricans living in other parts of the U.S. as our reference group. Similarly, we control for the respondent's generation, with first-generation respondents serving as our reference category. First-generation respondents are respondents who were born on the island of Puerto Rico. We also control for the language of interview, with Spanish language coded as 1 and English coded as 0, and control for the mode of survey responses.

Group closeness and linked fate results

When examining the dimension of closeness, we find that respondents who identify as Black are less likely to say they feel closer to other Latinos than other racial groups relative to respondents who identify as White. This is in line with our expectations since respondents who present more phenotypically Black are more likely to have different racialized experiences. Moreover, anti-Blackness within Latino communities can marginalize Black Latinos from the larger ethnic group. Skin tone is positive and statistically significant, with darker-skinned individuals being more likely to say that they feel closer to other Latinos. Holding a strong sense of Puerto Rican identity, higher income individuals, respondents who took the survey in Spanish, and being younger are also all positively associated with Latino group closeness.

Figure 7 displays the estimated increase in closeness to Latinos by racial identification and skin tone. Examining the image, we see that the predicted values for Black respondents are generally lower when compared to the other racial and ethnic groups. *Moreno* respondents are similar to *trigueños* and both groups have higher predicted levels of Latino group closeness out of all of the racial groups. Finally, there is a modest uptick as skin tones become darker for all categories.

Examining our regression results for linked fate with Black people, we find that having a darker skin tone is associated with higher levels of Black-linked fate. A one-unit change in skin tone is associated with a .216 increase in linked fate responses. Interestingly, identifying as Black is not statistically significant, though we do find that the association is positive (.281increse). This suggests that the respondent's physical appearance may play a larger role in their sense of Black-linked fate than their racial identification. We also find that respondents with greater levels of education are associated with an increase
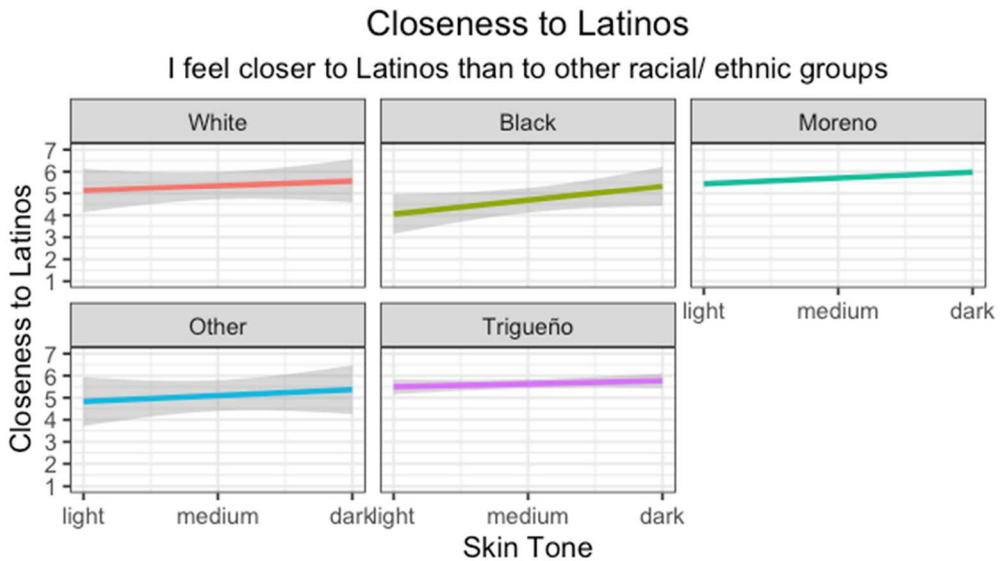
Closeness to Latinos
I feel closer to Latinos than to other racial/ ethnic groups

Figure 7. Predicted values for closeness to other Latinos by racial identification and skin tone.

in their linked fate responses. Third-generation respondents are also more likely to have higher levels of linked fate relative to first-generation respondents. Finally, older respondents are negatively associated with linked fate. This may point to a greater tendency for younger, later-generation Puerto Ricans to see their politics in line with Black Americans.

Figure 8 displays the predicted values for Black-linked fate. While not statistically significant, respondents who identify racially as Black hold stronger feelings of Black-linked fate. The rest of the racial groups strongly cluster together, but again, going from light to
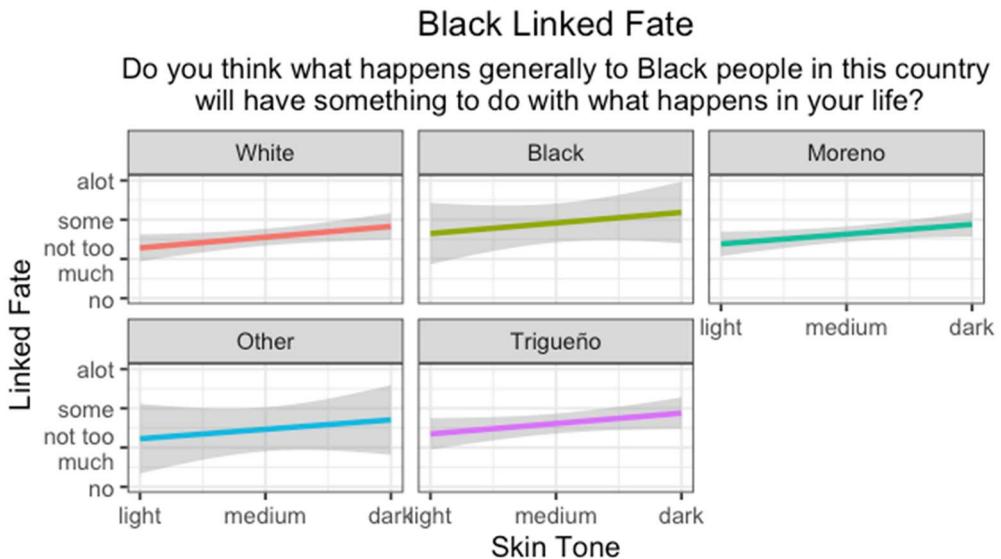
Black Linked Fate
Do you think what happens generally to Black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?

Figure 8. Predicted values for black-linked fate by racial identification and skin tone.

Table 2. CAP data: Latino group closeness and linked fate regressions.

	I feel closer to other Latinos	Linked fate with Blacks
Black	−0.496*	0.281
	(0.193)	(0.144)
Moreno	0.096	0.042
	(0.176)	(0.132)
Other	−0.192	−0.030
	(0.169)	(0.127)
Trigueño	0.234	0.154
	(0.127)	(0.095)
Skin tone	0.164*	0.216***
	(0.079)	(0.059)
Puerto Rican Identity	0.458***	
	(0.061)	
Income	0.108***	−0.027
	(0.031)	(0.024)
Education	0.008	0.097*
	(0.052)	(0.039)
FL	−0.063	−0.206*
	(0.133)	(0.100)
NY	−0.231.	−0.220*
	(0.134)	(0.101)
PA	−0.151	−0.068
	(0.184)	(0.138)
2nd Gen	0.009	0.021
	(0.117)	(0.087)
3rd Gen +	0.235	0.277*
	(0.147)	(0.110)
Spanish survey	0.636***	−0.108
	(0.141)	(0.106)
Phone survey	0.213	0.162
	(0.150)	(0.112)
Age	−0.012***	−0.008**
	(0.003)	(0.002)
Female	0.003	−0.078
	(0.099)	(0.075)
Constant	3.378***	2.268***
	(0.345)	(0.219)
Observations	989	989
R^2	0.143	0.079
Adjusted R^2	0.128	0.064

Note: *$p < 0.05$;** $p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$.

dark on the skin tone scale among all racial identification is associated with a slight increase in Black-linked fate. Here the clear marker for solidarity with Blacks is skin tone rather than racial identification (Table 2).

Discussion

Our findings indicate that our expanded racial measures may more accurately reflect how people view themselves. Racial categories that correspond to Latin American and Caribbean notions of race have relevance and improve racial self-identification by decreasing the number of respondents who mark other. Intermediate racial categories represent the "brownness" that Latinos have long been associated with. We argue that all Latino surveys should be asking about racial identification and should provide more relevant categories to choose from. Those that are not in the intermediate categories and instead may be racialized as White or Black, have different attachments to the group and different

experiences than those that are "brown". In this study, Latino was not presented as a racial category, and it is possible that respondents selecting trigeño or moreno might otherwise identify as Latino because of their proximity to brownness. We do think that this could be the case, but using moreno and trigeño still gives us a bit more variation and understanding of how Latino respondents view themselves. This would be worth testing in future studies. Additionally, skin tone plays an important role in how close Latinos feel to other Latinos and their sense of Black-linked fate. The fact that we see darker skin tones associated with stronger solidarities reinforces the idea of racial hierarchy in the United States. Whiteness continues to have a privileged position, and phenotypical whiteness likely accounts for weaker solidarities with Latinos and Black-linked fate.

However, our findings also show that those who identify as Black are correlated with being less likely to feel closer to other Latinos. This also is evidence of the racial hierarchy in that Black Latinos do not have the same levels of closeness to Latinos who are often placed somewhere in between White and Black. Racial identification and skin tone both play an important role in how Latinos position themselves relative to both Latinos and Black people. Future work on Latino group identity and linked fate should include race and skin color in order to employ a comprehensive understanding of the effect of race and racialization on Latino identity. Although we find that skin tone and racial identification do not always fit as we may expect, overall, there is substantial congruence between skin tones and the corresponding racial categories. Some of the variations from expected alignments serve as an important explanation for the uncertainty respondents' face when confronted with racial categories. These are the same challenges that face Latin American racial scholars (Clealand 2022). Overall, most with medium or brown skin tones identify with a mixed-race category and most darker-skinned respondents identify with a Black or mixed-race category. But these categories mean different things for different generations and different skin tones. Moreover, while darker-skinned Latinos may identify as Black, *moreno* or *trigueño*, they are more likely to identify with others that have similar phenotypes. The inclusion of skin tone allows us to provide details about how respondents of varying skin colors identify, which categories are most relevant to certain phenotypes and how tone, race and group closeness are all related.

By examining group closeness with a racial framing, we can understand how this concept applies to Latinos. Black respondents had lower levels of Latino group identity relative to Whites indicating that Black Puerto Ricans in the United States may feel closer to Black people overall, and less connected to Latinos as a whole. It also demonstrates that our Black respondents are not necessarily distancing themselves from Blackness as previous scholarship and the Census results would suggest. Rather, we argue that not all identify with a Black/African American racial category but do recognize their Blackness and positionality in the U.S., creating feelings of solidarity with other Black people. Considering the data that identify racial disparities among Latinos as well as intra-Latino, anti-Black racism (Araujo-Dawson 2015; Benson and Clealand 2021; Haywood 2017; Holder and Aja 2021; Lavariega Monforti and Sanchez 2010; Rosado 2019), our results for Black Latinos make sense and argue for a Black experience across ethnicities. It is crucial that we take race into account when talking about Latinos as a group so that we develop methodologically sound theories for all members of the group.

Notes

1. Surveys in Latin America more recently have adopted both racial categorization and skin color to address the challenges in racial self-identification in the region where citizens are either not accustomed to marking race or choose categories that do not match with how they may be racialized by others (E. Telles and Paschel 2014).
2. Ideally we would have liked to examine linked fate with Blacks and linked fate with Latinos but Latino linked fate was not asked on this survey.
3. https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B03001%3A%20HISPANIC%20OR%20LATINO%20ORIGIN%20BY%20SPECIFIC%20ORIGIN&g=&lastDisplayedRow=30&table=B03001&tid=ACSDT1Y2018.B03001&hidePreview=true
4. Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States is a colonial one despite the island's official term as a Free Associated State or Commonwealth of the United States.
5. We also run our models using skin tone as a categorical variable. These results can be found in the appendix.
6. When we take out this measure our color scale and racial identification variables have a larger effect.

Disclosure statement

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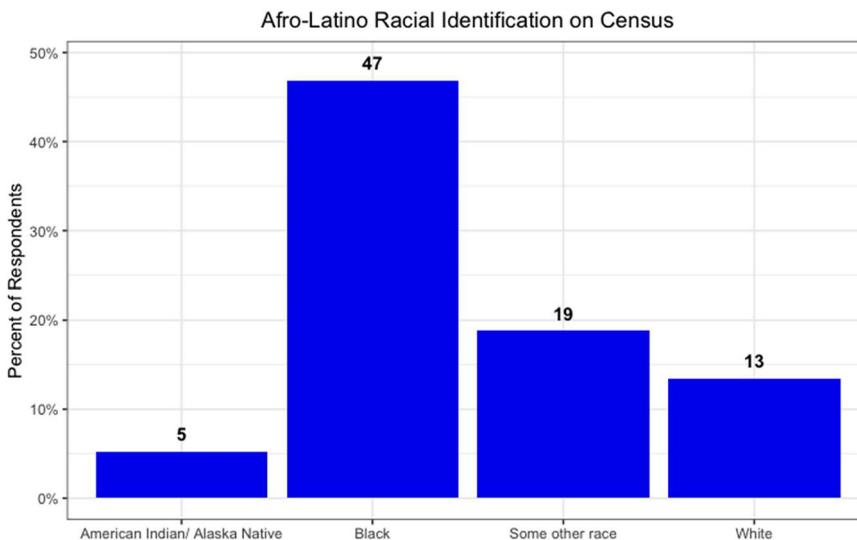
Appendix

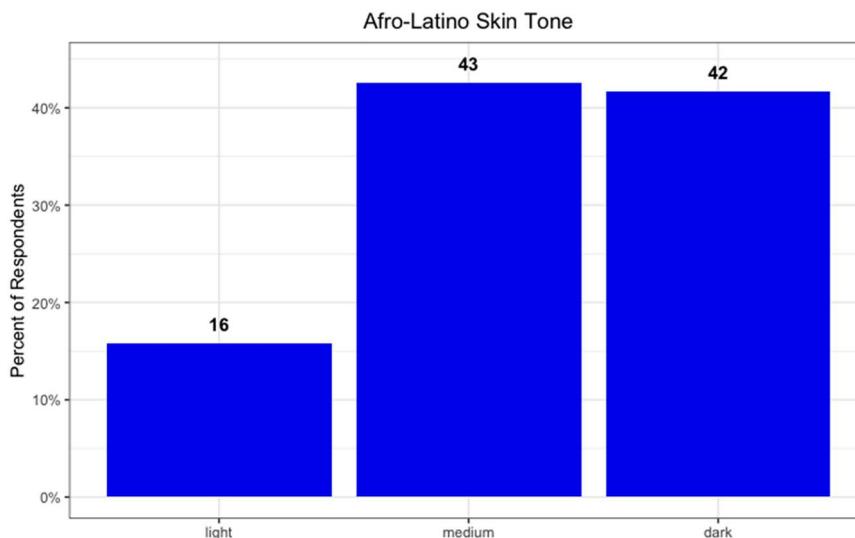**Figure A1.** 2020 CMPS: Afro-Latino self-identification on census.

Figure A2. 2020 CMPS: Afro-Latino skin tone.

Table A1. OLS regressions using the full 10-point skin tone variable.

	Closer to other Latinos	Black-linked fate
Black	−0.503**	0.246.
	(0.194)	(0.145)
Moreno	0.104	0.032
	(0.175)	(0.131)
Other	−0.185	−0.029
	(0.169)	(0.127)
Trigueño	0.236.	0.144
	(0.127)	(0.095)
Skin tone (1–10)	0.054*	0.083***
	(0.027)	(0.020)
Puerto Rican ID	0.455***	
	(0.061)	
Income	0.108***	−0.027
	(0.031)	(0.024)
Education	0.009	0.100*
	(0.052)	(0.039)
FL	−0.064	−0.209*
	(0.133)	(0.100)
NY	−0.227.	−0.215*
	(0.134)	(0.101)
PA	−0.148	−0.063
	(0.184)	(0.138)
2nd Gen	0.015	0.026
	(0.117)	(0.087)
3rd Gen +	0.241	0.283**
	(0.147)	(0.109)
Age	−0.012***	−0.007**
	(0.003)	(0.002)
Female	0.001	−0.079
	(0.099)	(0.075)
Spanish interview	0.628***	−0.108
	(0.140)	(0.105)
Phone int	0.217	0.160
	(0.149)	(0.112)

(*Continued*)

Table A1. Continued.

	Closer to other Latinos	Black-linked fate
Constant	3.441***	2.276***
	(0.337)	(0.211)
Observations	989	989
R^2	0.143	0.083
Adjusted R^2	0.128	0.068

Note: *$p < 0.1$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A2. OLS regression models with skin tone as a categorical variable using light as the reference category.

	Latino closeness	Black-linked fate
Black	−0.496*	0.289*
	(0.193)	(0.145)
Moreno	0.096	0.045
	(0.176)	(0.132)
Other	−0.191	−0.013
	(0.170)	(0.128)
Trigueño	0.234.	0.178.
	(0.129)	(0.097)
Medium tone	0.161	0.129
	(0.120)	(0.090)
Dark tone	0.329*	0.455***
	(0.160)	(0.119)
Puerto Rican ID	0.458***	
	(0.061)	
Income	0.108***	−0.027
	(0.032)	(0.024)
Education	0.008	0.097*
	(0.052)	(0.039)
FL	−0.063	−0.209*
	(0.133)	(0.100)
NY	−0.231.	−0.223*
	(0.134)	(0.101)
PA	−0.151	−0.082
	(0.184)	(0.138)
2nd Gen	0.009	0.028
	(0.117)	(0.087)
3rd Gen +	0.235	0.282*
	(0.147)	(0.110)
age	−0.012***	−0.008**
	(0.003)	(0.002)
female	0.003	−0.069
	(0.100)	(0.075)
Spanish interview	0.635***	−0.122
	(0.142)	(0.106)
Phone interview	0.213	0.175
	(0.150)	(0.112)
Constant	3.544***	2.522***
	(0.330)	(0.198)
Observations	989	989
R^2	0.143	0.080
Adjusted R^2	0.127	0.064

Note: *$p < 0.1$;** $p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.