The 2019 Kinder Houston Area Survey
Tracking Responses to the Economic and Demographic Transformations through 38 Years of Houston Surveys

Stephen L. Klineberg | May 13, 2019
The Houston Economy across the 38 Years
The official unemployment rates and negative ratings of job opportunities (1982-2019)

Positive ratings of job opportunities in the Houston area (1982-2019)

Percent rating job opportunities as “excellent” or “good.”

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (1982-2019)
What is “the biggest problem facing people in the Houston area today?” (1982-2019)

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (1982-2019)
The Education Crisis and the Growing Inequalities
The need for education beyond high school to qualify for a well-paid job (2019)

“In order to get a job that pays more than $35,000 a year, you need to have at least one or two years of education beyond high school.”

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2019)
The fates of all eighth graders in the Houston region through their next 11 years (2006-2017)

- **8th Grade (N=74,398)**: 100%
- **High School Diploma (N=56,117)**: 75%
- **Post-Secondary Enrollee (N=40,848)**: 55%
- **Post-Secondary Credential (N=16,498)**: 22%

Source: TEA Division of Performance Reporting for Region 4, Texas Academic Performance Reports 2016-17 District Attendance and Postsecondary Readiness Report.
The adequacy of funding for the public schools in Houston (1995-2018)

Which comes closer to your opinion about the public schools in Houston: “The schools have enough money, if it were used wisely, to provide a quality education”; or: “In order for the schools to provide a quality education, significantly more money will be needed.”

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (1995-2018)
The prevalence of economic hardship in Harris County today (2017-2019)

- 39%Could not come up with $400 in case of emergency (2019)
- 25%No health insurance (2019)
- 31%Household income less than $37,500 (2019)
- 35%Had problem paying for housing in the past year (2018)
- 33%Had problem paying for food in the past year (2017)

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2017-19)
Support for programs to reduce the inequalities in American society (2009-2019)

The government should reduce income differences in America.

Welfare benefits give poor people a chance to get started again.

Most people who receive welfare benefits are really in need of help.

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2009-2019)
Feeling More at Home with Houston’s Burgeoning Diversity

Houston’s ethnic diversity will be a source of great strength for the region.

The increasing immigration mostly strengthens American culture.

Immigrants contribute more to the American economy than they take.

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (1994-2019)
Support for admitting more or the same number of legal immigrants in the next ten years, in three U.S.-born ethnic communities (1995-2019)

“During the next ten years, would you like to see the U.S. admit more, fewer, or about the same number of legal immigrants as were admitted in the last ten years?”

Percent saying, “more” or “the same number.”

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (1995-2019)
Percent of Anglos who have close personal friends of a different racial/ethnic background

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2007-2018)
Percent of Blacks who have close personal friends of a different racial/ethnic background

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2007-2018)
Percent of Hispanics who have close personal friends of a different racial/ethnic background

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2007-2018)
Percent of Asians who have close personal friends of a different racial/ethnic background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Anglo friend</th>
<th>Black friend</th>
<th>Hispanic friend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2007-2018)
Interethnic romantic relationships by age among Anglos and Blacks (2007-2018, combined)

“Have you ever been in a romantic relationship with someone who was not Anglo/Black?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>18-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>70+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Have a close personal friend who is Anglo: 80% (U.S.-Born Hispanics), 62% (Hispanic Immigrants)
- Have a close personal friend who is Black: 79% (U.S.-Born Hispanics), 49% (Hispanic Immigrants)
- Have a close personal friend who is Asian: 48% (U.S.-Born Hispanics), 26% (Hispanic Immigrants)
- Have been in a romantic relationship with a non-Hispanic: 57% (U.S.-Born Hispanics), 22% (Hispanic Immigrants)

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2007-2018)

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2007-2018)
After Harvey
The “biggest problem” in Houston: The rise and fall of spontaneous concerns about flooding

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2017-19)
The likelihood of future storms and support for flood-mitigation controls (2018-2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It is almost certain that the Houston region will experience more severe storms during the next 10 years compared to the past 10 years.&quot;</td>
<td>76 (2018) 75 (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent favor &quot;prohibiting any additional construction in areas of Houston that have repeatedly flooded.&quot;</td>
<td>71 (2018) 56 (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent favor &quot;increasing local taxes to enable government agencies to buy out more of the homes that have repeatedly flooded.&quot;</td>
<td>55 (2018) 50 (2019)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2018-2019)
Concerns about climate change and calls for better land-use planning (2010-2019)

The threat of climate change is a “very serious problem.”

“We need better land-use planning to guide development in the Houston area.”

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2010-2019)
Continuity and Change in Political Orientations
Political party affiliation over the years among Harris County residents (1984-2019)

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (1984-2019)
“When you look ahead to the next few years, do you tend to believe that the country is headed for better times or more difficult times?”

Differences by political party in beliefs about the American future (2010-2019)

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2010-19)
Support for criminal justice reform by party affiliation (2002-2019)

“Some states are moving away from the idea of mandatory prison sentences for nonviolent drug offenders. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?”

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (2002-2019)
The moral acceptability of abortion and homosexuality across the years (1997-2019)

“Do you believe that (abortion/homosexuality) is morally wrong or is it morally acceptable?”

Homosexuality is morally acceptable.

Abortion is morally acceptable.

Source: Kinder Houston Area Survey (1997-2019)
Concluding Note
Conclusion

Houston-area residents are expressing significantly more support today than in earlier years . . .

- for policies to reduce the inequalities and address the needs of the poor;
- for more spending on public education, from cradle to career;
- for controls on development to reduce the vulnerability to future flooding;
- for continued efforts to enhance the region’s urban amenities.

The surveys also show clearly that area residents are embracing the region’s diversity and feeling more comfortable in a world of thriving friendships across ethnic communities, religious beliefs, and sexual orientations.
In sum, beneath the divisive political rhetoric, area residents appear to be more inclined than ever before to support the many ongoing efforts in the Houston area that are addressing today’s most compelling challenges.

It remains to be seen whether the Houston community as a whole can summon the political will to make the critical investments that will be needed to position the region for sustained prosperity in this new era of economic, demographic, and technological transformation.

Stay tuned. Thank you very much!