

THE QUALITY OF THE RACE AND SPANISH ORIGIN INFORMATION REPORTED IN THE 1980 CENSUS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the quality of the race and Spanish origin information collected in the 1980 census. This examination is based on the Content Reinterview Survey, which was conducted as part of the Census Bureau's evaluation program to determine the quality of population and housing data from the 1980 census. Specifically, this paper compares responses to the race and Spanish origin questions in the 1980 census and the Content Reinterview Survey (CRS) for identical persons. These comparisons were generated from a sample of households originally enumerated in the 1980 census and selected for reinterview; person-records were then matched to evaluate responses. (For this paper, the reinterview is used as the standard of comparison for the Census Bureau responses in order to shed light on reporting problems and/or systematic errors in the census arising from questionnaire wording; however, to fully understand the reporting differences in several race and origin categories the census also serves as the basis for analysis). Detailed information on the CRS sample design, data-collection methodology, and analysis is described in the report: 1980 Decennial Census Content Reinterview Results by Ellen Katzoff and Robert Smith, Bureau of the Census.

Although the CRS was conducted by highly trained and qualified interviewers mainly applying detailed questioning sequences probing for ambiguity and vagueness in 1980 census questions and instructions, the reinterview survey was not without problems. For example, noninterviews occurred when forms were not completed for all sample cases. Also, some respondents may have answered reinterview questions based on their response to the census question without attempting an independent reply to the equivalent reinterview question. In general, the reinterview study was unlikely to obtain the "correct" response in all cases since some respondents may not have understood the questions and simply guessed at an answer. However, notwithstanding these limitations, the CRS constituted a valuable method of evaluation of the quality of the race and ethnic reporting in the census.

We will first examine the reporting in the race item, including the reporting of race by Spanish origin persons. The second part of the paper analyzes the reporting in the Spanish origin item.

RACE

The 1980 census and CRS data on race were obtained from the following question:

<p>4. Is this person — Fill one circle.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> White</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Black or Negro</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Japanese</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Filipino</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Korean</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Vietnamese</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Indian (Amer.)</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Asian Indian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Hawaiian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Guamanian</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Samoan</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Eskimo</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Aleut</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other — Specify</p>
	<p>Print tribe</p>	

Since the majority of the 1980 census information on race was obtained from mail questionnaires, the race data represent self-classification by persons according to the race with which they identify. The CRS was conducted by direct personal interview and used the same question as used in the census. Also, the CRS tabulations included a "race not reported" category, whereas the census tabulations included assignment of racial responses for persons who did not report their race. These differences in data collection methodology and tabulation procedures should not seriously affect the comparability of the data. Major findings of the CRS results on the reporting of race are shown below.

White population

About 98 percent of the identical persons reported as White in the reinterview were classified in the same race category in the census. Nearly all of the remainder, 2 percent, were reported in the "Race, n.e.c." category in the census (table 1).

Table 1. Response to Race Question in the 1980 Census by Response in the Content Reinterview Survey

CRS classification	1980 census classification					
	All races	White	Black	American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	Asian or Pacific Islander	Race, n.e.c.
NUMBER						
Total respondents.....	24,585	20,890	2,791	99	326	479
White.....	21,057	<u>20,586</u>	15	45	18	393
Black.....	2,782	21	<u>2,742</u>	2	4	13
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut.....	88	36	-	<u>51</u>	-	1
Asian or Pacific Islander.....	302	11	-	-	<u>291</u>	-
Race, n.e.c.....	186	86	21	-	<u>12</u>	<u>67</u>
Race not reported.....	170	150	13	1	1	5
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY 1980 CENSUS RESPONSE						
Total respondents.....	100.0	85.0	11.4	0.4	1.3	1.9
White.....	100.0	97.8	0.1	0.2	0.1	1.9
Black.....	100.0	0.8	<u>98.6</u>	0.1	0.1	0.5
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut.....	100.0	40.9	-	<u>58.0</u>	-	1.1
Asian or Pacific Islander.....	100.0	3.6	-	-	<u>96.4</u>	-
Race, n.e.c.....	100.0	46.2	11.3	-	<u>6.5</u>	<u>36.0</u>
Race not reported.....	100.0	88.2	7.6	0.6	0.6	2.9
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY CRS RESPONSE						
Total respondents.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
White.....	85.6	<u>98.5</u>	0.5	45.5	5.5	82.0
Black.....	11.3	0.1	<u>98.2</u>	2.0	1.2	2.7
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut.....	0.4	0.2	-	<u>51.5</u>	-	0.2
Asian or Pacific Islander.....	1.2	0.1	-	-	<u>89.3</u>	-
Race, n.e.c.....	0.8	0.4	0.7	-	<u>3.7</u>	<u>14.0</u>
Race not reported.....	0.7	0.7	0.5	1.0	0.3	1.0

n.e.c. - Not elsewhere classified
 - Represents zero or rounds to less than 0.1 percent
 - Underlined cells represent matched racial responses, i.e., the responses were the same for identical persons in both the CRS and the 1980 census.

Black population

Nearly 99 percent of the Blacks in the reinterview were classified as such in the 1980 census (table 1).

American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut Population

The discussion here focuses only on American Indians because of the very small number (3) of Eskimos and Aleuts reported in the study. Caution must even be exercised with the analysis for American Indians because of the small number of sample cases.

The proportion of racial matches was relatively low among those classified as American Indian. Just 58 percent of the 88 respondents reported as American Indian in the reinterview were so identified in the census (table 1). A comparison of the reinterview and census responses indicates that most of the race mismatches among American Indians involved identification as White in either the CRS or the census. Of the 88 respondents reporting American Indian in the reinterview, 36 persons, or 41 percent, reported themselves as "White" in the census. If these data are analyzed using the census classification as the benchmark, it was found that of the 99 respondents reporting American Indian in the census, 45 persons, or 45 percent, were reported as White for the CRS.

One hypothesis is that the omission of the word "race" in the labeling of the 1980 question on race may have contributed to the response differences. For example, persons of mixed Indian and White parentage may have been confused as how to report their race, if the intent of the question was not clear to them.

Asian and Pacific Islander Population

Of the Asians and Pacific Islanders reported in the reinterview, 96 percent identified with Asian or Pacific Islander groups in the census. All of the remaining 4 percent, or 11 respondents, that were not identically classified were classified as White in the census (table 1).

Race, n.e.c.¹

The classification of persons in the "Race, n.e.c." category showed rather poor consistency. Of the 186 persons classified as "Race, n.e.c." in the reinterview, only 36 percent fell in the same category in the census (table 1). The largest component, about 46 percent, was reported as White in the census.

In addition to the inconsistent reporting in the "Race, n.e.c." category between the census and the CRS, the census showed a much higher number of persons (479) reporting in the "Race, n.e.c." category than the reinterview (186). And, of the 479 persons in the census "Race, n.e.c." category, most (393, or 82 percent) reported as White in the reinterview.

The inconsistency of responses in the "Race, n.e.c." category reflected primarily the reporting in this category by Spanish origin persons, as 447 of the 479 persons in the census "Race, n.e.c." category were persons of Spanish origin. Our analysis shows that the identical Spanish origin persons reported their race differently in the census than in the CRS. In the reinterview, less than 10 percent of the identical Hispanic persons reported themselves in the "Race, n.e.c." category, while over 84 percent reported as White. In contrast, of the identical respondents who reported themselves as

Spanish origin in the census, approximately 35 percent classified themselves in the "Race, n.e.c." category and around 61 percent as White in the race item (table 2).

Table 2. Race Reported in the 1980 Census and in the Content Reinterview Survey by Persons Reporting Themselves of Spanish Origin in the 1980 Census

Race	1980 census		Content Reinterview Survey	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total respondents.....	1,293	100.0	1,293	100.0
White.....	785	60.7	1,092	84.5
Black.....	33	2.6	46	3.6
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut..	9	0.7	10	0.8
Asian or Pacific Islander.....	19	1.5	13	1.0
Race, n.e.c.....	447	34.6	122	9.4
Race not reported.....	10	0.8

NOTE: The population universe is persons who reported themselves as Spanish origin in the 1980 census in response to a separate question on Spanish origin or descent. This table shows the responses of these Hispanic persons to the race question in the 1980 census and the CRS.

... Not applicable.

These disparities in the reporting of "Race, n.e.c." by Spanish origin persons may reflect a number of factors, such as different enumeration procedures, problems with question design or with certain categories, or uncertainty about how to report race because of a recent perceptual change in racial identification in the Spanish origin community. Further research and testing are needed to improve the reporting of race for Spanish origin persons.

SPANISH ORIGIN

The 1980 census and CRS data on Spanish origin were obtained from the following question which was based on self-identification by the respondent.

<p>7. Is this person of Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent?</p> <p>Fill one circle.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> No (not Spanish/Hispanic)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes, Mexican, Mexican-Amer., Chicano</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes, Puerto Rican</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes, Cuban</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic</p>
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Although the 1980 census question on Spanish/Hispanic origin also was used in the CRS, the census information was obtained, for the most part, from questionnaires returned by mail in contrast to the CRS which was conducted by direct personal interview using self-response to the extent possible. Also, in addition to the 1980 census Spanish origin question, the CRS included an additional series of questions asking respondents to specify the birthplace of each of their parents, grandparents, and more distant ancestors.

Total, Spanish Origin

About 89 percent of identical persons reporting Spanish origin in the reinterview were reported as such in the census (table 3).

Table 3. Response to Spanish Origin Question in the 1980 Census by Response in the Content Reinterview Survey (CRS)

CRS classification	Total	1980 Census Classification					
		Total, Spanish	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Other Spanish	Not Spanish
NUMBER							
Total respondents.....	24,585	1,293	772	169	93	259	23,292
Total, Spanish.....	1,332	<u>1,182</u>	727	165	87	203	150
Mexican.....	767	<u>723</u>	<u>694</u>	-	-	29	44
Puerto Rican.....	175	167	-	<u>160</u>	-	7	8
Cuban.....	98	91	-	84	6	6	7
Other Spanish.....	292	201	33	4	3	161	91
Not Spanish.....	23,253	111	45	4	6	56	<u>23,142</u>
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY 1980 CENSUS RESPONSE							
Total respondents.....	100.0	5.3	3.1	0.7	0.4	1.1	94.7
Total, Spanish.....	100.0	89.7	54.6	12.4	6.5	15.2	11.3
Mexican.....	100.0	<u>94.3</u>	<u>90.5</u>	-	-	3.8	5.7
Puerto Rican.....	100.0	95.4	-	<u>91.4</u>	-	4.0	4.6
Cuban.....	100.0	92.9	-	<u>100</u>	85.7	6.1	7.1
Other Spanish.....	100.0	68.8	11.3	1.4	<u>1.0</u>	<u>55.1</u>	31.2
Not Spanish.....	100.0	0.5	0.2	-	-	0.2	<u>99.5</u>
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY CRS RESPONSE							
Total respondents.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total, Spanish.....	5.4	91.4	94.2	97.6	93.5	78.4	0.6
Mexican.....	3.1	55.9	<u>89.9</u>	-	-	11.2	0.2
Puerto Rican.....	0.7	12.9	-	<u>94.7</u>	-	2.7	-
Cuban.....	0.4	7.0	-	0.6	<u>90.3</u>	2.3	-
Other Spanish.....	1.2	15.5	4.3	2.4	3.2	<u>62.2</u>	0.4
Not Spanish.....	94.6	8.6	5.8	2.4	6.5	21.6	<u>99.4</u>

- Represents zero or rounds to less than 0.1 percent.

- Underlined cells represent matched origin responses, i.e., the responses were the same for identical persons in both the CRS and the 1980 census.

There is some evidence that slightly more Spanish origin persons in the reinterview (11 percent) reported as nonSpanish in the census than did nonSpanish persons in the reinterview report as Spanish in the census (9 percent).

Almost 60 percent of persons reporting as Spanish origin in the census indicated in the reinterview that at least one parent was from a Spanish-speaking country; and an additional 26 percent reported grandparents or other specified ancestors from a "Spanish" country (table 4).

Table 4. Distribution of Persons Reporting in the 1980 Census Spanish Origin Question by Content Reinterview Response on Which Ancestor(s) are from a Spanish-Speaking Country

CRS response on which ancestor(s) from a Spanish-speaking country	Spanish Origin					Not of Spanish origin
	Total	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Other Spanish	
NUMBER						
Total respondents.....	1,293	772	169	93	259	23,292
Parent(s).....	766	419	124	87	136	55
Grandparent(s).....	232	186	19	-	27	61
More distant ancestor(s).....	101	76	7	-	18	51
Spanish ancestor(s) not specified.....	27	21	2	-	4	7
Spanish on neither side of family.....	167	70	17	6	74	23,118
PERCENT						
Total respondents.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Parent(s).....	59.2	54.3	73.4	93.5	52.5	0.2
Grandparent(s).....	17.9	24.1	11.2	-	10.4	0.3
More distant ancestors.....	7.8	9.8	4.1	-	6.9	0.2
Spanish ancestor(s) not specified.....	2.1	2.7	1.2	-	1.5	-
Spanish on neither side of family.....	12.9	9.1	10.1	6.5	28.6	99.3

- Represents zero or rounds to less than 0.1 percent.

Mexican Origin²

Of the persons reporting as Mexican origin in the reinterview, 91 percent reported as such in the census, 4 percent reported as "Other Spanish", and about 6 percent reported as nonSpanish (table 3).

About 54 percent of persons reporting Mexican origin in the census reported in the reinterview that at least one parent was born in a Spanish-speaking country (table 4). However, 9 percent of Mexican origin persons reported that they did not have, or did not know of, any "Spanish" ancestors on either side of the family (table 5).

Table 5. Distribution of Persons Reporting in the 1980 Census Spanish/Hispanic Origin Question by Content Reinterview Response on Side of Family on Which Spanish Ancestor(s) Exists

CRS Response	Spanish origin					Not Spanish
	Total, Spanish	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Other Spanish	
NUMBER						
Total respondents.....	1,293	772	169	93	259	23,292
Spanish on both sides of family.....	856	514	124	85	133	19
Spanish on one side of family.....	243	167	26	2	48	148
Family's side.....	122	80	8	1	33	59
Mother's side.....	121	87	18	1	15	89
Spanish on unspecified side of family.....	27	21	2	-	4	7
Spanish on neither side of family.....	167	70	17	6	74	23,118
PERCENT						
Total respondents.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Spanish on both sides of family.....	66.2	66.6	73.4	91.4	51.4	0.1
Spanish on one side of family only.....	18.8	21.6	15.4	2.2	18.5	0.6
Father's side.....	9.4	10.4	4.7	1.1	12.7	0.3
Mother's side.....	9.4	11.3	10.7	1.1	5.8	0.4
Spanish on unspecified side of family.....	2.1	2.7	1.2	-	1.5	-
Spanish on neither side of family.....	12.9	9.1	10.1	6.5	28.6	99.3

- Represents zero or rounds to less than 0.1 percent.

Puerto Rican Origin

Puerto Ricans also showed high reporting consistency between the census and the reinterview. Of those persons who reported as Puerto Rican origin in the reinterview, 91 percent had reported as Puerto Rican in the census, 4 percent as "Other Spanish", while 5 percent reported as nonSpanish (table 3).

About 73 percent of Puerto Ricans reported in the reinterview that they had parents born in a Spanish-speaking country (table 4). Three-fourths stated that they had "Spanish" ancestries on both sides of the family (table 5).

Cuban Origin

The proportion of Cuban origin persons reporting consistently between the census and the CRS was also rather high. For example, 86 percent of persons reporting Cuban origin in the reinterview also reported as Cuban in the census, 6 percent reported as "Other Spanish", but 7 percent reported as nonSpanish (table 3).

Because of relatively recent immigration to the United States, Cuban origin persons had a very high proportion (94 percent) with one or both parents born in a Spanish-speaking country (table 4). Furthermore, 91 percent of Cuban origin persons reported in the reinterview that their Spanish ancestry came from both sides of the family (table 5).

Other Spanish Origin

The CRS showed that reporting in the "Other Spanish" category of the Spanish origin question was highly inconsistent. Specifically, of the 292 persons reporting as "Other Spanish" in the reinterview, only 55 percent reported as such in the census; 11 percent had reported as Mexican origin, and a remarkably high proportion, 31 percent, reported as nonSpanish in the census (table 3).

If we use the census as the benchmark, we find that 22 percent of the respondents in the census "Other Spanish" category reported as "nonSpanish" in the reinterview (table 3). The in-flow and out-flow of reporting within the "Other Spanish" category shows that Hispanics as well as nonHispanics may have a problem with understanding that category. Also, it is possible that this classification problem occurred particularly among persons of mixed Spanish and nonSpanish descent who were not clear on how to report their origin.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

We have examined the quality of reporting in the 1980 census race item and the Spanish origin item, and the results are summarized below. The results indicate the areas which require further research and testing for the 1990 census planning program.

The racial distribution for the 1980 census was quite similar to the racial distribution of the CRS for the identical persons.

The consistency in reporting race, however, varied for the racial groups. In general, the consistency of reporting race was very high for White, Black, and Asian and Pacific Islander populations, whereas there were substantial inconsistencies for the American Indian population and those in the "Race, n.e.c." category.

The inconsistency in the "Race, n.e.c." category reflected the fact that race was reported differently in the CRS than in the census for a substantial number of persons of Spanish origin.

In general, the reinterview showed that response to the 1980 census Spanish origin question was very satisfactory, although there is some evidence that the total number of persons report-

ing as Spanish origin in the reinterview was slightly greater than that in the census.

Most of the identical persons who reported Spanish origin in the census reported similarly in the reinterview.

For most types of Spanish origin, namely, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban, the reporting in the census was consistent with that in the reinterview.

However, the CRS showed that reporting in the "Other Spanish" origin category was very inconsistent between the reinterview and the census.

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FOOTNOTES

- ¹ The "Race, n.e.c." category includes persons not classified in the White, Black, American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut, or Asian or Pacific Islander categories. "Race, n.e.c." includes persons reporting in the "Other" category and providing write-in entries such as Wesort, Cosmopolitan, Inter-racial, Mixed or a Spanish origin group (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban).
- ² Another postcensal evaluation study, Preliminary Evaluation of Responses in the Mexican Origin category of the Spanish Origin Item, showed that misreporting of Mexican origin by nonSpanish persons occurred in the 1980 census. This misreporting was negligible at the national level, but was noted to be severe in very specific areas of the nation where the Spanish origin population is generally sparse. For a full citation of this study see below.

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