

Status Update on CES Task Force 9: Sex and Gender

2023 UNECE-GS Session on Measuring Sex and Gender

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Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- Background
- 2020 Round of Censuses Recommendations Related to Sex
- Gender Identity Research
- Status of Task Force
- Next Steps

Introduction

- Conference of European Statistician (CES) Census Recommendations
- 2030 round first time there's a Task Forces focusing on sex and gender
- Revisions reflect changes in technology, collection techniques, society and public perception

Background

- Historically we have used the term sex to measure gendered differences
 - We acknowledge here in this Gender Statistics Working Group that men and women experience the world differently
 - Labor force participation rates, educational difference, time use, etc.
- In so doing measurement had contributed to conflation of the concepts of sex and gender
 - Gender is a social construction whereby a society or culture assigns certain tendencies or behavior to the labels of woman and man or masculine and feminine
- In many data collection systems it's important to maintain sex as a binary option. However, the data provided by respondents may actually be something closer to gender or gender identity
- There are additional factors to consider when untangling the conflation of sex and gender

2020 Round of Censuses Recommendations Related to Sex

- The Recommendations point to the fact that sex as a core variable is fundamental
- Acknowledge that some countries have started to see the need for additional sex or gender response categories to allow persons of “cross-gender or indeterminate sex” to self identify in survey.
- On-line survey of countries included one question on sex as a core topic “Were there any serious issues raised about the collection of sex? For example, complaints about how the question can be answered by people who have undergone gender reassignment or by people who do not identify with one or other of the response options?”
 - Findings showed that 100% of countries collected the sex of every census respondent
 - “No country reported that there had been any serious issues raised...although both Canada and the UK commented on concerns expressed by some user groups about the lack of transgender/transsexual categories.”

2020 Round of Censuses Recommendations Related to Sex - continued

- The Recommendations point out that while some countries do wish to attempt to record gender or gender identity information in a census, it is important to recognize that particular attention needs to be given to:
 - Data quality
 - Rigorous testing
 - Response errors that can exponentially impact small and unique populations
- Recommendations conclude that perhaps it's better not to collect the data at all if there are data quality concerns and disclosure risks

Gender Identity Research

- After the 2020 Recommendations were issued further UNECE-GS work continued to expand our understanding of sex/gender reporting
- In 2019 the CES carried out an in-depth review of measuring gender identity prepared by Canada and the UK
- As part of the UNECE-GS May 2019 meeting in Neuchatel a session was dedicated to measuring gender identity
- From this a Gender Identity Task Team was formed that organized a wiki with gender resources that are available to countries

Status of Task Force

- Represented by ten member countries along with participants from UNSD, UNFPA
- Several meetings taking into account breadth of country experiences related to sex and gender measurement
- Experiences shared collecting information on sex and gender in recent censuses in the UK and Canada
- Research in the United States
- Other countries not collecting information are receiving input from LGBT groups that this information is desired

Next Steps

- The Task Force just finished preparing questions for the on-line survey to support the 2030 Recommendations
- The survey questions will complement the Task Force's key research objectives:
 - Outline concepts and definitions
 - Rationale for sex as a core topic in addition to the collection of information on gender
 - Experiences of countries that do collect information on gender
 - Issue to consider before making changes to the census (e.g. policy, public opinion, legal context, disclosure control and quality assurance)

Next Steps - continued

- Survey questions ask:
 - Whether sex/gender information is gathered via Census or Population Register
 - If you have gender questions what is the wording and response options
 - Do you have gender question statistical standards or harmonization of data
 - What are your disclosure and quality assurance methods for small populations
 - If the national language(s) include different words for sex and gender
 - If the public generally understands the differences between these terms
- Survey results will be captured and evaluate late 2023 to late 2024
- Findings will be noted in a CES Report and culminate in 2030 Recommendations

Thank you for your attention

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