

DISCUSSION

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The first two papers in this session describe changes in the Current Population Survey that have been, or soon will be, made. "Overview of Current Population Survey Sample Design" is concerned with the three supplements of CPS carried out since March 1973, the most recent of which is not yet completed. The purpose of all three is to improve data for States and SMSA's, particularly so that Federal funds can be better allocated to these subnational areas. The goals of each supplement, as specified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to the Bureau of the Census, are stated in terms of the sampling precision to be achieved. Nothing, however, is stated about how these goals were determined. It seems to me that this is an important topic for research, and it will be even more important when the CPS is redesigned after the 1980 Census with an emphasis on providing better data for subnational areas, as is forecast by Robert Stein in his paper.

The second paper by Margy Schooley *et al* is especially important in that it documents recent changes in CPS definitions and questionnaire. The most important of these are: 1) A change from the "head of the household" to a central "reference person" or "householder", and

2) A change in the definition of "race" and the manner in which it is determined.

Robert Stein attempts to forecast the form of the CPS in the 1980's, after it has been redesigned on the basis of the recommendations of the National Commission on Employment and Unemployment Statistics and the new data arising from the 1980 Census. I suggest we file this away until the mid-1980's. My own forecast is that he will do much better than is the case with most economic forecasts. Thomas Plewes is also concerned with the redesign, but more with the interagency cooperation involved in the process than with the technical details.

The final paper, "A Test of Data Collection Methodologies: The Methods Test," describes an experiment that is currently being conducted by the Bureau of the Census and presents some preliminary analyses of the first phase of the experiment. Results from the Methods Test have the potential for having a major influence on the methodology of data collection in the redesigned CPS. The authors are to be commended for bringing this material to the attention of the statistical community at such an early stage.