

# Points of Consideration

## Why counting race for Latin@s/Hispanics is important by Dr. Nancy López, UNM

### 1. Latin@s have always been treated differently by race even if they are of the same ethnicity

Flattening the difference between race and ethnicity is ahistorical at best and . In the 1947 Mendez vs. Westminster desegregation case, Mexican American students who were not visible minorities were allowed to attend school with whites. It was only when The difference between race (social construction based on meanings ascribed to physical characteristics) and ethnicity (cultural background) is real. See attached resources on the value added by maintaining two separate questions on Hispanic ethnicity and race for revealing and ameliorating racial inequities within Latin@ communities across a variety of social outcomes (e.g., housing, employment, voting rights, education, etc.)

### 2. Garbage in, Garbage Out

Making Hispanic ethnicity and race co-equal and analytically equivalent will lead to unusable data. Basic social science research is premised on the idea that you can't use one question for two analytically distinct constructs (e.g., you can't measure gender and sexuality in one question).

### 3. Project the Outcome of this change for future of Equity Metrics and Distribution of Resources

What do you think will happens to data used to protect civil rights and measure racial discrimination in voting rights, fair housing, equal employment, health care access? Imagine ten to twenty years from now, when the most Hispanics will check the box and even write in a detailed origin (e.g., Puerto Rican, Mexican, Honduran, etc.), but nothing else about their race? The 2020 Census format found "Two or More" races was the second largest racial group. When one marks multiple boxes, it is not clear how this will impact civil rights metrics (e.g., Louisiana counts as black only those who identify as Black alone and Black and white, but no one else). Will two or more be the largest racial group in the 2030 Census? What will that mean for civil rights metrics?

### 4. Inconvenient Truth

You can't deny or ignore that Latin@s are comprised of different races. In making Hispanic ethnicity co-equal with race, are we assuming that all Hispanics/Latin@s are part of a "Brown monolith"? Who benefits from color and power evasive data about Latin@s

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## 5. Mitigating Undercounts

Will the combined Hispanic ethnicity and race question format contribute to reductions in the number of people that would have identified as AfroLatin@ in the previous two separate question formats? The Census Bureau's 2015 National Content Test (NCT) was inconclusive; however, it is very likely that AfroLatin@ numbers did decrease and would continue to do so in the future. More testing specifically on the impact of the combined question on undercounts is paramount before any potential changes are considered.

## 6. Ontological Violence & Erasure

Pretending that Blackness exists outside of Hispanic ethnicity is part and parcel of discursive violence and Anti-Blackness, regardless of intent.

## 7. Dismantling the Myth of a Brown Monolith

Pretending that Latin@s are racialized in similar ways contributes to color and power evasiveness.

## 8. Scientific Integrity

The preponderance of research that employs the two part question has made the invisible visible by documenting the materiality of anti-Blackness within Latin@ communities. If the proposed changes go forward this type of inquiry and knowledge production would be nullified.

## 9. Employing an Intersectionality as Inquiry and Praxis

In order to interrogate within in group racial differences in employment discrimination, housing discrimination, we need analytically distinct concepts, questions(e.g., are there wage differences between U.S.-born white Colombian women who earned 4-year college degrees and U.S.-born Black Colombian women?) If adopted, the combined Hispanic ethnicity and race question will nullify our ability to do intersectional analysis, which was possible with the two-question format.

## 10. Do No Harm

Given that there was no conclusive test of the potential harm that a combined question could have on our ability to discern inequities for AfroLatin@s, we need a moratorium until adequate testing is done and a critical mass of AfroLatin@ scholars with expertise in these communities are able to be at the table when decisions are made.