

FOR RELEASE September 15, 2015

# Hispanics of Salvadoran Origin in the United States, 2013

## *Statistical Profile*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
ON THIS REPORT:**

Mark Hugo Lopez, Director of Hispanic Research  
Molly Rohal, Communications Manager

202.419.4372

[www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)

# Hispanics of Salvadoran Origin in the United States, 2013

BY *Gustavo López*

An estimated 2 million Hispanics of Salvadoran origin resided in the United States in 2013, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

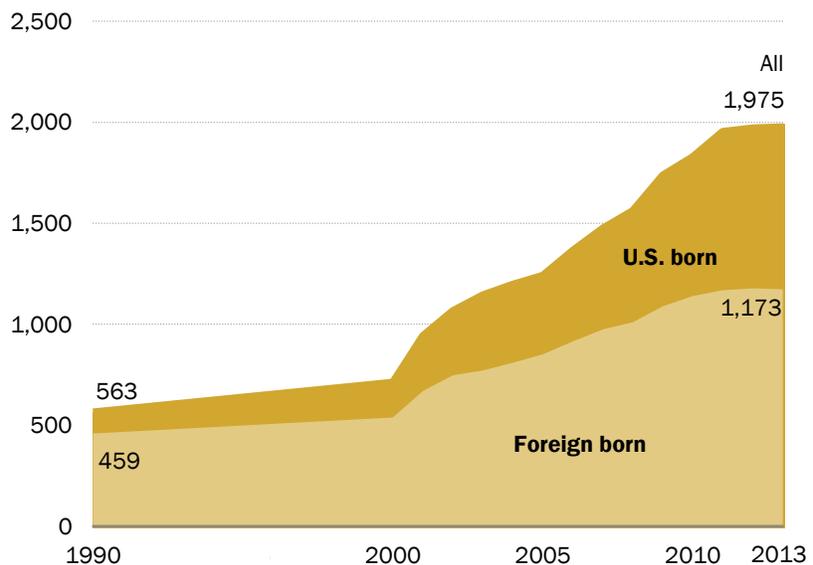
Salvadorans in this statistical profile are people who self-identified as Hispanics of Salvadoran origin; this means either they themselves are Salvadoran immigrants or they trace their family ancestry to El Salvador.

Salvadorans are the fourth-largest population of Hispanic origin living in the United States, accounting for 3.7% of the U.S. Hispanic population in 2013. Since 1990, the Salvadoran-origin population has more than tripled, growing from 563,000 to 2 million over that period. At the same time, the foreign-born population of Salvadoran origin living in the U.S. grew 156%, up from 459,000 in 1990 to 1.2 million in 2013. In comparison, Mexicans, the nation's largest Hispanic origin group, constituted 34.6 million, or 64.1%, of the Hispanic population in 2013.<sup>1</sup>

FIGURE 1

## Salvadoran-Origin Population in the U.S., 1990-2013

*In thousands*



Note: People in group quarters such as college dormitories or institutions are not included in figures for 2001 to 2005. Changes in the wording of the Hispanic origin question in the 2000 decennial census may have led to an undercount of some Hispanic origin groups in that year. For more, see <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2002/05/09/counting-the-other-hispanics/>

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of 1990 and 2000 censuses (5% IPUMS) and 2001-2013 American Community Surveys (1% IPUMS)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<sup>1</sup> Percentages are computed before numbers are rounded.

## About the Data

This statistical profile of Hispanics of Salvadoran origin is based on the Census Bureau's 2013 [American Community Survey](#) (ACS) and a nationally representative [Pew Research Center survey](#) of 5,103 Hispanic adults conducted May 24-July 28, 2013. The survey was conducted in both English and Spanish on cellular as well as landline telephones and has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.1 percentage points. For a complete methodology, see: <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/05/07/appendix-a-survey-methodology-2/>

Like any survey, estimates from the ACS are subject to sampling error and (potentially) measurement error. Information on the ACS sampling strategy and associated error is available at [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/methodology\\_main/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/methodology_main/). An example of measurement error is that citizenship rates for the foreign born are estimated to be overstated in the decennial census and other official surveys, such as the ACS (see Jeffrey S. Passel. 2007. "[Growing Share of Immigrants Choosing Naturalization](#)." Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, March). Finally, estimates from the ACS may differ from the decennial census or other Census Bureau surveys due to differences in methodology and data collection procedures (see, for example, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/laborfor/laborfactsheet092209.html> and <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/datasources/factsheet.html>).

This statistical profile compares the demographic, income and economic characteristics of the Salvadoran population with the characteristics of all Hispanics and the U.S. population overall, and includes public opinion data of Salvadoran and Hispanic adults. It is based on Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013 American Community Survey and Pew Research Center's 2013 National Survey of Latinos. Key facts include:

- **Immigration status.** Roughly six-in-ten Salvadorans (59%) in the United States are foreign born, compared with 35% of Hispanics and 13% of the U.S. population overall. About four-in-ten immigrants from El Salvador (42%) have been in the U.S. for over 20 years. About three-in-ten Salvadoran immigrants (31%) are U.S. citizens.
- **English proficiency and speaking Spanish at home.** According to the ACS, half of Salvadorans speak English proficiently.<sup>2</sup> The other half of Salvadorans ages 5 and older report speaking English less than very well, compared with 32% of all Hispanics. Overall, 89% of Salvadorans speak Spanish at home, higher than the share (73%) of all Hispanics ages 5 and older who speak Spanish at home.

---

<sup>2</sup> This includes Salvadorans ages 5 and older who speak only English at home or, if they speak a non-English language at home, indicate they can speak English "very well."

- **Bilingualism and language dominance.** [According to the 2013 Pew Research Center survey](#), only 3% of Salvadoran adults are English-dominant, much lower than the share of Hispanics overall (25%).<sup>3</sup> About six-in-ten (63%) Salvadoran adults are Spanish-dominant, and roughly one-third (35%) are bilingual. The share of Salvadoran adults who are Spanish-dominant is higher than the overall Hispanic population (38%), and the share of bilingual speakers is about equal to the overall Hispanic population (36%).
- **Age.** Salvadorans are younger than the U.S. population but older than Hispanics overall. The median age of Salvadorans is 30; the median ages of the U.S. population and all Hispanics are 37 and 28, respectively. Among Salvadorans, the median age of immigrants is 39 years, while it's 12 years among the U.S. born.
- **Marital status.** Salvadorans ages 18 and older are married at an equal rate to Hispanics overall (46% of each) but are less likely to be married than the U.S. population overall (50%). Among Salvadorans ages 18 and older, the foreign born are more likely to be married than U.S.-born Salvadorans—52% vs. 23%.
- **Fertility.** Fewer than one-in-ten (8%) Salvadoran women ages 15 to 44 gave birth in the 12 months prior to this survey. That was similar to the rate for all Hispanic women (7%) and slightly higher than the overall rate for U.S. women (6%). Some 44% of Salvadoran women ages 15 to 44 who gave birth in the 12 months prior to the survey were unmarried. That was similar to the 45% rate for all Hispanic women and greater than the 38% overall rate for U.S. women.
- **Regional dispersion.** Salvadorans are concentrated in the South (42%) and in the West (39%), mostly in California (34%).
- **Educational attainment.** Salvadorans have lower levels of education than the U.S. Hispanic population and the U.S. population overall. Some 8% of Salvadorans ages 25 and older—compared with 14% of all U.S. Hispanics and 30% among the entire U.S. population—have obtained at least a bachelor's degree. Among Salvadorans ages 25 and older, the U.S. born are more likely to have earned a bachelor's degree or more than foreign-born Salvadorans—22% vs. 7%.

---

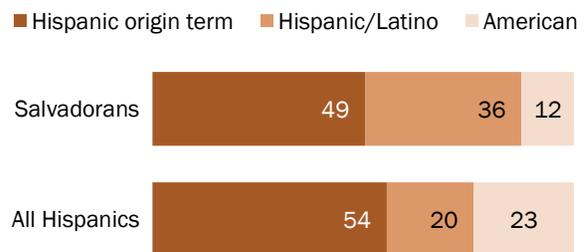
<sup>3</sup> Language dominance, or primary language, is a composite measure based on self-described assessments of speaking and reading abilities. "Spanish-dominant" persons are more proficient in Spanish than in English, i.e., they speak and read Spanish "very well" or "pretty well" but rate their English-speaking and -reading ability lower. "Bilingual" refers to persons who are proficient in both English and Spanish. "English-dominant" persons are more proficient in English than in Spanish.

- Income.** The median annual personal earnings for Salvadorans ages 16 and older was \$20,800 in the year prior to the survey—slightly lower than the median earnings for all U.S. Hispanics (\$21,900) and lower than the median earnings for the U.S. population (\$30,000).
- Poverty status.** The share of Salvadorans who live in poverty, 20%, is higher than the rate for the general U.S. population (16%) but lower than the rate for Hispanics overall (25%).
- Health insurance.** Some 37% of Salvadorans do not have health insurance, compared with 29% of all Hispanics and 15% of the general U.S. population. Some 14% of Salvadorans younger than 18 are uninsured. (These data reflect insurance rates prior to the implementation of the individual insurance mandate of the Affordable Care Act.)
- Homeownership.** The rate of Salvadoran homeownership (39%) is lower than the rate for all Hispanics (45%) and the U.S. population (64%) as a whole.
- “Salvadoran” is the identity term used most often.** When asked in a [2013 Pew Research Center survey](#) what term they use to describe themselves most often, about half of Salvadoran adults (49%) say they most often use term “Salvadoran.” Some 12% say they describe themselves most often as “American.” About one-third (36%) most often use the pan-ethnic terms of

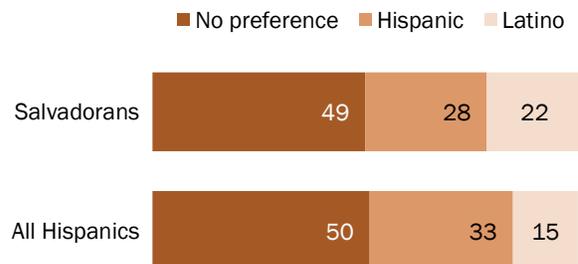
FIGURE 2

### Salvadoran Views of Identity

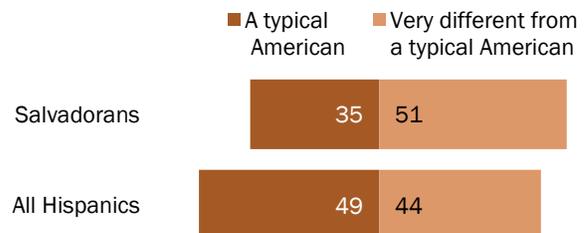
% saying they most often describe themselves as ...



% saying they prefer the term ...



% saying they think of themselves as ...



Note: “Don’t know/Refused” responses not shown. For top chart, volunteered responses of “Depends” not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center survey of Hispanic adults, May 24-July 28, 2013 (N=5,103 including 271 Salvadoran adults)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

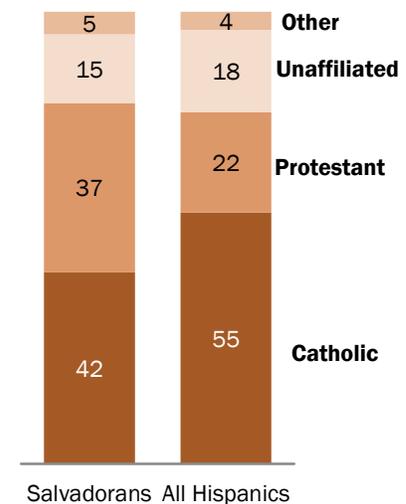
“Hispanic” or “Latino” to describe their identity. By comparison, 54% of all U.S. Hispanics say they prefer their ancestor’s Hispanic origin term to describe their identity, 23% say they describe themselves most often as “American” and two-in-ten use the pan-ethnic terms of “Hispanic” or “Latino” to describe their identity.

- Preference for Hispanic or Latino.** In regard to the pan-ethnic terms of “Hispanic” or “Latino,” about half of Salvadoran adults (49%) have no preference for either term. Among those who have a preference, more prefer the term “Hispanic” (28% of all Salvadorans), while 22% prefer the term “Latino.” By comparison, half of all Hispanic adults have no preference for either term, and among those who do have a preference, Hispanic is favored over Latino 2-to-1.
- Typical American or not.** When asked in the 2013 Pew Research survey whether they thought of themselves as a typical American or very different from a typical American, Salvadorans are more likely to see themselves as “very different from a typical American” (51%) compared with about one-third of Salvadoran adults (35%) who see themselves as “a typical American.” By comparison, Hispanic adults overall are more likely to think of themselves as typical Americans (49%) than very different from a typical American (44%).
- Religious affiliation.** A [2013 Pew Research Center survey](#) of Hispanic adults finds that about four-in-ten Salvadorans (42%) identify themselves as Catholic. Some 37% of Salvadorans are Protestant, and among all Salvadorans, only 5% are mainline Protestants and 32% are evangelical Protestants. Some 15% of Salvadoran adults are religiously unaffiliated. In contrast, among all Hispanics, 55% identify as Catholic, 22% identify as Protestant, and about two-in-ten (18%) are unaffiliated.

FIGURE 3

### Salvadoran Religious Affiliation

% of adults who belong to each religious group



Note: “Don’t know” responses not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center survey of Hispanic adults, May 24-July 28, 2013 (n=4,080 including 228 Salvadoran adults)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Table 1**  
**U.S. Population, by Ethnicity and Salvadoran Origin, 2013**

Thousands, unless otherwise noted

	All	Hispanics	Hispanics of Salvadoran Origin		
			All	U.S. born	Foreign born
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>316,129</b>	<b>53,964</b>	<b>1,975</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>1,173</b>
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	155,592	27,377	1,006	403	603
Female	160,537	26,587	969	399	570
<b>Nativity</b>					
U.S. Born	274,788	34,981	802	802	---
Foreign Born	41,341	18,983	1,173	---	1,173
<b>Age</b>					
Median (in years)	37	28	30	12	39
<b>Age Groups</b>					
Younger than 5	19,682	5,053	182	179	3
5-17	53,820	12,635	403	348	54
18-29	53,007	10,923	402	201	200
30-39	40,997	8,454	376	44	332
40-49	42,158	7,039	299	16	283
50-64	61,801	6,560	233	11	222
65 and older	44,663	3,301	80	3	77
<b>Marital Status (ages 18 and older)</b>					
Married	122,043	16,750	638	63	575
Never married	71,957	13,603	575	196	379
Divorced/separated/widowed	48,628	5,924	178	16	162
<b>Fertility (women ages 15 to 44)</b>					
Total number of women	63,071	12,411	483	160	323
Women who had a birth in the past 12 months	3,893	873	37	8	29
Unmarried women <sup>2</sup> who had a birth in the past 12 mo	1,478	393	16	***	13
<b>School Enrollment (ages 5 to 18)</b>					
K-12	52,794	12,383	391	334	56
<b>Educational Attainment (ages 25 and older)</b>					
Less than high school graduate	28,268	10,491	562	17	545
High school graduate <sup>2</sup>	58,768	8,037	299	37	262
Two-year degree/Some college	61,501	6,988	206	53	153
Bachelor's degree or more	62,454	4,169	98	30	68
<b>Median Annual Personal Earnings (in dollars)</b>					
All (ages 16 and older with earnings)	\$30,000	\$21,900	\$20,800	\$17,000	\$22,000
Full-time, year-round workers	\$42,000	\$30,000	\$26,400	\$28,600	\$26,000
<b>Persons in Poverty<sup>3</sup></b>					
Younger than 18	16,224	5,739	156	139	17
18-64	28,336	6,693	211	37	175
65 and older	4,155	631	18	1	17
<b>Health Insurance<sup>4</sup></b>					
Uninsured, all ages	46,654	15,411	730	154	576
Uninsured, younger than 18	5,245	2,033	79	57	22
<b>Persons in Households by Type of Household<sup>5</sup></b>					
In family households	257,066	48,026	1,810	760	1,050
In married-couple households	183,952	30,351	1,104	449	655
In non-family households	51,033	4,944	141	30	111
<b>Citizenship</b>					
Citizen	294,112	41,173	1,163	802	361
Non-citizen	22,016	12,791	812	---	812
<b>Language (ages 5 and older)</b>					
Speaks only English at home	234,715	12,893	189	131	58
Does not speak only English at home	61,732	36,019	1,604	493	1,111
Speaks English very well	36,673	20,287	704	418	286
Speaks English less than very well	25,059	15,732	900	75	826
<b>Years in the U.S. (foreign-born only)</b>					
0 to 5 years	5,959	1,960	130	---	130
6 to 10 years	5,791	2,926	203	---	203
11 to 15 years	7,012	3,811	212	---	212
16 to 20 years	4,915	2,456	134	---	134
Over 20 years	17,664	7,830	493	---	493
<b>Regional Dispersion</b>					
Northeast	55,943	7,537	303	110	193
New York	19,651	3,609	169	63	106
Maryland	5,929	531	158	62	96
Midwest	67,548	4,953	68	32	35
South	118,384	19,724	832	330	501
Texas	26,448	10,155	283	110	173
Virginia	8,260	707	156	62	94
West	74,254	21,749	772	330	443
California	38,333	14,716	676	285	390

<sup>1</sup>Unmarried women includes those who were never married, divorced, separated or widowed. <sup>2</sup>High school graduate<sup>2</sup> includes those who have attained a high school diploma or its equivalent, such as a General Education Development (GED) certificate. <sup>3</sup>For detailed information on how poverty status is determined, see <http://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/POVERTY>. Due to the way in which the IPUMS assigns poverty values, these data will differ from those that might be provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. <sup>4</sup>These data reflect insurance coverage prior to the implementation of the individual insurance mandate of the Affordable Care Act. <sup>5</sup>The household population excludes persons living in institutions, college dormitories and other group quarters.

Note: Numbers may not sum to the total due to rounding. Analysis is based on the following number of observations: all, 3,132,795; Hispanics, 435,427; Hispanics of Salvadoran origin, 14,762; U.S.-born Salvadorans, 5,928; foreign-born Salvadorans, 8,834. The symbol \*\*\* indicates insufficient number of observations to provide a reliable estimate.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS). More information on the source data and sampling error is available at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/design.shtml> and [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data\\_documentation/Accuracy/ACS\\_Accuracy\\_of\\_Data\\_2013.pdf](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2013.pdf).

Table 2

**Household Characteristics, by Ethnicity and Salvadoran Origin, 2013**

	All	Hispanics	Hispanics of Salvadoran Origin		
			All	U.S. born	Foreign born
<b>Total</b> (in thousands)	<b>116,291</b>	<b>14,246</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>439</b>
<b>Homeownership</b> (household heads)					
In owner-occupied homes (in thousands)	73,933	6,452	194	18	176
In renter-occupied homes (in thousands)	42,358	7,794	302	39	264
Homeownership rate (%)	63.6	45.3	39.1	32.0	40.0
<b>Household Annual Income</b> (in dollars)					
Median	\$52,000	\$41,000	\$44,060	\$47,000	\$44,000
<b>Household Size</b>					
Average number of persons	2.6	3.5	4.0	3.4	4.1

Note: The household population excludes persons living in institutions, college dormitories and other group quarters. Households are classified by the ethnicity of the household head. Numbers may not sum to the total due to rounding. Analysis is based on the following number of observations: all, 1,211,264; Hispanics, 121,664; Hispanics of Salvadoran origin, 3,968; U.S.-born Salvadorans, 479; foreign-born Salvadorans, 3,489.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS). More information on the source data and sampling error is available at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/design.shtml> and [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data\\_documentation/Accuracy/ACS\\_Accuracy\\_of\\_Data\\_2013.pdf](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2013.pdf).

Table 3

**Employment Characteristics, by Ethnicity and Salvadoran Origin, 2013**

Thousands, unless otherwise noted

	All	Hispanics	Hispanics of Salvadoran Origin		
			All	U.S. born	Foreign born
<b>Employment Status</b> (civilians ages 16 and older)					
Employed	145,238	22,948	998	185	813
Unemployed	13,365	2,535	91	32	59
Not in labor force	91,321	12,437	359	98	261
Unemployment rate (%)	8.4	9.9	8.4	14.6	6.8
<b>Industries<sup>1</sup></b>					
Construction, agriculture and mining	11,827	3,116	159	12	147
Manufacturing	15,283	2,383	106	15	92
Trade and transportation	26,636	4,322	185	50	135
Information, finance and other services	91,492	13,127	547	108	439
<b>Occupations</b>					
Management, professional and related occupations	56,566	5,087	127	41	86
Services	22,944	5,522	327	40	287
Sales and office support	35,127	5,037	176	66	110
Construction, extraction and farming	8,287	2,724	144	10	135
Maintenance, production, transportation and material moving	22,314	4,577	223	28	195

<sup>1</sup>Currently employed civilians ages 16 and older.

Note: Analysis is based on the following number of observations: all, 2,530,954; Hispanics, 311,328; Hispanics of Salvadoran origin, 11,055; U.S.-born Salvadorans, 2,527; foreign born-Salvadorans, 8,528.

Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 2013 American Community Survey (1% IPUMS). More information on the source data and sampling error is available at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/design.shtml> and [http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data\\_documentation/Accuracy/ACS\\_Accuracy\\_of\\_Data\\_2013.pdf](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2013.pdf).