

A Study of Visitors at a Public Program: *The Bolivian Festival*,
National Museum of American Indian



November 2012



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Abstract

This study of the May 2012 *Bolivian Festival*, conducted by the Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A), is one of a series of studies funded by the Latino Initiatives Pool. The Pool is sponsored by the Smithsonian Latino Center and the programs are primarily held at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The results reported here are based on exit surveys of visitors at the festival. From a random sample of 336 intercepted visitors, 234 completed surveys were collected (71% response rate).

Seventeen percent of visitors identified themselves as having a Hispanic or Latino origin. Nine percent respondents spoke Spanish as their primary language; 80% spoke English and 11% spoke another languages.

The study shows that the Latino respondents' ratings for the festival were similar to the average for Smithsonian exhibitions. The data presented in this report also show that the experiences of Latino and non-Latino visitors differed in some key ways – not only in what they would like to experience at NMAI, but also in the reasons they gave for going to NMAI. Overall, 69% visitors were not aware of the Bolivian Festival before arriving at NMAI museum.

Summary

This study of the May 2012 *Bolivian Festival*, conducted by the Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A), is one of a series of studies funded by the Latino Initiatives Pool. The Pool is sponsored by the Smithsonian Latino Center and the programs are primarily held at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The results reported here are based on exit surveys of visitors at the festival. From a random sample of 336 intercepted visitors, 234 completed surveys were collected (71% of response rate).

Seventeen percent of visitors identified themselves as having a Hispanic or Latino origin. Nine percent of respondents spoke Spanish as their primary language; 80% spoke English and 11% spoke another languages.

The study shows that the Latino respondents' ratings for the festival were similar to the average for Smithsonian exhibitions and those reported in *A Study of Visitors in a Public Program: The Power of Chocolate Festival*. The data presented in this report also show that the experiences of Latino and non-Latino visitors differed in some key ways – the reasons they gave for going to NMAI as well as what they would like to experience in the museum. For example,

- Latinos rated the festival higher than non-Latinos
- Non-Latinos had low awareness of the *Bolivian Festival*; Latinos mainly heard from W
- W
- word of mouth
- Most Latino visitors came to NMAI for the *Bolivian Festival* and non-Latino visitors came for a General visit.
- Asked for their preference among possible programs at NMAI, Museum tours in English was the most common answer among non-Latinos and Museum tours in Spanish was the most popular answer among the Latinos.
- All visitors would like to attend programs and activities on Saturdays during the day.

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Preface

This study is one of a series funded by the Latino Initiatives Pool, sponsored by the Smithsonian Latino Center at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The purpose of this planning grant was for the Office of Policy & Analysis (OP&A) to evaluate current museum efforts at Latino audience outreach and for NMAI to start developing a regular programming schedule for area families.

At NMAI, I would like to thank Amy Van Allen, Project Manager, who worked closely with OP&A, for proposing the studies, ensuring their efficient implementation, and helping out data collection as well. At OP&A, the study was under the overall supervision of Zahava D. Doering, ably assisted by Hyemin Kim. OP&A staff Whitney Watriss and Ioana Munteanu, and interns Mina Son and Hyemin Kim helped collect the data and assisted in its processing. Hyemin Kim, an intern from Korea, deserves special recognition for undertaking most of the analysis with software previously unfamiliar to her and drafting much of this report.

Carole Neves, Director
Office of Policy and Analysis

Photo: Katherine Fogden, NMAI

Alma Boliviana – traditional Bolivian dancers

Background

In late Fall 2011, the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) submitted a planning grant proposal, called UNDERSTANDING AND BUILDING A LOCAL LATINO FAMILY AUDIENCE, to the Latino Initiatives Pool, sponsored by the Smithsonian Latino Center. The purpose of this planning grant was to evaluate current museum efforts at Latino audience outreach and begin to develop a regular programming schedule for area families.

The opening of NMAI's new *imagiNATIONS* Activity Center in September 2011 motivated the proposal. As the first completely bilingual space in the museum, it presents a new opportunity for NMAI to meet some of its major goals: improve educational opportunities for school-age visitors; provide a focused space for families; and engage and build the museum's local audience.

Through this partnership with the Latino Center, NMAI expected:

- To evaluate the bilingual activity center, and ensure that the center is an effective mechanism for communicating with local family audiences;
- To conduct a needs assessment to evaluate bilingual and Latin-themed programming, and to determine if NMAI is meeting the needs of its core and intended audiences;
- To test NMAI's success in presenting the core Smithsonian themes of Valuing World Cultures and Understanding the American Experience; and
- To build a local audience that returns because the children believe that NMAI is "their museum."

In short, NMAI needed answers to the questions:

- Why did visitors come to these particular programs, and what did they think?
- What else can or should the museum do to match its mission and goals to visitor expectations?
- How best do we reach out to these audiences?

NMAI, in general, values feedback from visitors on their interests and expectations, which help it understand how to build on past programming successes to make it more relevant to local audiences, particularly Latino ones.

In developing the proposal for the Latino Pool, NMAI partnered with the Office of Policy & Analysis (OP&A) to conduct a series of surveys of visitors to *imagiNATIONS* Activity Center programs, other NMAI programs (especially the weekend Festivals), and several Latino Center programs. The intent was to survey program visitors, including Latinos, about their attendance. How did they learn about a specific program? Why did they choose to attend it? What did they think of it? Do they attend similar programs at non-SI venues? Would they attend similar programs at another SI venue? What kinds of programs and activities are

they interested in? The information would also help NMAI understand how to broaden its audience – how to get the news out and encourage audiences to visit, look at what the museum offers, and participate in programs. NMAI was especially interested in percent of children visiting the museum, and what would lead them to return.

OP&A conducted studies from January through October. At the end of the calendar year, after data are collected at multiple programs and at the *imagiNATIONS* Activity Center, OP&A will write a final report. The *Bolivian Festival*, an annual festival held in May, was the second program at NMAI at which data were collected. Working with OP&A staff, NMAI assisted in questionnaire development and some staff was trained to participate in the data collection. What follows are the results from the *Bolivian Festival* study.

Introduction

The *Bolivian Festival* was held at NMAI on Saturday, May 12 and Sunday, May 13. The festival included contemporary and traditional dance, a Baroque music concert, storytelling, demonstrations held on Potomac Atrium, welcome center, welcome plaza, and various museum locations.

Methodology

During the festival, OP&A and NMAI staff conducted the survey. Visitors were intercepted at the top of the stairs leading to the main museum exit. During the survey periods, a total of four and a half hour, 1312 visitors exited. Potential interviewees were approached, asked for their participation, and handed a clipboard with the questionnaires and pencils; i.e., for self- administration. A total of 336 exiting visitors were intercepted, and 234 surveys were completed, yielding a response rate of 71%. (See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire and Appendix B for frequencies of responses.)

Findings

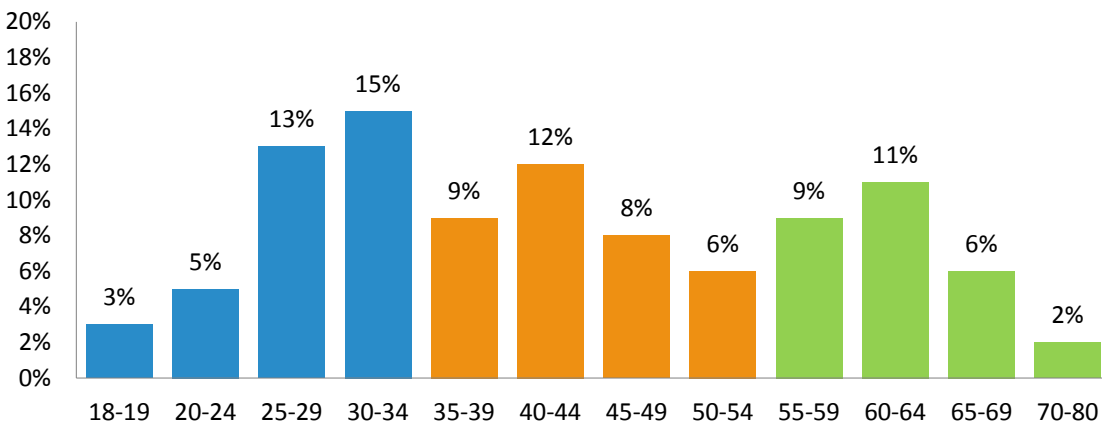
In what follows, we first describe the demographic characteristics of visitors to the *Bolivian Festival* and then report the rating they gave the festival. Next, the ways in which visitors heard about the festival are described. The last section of findings reports visitors' views of types of programs they might attend at NMAI.

Demographic Characteristics

Age: The average age of respondents was 43 and their median age was 41.¹ One way to view the age distribution is in 5-year groupings. As shown in Figure 1, further aggregation (approximately twenty year age ranges) shows that people 34 years old or less (37%) and those 35 to 54 (35%) attended in approximately equal percentages, while those 55 and older are the smallest group (28%).

Figure 1

Age Distribution of Visitors, by 5-Year Age Groupings
(In Percent)



Sex: Slightly more women attended the festival than men. Among non-Latino visitors and Latino visitors, the percentage of women and men was similar. (Non-Latino visitors: men 49%, women 51%; Latino visitors: men 44%, women 56%)

Latino: About one in five visitors identified as having a Hispanic or Latino origin (17%). Visitors who identified as Latino were also asked to identify their country of origin (or

¹ Dividing respondents by generation shows that: 4%, Silent generation (born 1925-1945); 20%, Leading Boomers (born 1946-1955); 12%, Trailing Boomers (born 1956-1964); 40%, Generation X (born 1965-1981); 24% Generation Y (born 1982-1998).

origins). About one in ten Latinos identified as *Bolivian* (10%). Other origins were named by 5%.

Among the total attendees, respondents who identified themselves as *American Indian, Alaska Native or Indigenous American* were a smaller group (6%) than Latinos.

Language: *English* was the primary language of most attendees at the *Bolivian Festival* (80%). About one in ten indicated their primary language was something other than English or Spanish were 11% and a similar number selected *Spanish* (9%). Half of Latinos marked *Spanish* as their primary language.

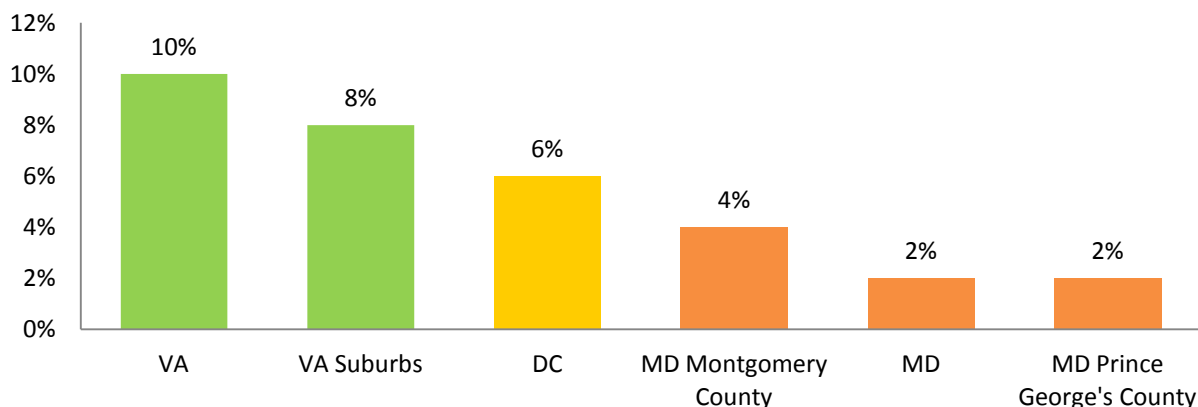
Group composition: Nine out of ten respondents were visiting with at least one other person (87%). Roughly four out of five of those not visiting alone were with an adult (80%), about one in ten were with youth age 6-12 (12%), and a small percentage was with youth under 6 (7%) or a teen 13-17 (7%). Among visitors with youth under 18, about three out of ten visitors visited *imagiNATIONS Activity Center* during their visit to the museum (28%). On the other hand, very few visitors without youth under 18 visited *imagination Activity Center* (14%).

Residence: Just over half of the respondents (59%) were from U. S. locations outside of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area; about three out in ten about were *local visitors* from the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area (32%); and the rest, one in seven, were visiting from another country (14%).

Figure 2

Percent of Local Visitors at the *Bolivian Festival*

Total= 32%
(In Percent)



*VA= Virginia, not including the Virginia suburbs around DC; MD= Maryland, not including Montgomery and Prince George County.

Ratings

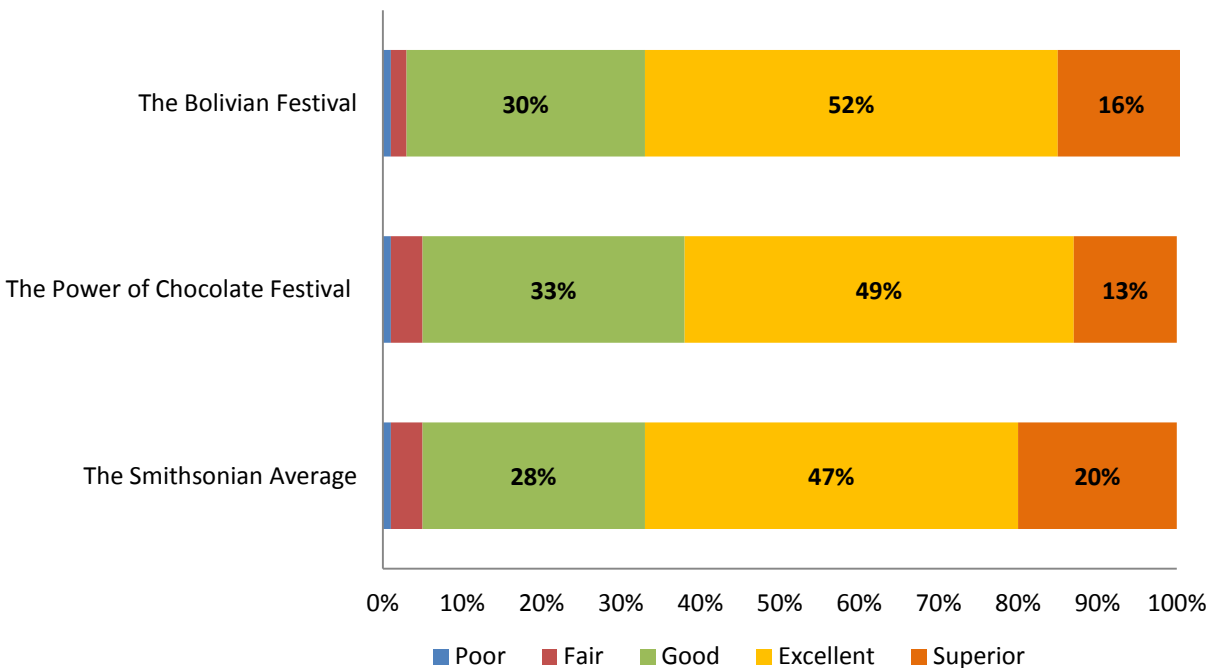
Visitors were asked to rate their overall experiences at the *Bolivian Festival* on a five point-scale that has been applied by OP&A across Smithsonian exhibitions and museums: *Poor*, *Fair*, *Good*, *Excellent*, and *Superior*. In general, visitors who are basically satisfied with their visits tend to mark it *Excellent*. Visitors who are critical tend to select one of the lower three categories—*Poor*, *Fair*, or *Good*. Those who have very positive responses tend to mark *Superior*.

Half of visitors who attended the *Bolivian Festival* rated their experiences in the exhibition as *Excellent* (52%). About one third of visitors rated their experience lower (*Good*, 30%; *Fair*, 2%; *Poor*, 1%). A small percentage rated it higher (*Superior*, 16%), which is lower than the Smithsonian average (*Superior*, 20%). These results are shown in Figure 3. This figure also contains the rating for the *Chocolate Festival* that was almost the same as that for the *Bolivian Festival*.

Figure 3

Ratings Given by Visitors at two Public Programs: *Bolivian Festival* and the *Chocolate Festival*, and the Smithsonian Average

(In Percent)

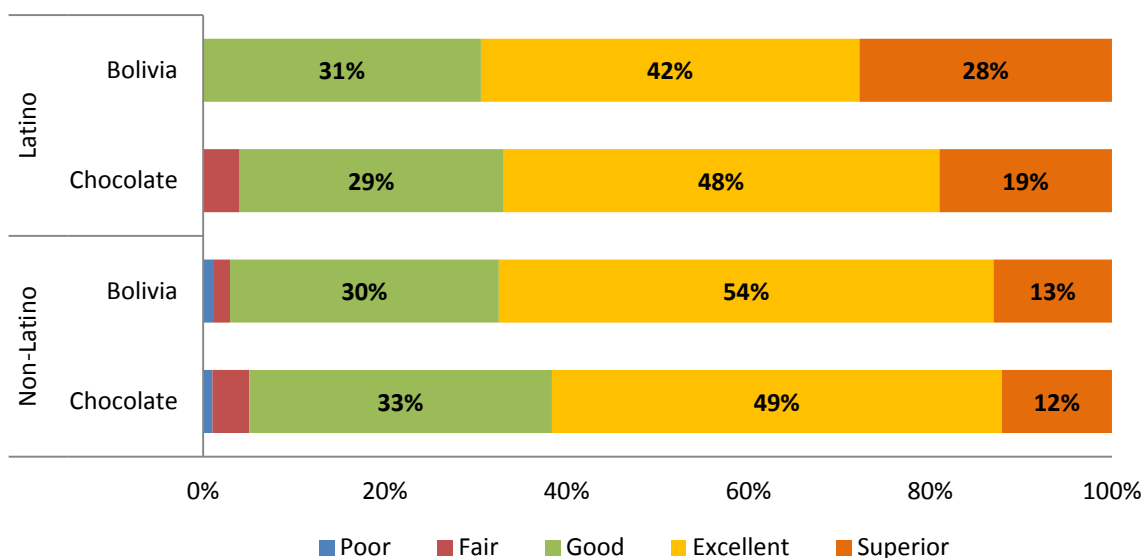


Compared to non-Latino visitors, Latinos rated the *Bolivian festival* higher (*Superior* 28%). See Figure 4. Again, this result is similar to that observed for the *Chocolate Festival*.

Figure 4

Ratings of the *Bolivian and Chocolate Festival*, Latino and Non- Latinos Visitors

(In Percent)



Reasons for Coming to NMAI

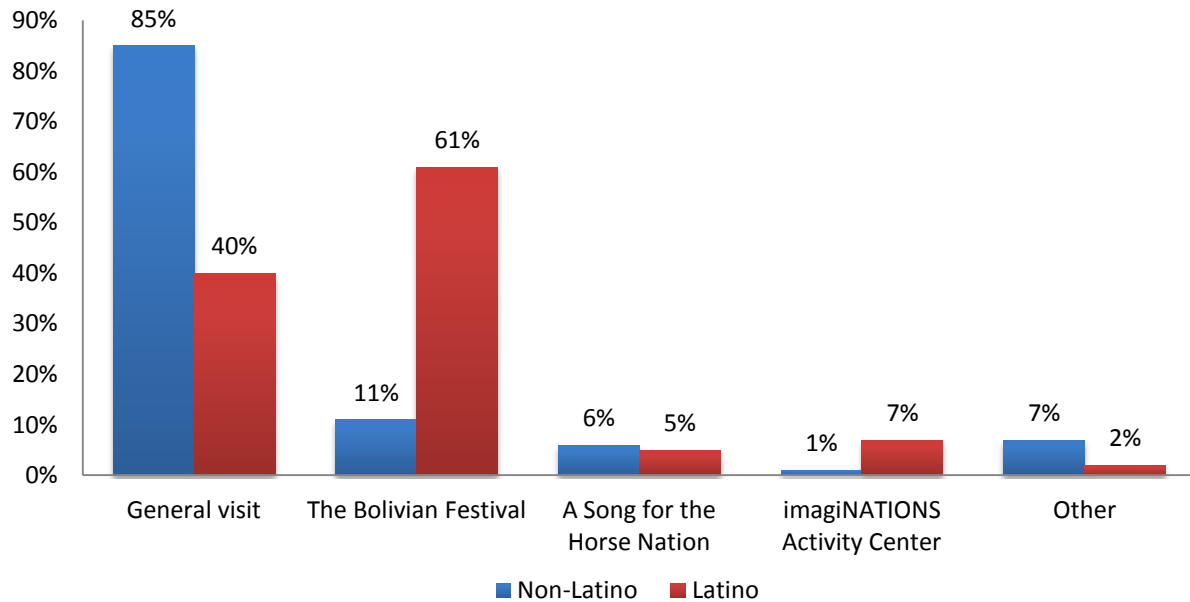
About three in ten visitors to the *Bolivian Festival* were making repeat visits to NMAI (28%). Nearly one in five visitors had been to NMAI in the last 12 months (17%). Repeat visitors their overall experiences at the *Bolivian festival* slightly higher than those making a first visit (15% of first visitors and 30% of repeat visitors rated overall experiences as Superior). When asked how “*How often do you attend programs/activities at other museums?*” 18% of people who said they attend museums more than once a month mentioned that they visited NMAI before.

When asked “*Which of the following did you come to see today?*” Many of those who attended the *Bolivian Festival* came to NMAI for a General visit (77%). One out of five visitors at the *Bolivian Festival* came to attend the festival (19%), and a small percentage came to see *A Song for the Horse Nation* (5%), for other reasons (5%), or the *imaginationS* Activity Center (2%). More Latino visitors came to NMAI to see the *Bolivian Festival* (61%) than non-Latino visitors who came to NMAI to see the *Bolivian Festival* (11%). See Figure 5.

Figure 5

Reasons for Coming to the *Bolivian Festival*, Latino and Non- Latinos Visitors

(In Percent)



Also, when asked how “*How often do you attend programs/activities at other museums?*” 18% of people who said they attend museums more than once a month mentioned that they visited NMAI before.

Awareness of the *Bolivian Festival*

Visitors were asked how they found out about the *Bolivian Festival*. The questionnaire included a list of nine possible ways of learning about the *Bolivian Festival*. The most common responses, in decreasing order, were *Museum website and/or social media* (9%), *Word of mouth* (9%), *Other Websites and/or social media* (6%). Fewer visitors selected the remaining options: *Newspaper or magazine* (3%), *Museum banners outside* (3%), *Other Museum programs or events* (2%), and *Museum tour* (2%).²

Of the visitors who attended the festival, nearly three out of ten visitors knew of the *Bolivian Festival* before coming to the museum (31% Knew, 69% Did not know). Awareness of the *Bolivian Festival* was lower than the *Power of Chocolate* (61% Knew the *Chocolate festival*).

More Latino visitors came to NMAI to see the *Bolivian Festival* (60%) than non-Latino visitors (11%).

² None of the sampled visitors noticed the Advertisement in a Metro Station and Museum calendar or mailing.

Women and men were equally likely to indicate that they came specifically to see the festival (19% each). Looking at just Latino respondents, two thirds (65%) of Latino men came specifically for the *Bolivian Festival*, compared to three out of five (59%) of Latino women.

What visitors would like to attend at NMAI

Visitors were asked, “Which of the following would you personally like to attend at this museum?” There were nine options available for responses, five of the responses included either the words *Spanish* or *Latin American* (see Question 6, Appendix A).³ The largest response for non-Latino visitors was an option that did not have *Spanish* or *Latin American* words in the response. More than half of the non-Latino visitors marked that they would personally like to attend *Museum tours in English* (52%).

Of the responses that had *Spanish* or *Latin American* words in the choice, *Traditional Latin American Dance performances* (27%) were the most popular with non-Latino visitors.

Overall Latino visitors are more interested in personally attending an event at NMAI compared to non-Latinos. Latino visitors were mostly interested in personally attending *Museum tours in Spanish* (38% of Latinos). Latino visitors were also interested in attending, *Lectures on traditions in Latin America* (33%), *Latin American community festivals* (33%), and *Museum tours in English* (31%).

The largest differences between response rates of Latino and non-Latino visitors were in the *Museum tours in Spanish* (35% difference). Followed by *Lectures on traditions in Latin America* (22% difference), and traditional Latin American dance performances (16% difference) follow after the Spanish museum tour answer. These results are shown in Figure 6.

The majority of visitors stated that they are most likely to attend a program or activity at a museum on Saturday during the day (71%).

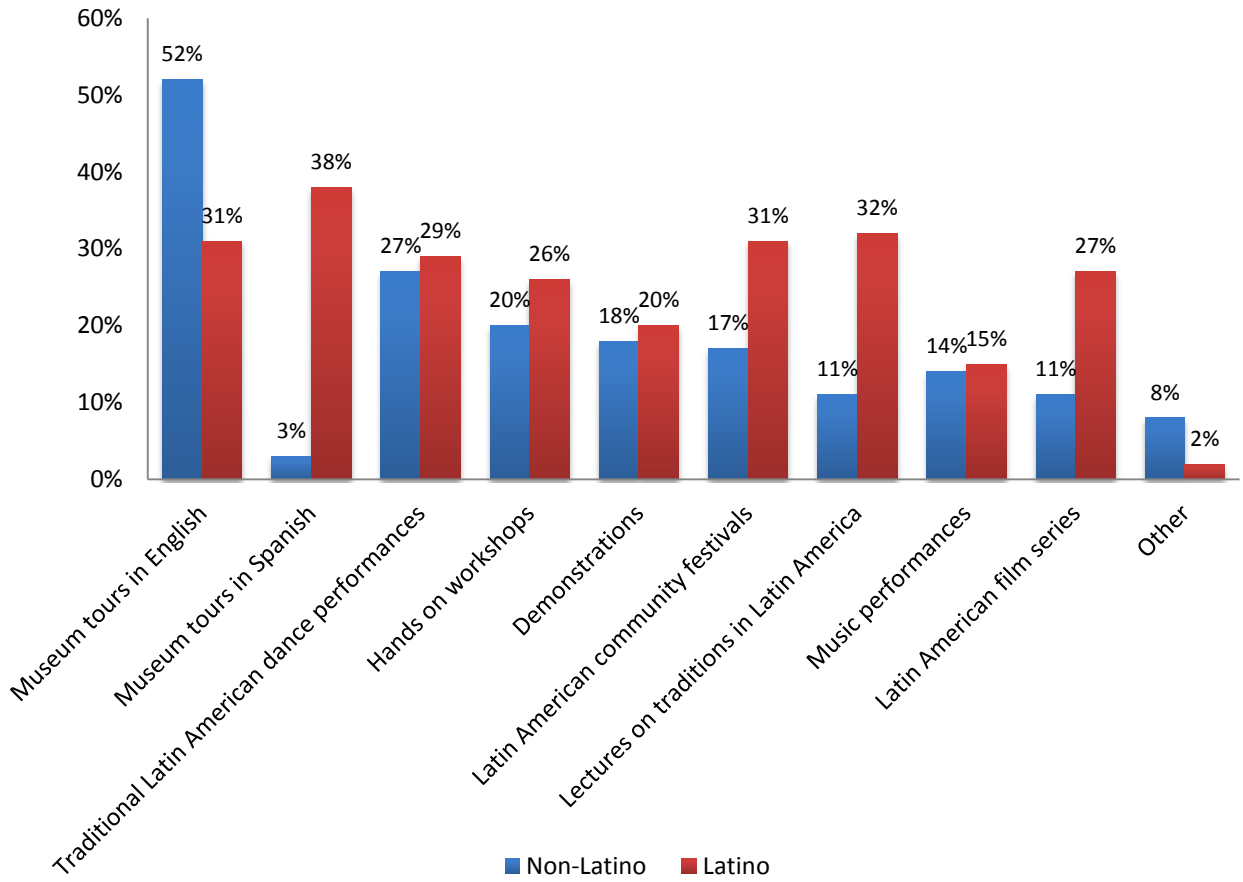
³ OP&A added one option ‘*Museum tours in English*’ because it was unsure if the low response was because visitors do not want to attend *Museum tours*, or attend *Museum tours in Spanish*, a response for *Museum tours in English* was not provided at *The Chocolate festival*.

Figure 6

Non-Latino vs. Latino Visitor Response to

“What they would *personally* like to attend at NMAI”

(In Percent)



Comments

As this is the second study in the series, a discussion of the implications of findings is preliminary. After several more programs are studied, trends and special features may become apparent.

This study of the *Bolivian Festival* identified some aspects of the programming that should be watched in future assessments. For example, sources of information about the programs and types of programs are of considerable interest. The study generally showed low awareness of this festival, particularly among non-Latinos.

The overall experience rating measured in this study indicates similar satisfaction among non-Latinos compared to the Smithsonian average.

Appendix A

Questionnaire for the *Bolivian Festival*

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National Museum of the American Indian Survey of Exiting Visitors

Have you been to this museum before today?

- No
 Yes, within the last 12 months
 Yes, more than 12 months ago

Which of the following did you come to see today? [Mark one or more]

- General visit
 The Bolivian Festival
 A Song for the Horse Nation
 imagiNATIONS Activity Center
 Other. Please specify: _____

Please rate your overall experience at this Bolivian Festival.

- Poor Fair Good Excellent Superior

How did you know about the Bolivian Festival? [Mark one or more]

- Museum website and/or social media
 Other website and/or social media
 Advertisements in a Metro Station
 Newspaper or magazine article
 Museum tour
 Museum banners outside
 Museum calendar or mailing
 Other museum program or event
 Word of mouth
 I didn't know about the Bolivian Festival before I arrived at the museum today

Have you attended any programs/activities at this museum in the past year?

- No Yes. Which ones? _____

Which of the following would you personally like to attend at this museum? [Mark one or more]

- Museum tours in Spanish
 Museum tours in English
 Latin American community festivals
 Latin American film series
 Traditional Latin American dance performances
 Music performances. Please specify: _____

- Lectures on traditions in Latin America
 Hands on workshops
 Demonstrations
 Other. Please specify: _____

Today, did you visit the imagiNATIONS Activity Center?

- Yes No
 Not today but have visited since it opened (September 2011)

When are you most likely to attend a program/activity? [Mark one or more]

- Weekday during the day Weekday at night
 Saturday during the day Saturday at night
 Sunday during the day Sunday at night

How often do you attend programs/activities at other museums?

- Almost never
 A few times a year
 About once a month
 More than once a month

Are you alone or are you with others?

- I am alone I am with others

If you are with others, please indicate the number of people you are with.

- adults age 18 and over
 youth age 13-17
 youth age 6-12
 youth under 6

Are you male or female?

- Male Female

What is your primary language?

- English
 Spanish
 Other. Please specify: _____

What is your age?

Do you live in the United States or another country?

- United States, specify zip code:

- Another country, specify: _____

Today, were you in the Metro Center station?

- Yes No
 Not today but in the past week or so

Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin? [Mark one or more]

- No
 Yes, Bolivian
 Yes, Cuban
 Yes, Dominican
 Yes, Mexican/Chicano
 Yes, Puerto Rican
 Yes, Salvadorean
 Yes, Other: _____

What race do you consider yourself to be? [Mark one or more]

- African American/Black
 American Indian/Native Alaskan
 Asian (Chinese, Indian, Japanese, etc.)
 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
 White

Are you a Charter Member of NMAI?

- Yes No

THANK YOU!!!

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Appendix B

Frequency Distributions from the *Bolivian Festival*

Have you been to this museum before today?	Overall	Latino
No(First time visitor)	72%	63%
Yes, within the last 12 months(Repeat)	17%	25%
Yes, more than 12 months ago(Repeat)	11%	12%

Which of the following did you come to see today? [Mark one or more]	Overall	Latino
General visit	77%	40%
<i>The Bolivian Festival</i>	19%	60%
<i>A Song for the Horse Nation</i>	5%	5%
imagiNATIONS Activity Center	2%	8%
Other	5%	3%

Please rate your overall experience at this <i>Bolivian Festival</i>	Overall	Latino
Poor	1%	0%
Fair	2%	0%
Good	30%	30%
Excellent	52%	42%
Superior	16%	28%

How did you know about the <i>Bolivian Festival</i> ? [Mark one or more]	Overall	Latino
Museum website and/ or social media	9%	18%
Other website and/ or social media	6%	10%
Advertisements in a Metro Station	0%	0%
Newspaper or magazine article	3%	8%
Museum tour	2%	5%
Museum banners outside	3%	5%
Museum calendar or mailing	0%	0%
Other museum program or event	2%	3%
Word of mouth	9%	28%
I didn't know about the Bolivian Festival before I arrived at the museum today	69%	35%

Have you attended any programs/ activities at this museum in the past year?	Overall	Latino
Yes	6%	13%
No	94%	87%

Which of the following would you personally like to attend at this museum? [Mark one or more]	Overall	Latino
Museum tours in English	48%	31%

Museum tours in Spanish	9%	38%
Traditional Latin American dance performances	27%	30%
Hands on workshops	21%	25%
Demonstrations	18%	20%
Latin American community festivals	20%	33%
Lectures on traditions in Latin America	15%	33%
Music performances	14%	15%
Latin American film series	14%	27%
Other	6%	3%

Today, did you visit the <i>imaginATIONS</i> Activity Center?	Overall	Latino
Yes	15%	20%
No	83%	80%
Not today but have visited since it opened(September 2011)	2%	0%

When are you most likely to attend a program/ activity? [Mark one or more]	Overall	Latino
Saturday during the day	71%	68%
Sunday during the day	26%	50%
Weekday during the day	20%	15%
Saturday at night	15%	24%
Weekday at night	8%	15%
Sunday at night	8%	15%

How often do you attend programs/ activities at other museums?	Overall	Latino
Almost never	29%	25%
A few times a year	58%	55%
About once a month	9%	10%
More than once a month	4%	10%

Are you alone or are you with others?	Overall	Latino
I am alone	13%	5%
I am with others	87%	95%

If you are with others, please indicate the number of people you are with.	Overall	Latino
Adult age 18 and over	80%	84%
Youth age 13-17	7%	12%
Youth age 6-12	12%	15%
Youth under 6	7%	13%

Are you male or female?	Overall	Latino
Male	49%	44%

	Female	51%	56%
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What is your primary language?		Overall	Latino
	English	80%	44%
	Spanish	9%	50%
	Other	11%	6%
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What is your age?		Overall	Latino
	Mean	43	36
	Median	41	34
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Do you live in the United States or another country?		Overall	Latino
	United States	86%	87%
	Another country	14%	13%
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Today, were you in the Metro Center station?		Overall	Latino
	Yes	24%	22%
	No	70%	65%
	Not today but in the past week or so	6%	13%
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Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin? [Mark one or more]		Overall	Latino
	No	83%	
	Yes, Bolivian	10%	56%
	Yes, Cuban	0%	2%
	Yes, Dominican	1%	6%
	Yes, Mexican/ Chicano	1%	5%
	Yes, Puerto Rican	0%	3%
	Yes, Salvadorian	0%	1%
	Yes, other	5%	29%
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What race do you consider yourself to be? [Mark one or more]		Overall	Latino
	African American/Black	8%	8%
	American Indian/Native Alaskan	6%	23%
	Asian (Chinese, Indian, Japanese, etc.)	9%	8%
	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	1%	0%
	White	81%	0%
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Are you a Charter Member of NMAI?		Overall	Latino
	Yes	3%	6%
	No	97%	94%