
Hispanic and Latino Representation in Film: Erasure On Screen & Behind the Camera Across 1,300 Popular Movies

Annenberg Inclusion Initiative

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The purpose of this report was to analyze the prevalence and portrayal of Hispanic/Latinos on screen and behind the camera across 1,300 top box office films from 2007 to 2019. Quantitatively, the analysis focused on the frequency of Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads and all speaking or named characters as well as how prevalence varies by gender, age, and descent. Behind the camera, we assessed Hispanic/Latino directors, producers and casting directors across the 13-year sample. An analysis of U.S.-born Latinos was included for leads/co leads, directors, and in the qualitative analysis. Qualitatively, stereotypes and tropes surrounding Hispanic/Latino characters were assessed in a subset of specific movies theatrically released in 2017, 2018 and 2019. As with all our reports, solutions for systemic change are offered in the concluding section. Below are the key findings from the report.

Key Findings

On Screen

Leads/Co Leads. Only seven of the highest-grossing films in 2019 (7%) depicted a Hispanic/Latino lead or co lead. Moving from films ($n=100$) to protagonists ($n=113$), the story remains the same. Seven or 6.2% of all leads/co leads identified were cast with an actor of Hispanic or Latino descent.

Across 1,300 movies and 1,387 leads/co leads, only 48 were Hispanic/Latino. This translates into a mere 3.5% samplewide. And yet, this identity group comprises 18.7% of the U.S. population and 49% of residents in Los Angeles. Very little deviation occurred over time for Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads. In 2019, there were 7 and in 2018 there were 5. Zero Hispanic/Latino leads appeared across the sample of 100 top films of 2007.

Leads/co leads varied by gender, age, sexuality, disability and descent. Focusing on gender, 6 of 7 movies in 2019 with a Hispanic/Latino lead or co lead featured a girl or woman driving the plot. This was a 13-year high. Across the full sample, over half (54.2%, $n=26$) of Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads were filled with girls/women. While notable, contextualizing these findings samplewide tells a different story. Only 1.9% of **all** leads/co leads across 1,300 movies were Hispanic/Latino girls/women as were only 6.5% of **all** female protagonists.

Turning to age, there were no Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads 45 years of age or older driving the plot in the 100 top films of 2019. This trend plays out across the 13-year sample. Only ten, or less than 1%, of the 1,300 films studied had a Hispanic/Latino actor 45 years of age or older as the lead/co lead. Crossing age with gender, the opportunities for Hispanic women and Latinas to lead/co lead a film nearly vanish: only three of the ten Hispanic/Latino lead roles were held by women in this age bracket. In two of these cases, the roles were played by one actor.

Notably, none of the Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads in 2019 were depicted as LGBTQ+. One Hispanic/Latina lead/co lead character was shown with a disability on screen. This is consistent with 2018 and 2017, when a Hispanic/Latino actor who played a character with a disability was at the center of a film.

In 2019, 5% ($n=5$) of films featured leads/co leads with Latinx actors. Four of 5 films starred a Latinx girl or woman in the most prominent role. One role was filled by a Latinx man. Latinx girls and women have been cast more frequently than Latinx boys and men across the 13-year sample. Of the 31 leading/co leading roles that featured Latinx actors, 64.5% were filled with girls and women ($n=20$) and 35.5% were filled with boys and men ($n=11$).

Only 31 or 2.2% of all 1,387 protagonists were Latinx. Two Latinx actors have never co led a film together across the 13-year time frame. The 31 roles across the 13-yr time frame were filled with 24 individual Latinx actors. While most Latinx actors only worked once from 2007-2019, Cameron Diaz and Jennifer Lopez were the top performers driving the action in 5 and 3 films respectively.

There were very few leading roles filled with Afro-Latino actors. In 2019, there were three Afro-Latino leads/co leads, though only six Afro-Latino actors appeared in lead/co lead roles overall. Only one Afro-Latino lead/co lead actor played a character who was Afro-Latino.

All Speaking or Named Characters. Across the 13-year sample and 51,158 speaking or named characters evaluated, Hispanic/Latinos only comprise 5% ($n=2,578$) of these roles. No change over time was revealed with 2019 (5.9%) not meaningfully different from 2018 (6%) or 2007 (3.3%).

Examining population norms across the 50 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., 78.8% of these U.S. locations have more Hispanic/Latino residents than what we see across 1,300 feature films. Drilling down even further, each of the 25 most populous counties in the U.S have a higher percentage of Hispanic/Latinos than Hollywood films.

Only two films in 2019 depicted a cast of Hispanic/Latino characters proportional to the U.S. population (18.7%). Five films exceeded proportional representation. Over time, only 20 films across the 1,300 film sample were within ± 2 percentage points of the U.S. Census benchmark.

More than a third (35%) of the top films of 2019 rendered Hispanic/Latino characters invisible. That is, 35 films did not include a single Hispanic/Latino speaking or named character across the entirety of the film.

Each year, across the 100 most popular movies, Hispanic/Latino characters have been missing from no less than 34 films (in 2011) and up to 55 films (in 2012). Women from these groups consistently see even higher rates of exclusion from popular stories. The invisibility of Hispanic women and Latinas was at an all-time high in 2007 when they were missing from a full 78 of the 100 films. In 2019, 59 films rendered this group invisible. Out of 1,300 films, a total of 856 erased Latina and Hispanic women altogether.

In 2019, 98 of 100 movies excluded LGBTQ Hispanic/Latinos and 95 of 100 movies excluded Hispanic/Latino characters with disabilities on screen. Only one film depicted a Hispanic/Latino character who was both gay and had a disability. Across five years and 500 films, 95.4% ($n=477$) of films

were missing a Hispanic/Latino character with disability. For the past six years and 600 films, only seven movies included a LGBT-identifying Hispanic/Latino character. That means that 98.8% of films were devoid of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Hispanic/Latinos.

Behind the Camera

A total of 1,447 directors were credited across the 100 top-grossing films from 2007 to 2019. Hispanic/Latino directors represented 4.2% ($n=61$) of all helmers across the last 13 years. 2019 (4.5%, $n=5$) was no different from 2018 (4.5%, $n=5$) or 2007 (2.7%, $n=3$).

In terms of gender, only 3 Hispanic women or Latinas have directed a top film over the past 13 years (i.e., *Patricia Riggen*, *Melina Matsoukas*, *Roxann Dawson*). To contextualize these results, the ratio of white male directors to Hispanic female or Latina directors was 200 to 1. In terms of Afro-Latinos, only 2 were credited across the 1,300 movies: *Steven Caple Jr.*, *Melina Matsoukas*.

The 61 directors overall were reduced to 35 unique helmers across the 13-year sample. One director made six top-grossing movies, the most across the sample. Five directors helmed a total of four movies each. Looking to ethnic heritage, almost one-third (31%) of directors were Mexican, 31% were Spanish, and 11% were Puerto Rican. Brazilian and Cuban directors accounted for 8.6% each, while 1 director was Argentine, 1 was Chilean, and 1 was Uruguayan. Slightly more than one-third (34.3%, $n=12$) of the 35 directors were born in the U.S., while the remaining 65.7% ($n=23$) were international.

Turning to producers, a total of 3,953 “Produced by” credits were evaluated across the 13-year sample. Overall, 3% ($n=119$) of producers were Hispanic/Latino and 97% ($n=3,834$) were not. The percentage of Hispanic/Latino producers in 2019 (5.6%, $n=19$) was not significantly different from 2018 (4.8%, $n=16$) or 2007 (2.2%, $n=6$). The majority of Hispanic/Latino producers were men (78.1%, $n=93$) while less than one-quarter (21.9%, $n=26$) were women. This is a ratio of 3.6 male Hispanic/Latino producers to every one Hispanic/Latina producer. Hispanic/Latina producers represented less than 1% (0.7%) of all producers across 1,300 top-grossing movies.

There were slight percentage differences over time for Hispanic/Latina producers, though little numerical deviation overall. In 2019, 36.8% ($n=7$) of Hispanic/Latino producers were women, compared to 25% ($n=4$) in 2018 and 16.7% ($n=1$) in 2007. While this represents slight progress, there were only 13 individual Hispanic/Latina producers across the 13 years.

Out of 2,014 casting directors for the 1,300 movies, 3.3% ($n=66$) were Hispanic/Latino and 96.7% ($n=1,948$) were not. Once again, there was no change over time. In 2019, 5.9% ($n=8$) of casting directors were Hispanic/Latino, compared to 4.3% ($n=6$) in 2018 and 1.3% ($n=2$) in 2007. The majority of Hispanic/Latino casting directors were women: 74.2% ($n=49$) in total across 13 years, compared to 25.8% ($n=17$) who were men.

Behind the camera inclusion was related to on screen portrayals. To illustrate, films with a Hispanic/Latino director were more likely to include Hispanic/Latino characters, as 13.9% of all characters were Hispanic/Latino across these films. Movies with a non-Hispanic/Latino director had casts that included Hispanic/Latino characters in 4.7% of all speaking roles. Looking at 300 top grossing films from 2017-2019, nearly half of the films (47.1%) with Hispanic/Latino directors had one or more Hispanic/Latino actors in a top-billed role, compared to 26.5% of films by non-Hispanic/Latino directors.

Once again, films with a Hispanic/Latino casting director were more likely to feature Hispanic/Latino characters than those without Hispanic/Latino casting directors: 10.6% vs. 4.8%. Less than half (41.7%) of 300 recent films (2017-2019) cast by Hispanic/Latino casting directors had top-billed Hispanic/Latino actors, compared to 26.5% of films cast by non-Hispanic/Latino casting directors.

The relationship between the presence of a Hispanic/Latino producer on films (yes, no) and on screen portrayals of characters from this community was not significant for speaking characters (9.5% vs. 4.7%). For top-billed talent across 300 popular recent movies (2017-2019) a different picture emerged. Slightly more than one-third (34.2%) of films with Hispanic/Latino producers had top roles held by Hispanic/Latino actors, compared to 26.7% of movies without a Hispanic/Latino producer.

Qualitative Analysis

The report includes an updated qualitative analysis of the context and stereotypical nature of roles featuring Hispanic/Latino characters on screen. We examined Hispanic/Latino characters across every film with one or more top billed Hispanic/Latino actors, including a total of 28 movies, and 132 characters (38 top billed characters; 94 speaking characters).

Of the 500 top billed actors across 2019, 7.6% ($n=38$) were Hispanic/Latino and appeared in 28 films. A full 82.1% ($n=23$) of movies featured only one Hispanic/Latino actor in the top billed cast. Three films had two and one movie featured four top-billed actors. All five top billed actors were Hispanic/Latino in only one of the 28 films (*Dora and the Lost City of Gold*).

We further examined the top-billed Hispanic/Latino actors to identify those who are U.S.-born Latinos not of Spanish descent (unless they were Spanish in addition to another Latino origin). Here we use the term Latinx to distinguish this group. Twenty-two (57.9%) Hispanic/Latino top-billed actors were Latinx.

Nearly one-third (31.6%) of Hispanic/Latino top-billed actors and 21.3% of all Hispanic/Latino characters were shown with some *religious affiliation*. A greater share of top-billed actors were shown in connection to religiosity in movies from 2019 than in those from 2017-2018.

Depictions of Hispanic/Latino characters-- both top-billed and all characters-- were consistent with our previous study on films from 2017-18. Nearly one-seventh (13.2%) of top-billed Hispanic/Latino characters and 13.8% of all Hispanic/Latino characters were shown in roles that depicted a *lower social class*.

Hispanic/Latinos overall were shown as *angry or temperamental*, consistent with what we found in 2017-18. This trait was more pronounced among top-billed Hispanic/Latino characters (23.7%) than among all characters (8.5%).

There was a difference between male and female characters in *sexualization*. Beginning with Hispanic/Latinas, 29.2% ($n=7$) of the 24 top-billed girls/women were sexualized, while none of the top-billed male Hispanic/Latino characters were. Among all characters, a similar gender difference emerged, as 26.5% ($n=9$) of all Hispanic/Latina characters but 10% ($n=6$) of Hispanic/Latino male characters were sexualized.

There was a higher rate of *criminality* in films from 2019 than 2017-18-- 39.5% of top-billed characters ($n=15$) and 29.8% ($n=28$) of all characters were portrayed as criminals. We further examined several

distinctions related to crime that were not part of our prior investigation. This included whether Hispanic/Latino characters that were portrayed as criminals were involved with *organized crime*, and whether *violent crime* was part of the portrayal. Although a single top-billed character (6.7%) was shown participating in organized crime, 39.3% ($n=11$) of all characters were part of gangs, involved in sex trafficking, or members of crime syndicates. Of the top-billed Hispanic/Latino characters shown as criminals, nearly half (40%, $n=6$) were violent, as were 21.4% ($n=6$) of all Hispanic/Latino characters depicted as violent criminals.

The portrayal of Hispanic/Latino characters still centers on immigrant or international experiences. Although 24 of the 28 films examined (85.7%) took place in the U.S., only 44, or 33.3% of characters examined were U.S.-born Latinos. In other words, 36.8% of top-billed characters ($n=14$) and 31.9% ($n=30$) of all speaking or named Hispanic/Latinos were depicted as Latinx. Looking to depictions of immigration, in 2019, Hispanic/Latino characters were shown as immigrants at a higher rate than in previous years across both top billed (13.2%, $n=5$) and all other Latino characters (8.5%, $n=8$).

Over a quarter (26.3%, $n=10$) of top billed, and 43.6% ($n=41$) of all Hispanic/Latino characters were shown living in a Latin American country across a portion of or the entirety of the plot.

Another way that Hispanic/Latinos were otherized was through *language*. Nearly half (47.4%, $n=18$) of top-billed characters and 56.4% ($n=53$) of Hispanic/Latino speaking or named characters demonstrated that they spoke or understood Spanish. One character in the film *Dora and the Lost City of Gold* spoke Quechua--a native Latin American language. Going further, 37.2% of all Hispanic/Latino characters ($n=35$), did not speak English or demonstrate a familiarity with the language, though none of them were top-billed.

Out of 97 characters that spoke one or more words of English overall, 27.8% spoke the language with an accent, indicating that Spanish was their first language. More than one-fifth (23.7%, $n=9$) of the 38 top billed Latinos and almost a third (30.5%, $n=18$) of English-speaking Hispanic/Latino characters spoke with a detectable Spanish accent.

Overall, 36.8% ($n=14$) of top billed and 43.6% ($n=41$) of all Hispanic/Latino characters were portrayed on screen without any references to their Latinidad across a variety of context cues. Seventeen top billed characters (44.7%) had references made to their Hispanic/Latino heritage verbally ($n=15$) and/or with cultural artifacts ($n=11$) across the context of the film. Cultural heritage was even more likely to be erased or minimized among all Hispanic/Latino characters. In only 26.6% of cases did Hispanic/Latino speaking or named characters make verbal remarks ($n=9$) or appear amongst cultural symbols ($n=22$) reflecting their Hispanic/Latino background.

Hispanic/Latino characters across the entire sample were shown in *isolation* more than half the time-- 50% of top billed Hispanic/Latinos were isolated and 51.1% of all Hispanic/Latino characters were never shown with family or other Hispanic/Latino community members.

The final area of interest regarding Hispanic/Latino characters in film was *occupation*. Fewer Hispanic/Latino characters were depicted with a job in 2019 (41.7%) than in 2017-2018 (52.3%). Similar patterns across all three years emerged, however, when examining the type of jobs held by Hispanic/Latinos across industry sectors. Of the 56 Hispanic/Latino characters with an occupation, 47.3% ($n=26$) were shown in a job that did not require a specialized education (e.g., salesperson, factory worker, line cook, street vendor). A quarter ($n=14$, 25.5%) were shown in law enforcement and security

(e.g., police officers, members of the military, security guards). Only 12.7% ($n=7$) depicted educated professionals (i.e., 3 medical doctors, 2 professors, 1 journalist). Finally, two characters (3.6%) held high level occupations involving STEM careers (1 pharmacist, and 1 government official). The continued emphasis on depicting Hispanic/Latino characters in low-level occupations perpetuates stereotypes and does little to reflect reality.

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The Annenberg Inclusion Initiative released its first report on the prevalence and portrayal of Latino characters in 1,200 top movies from 2007 to 2018. Since then, our work on the topic has continued to evolve. The purpose of this study is to update our initial study by examining the presence of Hispanic/Latino characters and content creators in the 100 top-grossing films of 2019, and to determine whether change has occurred over time for this community.

Given the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on theatrical distribution, 2020 is not included in the study. Films released in 2020 do not meet the definition of a “typical” top-grossing film. That is, they have not earned sufficient domestic theatrical revenue to be compared to top-grossing movies from previous years. If these films were included, any resulting deviations from over time patterns might be due to choices made about film releases in light of the pandemic and not a result of real change. Given this, movies in 2020 may be from a different population and thus it is unwise to include them in this longitudinal evaluation.

On the screen, we examined the prevalence of Hispanic/Latinos as leads/co leads driving the plot as well as all speaking or named characters. Behind the camera, the frequency of Hispanic/Latino directors, producers, and casting directors was calculated. As in our first report, we include a qualitative analysis of the portrayal or context surrounding top-billed Hispanic/Latino characters in 2019 movies, comparing the results to our work on 2017-2018 movies.

Throughout the report, we use the term Hispanic/Latino to refer to characters, actors, and behind-the-camera personnel who are affiliated with a variety of Hispanic, Spanish-speaking or Latin backgrounds or countries.¹ In line with U.S. Census, we consider Hispanic/Latino identity to represent “the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before arriving in the United States. People who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race.”² This definition casts a wide net to capture representation of Hispanic/Latinos at its most broad and includes characters and actors who represent the international nature of this community.

However, we also narrowed our focus to specifically examine Hispanic/Latinos who were born in the U.S. and its territories. The aim here was to understand the frequency with which this facet of the Hispanic/Latino community works on screen and behind the camera in movies, which is consistent with our previous Netflix research as well as the work from the Pew Research Center.³ Throughout the report, we use the term Latinx to refer to these individuals.⁴

The paper opens by examining Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads across 1,300 films. We then assess all speaking characters of Hispanic/Latino origin as a replication and extension of our previous study.

Following that, we review behind-the-scenes representation. Lastly, we provide results of a qualitative investigation into the portrayal of Hispanic/Latino characters.

Across the paper, a variety of comparisons are made. Only deviations of 5 percentage points or greater were considered to represent meaningful or significant change. This ensures that we avoid emphasizing trivial fluctuations. For many analyses, we first present the findings for 2019 and then often compare those results to 2018 and 2007.

Quantitative Analysis

On Screen Protagonists

Hispanic/Latinos. First, we focused on the prevalence of Hispanic/Latino leads and co leads. Only seven of the highest grossing films in 2019 (7%) depicted a Hispanic/Latino lead or co lead. Moving from films ($n=100$) to protagonists ($n=113$), the story remains the same. Seven or 6.2% of all leads/co leads identified were cast with an actor of Hispanic or Latino descent.

Table 1
Hispanic/Latino Leads/Co Leads: 2007-2019

	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	Total
H/L Leads	0	2	2	5	3	5	3	5	3	3	5	5	7	48
% of H/L Leads	0	1.9%	1.9%	4.9%	2.6%	4.8%	2.7%	4.5%	2.9%	2.8%	4.9%	4.9%	6.2%	3.5%
Total Leads	102	108	104	101	116	104	113	111	104	107	103	101	113	1387

Note: Leads or co leads were those characters driving the plot using the three act structure. Table 1 does not include actors who held leading roles in ensemble casts.

As shown in Table 1, Hispanic/Latinos have never represented more than 6.2% of the leads/co leads across the 13-year sample.⁵ Pulling back and across all 1,387 leads/co leads, only 48 were Hispanic/Latino.⁶ This translates into a mere 3.5% samplewide. The 48 leads/co leads were played by 39 different Hispanic/Latino actors (20 males, 19 females).

Has the percentage of Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads changed over time? Only minimally. In 2007, there were no Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads across the 100 top films. In 2019, the total was seven and in 2018 the cap was five. While the more recent years represent a step in the right direction, the results are a far cry from the 18.7% of citizens that identify as Hispanic/Latino in the U.S.⁷

Table 2
Frequency of Hispanic/Latino Leads/Co Leads by Gender: 2007-2019

Lead/CoLeads	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	Total
Boys/Men	0	0	1	2	1	3	2	3	2	1	3	3	1	22
Girls/Women	0	2	1	3	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	6	26
Total	0	2	2	5	3	5	3	5	3	3	5	5	7	48

Note: Leads or co leads were those characters driving the plot using the three act structure. Table 1 does not include actors who held leading roles in ensemble casts.

In addition to prevalence, we were interested in whether leads/co leads varied by **gender, age** (45 years of age or older) and **descent**. Focusing on gender, 6 of 7 movies in 2019 with a Hispanic/Latino lead or co lead featured a girl or woman driving the plot (see Table 2). This was a 13-year high. Further, Hispanic/Latino girls and women outpaced boys and men from this community in starring roles.

In explanation, over half (54.2%, $n=26$) of Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads were filled with girls/women (see Table 2). While notable, contextualizing these findings samplewide tells a different story. Only 1.9% of **all** leads/co leads were Hispanic/Latino girls/women and 6.5% of **all** female protagonists.

Turning to age, we examined the number of Hispanic/Latino actors in leading/co leading roles at 45 years of age or older using theatrical release date and date of birth. Across the 100 top films of 2019, we found that there were no Hispanic/Latino actors 45 years of age or older in leading/co leading roles. The exclusion of middle aged and elderly Hispanic/Latino men and women in 2019 is consistent with what we have seen over time.

Table 3
Frequency of Hispanic/Latino Leads/Co Leads 45 and Older by Gender: 2007-2019

Year	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	Total
H/L men	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	7
H/L women	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	3

As shown in Table 3, only ten, or less than 1%, of the 1,300 films studied had a Hispanic/Latino actor 45 years of age or older as the lead/co lead. When you cross age with gender, the opportunities for Hispanic women and Latinas to lead a film nearly vanish: only three of the ten Hispanic/Latino lead roles were held by women in this age bracket. Two of the roles were played by the same actor. These findings demonstrate that Hispanic/Latino actors 45 years of age and older are not being placed at the top of the call sheet.

We expanded the analysis to examine inclusion of Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads who were 40 years of age and older.⁸ Using this expanded definition, only one additional film was led by a Latino man between the ages of 40 and 45. While there were three additional films led by Hispanic/Latina women in that age range, there was little variability in terms of who held the top role. One film in 2010 was led by a then 40-year-old Jennifer Lopez and Cameron Diaz led two films at the age of 41 in 2014. By examining

the age of leads and co leads in popular films, it becomes clear that the message to Latinas and Hispanic women, in particular, is that once they reach middle age their stories are not worth telling.

Considering the portrayal of lead/co lead characters, we also evaluated whether any portrayals of LGBTQ+ or lead/co lead characters with a disability occurred on screen. Notably, none of the Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads in 2019 were depicted as LGBTQ+. However, one Hispanic/Latina lead/co lead character was shown with a disability on screen. This is consistent with 2018 and 2017, when a Hispanic/Latino actor who played a character with a disability was at the center of a film.

Latinx. The data above reflect the prevalence and gender of all Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads in film. Now, we narrow the focus to Latinx actors or those born in the U.S. and its territories. Prior to our analysis, we excluded Hispanic actors of Spanish descent without any additional Latino ethnic origins. In 2019, 5% ($n=5$) of films featured leads/co leads with Latinx actors. Four of five films starred a Latinx girl or woman in the most prominent role. One role was filled by a Latinx man.

Table 3
Frequency of Latinx Leads/Co Leads by Year: 2007-2019

Year	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	Total
Latinx Leads/Co	0	2	2	4	2	2	1	4	2	2	2	3	5	31
Total Leads	102	108	104	101	116	104	113	111	104	107	103	101	113	1,387

Note: Latinx refers only to U.S. born Latinos who are not of Spanish descent (unless they were Spanish in addition to another Latino origin).

Matter of fact, Latinx girls and women have been cast more frequently than Latinx boys and men across the 13-year sample (see Table 4). Of the 31 leading/co leading roles that featured Latinx actors, 64.5% were filled with girls and women ($n=20$) and 35.5% were filled with boys and men ($n=11$).

Table 4
Frequency of Latinx Leads/Co Leads by Gender: 2007-2019

Lead/CoLeads	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	Total
Latinx Boys/Men	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	11
Latinx Girls/Women	0	2	1	3	2	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	4	20

Note: Latinx refers only to U.S.-born Latinos who are not of Spanish descent (unless they were Spanish in addition to another Latino origin).

Four other facts about Latinx leads/co leads are important to note. First, only 31 or 2.2% of all 1,387 protagonists were Latinx. Second, two Latinx actors have never co led a film together across the 13-year time frame. Third, the 31 roles across the 13-year time frame were filled with 24 individual Latinx

thespians (see Table 5). While most Latinx actors only worked once from 2007-2019, Cameron Diaz and Jennifer Lopez were the top performers driving the action in 5 and 3 films respectively. Fourth, there are very few leading roles filled with Afro-Latino⁹ actors. Three leads/co leads in 2019 were Afro-Latino, though only six leads/co leads from 2007 to 2019 were Afro-Latino. None of these actors worked more than once across the sample, and only one played a character who was Afro-Latino.

Table 5
Frequency of Latinx Leads/CoLeads by Actor Name: 2007-2019

Actor Name	# of Lead/ Co Lead Roles
Andrew Jacobs	1
Anna Maria Horsford	1
Anthony Gonzalez	1
Auli'i Cravalho	1
Cameron Diaz	5
Christina Aguilera	1
Danny Trejo	1
Demi Lovato	1
Isabela Merced	1
Jake T. Austin	1
Jennifer Lopez	3
Jessica Alba	1
Julia Goldani Telles	1
Louis C.K.	1
Michael Pena	1
Odette Annable	1
Raymond Ochoa	1
Rome Flynn	1
Rosa Salazar	1
Ryan Guzman	1
Tessa Thompson	1
Tony Revolori	1
Y'lan Noel	1
Zoe Saldana	1

The information on leads/co leads presented here reveals the continued marginalization of Hispanic/Latino stories by Hollywood studios. Although six of seven Hispanic/Latino leads in 2019 were girls and women, this still reveals little progress and too little commitment to telling stories that reflect

this audience. Additionally, Hispanic/Latinos who do have the opportunity to stand at the center of stories were primarily young and rarely Afro-Latino or U.S.-born. In the next portion of the paper, we turn to examining beyond leads/co leads to focus on all speaking or named characters across the 13-year sample.

On Screen Speaking Characters

This section examines the prevalence of all Hispanic/Latino speaking characters. Consistent with the definition presented above, and using U.S. Census distinctions, those who were identified as Hispanic or Latino can also be categorized under a multitude of racial distinctions. For this reason, we updated information included in our initial investigation to include characters who were not only Hispanic/Latino alone but those with multiracial and/or multiethnic origins.¹⁰ Essentially, we are widening the aperture of our definition. Given this change in protocol from the original report, percentages will deviate slightly from the prior study.¹¹

A total of 3,890 characters who either spoke independently or were given a name across the 100 top movies of 2019 were analyzed for their race/ethnicity.¹² Only 5.9% ($n=230$) of those characters were Hispanic or Latino, nowhere near the percentage in the U.S. population (18.7%).¹³ As shown in Table 6, 2019 did not meaningfully differ from 2018 (6%) or 2007 (3.3%). Despite all of the calls for inclusion and racial justice, there has been no change over time.

Table 6
Prevalence of Hispanic/Latino Speaking Characters across 1,300 Films by Year: 2007-2019

Year	Hispanic/Latino Characters		Total Characters
2007	3.3%	138	4,129
2008	4.9%	198	4,016
2009	2.8%	111	4,014
2010	3.9%	150	3,847
2011	6.7%	266	3,941
2012	4.2%	171	4,047
2013	5.3%	207	3,932
2014	5.3%	213	4,024
2015	6.2%	247	3,975
2016	3.9%	148	3,758
2017	7.2%	266	3,690
2018	6.0%	233	3,895
2019	5.9%	230	3,890
Total	5.0%	2,578	51,158

Note: Only those characters with an ascertainable race/ethnicity were included.

It becomes important to contextualize just how much Hollywood misses the mark when it comes to portrayals of Hispanic/Latinos. Examining population norms across the 50 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, and

Washington, D.C.,¹⁴ 78.8% have more Hispanic/Latino residents than what we see across 1,300 feature films. We drilled down even further, however. Each of the 25 most populous counties in the U.S have a higher percentage of Hispanic/Latinos than Hollywood films. Los Angeles, the home to Hollywood through major studios and production companies, is 49% Hispanic/Latino.¹⁵ With the Hispanic/Latino population representing just 5% of characters in film, it becomes abundantly clear just how far off Hollywood is at reflecting population norms at the city, state, or federal level.

There are two additional ways to understand the extent of the erasure of Hispanic/Latino speaking or named characters on screen: **proportionality** and **invisibility**. These prevalence indicators help us to disaggregate statistics and provide a more descriptive picture of representation. Proportionality tells us whether the distribution of Hispanic/Latino characters was balanced across films, while invisibility indicates how often Hispanic/Latino characters were completely absent across stories. Both measures are presented at the film level.

In order to measure proportionality we asked the question: how many films approximate the proportion of Hispanic/Latinos in the U.S. population within ± 2 percentage points of the U.S. Census?¹⁶ Only two films in 2019 depicted a cast of characters proportional to the U.S. population (18.7%). Those films were *Five Feet Apart* and *Gemini Man*. Five films exceeded proportional representation. Four of these were films set partially in Latin American countries (*Dora and the Lost City of Gold*, *The Curse of La Llorona*, *Terminator: Dark Fate*, *Rambo: Last Blood*) and the fifth (*Alita: Battle Angel*) was set in a fictional, post-apocalyptic world from the mind of Robert Rodriguez. Over time, only 20 films across the 1,300 film sample were within ± 2 percentage points of the U.S. Census benchmark.

Table 7
Number of Films without Any Hispanic/Latino Characters: 2007-2019

Year	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	Total
Missing H/L Characters	42	49	53	49	34	55	43	48	36	46	36	41	35	567
Missing H/L Females	78	67	72	73	54	68	68	69	61	65	57	65	59	856

Note: The invisibility analysis was conducted across 100 movies each year.

The second indicator—invisibility—illuminates how often Hispanic/Latino characters are excluded from films altogether. More than a third (35%) of the top films of 2019 rendered these groups invisible. That is, 35 films **did not include a single Hispanic/Latino speaking or named character across the entirety of the film.**

Table 8
Number of Films without Hispanic/Latino Characters by LGBT & Disability by Year

Measure	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
# of films missing H/L LGBTQ+ characters	100	99	100	98	98	98	593
# of films missing H/L chars w/ disabilities	Not Measured	95	98	95	94	95	477

Again, this is on par with the top films over time. Each year, across the 100 most popular films, Hispanic/Latino characters have been missing from no less than 34 films (in 2011) and up to 55 films (in 2012). Women from these groups consistently see even higher rates of exclusion from popular stories. The invisibility of Hispanic women and Latinas was at an all-time high in 2007 when they were missing from a full 78 of the 100 films. Most recently, in 2019, this trend still has not weakened, with 59 films rendering this group invisible. While this represents a statistical change (+19 percentage points), it does not signify that the film industry is an inclusive environment for Latinas and women of Hispanic origin. Out of 1,300 films, a total of 856 erased Latina and Hispanic women.

We were also interested in measuring how often Hispanic/Latino individuals with disabilities and those identifying as LGBTQ+ were excluded from popular narratives. In 2019, 98 of 100 movies excluded LGBTQ+ Hispanic/Latinos and 95 of 100 movies excluded Hispanic/Latino characters with disabilities on screen. Only one film depicted a Hispanic/Latino character who was both gay and had a disability.

Table 8 demonstrates that Hispanic/Latino characters in each of these groups have rarely been depicted over time. Overall, across five years and 500 films, 95.4% ($n=477$) of films were missing a Hispanic/Latino character with a disability. For the past six years and 600 films, only seven movies included a LGBTQ-identifying Hispanic/Latino character. That means that 98.8% of films were devoid of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Hispanic/Latinos. However, none of the Hispanic/Latino characters were bisexual or transgender. As demonstrated in this section, Hispanic/Latino communities-- including Hispanic/Latina girls and women, those with disabilities, and who are LGBTQ+-- have been routinely and excessively erased from stories shown on the big screen.

The results in this section demonstrate that Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads and speaking characters remain underrepresented and often invisible on screen in the top films of the last 13 years. The lack of representation means that nearly 20% of the U.S. population does not see their stories reflected in some of the biggest films of the past decade. In the next section, we begin to explain why as we turn to representation of the Hispanic/Latino community behind the camera.

Behind the Scenes

In this section, we examine the presence of Hispanic/Latino individuals working behind the camera in three positions: director, producer, and casting director. Beginning with directors, a total of 1,447 helmers were credited across the 100 top-grossing films from 2007 to 2019. Hispanic/Latino directors represented 4.2% ($n=61$) of all helmers across the last 13 years. 2019 (4.5%, $n=5$) was no different from 2018 (4.5%, $n=5$) or 2007 (2.7%, $n=3$). Clearly, there has been no change over time. See Table 9.

In terms of gender, only 3 Hispanic women or Latinas have directed a top film over the past 13 years (*Patricia Riggan*, *Melina Matsoukas*, *Roxann Dawson*). To contextualize these results, the ratio of white male directors to Hispanic female or Latina directors was 200 to 1. In terms of Afro-Latinos, only 2 were credited across the 1,300 movies: *Steven Caple Jr.*, *Melina Matsoukas*.

Table 9
Hispanic/Latino Directors: 2007-2019

Year	# of Hispanic/Latino Directors		Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Directors	Total Directors
	Men	Women		
2007	3	0	2.7%	112
2008	3	0	2.7%	112
2009	7	0	6.3%	111
2010	2	0	1.8%	109
2011	3	0	2.8%	108
2012	3	0	2.5%	121
2013	7	0	6.5%	107
2014	8	0	7.5%	107
2015	4	0	3.7%	107
2016	2	1	2.5%	120
2017	8	0	7.3%	109
2018	5	0	4.5%	112
2019	3	2	4.5%	112
Total	58	3	4.2%	1,447

The 61 directors overall were reduced to 35 unique helmers across the 13-year sample. One director made six top-grossing movies, the most across the sample. Five directors helmed a total of four movies each. Looking at the ethnic heritage of directors, almost one-third (31%) were Mexican, 31% were Spanish, and 11% were Puerto Rican. Brazilian and Cuban directors accounted for 8.6% each, while 1 director was Argentine, 1 was Chilean, and 1 was Uruguayan. Slightly more than one-third (34.3%, $n=12$) of the 35 directors were born in the U.S., while the remaining 65.7% ($n=23$) were international.

Table 10
Ethnicity and Descent of Hispanic/Latino Directors: 2007-2019

Ethnicity/Descent	# of Directors	% of Directors
Mexican	11	31.4%
Spanish	11	31.4%
Puerto Rican	4	11.4%
Cuban	3	8.6%
Brazilian	3	8.6%
Argentine	1	2.9%
Chilean	1	2.9%
Uruguayan	1	2.9%
Total	35	100%

Note: All but one director had a single Hispanic/Latino ethnicity or descent. For the remaining individual, public comments regarding identification were used to make a determination.

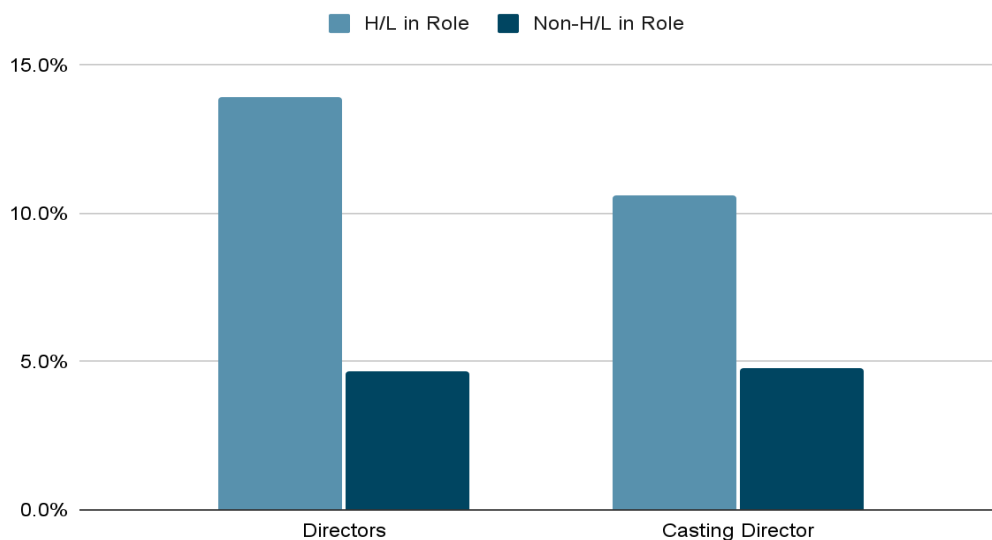
Turning to producers, a total of 3,953 “Produced by” credits were evaluated across the 13-year sample. Overall, 3% ($n=119$) of producers were Hispanic/Latino and 97% ($n=3,834$) were not. The percentage of Hispanic/Latino producers in 2019 (5.6%, $n=19$) was not significantly different from 2018 (4.8%, $n=16$) or 2007 (2.2%, $n=6$). The majority of Hispanic/Latino producers were men (78.1%, $n=93$) while less than one-quarter (21.9%, $n=26$) were women. This is a ratio of 3.6 male Hispanic/Latino producers to every one Hispanic/Latina producer. Hispanic/Latina producers represent less than 1% (0.7%) of all producers across 1,300 top-grossing movies.

There were slight percentage differences over time for Hispanic/Latina producers, though little numerical deviation overall. In 2019, 36.8% ($n=7$) of Hispanic/Latino producers were women, compared to 25% ($n=4$) in 2018 and 16.7% ($n=1$) in 2007. While this represents slight progress, there were only 13 individual Hispanic/Latina producers across the 13 years. Clearly, more progress is needed to expand access for Hispanic/Latina producers in film.

The final behind-the-camera position of interest was casting directors. Out of 2,014 casting directors for the 1,300 movies, 3.3% ($n=66$) were Hispanic/Latino and 96.7% ($n=1,948$) were not. Once again, there was no change over time. In 2019, 5.9% ($n=8$) of casting directors were Hispanic/Latino, compared to 4.3% ($n=6$) in 2018 and 1.3% ($n=2$) in 2007. The majority of Hispanic/Latino casting directors were women: 74.2% ($n=49$) in total across 13 years, compared to 25.8% ($n=17$) who were men.

Given the findings for behind-the-camera roles, we were curious about the relationship between directors and the on-screen prevalence of Hispanic/Latino characters in film. To undertake this analysis, we bifurcated the sample of films into those with a Hispanic/Latino director and those without. We then compared the percentage of Hispanic/Latino characters in each group. As shown in Figure 1, films with a Hispanic/Latino director were more likely to include Hispanic/Latino characters (including Multiracial/Multiethnic characters), as 13.9% of all characters were Hispanic/Latino across these films. Movies with a non-Hispanic/Latino director had casts that included Hispanic/Latino characters in 4.7% of all speaking roles.

Figure 1
Relationship between Director Race/Ethnicity and Character Race/Ethnicity



We were also curious whether this relationship persisted for casting directors. Following the same procedure as above, we separated films with Hispanic/Latino casting director(s) from those without, and then examined the prevalence of Hispanic/Latino characters (including Multiracial/Multiethnic characters). Once again, films with a Hispanic/Latino casting director were more likely to feature Hispanic/Latino characters than those without Hispanic/Latino casting directors: 10.6% vs. 4.8%. A similar, but non-significant relationship emerged for producers. Films with at least one Hispanic/Latino producer featured Hispanic/Latino characters in 9.5% of speaking roles compared to 4.7% in movies with no Hispanic/Latino producers.

Another way to evaluate this relationship was to evaluate the prominence of Hispanic/Latinos in films with Hispanic/Latino creatives in key roles. To that end, we focused on 300 top films from 2017 to 2019. Here, we were curious about the percentage of top-billed actors across these movies who were Hispanic/Latino, and whether this varied with the race/ethnicity of the director, casting director, or producer.

More than half of the films (47.1%) with Hispanic/Latino directors had one or more Hispanic/Latino actors in a top-billed role across these 300 movies, compared to 26.5% of films by non-Hispanic/Latino directors. This was similarly true for casting directors. Less than half (41.7%) of films cast by Hispanic/Latino casting directors had top-billed Hispanic/Latino actors, compared to 26.5% of films cast by non-Hispanic/Latino casting directors. Once again, the trend for producers was more modest. Slightly more than one-third (34.2%) of films with Hispanic/Latino producers had top roles held by Hispanic/Latino actors, compared to 26.7% of movies without a Hispanic/Latino producer.

The data in this section reveal the continued exclusion faced by creative personnel who are Hispanic/Latino, as well as the need for greater representation behind-the-camera. Hispanic/Latino directors, casting directors, and producers are in positions to advocate for on screen talent, and it is clear that they do just that when working on top films. To create change on screen, behind-the-camera inclusion is the key.

Qualitative Analysis

In addition to our examination of prevalence, here we include an updated qualitative analysis of the context and stereotypical nature of the roles held by Hispanic and Latino characters on screen. We first assessed the 5 top-billed actors of each film for their race/ethnicity.¹⁷ For every film with one or more top-billed Hispanic/Latino actors, we examined a series of factors related to common stereotypes for each Hispanic/Latino character in that film.

Of the 500 top-billed actors across 2019, 38 (7.6%) were Hispanic/Latino and appeared in 28 films. A full 82.1% ($n=23$) of movies featured only one Hispanic/Latino actor in the top billed cast. Three films (*Terminator: Dark Fate*, *The Curse of la Llorona*, and *Crawl*) had two, one movie (*Rambo: Last Blood*) featured four. All five top billed actors were Hispanic/Latino in only one of the 28 films (*Dora and the Lost City of Gold*).

We further examined the top-billed Hispanic/Latino actors to identify those who are U.S.-born Latinos not of Spanish descent (unless they were Spanish in addition to another Latino origin). Here we use the term Latinx to distinguish this group. Twenty-two (57.9%) Hispanic/Latino top-billed actors were Latinx.¹⁸

After determining the top-billed Hispanic/Latino actors, we examined every Hispanic/Latino character in the 28 films in which they appeared. Thus, we qualitatively investigated the portrayal of 132 characters across various indicators related to Hispanic/Latino stereotypes (e.g., criminality, occupation, immigration, social class, religion, language). The 132 characters comprise the 38 characters portrayed by Hispanic and Latino top-billed actors as well as 94 Hispanic/Latino characters across the 29 films.¹⁹

Table 11
Attributes of Hispanic/Latino Characters across 28 Top Films of 2019

Attribute	All Speaking Characters 2019	All Speaking Characters 2017-18	Top Billed Characters 2019	Top Billed Characters 2017-18
Religious	21.3%	21%	31.6%	26%
Immigrant	8.5%*	3%	13.2%*	5%
Low Income	13.8%	13%	13.2%	17%
Angry/Temperamental	8.5%	12%	23.7%	21%
Sexualized	16%	n/a	18.4%	n/a
Criminal	29.8%*	24%	39.5%*	28%
Violent Criminal	21.4%	n/a	40%	n/a
Organized Crime Group	39.3%	n/a	6.7%	n/a

Note: Cells with an asterisk indicate significant deviation from results obtained across films from 2015 to 2018. Violent Criminal and Organized Crime Group are subsets of the Criminal variable and are calculated out of those characters who were shown as criminals.

The prevalence of several stereotypes associated with the Hispanic and Latino communities in film mirrored what was observed in movies from 2017-2018, with some small changes. Beginning with *religious affiliation*, 31.6% of Hispanic/Latino top-billed actors and 21.3% of all Hispanic/Latino characters were shown with some indication of religious practice. This included religious iconography and items (e.g., Virgin Mary statues or images, crucifix, rosary beads), references to God or gods, prayer, and attending church. In two films, Hispanic/Latino characters were shown praying frantically in Spanish while in danger. A greater share of top-billed actors were shown in connection to religiosity in movies from 2019 than in those from 2017-2018.

The *social class* of Hispanic/Latino characters was also explored. Here, we were interested particularly in depictions of low social class as it aligns with stereotypes about Hispanic/Latinos.²⁰ Depictions of Hispanic/Latino characters-- both top-billed and all characters-- were consistent with our previous study on films from 2017-18. Nearly one-seventh (13.2%) of top-billed Hispanic/Latino characters and 13.8% of all Hispanic/Latino characters were shown in roles of a lower social class. This included depictions of homelessness, being unable to provide necessities, and overt statements of poverty.

Hispanic/Latinos overall were shown as *angry or temperamental*, consistent with what we found in 2017-18, conforming to stereotypes about Hispanic/Latinos that have persisted in media for decades.²¹ This trait was more pronounced among top-billed Hispanic/Latino characters (23.7%) than among all characters (8.5%). Characters raised their voices with each other, got into arguments that occasionally turned physical, and demonstrated emotional volatility.

The *sexualization* of Hispanic/Latino characters--both men and women--is a common trope or stereotype.²² However, the data in this investigation revealed a difference between male and female characters in sexualization. Beginning with Hispanic/Latinas, 29.2% ($n=7$) of the 24 top-billed girls/women were sexualized, while none of the top-billed male Hispanic/Latino characters were. Among all characters, a similar gender difference emerged, as 26.5% ($n=9$) of all Hispanic/Latina characters but 10% ($n=6$) of Hispanic/Latino male characters were sexualized. Given that in 2019 we employed a different methodological approach, we cannot directly compare these metrics over time, but the trends are consistent with what we saw in the previous investigation. Two Hispanic/Latino characters are young women-- these characters are shown in revealing clothing, in contexts with sexual behavior, and in ways that demonstrate the teenagers are the agents of their own sexualization. These portrayals, along with others in the sample, reveal that the sexualization of girls/women from this racial/ethnic group continues to be a hallmark of storytelling.

It was also important to examine whether the characterization of Hispanic/Latino characters included *criminality*. In particular, we were curious whether 2019 films differed from our previous report, when 28% of top-billed characters and 24% of all speaking characters were portrayed as criminals. Indeed, we saw a higher rate of criminality than 2017-18-- 39.5% of top-billed characters ($n=15$) and 29.8% ($n=28$) of all characters were portrayed as criminals in films from 2019. The criminality stereotype did not only occur among antagonists; 5 of the top-billed characters shown as criminals were the hero of the film, and 3 were villains. Notably, depictions of Hispanic/Latinos in conjunction with criminality occurred across 14 films, and were thus not just concentrated in one or a few movies.

To better understand the way that criminality was shown, we further examined several distinctions related to crime that were not part of our prior investigation. This included whether Hispanic/Latino characters that were portrayed as criminals were involved with *organized crime*, and whether *violent crime* was part of the portrayal. Although a single top-billed character (6.7%) was shown participating in organized crime, 39.3% ($n=11$) of all characters were part of gangs, involved in sex trafficking, or members of crime syndicates. While few characters were involved specifically with drug trafficking or overtly in cartels, tying Hispanic/Latinos to criminality at all can reinforce stereotypes about this community.

Finally, we examined violent criminals. Of the top-billed Hispanic/Latino characters shown as criminals, nearly half (40%, $n=6$) were violent, as were 21.4% ($n=6$) of all Hispanic/Latino characters depicted as violent criminals. Here, characters were assassins, murderers, assaulted others or threatened them with aggression. Taken together, the portrayal of Hispanic/Latinos in 2019 movies is inescapably one that involves criminal and often violent behavior.

One valuable perspective from the Hispanic/Latino community that seems to be missing in film is that of U.S.-born Latinos. Although 24 of the 28 films examined (85.7%) took place in the U.S., only 44, or 33.3% of characters examined were U.S.-born Latinos. In other words, 36.8% of top-billed characters ($n=14$) and 31.9% ($n=30$) of all speaking or named Hispanic/Latinos were depicted as Latinx. Looking to depictions of immigration, in 2019, Hispanic/Latino characters were shown as immigrants at a higher rate than in previous years across both top billed (13.2%, $n=5$) and all other Hispanic/Latino characters (8.5%, $n=8$).

A possible explanation for the low percentages of Latinx characters is a movie's geographical setting. Over a quarter (26.3%, $n=10$) of top billed, and 43.6% ($n=41$) of all Hispanic/Latino characters were shown living in a Latin American country across a portion of or the entirety of the plot. These characters all occurred across five movies, representing three countries: Mexico (*Terminator: Dark Fate*, *The Curse*

of *la Llorona*, *Rambo: Last Blood*, *47 Meters Down*), one in Guatemala (*Terminator: Dark Fate*); one in Peru (*Dora and the Lost City of Gold*).

These results reveal that the portrayal of Hispanic/Latino characters still centers on immigrant or international experiences. This erases the stories of Hispanic/Latino families who have lived in the U.S. for multiple generations.²³ Such framing from the film industry also reinforces a vitriolic rhetoric that Latinos do not belong in this country and leaves room for harmful stereotypes to flourish.

Another way that Hispanic/Latinos were otherized was through *language*. Nearly half (47.4%, $n=18$) of top-billed characters and 56.4% ($n=53$) of Hispanic/Latino speaking or named characters demonstrated that they spoke or understood Spanish. One character in the film *Dora and the Lost City of Gold* spoke Quechua--a native Latin American language. No characters spoke Portuguese. Going further, 37.2% of all Hispanic/Latino characters ($n=35$), did not speak English or demonstrate a familiarity with the language, though none of them were top-billed. These characters were largely ($n=30$) those shown living in a Latin American country.

Out of 97 characters that spoke one or more words of English overall, 27.8% spoke the language with an *accent*, indicating that Spanish was their first language. More than one-fifth (23.7%, $n=9$) of the 38 top billed Latinos and almost a third (30.5%, $n=18$) of English-speaking Hispanic/Latino characters spoke with a detectable Spanish accent. While being a non-Native English speaker does not correlate with nationality, repeatedly presenting Hispanic/Latino characters with an accent suggests to viewers that members of this group are outsiders in their own communities.

As we found in our previous report, Hispanic/Latino characters in 2019 movies were often devoid of any connections to their unique culture or community. Overall, 36.8% ($n=14$) of top billed and 43.6% ($n=41$) of all Hispanic/Latino characters were portrayed on screen without any references to their Latinidad across a variety of context cues. The lack of relevant cultural cues and the isolation of Hispanic/Latino characters may have greater consequences than filmmakers might imagine. Young Hispanic/Latino filmgoers with highly salient ethnic identity may be more negatively affected by the erasure of their community.²⁴

Community presence was measured by assessing cultural artifacts often associated with the Hispanic and Latino communities, verbal remarks in reference to an individual's ethnic background, or relationships with other Hispanic/Latinos.²⁵ Seventeen top billed characters (44.7%) had references made to their Hispanic/Latino heritage verbally ($n=15$) and/or with cultural artifacts ($n=11$) across the context of the film. Cultural heritage was even more likely to be erased or minimized among all Hispanic/Latino characters. In only 26.6% of cases did Hispanic/Latino speaking or named characters make verbal remarks ($n=9$) or appear amongst cultural symbols ($n=22$) reflecting their Hispanic/Latino background.

While verbal references to Hispanic/Latino ethnicity were made about only nine of the non-top billed characters, a full 44.4% of those comments ($n=4$) were disparaging statements or insults. These included insults like being called a "dirty anchor baby," and other racial slurs. Negative remarks were also made about top-billed Hispanic/Latinos in relation to their ethnicity, though this happened less frequently ($n=3$, 20%). Though disparagement is not a hallmark of Hispanic/Latino representation, the inclusion of negative comments may reinforce existing attitudes or beliefs about this group.

Another means of examining how Hispanic/Latinos on screen engaged with their heritage was to assess how often Hispanic/Latinos appeared in community with each other. Hispanic/Latino characters across the entire sample were shown in isolation more than half the time--50% of top billed Hispanic/Latinos were isolated and 51.1% of all Hispanic/Latino characters were never shown with family or other Hispanic/Latino community members.

The final area of interest regarding Hispanic/Latino characters in film was *occupation*. Fewer Hispanic/Latino characters were depicted with a job in 2019 (41.7%) than in 2017-2018 (52.3%). Similar patterns across all three years emerged, however, when examining the type of jobs held by Hispanic/Latinos across industry sectors. Of the 56 Hispanic/Latino characters with an occupation, 47.3% ($n=26$) were shown in a job that did not require a specialized education (e.g., salesperson, factory worker, line cook, street vendor). A quarter ($n=14$, 25.5%) were shown in law enforcement and security (e.g., police officers, members of the military, security guards). Only 12.7% ($n=7$) depicted educated professionals (i.e., 3 medical doctors, 2 professors, 2 journalists). Finally, two characters (3.6%) held high level occupations involving STEM careers (1 pharmacist, and 1 government official). The continued emphasis on depicting Hispanic/Latino characters in low-level occupations perpetuates stereotypes and does little to reflect reality.

The results in this section reveal that Hispanic/Latino characters continue to be portrayed in stereotypical ways throughout popular films. Characters are still shown as criminals, in low-level occupations, and otherized as foreigners and non-native English speakers. These trends do not reflect the diverse community of Hispanic/Latinos in the U.S. and reveal a lack of creativity on the part of filmmakers. As storytellers seek to add more Hispanic/Latino characters to their productions, they must be cautious not to reinforce stereotypes that have existed for decades.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to update our previous study on Hispanic/Latino representation in top-grossing films. To that end, we scrutinized the leads/co leads, speaking characters, and behind-the-camera teams to understand the prevalence of Hispanic/Latinos working in key roles across popular movies. Additionally, we updated a qualitative analysis on the presentation of Hispanic/Latino characters in these movies to assess the extent to which stereotyping continues to occur. Below, we present three major trends that emerged across the investigation.

#1 Hispanic/Latinos Remain Invisible in Popular Film

The data in this report demonstrate that very few Hispanic/Latino actors are at the center of popular films as leads/co leads. In 2019, only seven leads/co leads were Hispanic/Latino actors. All but one were women, but only three depicted a Hispanic/Latino character on screen. This is consistent from year-to-year, as only 48 Hispanic/Latino actors have held a lead/co lead role across 1,300 movies. This relegates Hispanic/Latino actors to sidekick, friend, or even villain roles. Moreover, it fails to reflect the multitude of stories about Hispanic/Latinos that exist to be told.

Beyond main characters, only 5% of all speaking characters across the last 13 years have been Hispanic/Latinos. Yet, this community represents nearly 20% of the U.S. population, 25% of theatrical audiences in 2019, and is one of the fastest growing racial/ethnic groups in the nation.²⁶ Setting aside the small percentage of characters overall, the Hispanic/Latino community is not only underrepresented but often *invisible* on screen. This is particularly true for women, members of the LGBTQ+ community,

and those with disabilities. The lack of progress when it comes to the inclusion of Hispanic/Latino characters in popular movies speaks volumes about the value that content creators, executives, and other film professionals place on this community.

#2 Hispanic/Latinos are Missing Behind-the-Camera

Erasure on screen is less surprising when the identity of filmmakers is considered. A mere 4.2% of directors, 3% of producers, and 3.3% of casting directors were Hispanic/Latino. In other words, no more than 5% of content creators across categories were Hispanic/Latino across 1,300 films and 13 years. These statistics are particularly concerning given the level of participation of Hispanic/Latino directors at Sundance Film Festival and in other industry programs. These numbers reflect not an industry that cannot identify talented Hispanic/Latino creatives, but one that will not include them.

#3 Stories Continue to Stereotype Hispanic/Latino Characters

The results from the qualitative analysis reveal that perhaps the only positive outcome of the invisibility of Hispanic/Latino characters is the potential for fewer stereotypical and marginalizing portrayals. Whether as criminals, in low-level occupations, or in depictions that render Hispanic/Latinos “foreign,” movies continue to perpetuate a picture of Hispanic/Latinos that renders this community one of dangerous outsiders. This is at best irresponsible and at worst pernicious. The everyday experiences of film writers, directors, producers, and executives must bring them in contact with many Hispanic/Latinos who directly contradict these stereotypes-- particularly in Los Angeles, where 49% of the population identifies as Hispanic/Latino.²⁷ Storytelling can be a vehicle for empathy and one that promotes positive intergroup relations. Hollywood has yet to deploy its work as such for Hispanic/Latinos.

Limitations

As with every study, a few limitations must be noted. First, the nature of identification as Hispanic/Latino is one that encompasses ancestry, geography, culture, and even language. Given this broad scope for identity and the difficulty of measuring belonging to the community, there may be additional actors or characters who audiences might view as Hispanic/Latino but who are not included in this analysis. The reverse may also be true. However, every effort was made to provide a profile of the Hispanic/Latino community in film that is true to how individuals identify and how characters may be identified by audiences. A second limitation comes from our sample of content. Although films from 2020 were not included for reasons stated in the introduction of this paper, more recent releases, or films distributed solely via streaming platforms may present a different picture of the Hispanic/Latino community. Our work in other domains gives us limited reasons for optimism, but additional work should explore a broader range of content. Finally, we did not explore counterstereotypical portrayals of Hispanic/Latinos. We recommend that other scholars approach content with this perspective to determine if films or other entertainment programming may offer portrayals beyond what we have enumerated here.

In sum, there remains much progress needed to see the Hispanic/Latino community portrayed both by measures of quantity and quality in a way that captures this group more accurately. Until studios and production companies take the need for inclusion seriously and work directly with content creators from the community, we anticipate that there will be little change. Embracing the talent and creative spirit of

the many Hispanic/Latinos working in entertainment-- particularly those in the U.S.-- has the opportunity to influence the landscape of filmmaking for generations to come.

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Footnotes

1. This report builds upon data first described in our initial study on the topic. See Smith, S.L., Choueiti, M., Case, A., Pieper, K., Clark, H., Hernandez, K., & Martinez, J. (2019). *Latinos in Film: Erasure On Screen & Behind the Camera Across 1,200 Popular Movies*. Los Angeles, CA: Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. <https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-muslim-rep-global-film-2021-06-09.pdf>.

In line with the U.S. Census, we consider Hispanic/Latino identity to represent “the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before arriving in the United States. People who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race.” (U.S. Census: <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin.html>) This definition captures representation of Hispanic/Latinos at its most broad and includes characters, actors, and directors who represent the international nature of this community.

The process of determining Hispanic/Latino characters includes using information presented in a film’s plot, including the character’s name, direct statements, and other cues (including appearance). Characters from Spain, Brazil, as well as Latin America can all be coded under the Hispanic/Latino moniker given other culturally relevant contextual cues.

Determining Hispanic/Latino leads/co leads and directors required obtaining information about the person. In the absence of direct identification by the individual, a set of criteria was developed to determine whether a person should be considered Hispanic/Latino. People with one or more Hispanic/Latino parents were included as Hispanic/Latino. When a person had at least one parent who identifies as more than half Hispanic/Latino, that individual was included as Hispanic/Latino. This was determined by using a variety of cues from the Census definition, namely nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors.

Those with just one Hispanic/Latino grandparent (i.e., their parent is half Hispanic/Latino or less) were included when additional confirmation of their lineage was obtained. This could include references to Hispanic/Latino culture, having lived in a predominately Hispanic/Latino country, speaking languages or dialects connected with Hispanic/Latino communities, or contextualizing relationships with Hispanic/Latino family members. Other confirmation came from direct statements about their ethnic background in interviews, or on self-edited public databases such as on IMDbPro that align with previous characters. We did not include people with a Hispanic/Latino grandparent when no comments or acknowledgments were made.

People with only a Hispanic/Latino great-grandparent (as it fits the above definition) or further ancestry were excluded, although those with unspecified or distant Hispanic/Latino ancestry or forebears not tied to a particular family member were researched to determine further Hispanic/Latino identification beyond ancestral ties. Nationality was not considered sufficient to include an actor as Hispanic/Latino without additional information on the individual’s ethnic identification or parental identification. In line with this definition, some previous judgments were altered. One lead/co lead in 2014 was removed from analysis as the individual is not Hispanic/Latino. One additional change was made not due to an individual’s identification but because of the role in the film. One male Hispanic/Latino lead/co lead in 2007 was changed to an ensemble leading character in line with our definition of ensemble leads.

Other information on data collection procedures, reliability, and definition of measures can be found in previous Annenberg Inclusion Initiative reports (<http://annenberg.usc.edu/aii>).

2. U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.). *Hispanic Origin*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin.html>.

3. See Smith S, L., Pieper, K., Choueiti, M., Yao, K., Case, A., Hernandez, K., Moore, K. (2021). Inclusion in Netflix Original U.S. Scripted Series & Films. Los Angeles, CA: Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. <https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-inclusion-netflix-study.pdf>.

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4. Noe-Bustamante, L., Mora, L., & Lopez, M.H. (2020). Views on Latinx as a pan-ethnic term for U.S. Hispanics. Pew Research Center. Retrieved September 2, 2021 from <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2020/08/11/views-on-latinx-as-a-pan-ethnic-term-for-u-s-hispanics/>.
5. Leads/co leads represent one to two individual characters or actors at the center of the plot. Ensembles consist of three or more characters/actors who drive the story. More information on these definitions can be found in previous reports from the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

Of the 30 actors across eight ensemble casts in 2019, two were Hispanic/Latino (6.7%). Of these two Hispanic and/or Latino actors, one was male and the other was female. When examining the exclusion of the Hispanic/Latino ensemble actors over time, there has been no change. From 2007 to 2019, anywhere from 4 to 13 films each year had a Hispanic/Latino actor in an ensemble leading role, and Hispanic/Latino actors comprised only 4% (n=24) of ensemble roles in 13 years.
6. In this report, Hispanic/Latino characters included those of any race/ethnicity. This is a change from the methodology employed previously, and results in slight deviations from what was reported in our previous investigation. We provide information that aligns with a strict replication of the prior study in Footnote 10.
7. U.S. Census Bureau (2021). *Race and Ethnicity in the United States: From 2010 Census and 2020 Census*. Retrieved September 2, 2021 from <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/race-and-ethnicity-in-the-united-state-2010-and-2020-census.html>.
8. For this analysis, we also examined actors 40+ in ensemble roles in 2019. The only Hispanic/Latino actor in a protagonist role who approached their fourth decade was one man amongst an animated cast. This is consistent with the five Hispanic/Latino actors aged 40+ who have been part of leading ensembles in films released in 2009, 2010, 2014, 2016, and 2018. See Annenberg Inclusion Initiative (2020). *Inequality in 1,300 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBTQ & Disability from 2007 to 2019*. Los Angeles, CA. Retrieved from https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-inequality_1300_popular_films_09-08-2020.pdf.
9. Afro-Latinos are individuals who identify as Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino.
10. In addition to the data presented in the report, we provide a strict replication of the prior investigation, which offers a more conservative estimate of Hispanic/Latino representation and does not include multiracial/multiethnic characters. In 2019, 4.9% of speaking characters were Hispanic/Latino, for an overall total of 4.6% across 1300 films. 44 films in 2019 did not include a single Hispanic/Latino character, whereas 71 films were missing a Hispanic or Latina woman in the storyline. For Hispanic/Latinos with disabilities, 98 movies excluded this group and similarly, 98 films excluded LGBTQ Hispanic/Latino characters.
11. To compare the data to our previous study, see Smith, S. L., Choueiti, M., Case, A., Pieper, K., Clark, H., Hernandez, K., & Martinez, J. (2019). *Latinos in Film: Erasure On Screen & Behind the Camera Across*

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<https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-study-latinos-in-film-2019.pdf>.
12. Following the release of the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative (2020) report, we removed 1 character that was included erroneously due to a demographic change.
 13. U.S. Census Bureau (2021). *Race and Ethnicity in the United States: From 2010 Census and 2020 Census*. Retrieved September 2, 2021 from <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/race-and-ethnicity-in-the-united-state-2010-and-2020-census.html>.
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 15. U.S. Census Bureau. *Quick Facts*. Retrieved September 10, 2021 from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/losangelescountycalifornia/RHI725219>.
 16. U.S. Census Bureau (2021). *Race and Ethnicity in the United States: From 2010 Census and 2020 Census*. Retrieved September 2, 2021 from <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/race-and-ethnicity-in-the-united-state-2010-and-2020-census.html>.
 17. The top-billed actors for each film were determined by using four sources that were cross-referenced with each other: the opening and closing credit roll on screen in the film, Gracenote's StudioSystem.com, VarietyInsight.com, and IMDbPro.com. When credits were listed in order of appearance or alphabetical order in any of the above sources, other sources where order of relevance/importance/status were used.
 18. One U.S.-born actor was not considered Latinx because his only Hispanic ethnic origin is Spanish. Four other actors were born in Latin America, immigrated to the U.S. at a very young age and were raised in the country. They are not included.
 19. No characters in this analysis were from Spain or of Spanish descent. Three top-billed actors were identified as *only* Spanish. Two played Mexican nationals and the third played a White/Caucasian character not of Hispanic descent. We coded 39 "top-billed actors" overall as one White/Caucasian top-billed actor plays a multiracial Hispanic/Latino character. Eight of the 38 Hispanic/Latino top billed actors did not portray a Hispanic/Latino character.
 20. Exploring Hispanic/Latino stereotypes as it relates to social class was influenced by previous literature that highlighted public perceptions of Hispanic/Latinos as being 'poor' or 'lazy.' See C. R. Berg (1990). Stereotyping in films in general and of the Hispanic in particular. *Howard Journal of Communication*, 2(3). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/10646179009359721> and Moses, J. (2012). Moving Away from Racial Stereotypes in Poverty Policy: Trends Suggest a Decline in Race Baiting, Creating Ways to Better Examine Race in Policymaking. *Center for American Progress*. Retrieved September 2, 2021 from https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2012/02/pdf/race_stereotypes.pdf.
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25. The purpose of these variables was to highlight how Hispanic/Latino characters communicate and engage with their background on screen (e.g., interactions with other Hispanic/Latino characters, presence of cultural artifacts, and/or verbal references). Hispanic/Latino characters were qualitatively assessed on their relationship with their Hispanic/Latino heritage according to several markers: Community by Association, Community by Artifacts, and Community by Remark. Community by Association evaluated if a character was associated with other Hispanic/Latino characters (e.g., family members, community organizations). Community by Artifacts explored whether the character was in the presence of physical artifacts or symbols that were associated with Spanish, Hispanic, or Latin American culture. Community by Remark counted any verbal references to the character's Hispanic/Latino background(s).
26. For population growth see Noe-Bustamante, L., Hugo Lopez, M., & Manuel Krogstad, J. (2020). U.S. Hispanic population surpassed 60 million in 2019, but growth has slowed. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved September 10, 2021 from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/07/u-s-hispanic-population-surpassed-60-million-in-2019-but-growth-has-slowed/>. MPA. (2019). *Theme Report 2019*. Retrieved September 10, 2021 from <https://www.motionpictures.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/MPA-THEME-2019.pdf>.
27. U.S. Census Bureau. *Quick Facts*. Retrieved September 10, 2021 from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/losangelescountycalifornia/RHI725219>.