William O’Hare has more than forty years of experience in statistical analysis of social and demographic data. Previously a Senior Consultant with the KIDS COUNT Project at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bill is the author of The Undercount of Young Children in the U.S. Decennial Census (SpringerBriefs in Population Studies).

Census: Why Ensuring a Fair and Accurate Census Matters

Dr. William P. O’Hare
July 18, 2017
Topics to be covered

• Who is undercounted in the Census?

• Why are they undercounted?

• What can we do about it?

Who is undercounted in the Census?

• The importance of differential undercounts

• Many long-standing differentials
### 2010 Census Percent Net Undercount by Age, Sex, and Tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Net Undercount Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Total</strong></td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Young Children (age 0 to 4)</strong></td>
<td>-4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elderly (age 60+)</strong></td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td>-0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Renters</strong></td>
<td>-1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home-Owners</strong></td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau

**Note.** In this table undercounts are denoted by a minus (-) sign.

### 2010 Census Estimates of Percent Net Undercount by Race and Hispanic Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Net Undercount Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Total</strong></td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Hispanic White Alone</strong></td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black</strong></td>
<td>-2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>-1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American Indian and Alaskan Native</strong></td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On Reservations</strong></td>
<td>-4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indian Areas Off Reservations</strong></td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance of U.S.</strong></td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander</strong></td>
<td>-1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black Males age 30-49</strong></td>
<td>-10.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic Males age 30-49</strong></td>
<td>-5.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau

**Note.** In this table undercounts are denoted by a minus (-) sign.
Other At-Risk Groups

• Immigrants
• People in low-income households
• The undocumented population
• People who don’t trust government
• Those who do not speak English well
• The homeless
• Those without internet access
• Highly mobile groups
• People living in poor neighborhoods in large cities
• Selected rural areas (Indian Reservations, Border Counties, rural black belt in the South)

Why are they undercounted?

• Many reasons – no single answer to this question
Some reasons people are undercounted

• Housing unit not on Census Bureau’s Master Address File (MAF)- Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA)
  • Multi-unit buildings

• People not included on returned census questionnaire

• Residence rules are unclear – complex households
  • "residentially ambiguity" where do they really live
    “Usual place of residence” concept used in Census

• Fear of government – resist responding

• Highly mobile populations – renters

• Language issues

What can be done in the 2020 Census?
Framework for addressing 2020 Census?

• W. P. O’Hare (2016) Five Steps for Reducing the High Net Undercount of Young Children in the 2020 Census, The Census Project,


3 Main opportunities to have impact

• Census Bureau operations
  • Questionnaire design, focus on HTC neighborhoods, call back procedures, use of internet, use of administrative data, etc.

• Census advertising/outreach/partnership
  • Census partnership program
  • Census complete count committees

• Outreach independent of the Census Bureau
  • “trusted voices” in the local community
  • Culturally sensitive messages
  • Local support in places that are familiar
New resources from The Leadership Conference (http://civilrights.org/census/)

- Resources from The Leadership Conference
  - Prototype for young children
  - Fact Sheet with overview of problem and issue
  - Tables for states, large cities, and congressional districts

- Use for advocating with leaders
  - Need for Census Bureau funding

- Use for targeting outreach efforts
- Use for raising public awareness—media

THANKS

Contact Information
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