

CULTURAL

IDENTITY

SOCIAL

CAPITAL

and the

AMERICAN

DREAM:

**A Study on
Latinx Millennials in
Southern California**

Mark G. Wu, Ph.D. | Inez González, Ed.D. | California State University, Fullerton

Executive Summary

This research studies the cultural identity, social capital, and the American dream of Latinx Millennials in Southern California. An online survey using a Qualtrics panel conducted between October 24, 2018, and December 19, 2018, with a sample of 780 respondents. Seven groups of variables and constructs were measured: (1) demographics; (2) cultural values and identity; (3) personal traits; (4) family-sourced capital (5) neighborhood/community-sourced capital; (6) social capital; and (7) perceptions of the American Dream.

Key Findings

Latinx millennials are a hybrid of Latinx and U.S. identity, skewing towards U.S. identity.

This duo-identity creates conflict for Latinx millennials in regards to their values. For example, we see this evident on immigration issues. Although most do not agree that people who came to the U.S. illegally should be deported, some agree there should be stricter immigration laws. The majority of respondents (81%) agree that young immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children should be allowed to remain in the country if they meet Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) requirements.

Latinx millennials perceive the American Dream differently across gender and levels of education.

Significant predictors of achieving the American dream include place of birth, age, Latinx culture competency, U.S. identity, caballerismo, religion, ambition, family financial resources, neighborhood safety, neighborhood spirit of helping, and civic engagement.

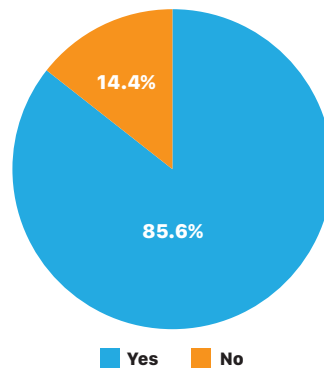
Although more than half of Latinx millennials think achieving the American Dream is difficult for them, they acknowledge they are better off than their parents were.

Latinx millennials show a high level of lack of social trust and a low level of civic engagement. Those trying to connect with Latinx millennials must work to earn their trust.

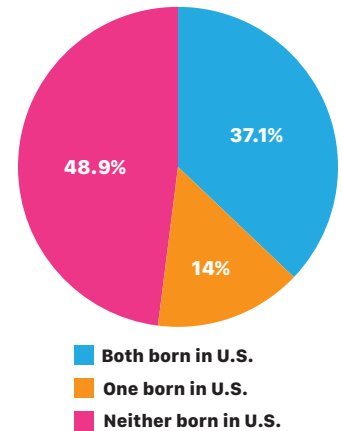
Demographic Profile

Latinx millennials are between 22 to 37 years old. Gender participation was evenly split between males and females. Less than 15% of respondents were foreign-born, lower than Latinx nationwide numbers (36%). Nearly 65% of respondents stated that their parents are first-generation immigrants. Almost half of parents were both born in another country; 14% had at least one parent born abroad. Latinx millennials' political affiliation suggests disillusionment with the two-party system, 45% identify as independent or selected "other." Only 30.4% are married, which is significantly lower than 45% nationwide. Almost 70% indicated México to be their family's country of origin.

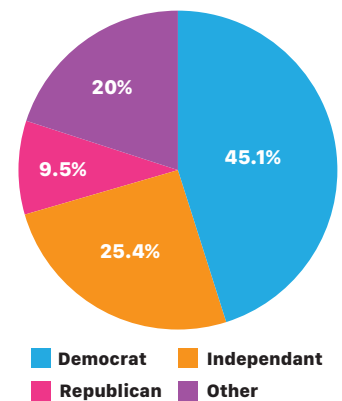
Were you born in the United States?



Where were your parents born?



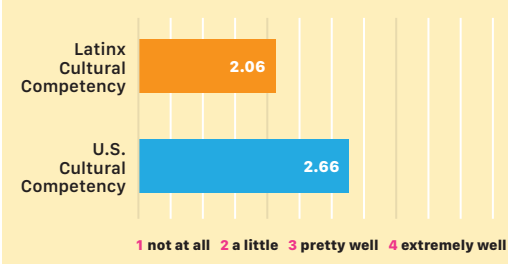
Which of the following best describes your political affiliation?



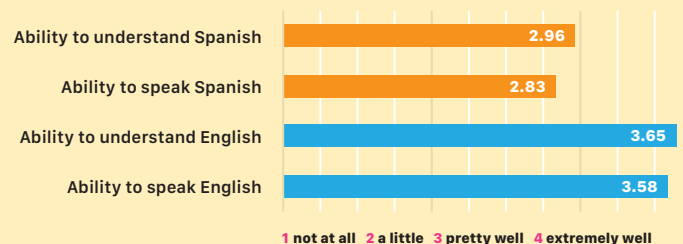
Cultural Profile

Respondents indicate a moderate proficiency in Spanish and proficiency in English. Their language ability in both English and Spanish suggests they are mostly bilingual. Latinx millennials reported a higher U.S. cultural competency than Latinx cultural competency. Regardless of their cultural competency level, they strongly identify with both Latinx and U.S. culture, displaying dual Latinx-U.S. identity.

Cultural Competence



Language Ability



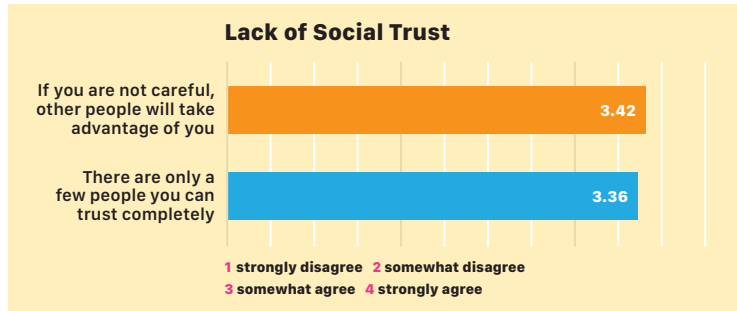
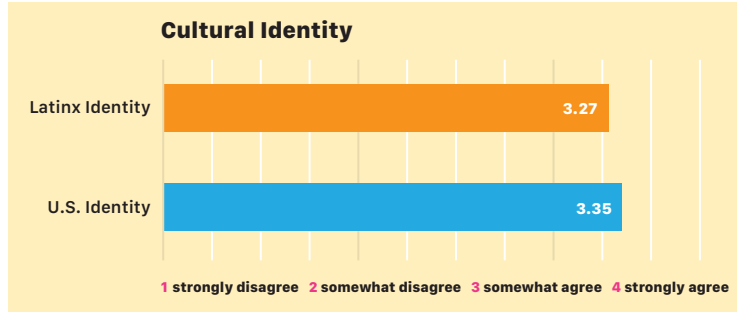
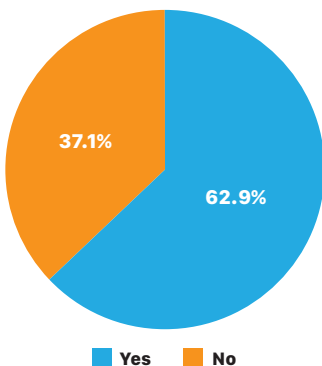
Respondents dual Latinx-U.S. identity creates an internal conflict in regards to their attitudes toward immigration. No matter their degree of identity between U.S. and Latinx culture, 81.4% of respondents stated that young immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children should be allowed to remain in the country if they meet certain requirements (DACA). The more respondents identify with Latinx culture, the less they tend to agree with the deportation of undocumented immigrants, the building of a southern border wall, and the Trump administration's overall immigration policies. The more respondents identify with U.S. culture, the more they tend to agree with the deportation of illegal immigrants, the building of the southern border wall, and the Trump administration's overall immigration policies.

Latinx literature indicates that family, religion, respeto, machismo, and caballerismo are five important Latinx cultural values. Only machismo appears to be no longer a cherished cultural value by the majority of U.S. Latinx millennials.

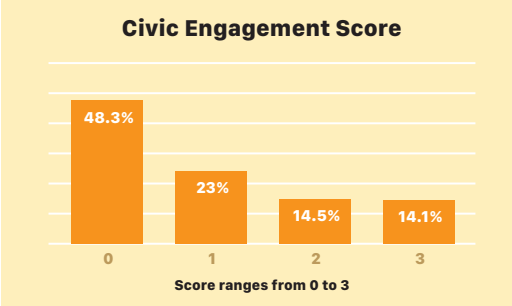
Social Capital

Social capital consists of social structures that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Researchers have identified institutional agents (mentors) as a source of social capital. Sixty percent of Latinx millennials state to have had a person who helped them in their life. More than half of the mentors were Latinx.

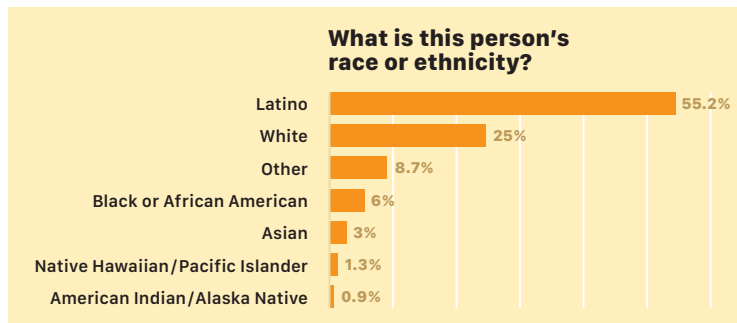
Did you meet someone, other than family members, who ended up making a big difference in your life? (e.g. a mentor, partner or friend)



The respondents display a high level of lack of social trust, consistent with U.S. millennials in general, who demonstrate a similar level of lack of social trust.



The civic engagement score was measured using three questions on volunteerism, working on community problems, and group membership. Almost half indicated no participation in any of these three activities.



The American Dream

Latinx millennials perceive the American Dream differently across gender and levels of education. Significant predictors of the perception that the American dream is achievable include place of birth, age, Latino culture competency, U.S. identity, caballerismo, religion, ambition, family financial resources, neighborhood safety, neighborhood spirit of helping, and civic engagement.

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
nativity	1.474	0.393	14.047	1	0.000	4.369
age	-0.101	0.028	13.156	1	0.000	0.904
ability to understand English	-0.895	0.333	7.249	1	0.007	0.408
Latinx culture competency	0.485	0.173	7.838	1	0.005	1.624
U.S. identity	0.625	0.213	8.569	1	0.003	1.867
caballerismo	-0.492	0.251	3.839	1	0.050	0.611
religion	0.328	0.123	7.090	1	0.008	1.388
ambition	0.322	0.185	3.010	1	0.083	1.380
family financial resources	0.531	0.146	13.172	1	0.000	1.701
safety of neighborhood	0.285	0.155	3.372	1	0.066	1.329
neighborhood helping each other	0.300	0.145	4.293	1	0.038	1.349
civic engagement	0.401	0.118	11.642	1	0.001	1.494

Exp(B) shows odds of believing they can achieve the American Dream.