

## CENTER FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

# Black and Latino Attitudes and Experiences During COVID-19

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## Summary

The CSBS has been surveying citizens from the state of Illinois to gauge their attitudes towards technological solutions used to manage COVID-19 and assess their reactions to adopting and using these technologies. We have also been asking Illinoisans about their experiences with COVID-19 and how they are coping with the pandemic. It has been impossible to avoid the fact that the Black and Latino communities across the US ([Czeisler, 2020](#)) are suffering disproportionately due to COVID-19. Because of this, we sought to derive a better understanding of these two groups, and for this study sampled large numbers of Blacks and Latinos to gain a deeper understanding of these COVID-19 related issues and experiences. Their ratings and open-ended responses to the challenges as well as opportunities they face as the pandemic continues. To that end, we report on the following issues as they relate to the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic by Blacks and Latinos in the state of Illinois:

1. Attitudes towards technology used to manage COVID-19
2. Factors shaping COVID-19 technology adoption
3. COVID-19 attitudes and experiences

## 1. Attitudes towards technology used to manage COVID-19

### WILLINGNESS TO USE COVID-19 TECHNOLOGY

Traditional case investigation and contact tracing are central to public health officials' ability to monitor, manage, and contain outbreaks of COVID-19; however, efforts are ongoing for technological solutions to increase the efficiency of these practices. With smartphone applications, proximity-tracking tools that use Bluetooth technology can decrease the overall burden for manual contact with case investigators and contact tracers, help identify contacts in a timelier fashion, facilitate communication with contacts, and ensure rapid isolation of contacts to break to the chain of transmission. However, significant concerns about privacy and invasiveness can hamper the viability of using such technology. As a result, we assessed how Blacks and Latinos differed in their willingness to use smartphone apps such as track-and-trace programs and status indicator programs to help researchers and public health officials manage the virus.

In line with [past survey results](#), Latinos (41% yes) and Blacks (36%) were moderately accepting of

COVID-19 technology (Figure 1). These results also dovetail with external sources, such as the Pew Research Center, which suggests that Latino populations may be more trusting of mobile phone technology such as track-and-trace apps that combat COVID-19 than other racial groups ([Anderson & Auxier, 2020](#)).

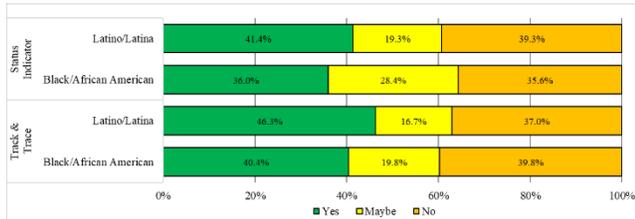


Figure 1: Would you be willing to use COVID-19 App?

## 2. Factors Shaping COVID-19 Technology Adoption

The large proportions of individuals reporting uncertainty about using smartphone technology to help combat COVID-19 casts doubt as to whether public health campaigns that utilize these technologies will be effective. As a result, it is crucial to construct effective public health messages that can persuade individuals to act in the public interest. In the present analysis, we thus examine the factors that may shape individuals who would utilize mobile app technology to combat COVID-19.

### INSTITUTIONAL TRUST

[Our previous analysis](#) (which collected data from 5/6/2020 to 5/21/2020) showed that about 68.9% of individuals believed that the organization offering the COVID-19 mobile app would influence their likelihood to utilize the technology. In the present analysis, 64.8% indicated the organization offering the application would matter. We followed up on this analysis by investigating how much Latinos and Blacks would trust various organizations with their data. On average, Latino respondents reported greater trust across organizations than Blacks, with medical providers garnering the most trust from both groups (see

Figure 2). One potential rationale for increased institutional trust in medical providers may be attributed to the value individuals place on the privacy of their health information. When asked under what conditions individuals would use a COVID-19 status app, one participant noted, “I would want it to be controlled by a medical company. They are under HIPAA which protects your information. They would have to atone for breaches or misuse of your information.” Thus, knowledge of who is in control of the data and the level of security with data storage is salient to these populations. When asked under what conditions individuals would use a COVID-19 status app, one participant noted, “I would want it to be controlled by a medical company. They are under HIPAA which protects your information. They would have to atone for breaches or misuse of your information.” Thus, knowledge of who is in control of the data and the level of security with data storage is salient to these populations.

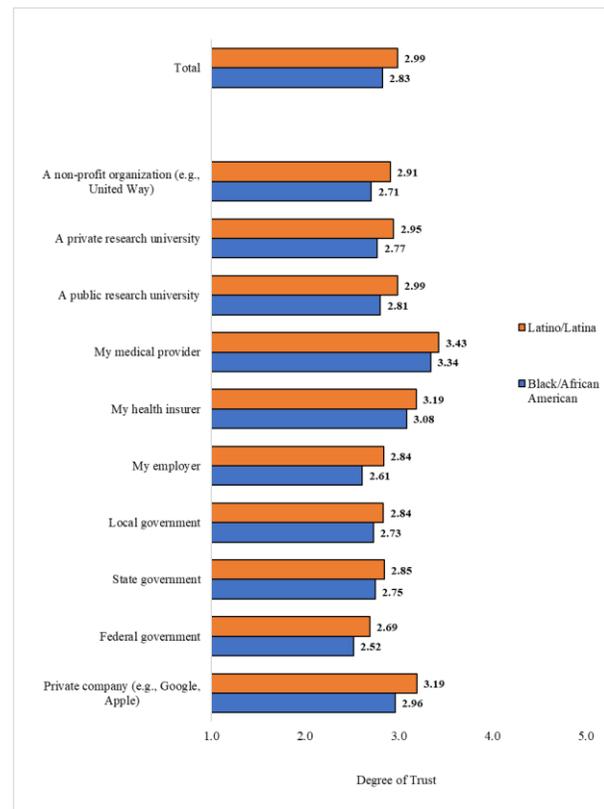


Figure 2: If such a COVID-19 status app were offered, who would you trust to protect your privacy?

## PERSONAL MOTIVATIONS

Similar to our previous analysis, we also investigated how different motivating factors predicted willingness to utilize COVID-19 mobile apps (see Figure 3). There were a few notable findings. First, Latinos and Blacks reported being most compelled to utilize track-and-trace technology to protect their family and friends, get things back to normal, and protect vulnerable populations. These attitudes were echoed in open-ended responses, as many mentioned the importance of collective health during the pandemic. One participant noted, “I would personally use the app because myself and many of my family members are a part of the at-risk population.” Other participants recognized that for change to occur, looking out for others is crucial: “I would not want to infect someone and I would want to know if I come in contact with someone infected. Things have to get back to some sense of normalcy, but we have to keep each other safe.”

Second, appeals that attempt to tout the scientific merits of a COVID-19 related technology may be ineffective. As with our previous results, these appeals were relatively unconvincing for Latinos and Blacks. The appeal of scientific backing may not be as convincing because participants are uncertain of the efficacy of the app without knowledge as to how the app operates. One participant expressed their skepticism: “How reliable would this app be? Suppose it is someone who I don’t know and they walk past me and I learn they have the virus and I don’t know them, then what?” Taking similar comments into account, individuals may benefit from receiving information explaining the basic functionality of the app.

## 3. COVID-19 Attitudes and Experiences

### ANXIETY AND WORRY ABOUT COVID-19

Latinos and Blacks reported feeling a greater chance of both 1) contracting and 2) dying from

COVID-19 in the coming months than might be expected (see Figure 4). However, these amounts are relatively lower probabilities than the amounts reported in our previous survey, (25.0% and 22.9%, respectively). Granted, participants likely overestimated their chances of contracting the COVID-19 virus and drastically overestimated their chances of dying from the virus. While racial minority groups face a higher mortality rate than whites (APM, 2020), overall mortality rates for COVID-19 may be between 0.5 and 1% (WHO, 2020).

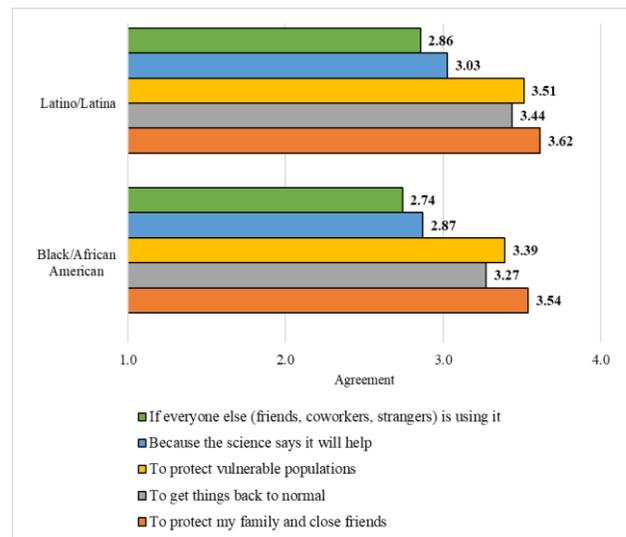


Figure 3: Why might you personally utilize a track & trace app?

We also explicitly asked respondents the extent to which they are worried about COVID-19. Respondents assessed the statement, “COVID-19 has impacted everyone in unique ways. How concerned do you feel about COVID-19?” (1=Not at all concerned to 5=Extremely concerned). To this question, Latinos ( $M=3.83$ ,  $SD=1.13$ ) and Blacks ( $M=3.81$ ,  $SD=1.01$ ) each reported a considerable amount of concern. We followed up on this statement by assessing participants’ concerns across six domains, such as physical health and job security. Latinos and Blacks reported the greatest concern for their personal physical health (see Figure 5). Furthermore, domain-specific worries about COVID-19 all fell considerably short of the overall average, suggesting that the pandemic itself

may be producing generalized anxiety that is difficult to capture or assess.

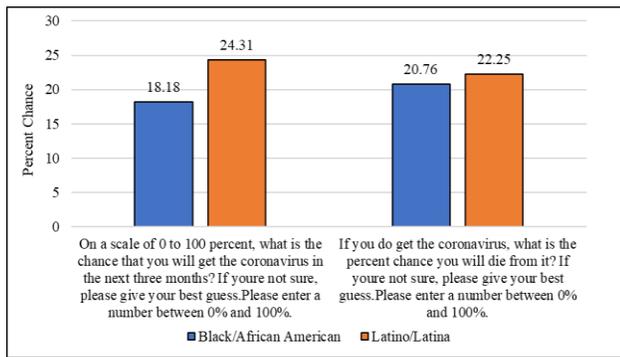


Figure 4: Estimated Chances of Contracting and Dying from COVID-19

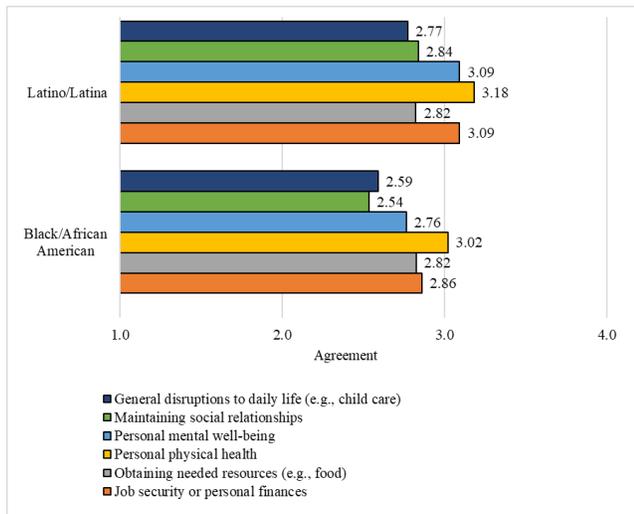


Figure 5: How concerned do you feel about COVID-19, in the following areas?

## COVID-19 RELATED BEHAVIORS

Respondents indicated whether or not they had engaged in certain behaviors in response to COVID-19 (see Figure 6). Latinos and Blacks were approximately equally likely to pray, stockpile food, and wear a face mask. Interestingly, the present sample reported wearing a face mask – one of the most important mental behaviors for slowing the spread of COVID-19 (Eikenberry et al., 2020; Niud, & Xu, 2020) – considerably more often than those in the past survey (80.8%), suggesting, as others have noted, that mask-wearing is becoming increasingly common (Kramer, 2020). However, the number of

those reporting to have avoided public spaces is considerably lower than those from our past survey (59.1%).

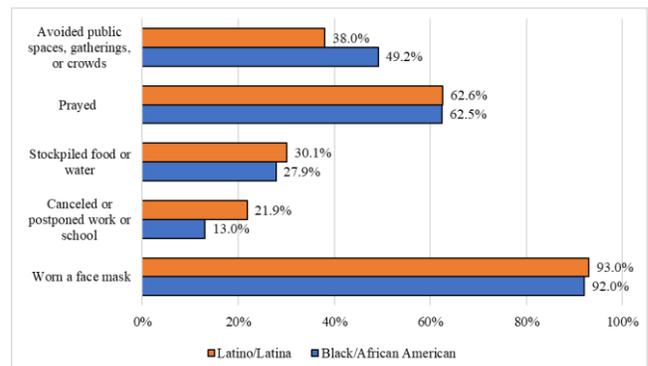


Figure 6: Which of the following have you done in the last seven days to keep yourself safe from coronavirus in addition to what you normally do?

Relatedly, another one of the most important behaviors for managing COVID-19 is self-quarantining (Hellewell et al., 2020). Thus, we also asked participants specifically about their self-quarantining behavior. Results indicated that Hispanics and Blacks quarantined approximately equally (see Figure 7). In our previous survey, individuals generally reported quarantining slightly more than the present sample (7.1% none of the time; 19.1% some of the time; 46.2% most of the time; 27.6% all of the time).

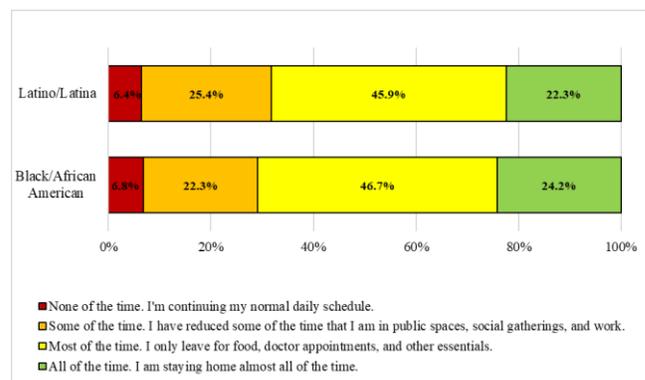


Figure 7: How much are you self-quarantining?

## Methodology

Participants were recruited from a panel survey by Schlesinger Group ([www.SchlesingerGroup.com](http://www.SchlesingerGroup.com)) between 6/1/2020 and 7/2/2020. The sample consisted of 982 individuals residing in Illinois (66.5% Black, 33.5% Latino, 67.9% Female, Mean Age=39.6, SD=15.7).

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[room/commentaries/detail/estimating-mortality-from-covid-19](#)

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