

GAINS, LOSSES, AND CHANGES IN HISPANIC COVERAGE WITH CHANGES IN ETHNICITY QUESTION

Ruth B. McKay, U.S. General Accounting Office
441 G Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20548

Key Words: Ancestry, Multi-ethnic, Socio-demographic diversity

Introduction

The 1995 Current Population Survey (CPS) Supplement on Race and Ethnicity provided a unique opportunity to learn about how respondents would identify their race and ethnicity under two different reporting conditions. The 1995 Supplement was one of a series of research initiatives to evaluate possible changes in the 1977 Office of Management and the Budget (OMB) Racial and Ethnic Categories for Federal Statistical Reporting. A serendipitous result of the Supplement was to open a new area of research on the factors underlying Hispanic household undercoverage, and variability in Hispanic reporting across surveys.

A long-standing problem in CPS Hispanic undercoverage had been documented by Shapiro and Bettin (1992). Previous research on factors contributing to Hispanic undercounts in household surveys had focussed on structural factors, e.g., multiple families within a single household (de la Puente, 1992), and cultural differences in definitions of "living" and "staying" in a household. Hispanic undercoverage in the CPS was believed to be largely attributable to "within household" rather than "whole household" undercoverage (McKay, 1993).

Ethnicity in the CPS and CPS Supplement

The CPS is a monthly Bureau of Labor Statistics/Census interview survey of labor force activity in a probability sample of 50,000 households selected to represent the U.S. population. Information on the race and ethnicity of household members is collected during a personal interview in their first month in sample. In the May, 1995 CPS Supplement, respondents were asked a different set of race and ethnicity questions than those in the first month's interview. The racial and ethnic identifications reported by individuals on each set of questions were then compared for changes in racial and ethnic identification.

The regular CPS question on ethnicity asks respondents to choose a single ethnic origin on a flashcard listing twenty ethnic origin groups. The Hispanic categories included on this flashcard are: *Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Central or South American*, and "Other Hispanic." The non-Hispanic categories include: *German, Italian, Irish, French, Polish, Russian, English, Scottish, Afro-American, Dutch, Swedish, Hungarian*, and *Another group not listed*.

The 1995 CPS Supplement ethnicity question, designed only to identify respondents as Hispanic or non-Hispanic, asked,

"Are you one of the following: Hispanic, Latino, of Spanish origin?"

Respondents who answered in the affirmative to this question were asked a follow-up question to elicit their specific Hispanic/Latino Spanish origin group.

As shown in Figure One, some respondents changed their identification as Hispanic across the two surveys. The analysis of the data from the 1995 CPS Supplement on Race and Ethnicity, presented in Table One, reveals that a total of 22,963,000 respondents identified as Hispanic in the regular CPS compared to a total of 25,476,000 who identified as Hispanic in the CPS Supplement. There were 3,909,000 respondents who identified as Hispanic on the Supplement who *had not* selected an Hispanic ethnic origin category on the CPS. In addition, 1,313,000 respondents who had identified with an Hispanic ethnic category on the CPS gave a *negative response* to the Supplement Hispanic ethnicity question. The net gain of 2,596,000 Hispanics in the Supplement over the regular CPS represents a 16% increase in the Hispanic count.

We examined the CPS ethnic origin flashcard categories that had been chosen by the "Supplement-only" Hispanics. The

overwhelming majority of these respondents had chosen the category, "Another group not listed." We next examined the entries of the CPS Hispanics¹, and the "Supplement-Only" Hispanics, to a separate question on ancestry that appeared on the Supplement. This question asked,

"Now, what is your ancestry or ethnic origin?"

Respondents were allowed to report multiple ancestries.

In Table 2, we see that there was a significant difference in the types of ancestries reported by the two groups. While fewer than 6% of those identified as Hispanic on the CPS reported non-Hispanic European ancestries, over 40% of the Supplement-only Hispanics listed one or more such ancestries. (German and Italian were the two most frequently-reported ancestries for this group.)

An analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of CPS Hispanics and "Supplement-only" Hispanics, revealed other significant differences between the two groups. The "Supplement-only" Hispanics were younger, higher in income, education, employment rate, home ownership, and also had smaller households, than the Hispanics identified by the regular CPS (McKay et al, 1998).

To learn about the ethnic composition of respondents who had selected a Hispanic ethnic origin category, e.g., *Mexican*, *Puerto Rican*, on the CPS flashcard, but had answered "No," to the Supplement Hispanic question, we examined their responses to the Supplement ancestry question. Table 3 displays the Hispanic origin reported on the CPS, and the ancestries reported on the Supplement, for the "CPS-only" Hispanics.

The total number (unweighted) of "CPS-only" Hispanics was 255. Of the 125 who had chosen one of the *Mexican* categories on the CPS flashcard, 72 gave Mexican as their first response on the Supplement ancestry question. Another 6 gave Mexican as their second ancestry response. The remaining 47 listed only non-Hispanic ancestries.

¹ CPS Hispanics refers to all respondents who selected a CPS Hispanic origin category.

Fourteen of the 21 who chose *Puerto Rican* on the CPS flashcard, gave Puerto Rican as their first ancestry, and another 2 as their second ancestry, on the Supplement. Three of the 6 CPS Cubans gave Cuban as their first ancestry on the Supplement.

Fifteen of the 64 "CPS-only" Hispanics who had chosen "Central or South American" on the CPS flashcard reported Central or South American ancestries on the Supplement. Thirteen reported *non-Hispanic* Central or South American ancestries, e.g., Brazilian, Haitian. Ten reported American Indian ancestries, e.g., Cherokee. Twenty-three of the CPS "Central or South Americans" listed other non-Hispanic ancestries, e.g., German, European.

Of the 39 "CPS-only" Hispanics who identified as "Other Hispanic" on the CPS flashcard, four reported "Hispanic" or "Spanish" on the Supplement ancestry question. Five reported specific Hispanic ancestries, e.g., Mexican, four reported "American Indian," and 25 reported other non-Hispanic ancestries, e.g., Portuguese.

Overall, 76 of the 255 "CPS-only" respondents, almost 30%, *did not meet* the CPS criteria for Hispanic designation – persons whose origins are the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, or Spain.

Of the 4,693 respondents (unweighted) who identified as Hispanic in both surveys, 480, over 10%, reported *different Hispanic origin groups* in each survey. As Table 4 shows, the rate of shift in origin groups from CPS to the Supplement was about 5% for Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, under 4% for Cubans, about 15% for Central and South Americans, and about 40% for "Other Hispanics." Of the 193 CPS "Other Hispanics" who shifted to a different Hispanic origin group on the Supplement, over 60% shifted to reporting as "Mexican."

In searching for possible causes of the shift in Hispanic origin across the two surveys, we examined the nativities of the parents of respondents who had shifted origin. Different maternal and paternal nativities were reported for only 20% of these respondents.

Discussion

The Supplement Hispanic ethnicity question which, unlike the CPS, did not restrict

respondents to choosing a single ethnic group, allowed more respondents, especially those of mixed ancestry, to identify as Hispanic. The additional respondents who identified as Hispanic on the Supplement represent a more affluent, educated group, and introduce more diversity into the overall socio-demographic profile of the Hispanic population in the United States.

In addition to lower Hispanic coverage, the regular CPS origin question tends to misclassify considerable numbers of respondents as Hispanic. This is especially true for the CPS origin category of "Central or South American," chosen by many American Indians (with origins in the Central United States) and persons of Portuguese descent (with origins in South America).

The fact that a majority of the 255 "CPS only" Hispanics reported valid Hispanic ethnicities or ancestries, e.g., Mexican, on both surveys, but did not identify as Hispanic on the Supplement, may be attributed to a difference in mode between the two surveys. The CPS ethnic origin question presented the respondent with a flashcard listing specific national origin groups, e.g., *Mexican, Puerto Rican*. The Supplement ethnicity question did not offer verbal examples of Hispanic national origin groups, and did not utilize a flashcard listing Hispanic origin groups. While the Supplement question allowed more Hispanics of diverse ancestries to identify with the category, the question *may have served as a barrier* for respondents who did not recognize that their specific national origin was included within the Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin category. Further analysis of these respondents' demographic characteristics, especially age, education, and rural/urban locality, may shed some light on the question.

Another unexpected result of comparing Hispanics' ethnic reporting on two surveys was the finding that over 10% *changed their specific*

national origin group across the surveys. This has important implications for demographers who create composite profiles of specific Hispanic groups by combining data derived from several different surveys.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the contributions of Clyde Tucker and Brian Harris-Kojetin to the research findings discussed in this paper.

References

- de La Puente, Manuel, "An Analysis of the Underenumeration of Hispanics: Evidence From Hispanic Concentrated Small Area Ethnographic Studies," *Proceedings of the Bureau of the Census 1992 Annual Research Conference* (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992), pp. 45-69.
- McKay, Ruth B., Harris-Kojetin, Brian A., Tucker, Clyde, "Question Wording Effects on Hispanic Coverage in the Current Population Survey," Paper presented to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Meeting, St. Louis, 1998.
- McKay, Ruth B., "Undercoverage of Hispanics in household surveys," *Monthly Labor Review*, September, 1993, pp.38-42.
- Shapiro, Gary and Bettin, Paul, "Coverage in Household Surveys," Paper presented to the Census Advisory Committee of the American Statistical Association and the Census Advisory Committee on Population Statistics at the Joint Advisory Committee Meeting, Suitland, October 1992.

Figure 1. Respondents identifying as Hispanic in the CPS and as Hispanic in the Supplement.

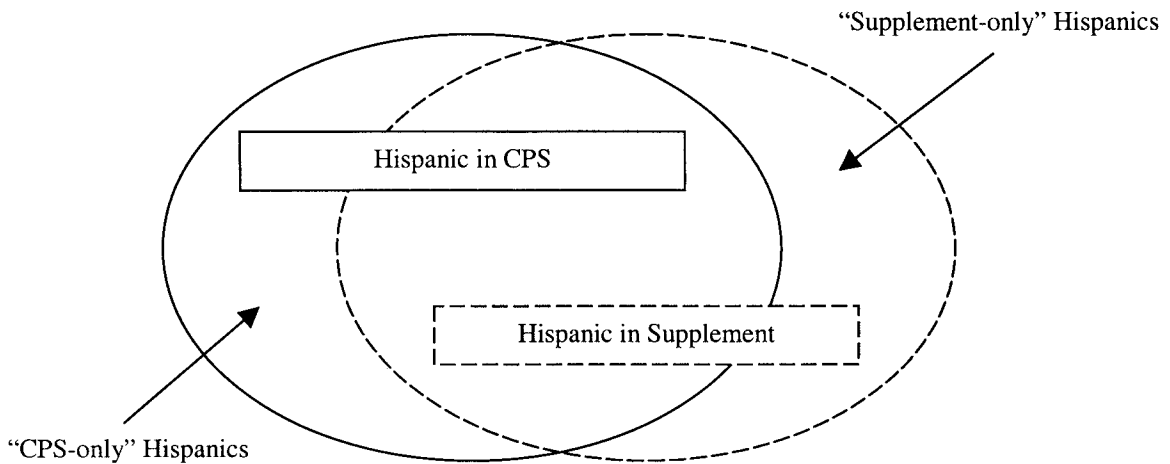


Table 1. Hispanic Counts ^{a,b} in the May, 1995 CPS and the CPS Supplement

Total count of Hispanics in the CPS	22,963,000
Total count of Hispanics in the CPS Supplement	25,476,000
Hispanic in the Supplement/not Hispanic in the CPS	3,909,000
Hispanic in the CPS/not Hispanic in the Supplement	1,313,000
Net gain of Hispanics in the Supplement over the CPS	2,596,000

a. All of these results are based on taking the information from Panels 1 and 2 of the May, 1995 CPS Supplement, which had a separate Hispanic origin question, and doubling those figures to represent the entire population.

b. Non-interview adjusted weights.

Table 2. Hispanics With and Without Non-Hispanic Ancestries

Hispanic on:	With	Without	Total
CPS	272 (5.48%)	4,689 (94.52%)	4961
Supplement only	363 (40.88%)	525 (59.12%)	888
Total	635	5214	5849

$\chi^2 = 959$
 $\rho < .001$

Table 3. Hispanic on CPS/Not Hispanic on Supplement

Origin on CPS	Ancestry on Supplement					
	Same first ancestry on supplement	Same second ancestry on supplement	Other Spanish/ Hispanic ancestries	Non-Hispanic South American/ Caribbean ancestries	American Indian	Other Non-Hispanic ancestries
Mexican 125 n=125	72	6	6		4	37
Puerto Rican n=21	14	2	1			4
Cuban n=6	3					3
Central/South American n=64	15		3	13	10	23
Other Hispanic n=39	4		5	1	4	25
Total n=255	n=108	n=8	n=15	n=14	n=18	n=92

Table 4. Hispanic Ethnicity in CPS and CPS Supplement

Supplement						
	Percent	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Central or South American	Other Hispanic
C P S	Mexican Mexican-American Chicano	94.28	0.14	0.00	0.32	5.26
	Puerto Rican	0.69	95.16	1.04	1.21	1.90
	Cuban	0.93	0.47	96.26	0.47	1.87
	Central or South American	4.59	0.47	0.79	85.44	8.70
	Other Hispanic	24.44	2.65	0.61	11.61	60.69