



Latino Diversity in the Top Tier of American Higher Education

Margarita Mooney
Office of Population Research
Department of Sociology
Princeton University
May 5, 2006

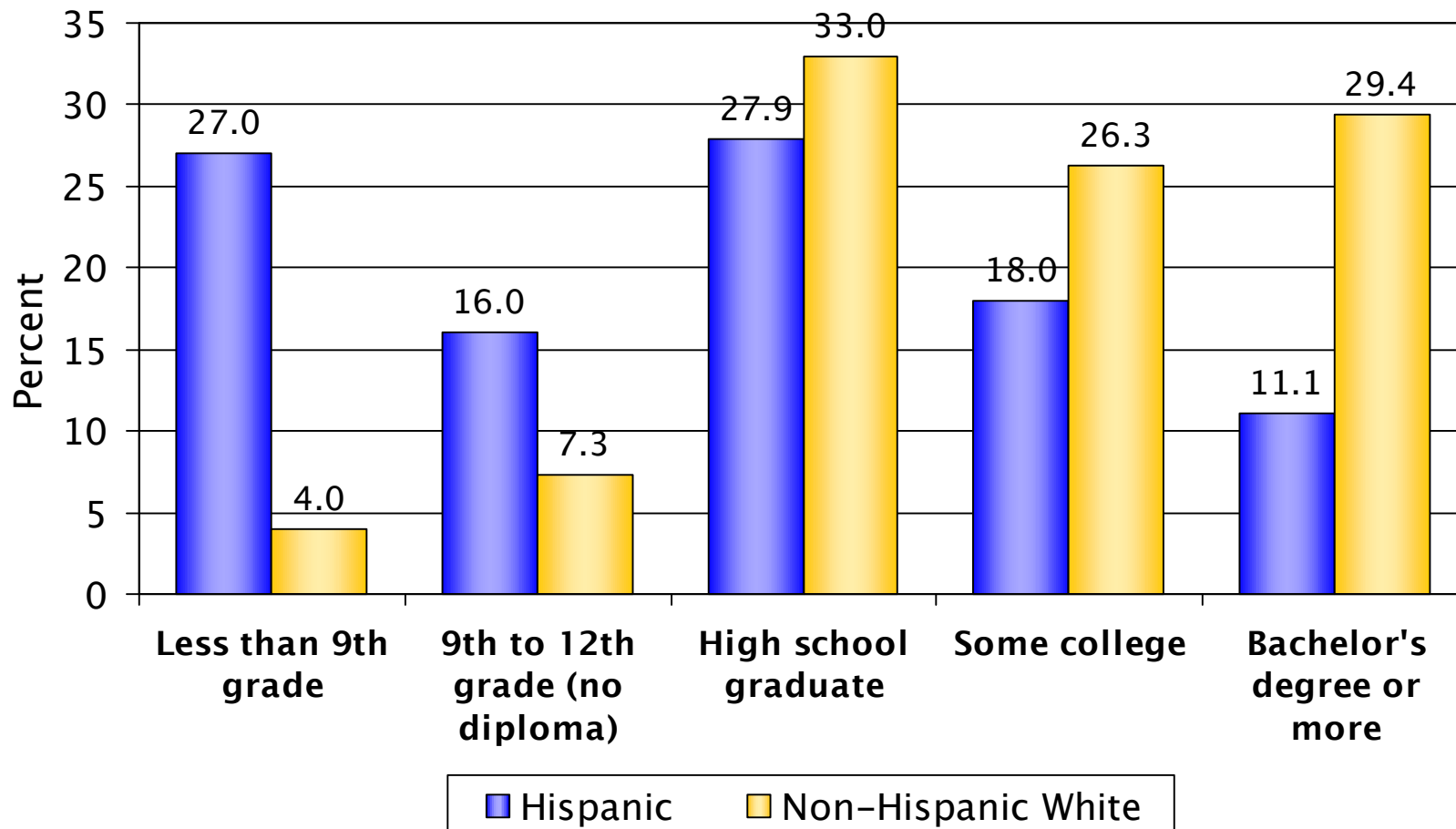


Why Study Hispanics and Education?

- Hispanics/Latinos are the minority group in the United States and growing fast
 - 35.3 million Latinos in the US in 2002, or 12.5% of population.
 - 57.9% growth rate from 1990-2000.
- Hispanic-White education gap is even larger than Black-White
 - Hispanics are less likely to enroll in college than both blacks and whites.
 - When Hispanics do enroll in college, they are more likely than whites or blacks to enroll in 2-year rather than 4 year colleges.

Educational Attainment by Hispanic Origin: 2002

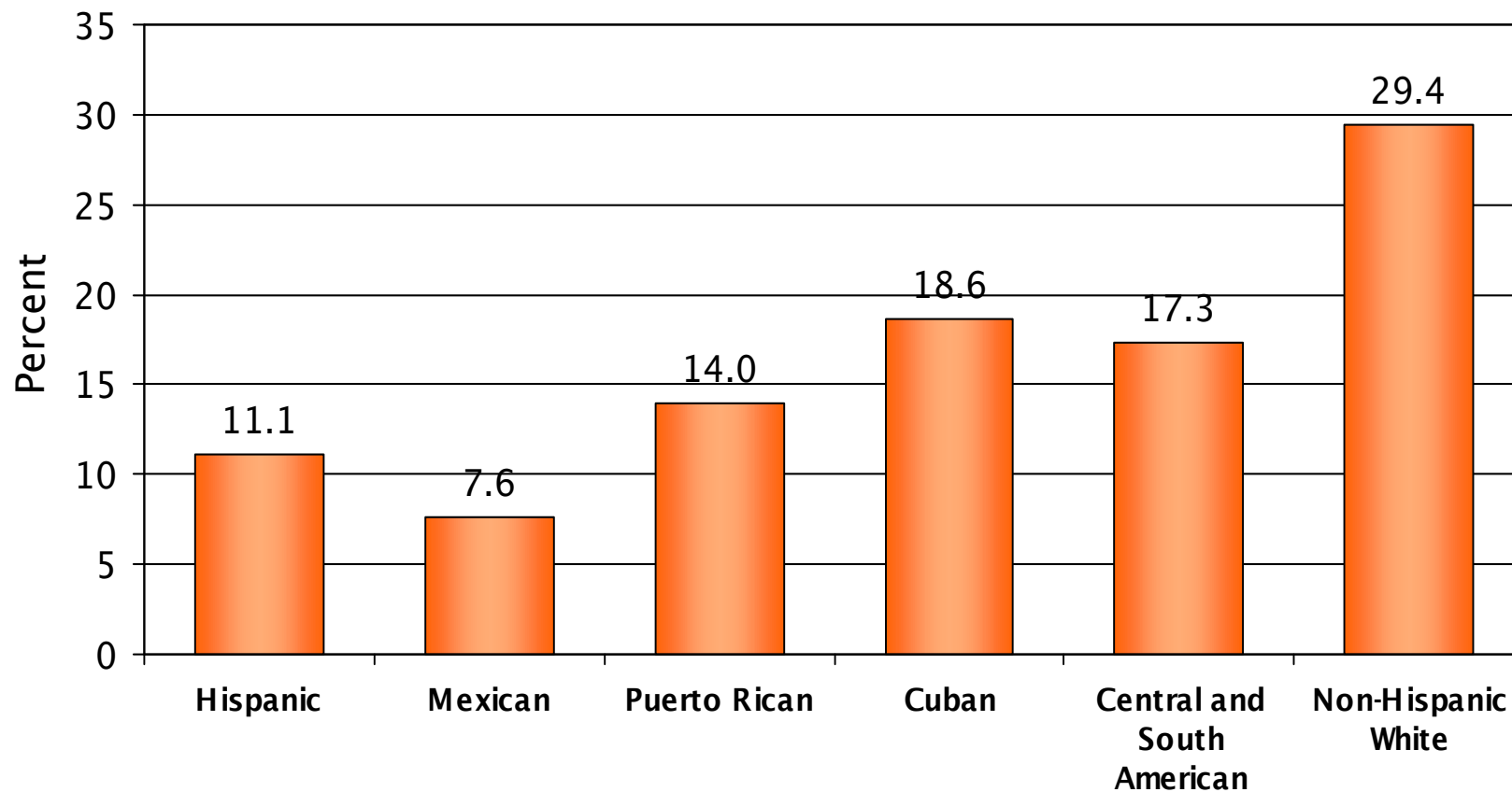
(Population 25 years and over)



Source: Current Population Survey, March 2002, PGP-5

Percent of Population with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Hispanic Origin: 2002

(Population 25 years and over)



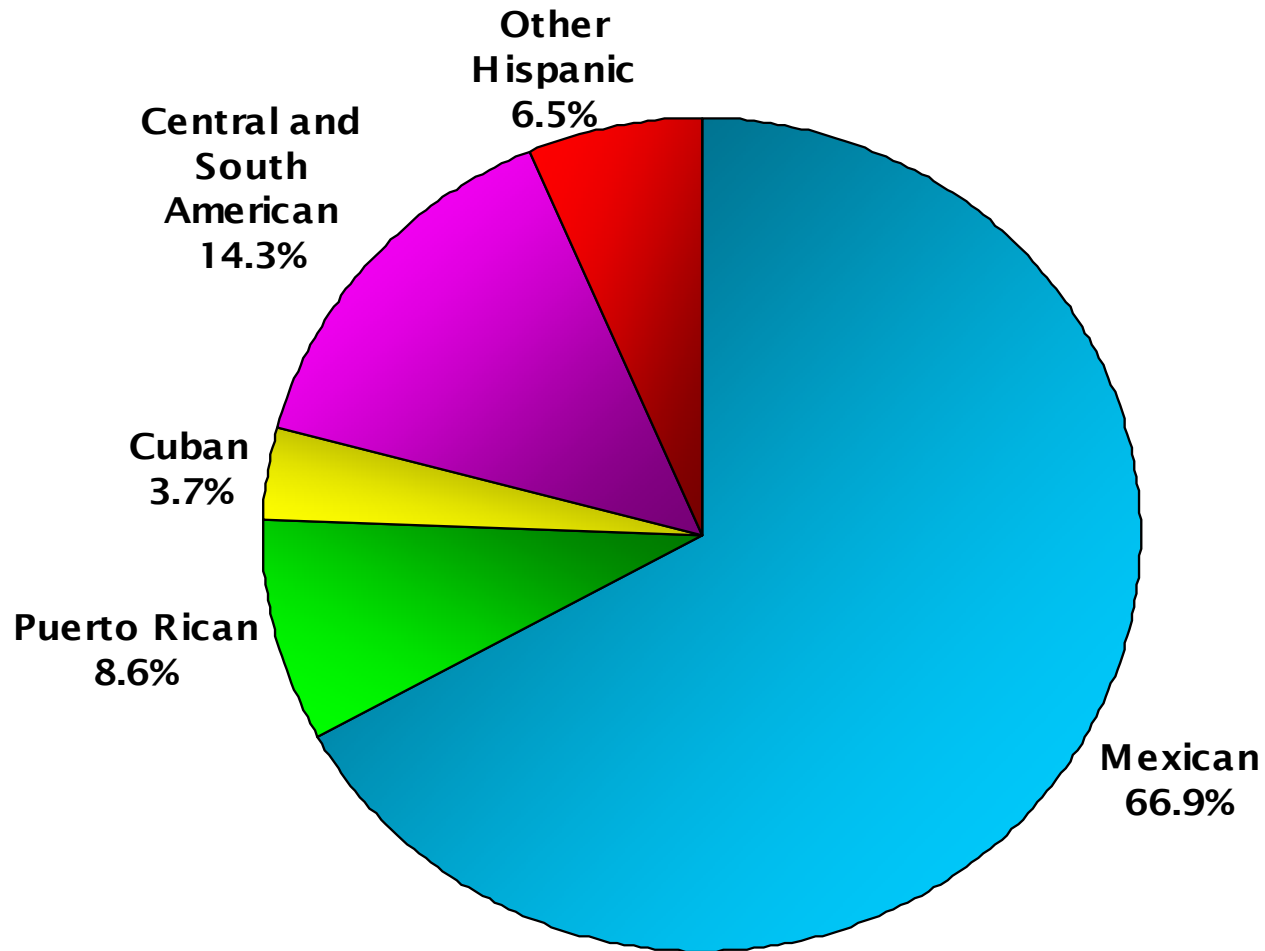
Source: Current Population Survey, March 2002, PGP-5



Who are Hispanics?

- The term “Hispanic” was first used on 1970 census.
- 2000 census question: “Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?” If yes, specify: 1) Mexican/Mexican-American/Chicano; 2) Puerto Rican ; 3) Cuban ; 4) Other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino. Name.
- On 2000 census, 17.3% (6.1 million people) of total Hispanic population chose “other” but did not give a detailed origin. This group is second in size only to Mexican origin group.

Percent Distribution of Hispanics by Type: 2002

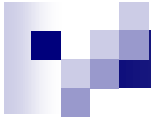


Source: Current Population Survey, March 2002, PGP-5

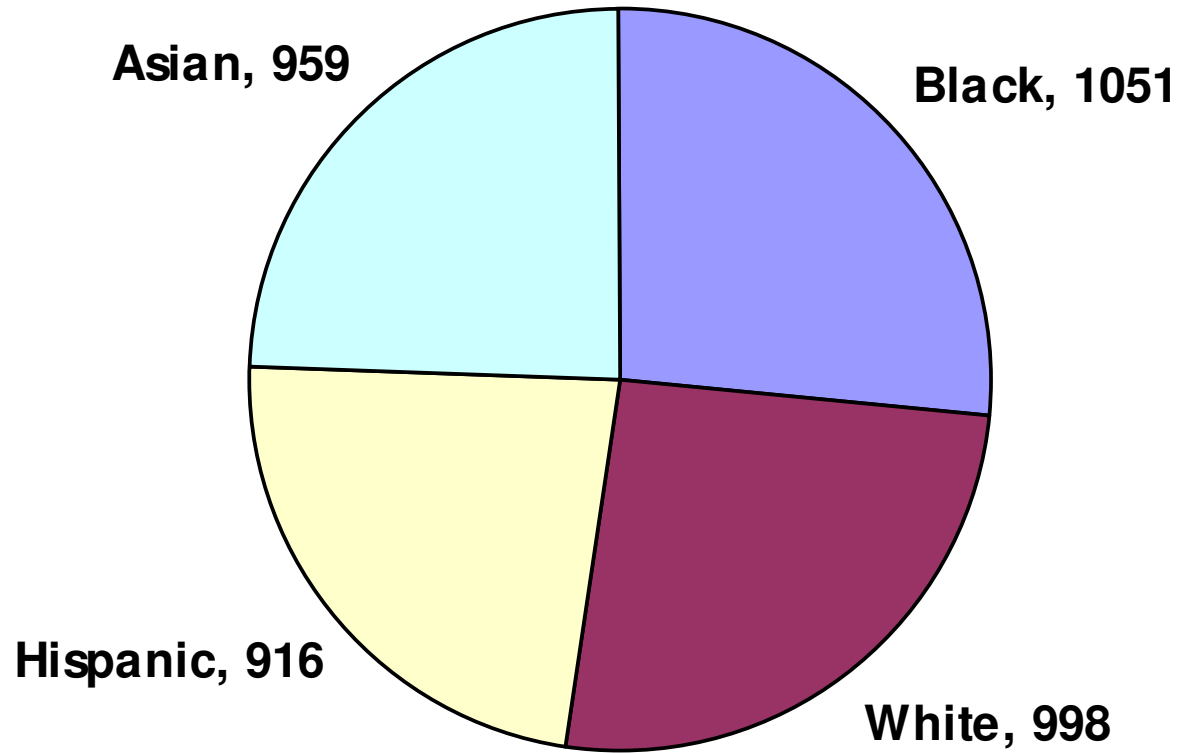


What is NLSF?

- NLSF was designed to provide comprehensive data to test different theoretical explanations for minority underperformance in college.
- Data was collected in five waves, twice in freshmen year, and then each spring after that.
- Total sample size of 3,924 students at 28 of most selective colleges and universities in the United States



NLSF Respondents by Race/Ethnicity





Schools Participating in NLSF

Liberal Arts Colleges

- Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Denison, Oberlin, Smith, Swarthmore, Wesleyan, Williams

Private Research Universities

- Columbia, Emory, Georgetown, Northwestern, Princeton, Rice, Stanford, Tufts, Tulane, U. Pennsylvania, Notre Dame, Vanderbilt, Washington U., Yale

Public Research Universities

- Penn State, Miami (OH), UC-Berkeley, U. Michigan-Ann Arbor, UNC-Chapel Hill

Historically Black Colleges

- Howard



Research Questions

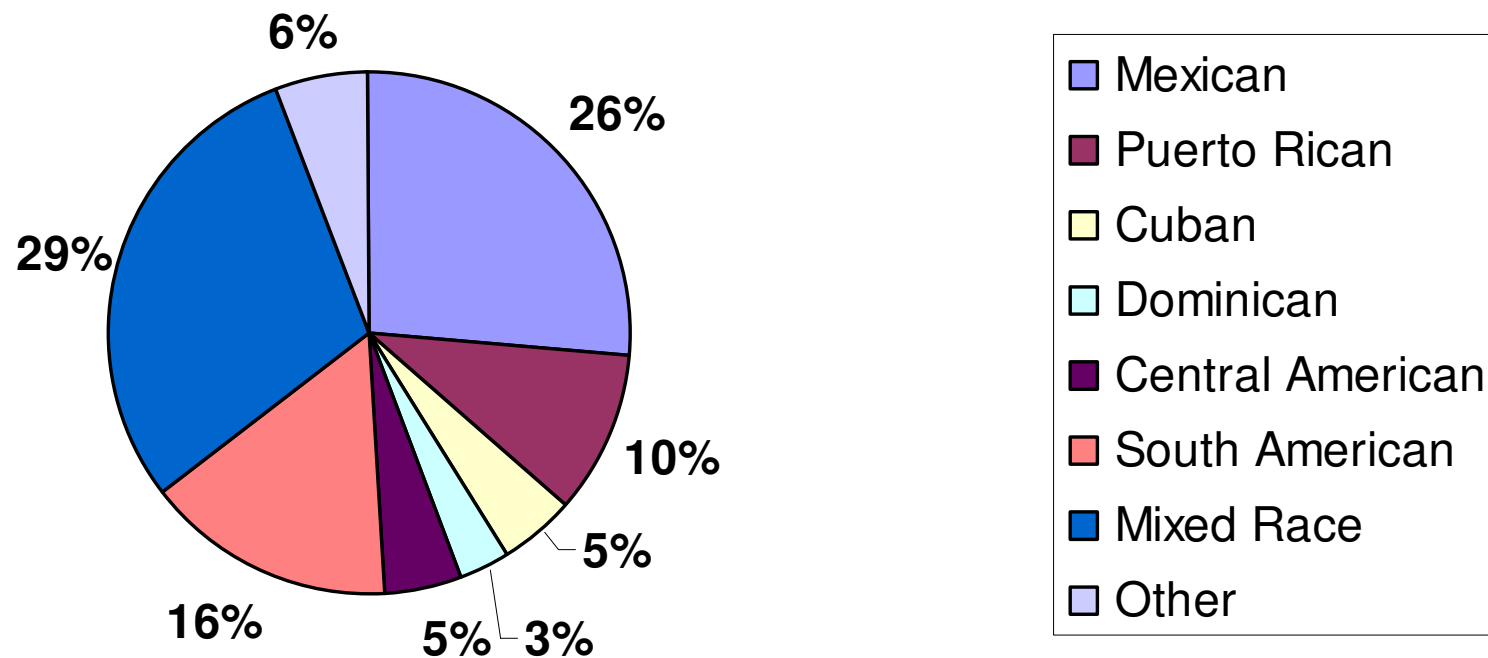
- Do Latinos underachieve relative to their white peers at selective colleges and universities?
- How do Latinos of specific national origin groups compare to their White, Black and Asian peers?

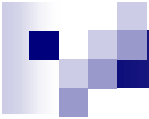


Why study Latinos at the most selective schools?

- Selective universities draw from a nationwide applicant pool, thus the Latino student population is likely very diverse.
- Highly selective colleges and universities don't just give an education, they shape class culture, inform social consciousness and cultivate leaders.

Latino Diveristy in NLSF





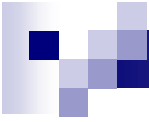
How do students on NLSF self-report their ID?

- #1: Why can't I just be American?
 - “my mother is Mexican and my father is Asian. I consider myself American.”
- #2: Complex Reductionism
 - “my mom’s puerto rican and my mom {dad} is from Nicaraguan and is black, I have some Irish and some Native American. I mostly just say that I am hispanic Puerto Rican.
- #3: All of the above.
 - “While Mexican, I am a mixture of White and Black and Native America”

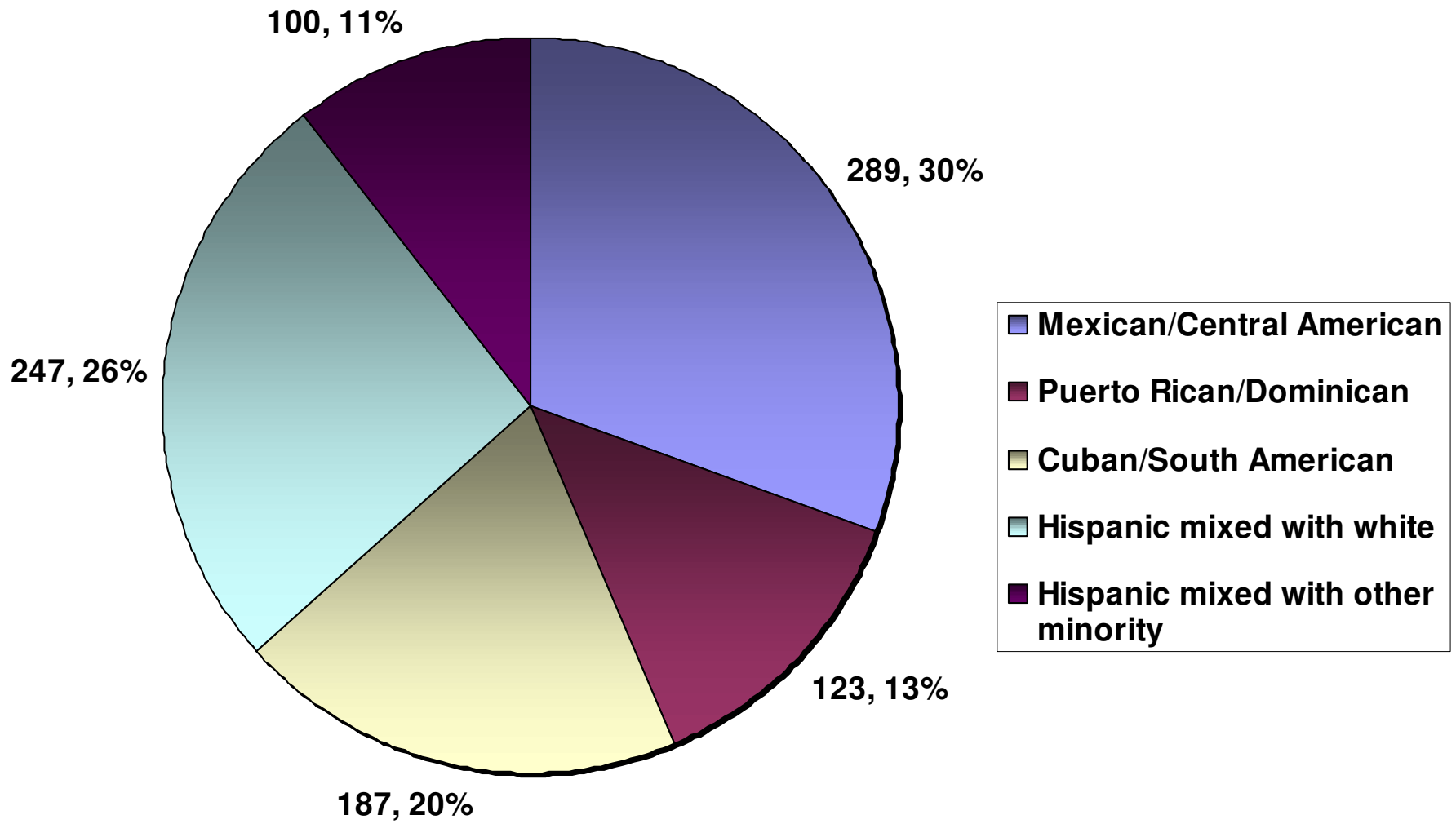


How do students on NLSF self-report their ID?

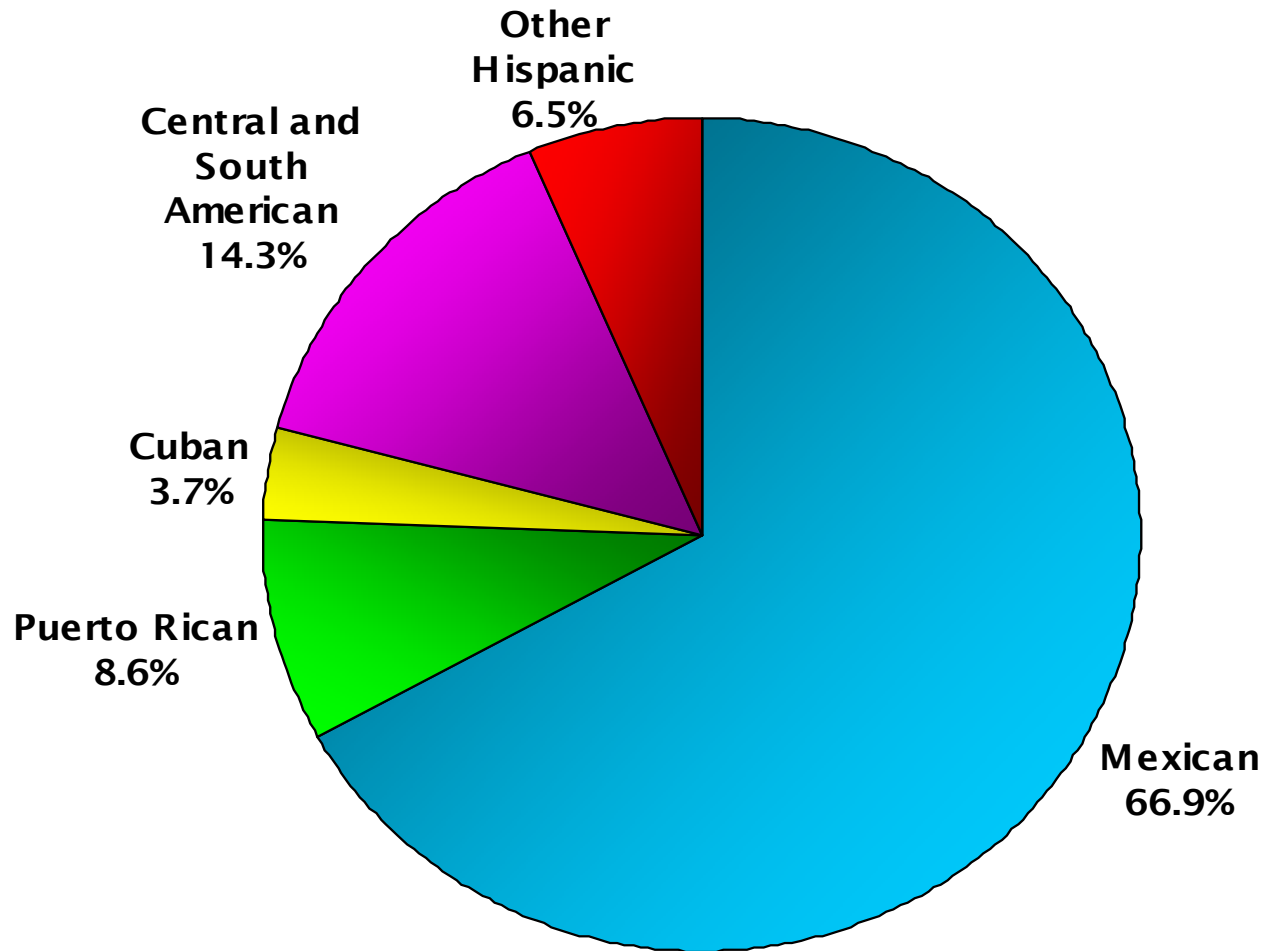
- #4: I don't like your categories.
 - “why does it say hispanic white or hispanic black? I'm just hispanic. I'm assuming hispanic white, but there is no number.”
 - “Mexican-American. Non-white. Non-Black.”
 - “Central American and Puerto Rican but raised as Central American. “mestiza” in Spanish”
- #5: I'm still figuring it out...
 - “father is puerto rican and my mother is extremely white”



Latino Diversity in NLSF

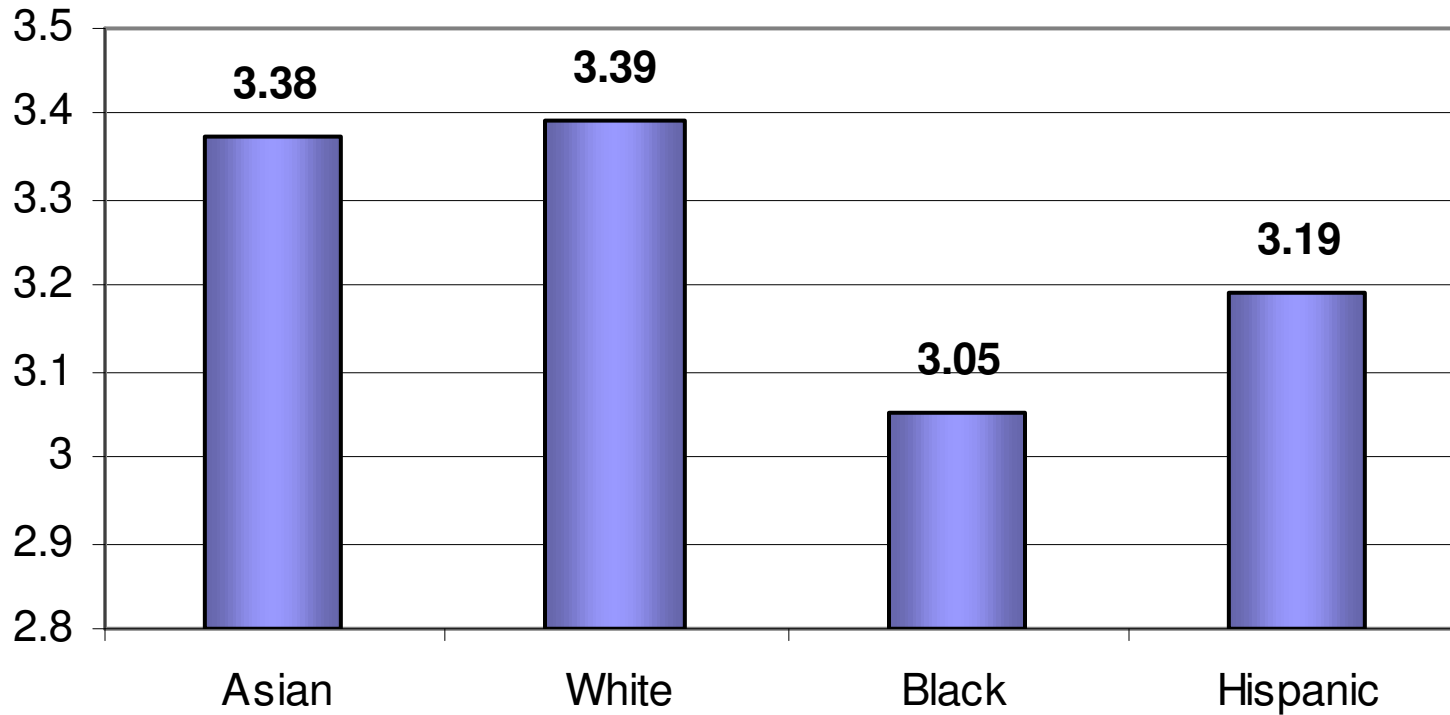


Percent Distribution of Hispanics by Type: 2002

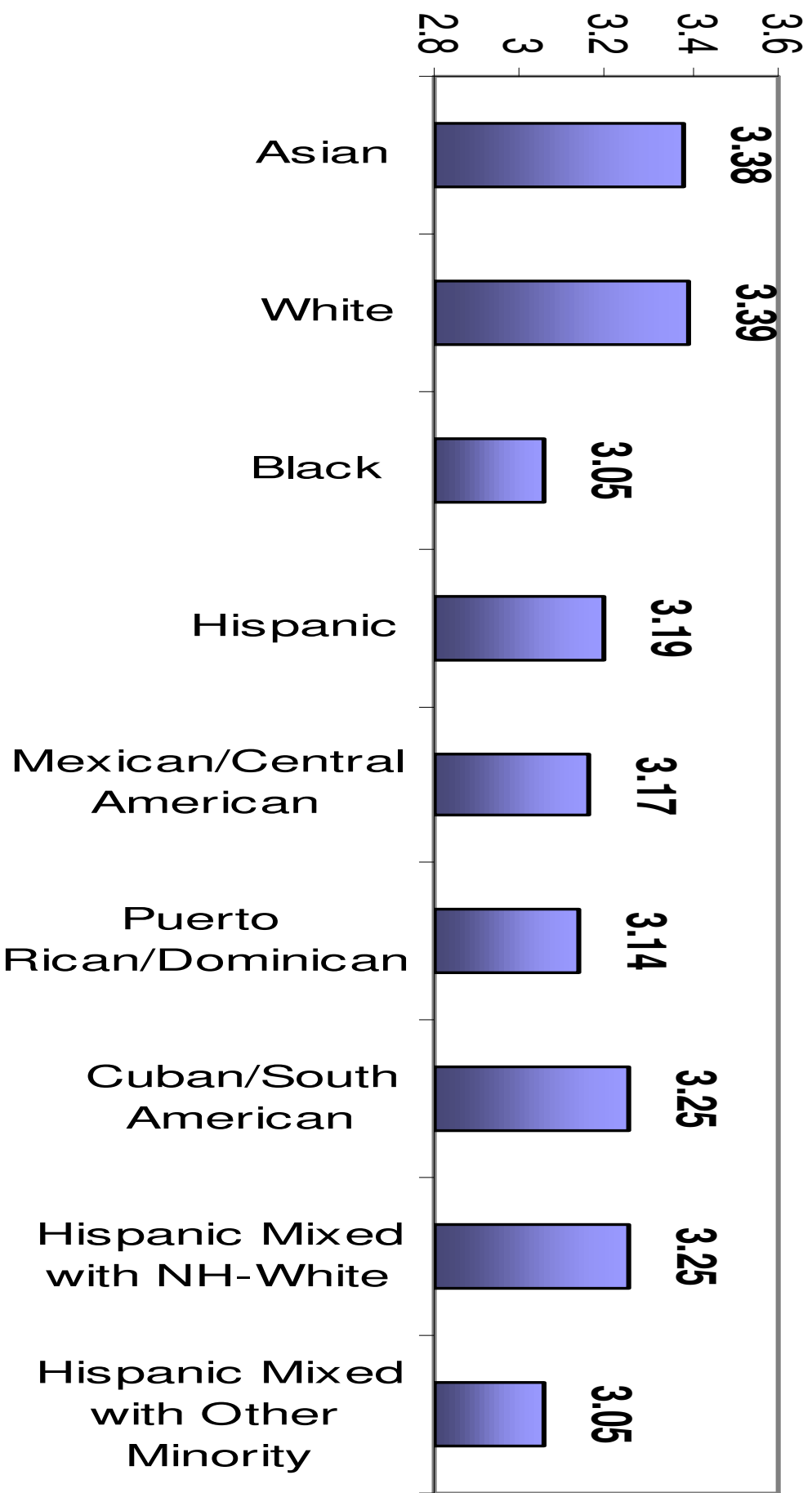


Source: Current Population Survey, March 2002, PGP-5

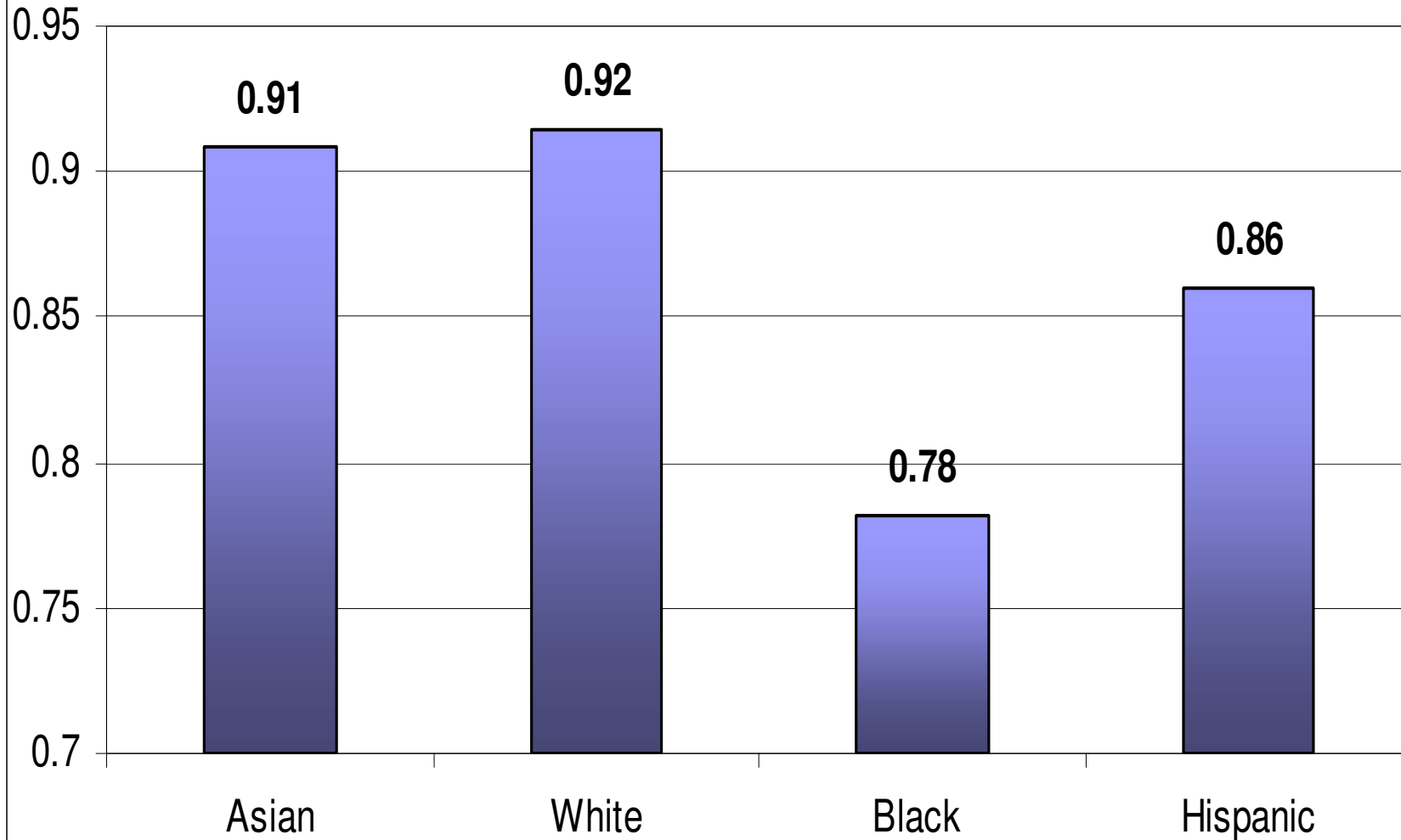
GPA by 4 Major Racial/Ethnic Groups



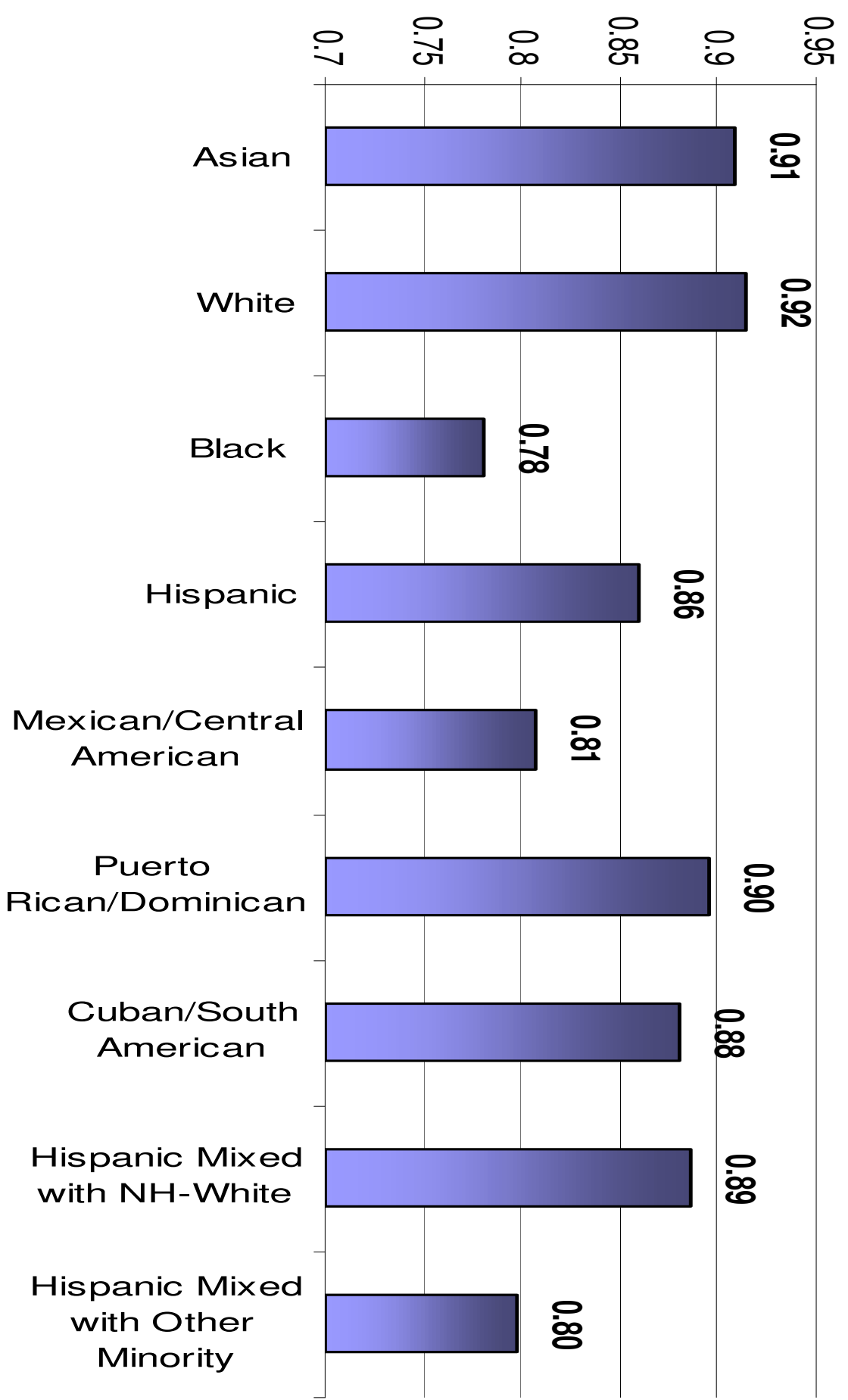
GPA by Ethnicity & Latino Origin

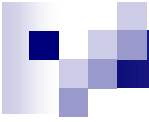


Overall Graduation Rates

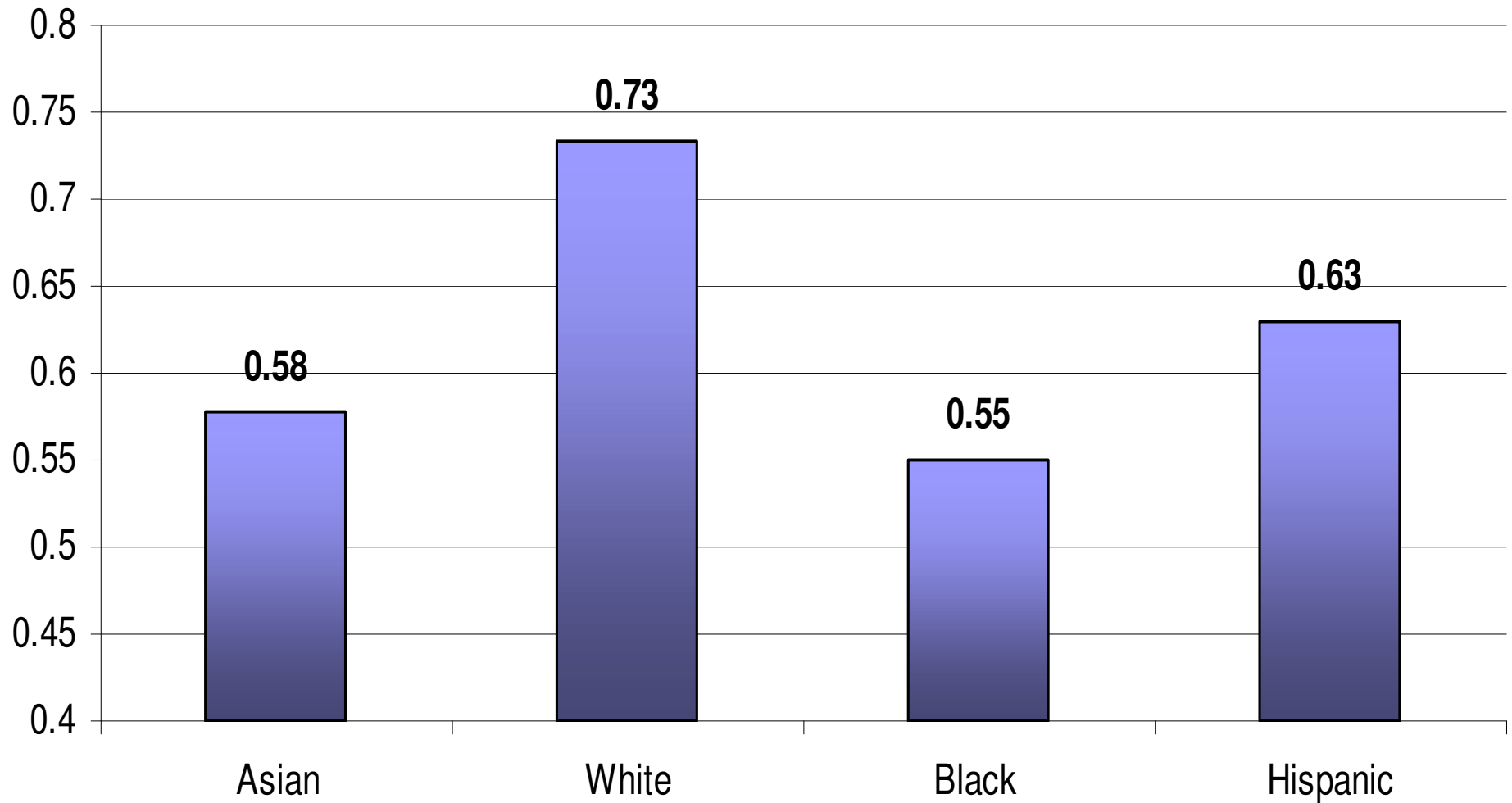


Overall Graduation/Diverse Latinos



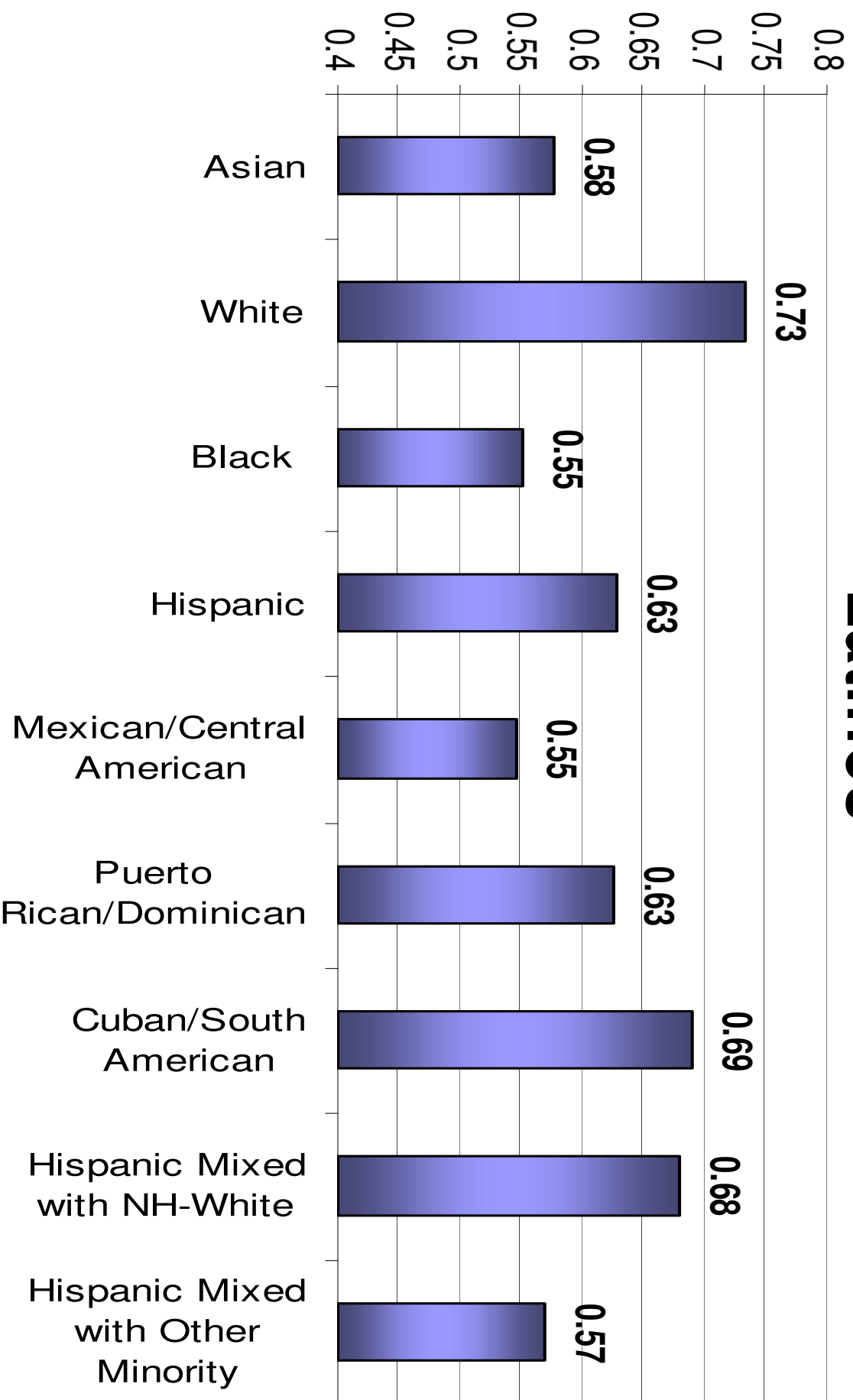


On Time Graduation



On Time Graduation/Diverse

Latinos





But are these differences statistically significant?

■ Hispanics Compared to Whites

- If we just compare Hispanics to whites, we observe an achievement gap. If we break the Hispanics down by national origins, we see that it Mex/CA, PR/Dom, and Hispanics mixed with other minorities drive the differences. One exception: PR/Dom overall graduation rates are not lower than whites.

■ Hispanics Compared to Blacks

- Mex/CA and PR/Dom, as well as Hispanic Mixed with Other Minorities are not much different than blacks. One exception: PR/Dom overall graduation rates are higher than blacks.



Regression Models

- 3 outcomes: College GPA, Overall Graduation Rate, and On-Time Graduation Rate
- 3 Models
 - A. Base Model: Comparing Across 4 Major Ethnic Groups
 - B. Diverse Latinos Model: 3 Ethnic Groups + Latinos Broken Down by National Origin
 - C. Model B + Control Variables (Respondent/Family Traits, Parents' Education, Family Economic Status, HS Attended/Achievement, Psychological Preparation)



Results

■ GPA

- Ethnic differences persist in all models

■ Overall Graduation Rates

- Mexicans/Central Americans and Hispanics & Other Minorities have a significant effect in ethnic model, but only Mexicans/Central Americans effect persists in full model

■ On-Time Graduation Rates

- Mexicans/Central Americans, Hispanics & Other Minorities, and Puerto Ricans/Dominicans have a significant effect in model B, but only Mexicans/Central Americans effect persists in full model



Control Variables

- Other significant effects in full model
 - Male
 - Two-parent Household
 - Parents' Education
 - Attended Private (Non-Religious High School) (only GPA & On-Time Graduation)
 - School Segregation (only GPA & Overall Graduation)
 - High School GPA
 - # AP Courses
 - Self-Rated Academic Preparation (only GPA & On-Time Graduation)
 - Susceptibility to Peer Influence (only GPA)
 - Self-Esteem (only GPA)



Conclusions

- Is the term Hispanic/Latino doublethink? Do we use it even though we know it doesn't mean something clear, or that it means something contradictory?
 - I think Hispanic/Latino may be a meaningful personal/social identity, but the term may not tell us much about differences in educational achievement compared to whites or blacks.



Conclusions

- Contexts, culture and social interactions matter to educational achievement.
 - Subtractive schooling and varying modes of caring (Valenzuela)
- We need more qualitative research on the social integration of diverse Latinos on college campuses and how that affects grades and graduation.
 - How do Latino students interact with other students (Latino and non-Latino), faculty and administrators?