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Authors

Mora, G. Cristina

Perez, Reuben

Vargas, Nicholas

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Institute of Governmental Studies
126 Moses Hall
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720
Tel: 510-642-6835
Email: igs@berkeley.edu

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About 25 percent of US-Born Latinos in CA Identify with “Latinx” Term Regularly

G. Cristina Mora
Reuben Perez
Nicholas Vargas
igs@berkeley.edu

The January 2020 IGS Survey asked a representative sample of US-Born Latino registered voters in the state about the term “Latinx” and found that more than half are familiar with the term and that about a quarter of them (24%) report using the label “often” or “somewhat often.” When we increase the threshold to consider those who have ever used the term to describe themselves, 50% of US-born Generation Z Latino respondents and 40% of US-born Millennial Latinos report having done so. The findings indicate that the “Latinx” label is much more popular in California than recent regional and national reports suggest, and also point to the incredible role that younger generations are playing in adopting and redefining Latinidad.

Importantly, “Latino” and “Hispanic” labels still remain overwhelmingly popular in California. However, the data suggests that a growing, younger segment of US-born Latinos have also adopted the “Latinx” label. Indeed, Generation Z respondents were close to three times more likely than Baby Boomers to adopt “Latinx.” This subset, though, seems to see “Latinx” as complementary to “Latino,” and often use both terms. Last, politics also plays a major role, with “very liberal” Latinos reporting that they are twice as likely than “very conservative” ones to adopt “Latinx” (40% versus 20%).

Nicholas Vargas, a University of Florida professor who took part in data analysis states: “As researchers, we understand that individuals are complex, and might use different labels at different times. Our survey question thus moved away from asking whether folks use Latino/Hispanic *or* Latinx - and instead explored if, and how frequently, they might use either- or both.” The findings show that a significant percentage of Generation Z and Millennials use *both* “Latino” and “Latinx.”

G. Cristina Mora and Reuben Perez, of UC Berkeley, were additional Co-PI’s on the project. Perez notes “Younger generations of Latinos might very likely use ‘Latinx’ among peers or on social media, and still also use ‘Latino’ when speaking with family, or in job settings.”

The data also show that “Latinx” was not necessarily associated with higher education. Overall, there was no statistically significant difference in “Latinx” usage between those respondents with a BA degree and those with a High School Diploma or less (22% versus 28%). The education findings convey that “Latinx” label adoption is more widespread, and not simply used by college educated or elite Latinos.

Reflecting on the findings, Mora states “The passionate debates over the ‘Latinx’ label underscores just how dynamic and diverse Latinos are. Historically, the community has never been satisfied with just one, static label. And today, younger Latinos often have more progressive gender politics compared to their older counterparts – the political and generational differences that we see in the data show that the youth are rethinking the power of labels.”

Latinx Familiarity

The 2020 IGS Poll asked US Born Latino respondents:

Table 1. Do you agree with the statement: I am familiar with the designation “Latinx”?

Familiar	55%
Not Familiar	45%

N=1055 US-Born CA Registered Latino Voters

Familiarity with the term, however, varied by political ideology, with over 75 percent of those self-identifying as “very liberal” expressing familiarity with the term in comparison to just 36 percent of those who identify as “very conservative.” Aside from politics, generation mattered considerably, with Gen Z almost twice as likely than Baby Boomers to say that they were familiar with the term. US-born Central Americans were also more likely than any other ethnic subgroup to note that they were familiar with the label.

Table 2. Latinx Familiarity Amongst US Born Latino Respondents

	Familiar	Not Familiar
Party Registration		
Democrat	60%	40%
Republican	34%	66%
No Party Preference/Other	59%	41%
Political Ideology		
Very Conservative	36%	64%

Somewhat Conservative	33%	67%
Moderate	48%	52%
Somewhat liberal	65%	35%
Very Liberal	76%	24%
Education		
Less than HS	59%	41%
HS	50%	50%
Some College	56%	44%
BA (and higher)	59%	41%
Gender		
Male	53%	47%
Female	57%	43%
Age		
Gen Z	67%	33%
Millennial	60%	40%
Gen X	49%	51%
Boomer	34%	66%
Ethnicity		
Mexican	56%	44%
Central American	73%	27%
South American	58%	42%
Other	44%	56%

N = 1055 US-Born Latino CA Registered Voter Respondents

Label Adoption and Variation

Improving on previous survey question formulations, we also asked Latinos about the range of labels that they use to describe their heritage. Our findings show that “Hispanic” and “Latino/a” are still much more popular than “Latinx.” Still, the “Latinx” label has been adopted by nearly quarter of the US-born California Latino registered voter population. This figure is much larger than any survey or estimate to date, suggesting that the label is more widespread than previously understood. Specifically, we asked:

Table 3. People sometimes use different ethnic labels to describe their heritage. How often do you use the following labels to describe yourself?

	Hispanic	Latino/a	Latinx
Adopters	64%	60%	24%
Very Often	38%	35%	12%
Sometimes	26%	25%	12%
Non-Adopters	36%	39%	76%
Rarely	19%	17%	14
Never	17%	22%	62

N = 1055 US-Born Latino CA Registered Voter Respondents

“Latinx” adopters, however, differed from those that did not adopt. Once again, age and political ideology play an important role with those who describe themselves as “very liberal” almost twice as likely to adopt “Latinx” than were “very conservative” respondents (39% versus 20%).

Table 4. How often do you use “Latinx” to describe yourself?

	“Adopters” (Often, Somewhat Often)	“Non Adopters” (Rarely, Never)
Party Registration		
Democrat	28%	72%
Republican	10%	90%
No Party Preference/Other	23%	77%
Political Ideology		
Very Conservative	20%	80%
Somewhat Conservative	11%	89%
Moderate	20%	80%
Somewhat liberal	21%	79%
Very Liberal	39%	61%
Education		
HS or Less	28%	72%
Some College	22%	78%
BA (and higher)	22%	78%
Gender		
Male	21%	79%
Female	25%	75%
Age		
Gen Z	33%	67%
Millennial	25%	75%
Gen X	15%	85%
Boomer	13%	87%
Ethnicity		
Mexican	25%	75%
Central American	34%	66%
South American	22%	78%
Other	15%	85%

N = 1055 US-Born Latino CA Registered Voter Respondents

Further multivariate analysis of this data can be found in the recently published, peer-reviewed article:

Mora, G Cristina, Reuben Perez, and Nicholas Vargas. 2021. “Who Identifies as ‘Latinx?’ The Generational Politics of Ethnoracial Labels.” *Social Forces*. Advanced Online Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soab011>

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish January 15-21, 2020 among 6,845 registered voters statewide, of whom 5,170 were considered likely voters in the November 2020 general election. About 1,055 respondents identified as US-Born Latinos, and were provided with specific questions on “Latinx” “Latino” and “Hispanic” label identification.

The survey was administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state’s registered voters. Once the survey questionnaire and email invitations had been finalized, they were translated into Spanish. Each email invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the University and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further email invitations.

Samples of registered voters with email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., derived from information contained on the state’s official voter registration rolls. Prior to the distribution of emails, the overall sample was stratified by age and gender in an attempt to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents across major segments of the registered voter population.

To protect the anonymity of survey respondents, voters’ email addresses and all other personally identifiable information derived from the original voter listing were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. In addition, post-stratification weights were applied to align the sample of registered voters responding to the survey to population characteristics of the state’s overall registered voter population. Likely voters were identified based on a voter’s stated intention to vote in the November general election and factoring in their history of voting in past elections.

The sampling error associated with the results from the survey are difficult to calculate precisely due to the effects of sample stratification and the post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that the results from the overall sample of registered voters and from the sample of likely voters in the November 2020 general election are subject to an approximate sampling error of approximately +/- 2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while questions asked based on each of the statewide random subsamples are subject to an approximate sampling error of +/- 2.5 percentage points.

Further information about the US Born Latino sample tabulations can be found on the *Berkeley IGS Poll* website at <https://igs.berkeley.edu/igs-poll/berkeley-igs-poll>. Further multivariate analysis of this data can be found in a recently published, peer-reviewed article:

Mora, G Cristina, Reuben Perez, and Nicholas Vargas. 2021. “ Who Identifies as ‘Latinx?’ The Generational Politics of Ethnoracial Labels.” *Social Forces*. Advanced Online Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soab011>

About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication and public service. A component of the University of California system’s flagship Berkeley campus, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. IGS’s acting co-directors are Professor Eric Schickler and Associate Professor G. Cristina Mora.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of public opinion in California on matters of politics and public policy through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*. The poll, which is disseminated widely, seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion, and to generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. For a complete listing of stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* go to <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>