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BY JASON VILLALBA AND MARK P. JONES | APR 28, 2022

Latinx? Not in Texas. We are Hispanics and Latinos.

A survey of Texas Hispanics and Latinos shows that few embrace the new term.



It has become common for academics, bureaucrats, journalists and other elites to refer to people with Latin American roots as "Latinx." It's a gender-neutral anglicized version of the Spanish word Latino, which in Spanish (a gendered language) is used to refer to men and as the generic default when gender is unspecified.

While the term Latinx is increasingly popular among these elites, it remains unpopular among the vast majority of the people it is being used to refer to in Texas, who overwhelmingly favor the terms Hispanic and Latino. Numbering 12 million, more than the entire population of all but six states, Latin American- and Iberian-origin Texans constitute 40% of the Lone Star State's population and, before the end of the decade, will represent the state's plurality ethnic or racial group.

In March, the Texas Hispanic Policy Foundation surveyed a representative sample of 687 Texans of Latin American and Iberian origin, in English and Spanish, on their opinions of the term Latinx. The survey asked about Latinx alone and in comparison to the two other most common terms used to refer to people of Latin American and Iberian heritage: Latino and Hispanic.

When asked to choose among the three terms, these Texans overwhelmingly prefer Hispanic (72%), followed by a quarter (25%) who prefer Latino and a mere 3% who prefer Latinx.

Across 28 different subgroups within nine sociodemographic categories (age, education, gender,

immigration generation, language use, lineage, partisanship, region, religion), significantly more of the respondents of Latin American and Iberian heritage prefer the term Hispanic to Latino, and prefer Latino to Latinx.

There's one exception. Respondents who speak Spanish primarily or exclusively at home are equally likely to prefer the terms Hispanic (49%) and Latino (47%). In no instance across these 28 sub-groups did more than 5% of any subgroup prefer the term Latinx.

These Texans also were asked whether they approved, disapproved or neither approved nor disapproved of the use of each of these three terms to refer to people of Hispanic, Latino or Latinx heritage. While, as noted above, significantly more of these respondents favor the term Hispanic (72%) over Latino (25%) when forced to choose, an overwhelming majority approve of using both the term Hispanic (87%) and Latino (81%). Virtually none disapproves of the use of these two terms (4% and 5% respectively). The remaining 9% and 14% neither approve nor disapprove of the use of the terms Hispanic and Latino.

In sharp contrast, only one-third (33%) of these Latin American- and Iberian-origin respondents approve of the term Latinx to refer to people of Hispanic, Latino or Latinx heritage, while two-fifths (39%) disapprove, with the remaining quarter (28%) neither approving nor disapproving.

The levels of approval are low, and levels of disapproval are high, even among groups that might be expected to be more positively disposed to the use of the term Latinx. For example, among women, 35% approve and 36% disapprove of the use of the term Latinx. Among members of Generation Z (born after 1996) 40% approve and 41% disapprove. Among Democrats, 39% approve and 34% disapprove, and among those with a college or postgraduate degree 26% approve and 55% disapprove.

The terms Hispanic and Latino are favored among virtually all Texans of Latin American or Iberian origin. And, while the term Latinx may be popular among many of the elites who dominate the state's educational and media institutions, it without question is not popular among Hispanic and Latino Texans, and is not the term that they prefer be used to refer to them and to members of their community.

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