

Updates on a Research Agenda for the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Questions on the Experimental Household Pulse Survey

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Presented at the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Research and Policy Conference

October 25, 2023

Outline

- Overview of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) questions on the Household Pulse Survey (HPS)
- Past research
- Research agenda
 - Sexual orientation write-ins
 - Record linkage
 - Breakoffs

HPS Background

- HPS remains an experimental survey.
- HPS has relatively low overall response rate (~4-7%).
- Questions asked only of respondents (i.e., no proxy response).
- Questions asked only of those aged 18 years and over.
- Self-response, online survey (no interviewer-administered option).
- Quick turnaround: data released less than two week after collection ends.
- Census Bureau dissemination policies determine granularity of products.
- Limited time for the Census Bureau to cognitively test revisions to baseline SOGI items.
- SOGI items added to HPS in Cycle 34 (July 2021).

Overview of SOGI Questions on the HPS

Sexual Orientation

Q1. Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?

- Gay or lesbian
- Straight, that is not gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Something else _____
- I don't know

Write-in line for 'something else' included for half of respondents beginning in Cycle 52.

Overview of SOGI Questions on the HPS

Gender Identity

Q1. What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

- Male
- Female

Q2. Do you currently describe yourself as male, female, or transgender?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- None of these

Q3. Just to confirm, you were assigned {FILL} at birth and now you describe yourself as {FILL}. Is that correct?

- Yes
- No <skip back to Q1 and/or Q2 to correct>

Existing SOGI Evaluations

- Impact of allocated sex at birth (SAB) values on transgender estimates.
- Performance of SAB/gender identity confirmation check.
- Question order experiment.
- Evaluation of characteristics of ‘residual’ respondents and nonrespondents to SOGI questions.

Sexual Orientation Write-ins

Sexual Orientation Write-ins: Research Questions

- Does the inclusion of a write-in line affect the overall distribution of responses to the sexual orientation question?
- What type of write-ins are being collected?

Sexual Orientation Write-ins

- Analysis of 631 responses from Cycle 52 of the survey.
- Responses were independently coded by two people.
 - Where coding differed, a third coder adjudicated the category to use for the response.
- Coding followed scheme used in past Census Bureau research.
- Estimates are unweighted unless noted and conclusions are not generalizable beyond this dataset.

Sexual Orientation Write-ins

Distribution of sexual orientation responses by treatment

Category	Combined weighted	Unweighted w/o write-in line	Unweighted w/ write-in line
Gay or Lesbian	3.1%	3.3%	3.4%
Straight, that is, not gay or lesbian	86.7%	88.0%	87.5%
Bisexual	4.7%	4.4%	4.2%
Something else	2.1%	1.7%	1.8%
I don't know	1.6%	1.2%	1.4%
Did not report	1.8%	1.4%	1.6%
Unweighted N	70,690	35,400	35,290

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, Cycle 52.

No substantive differences in distributions between those receiving the question version with the write-in line and question version without the write-in line.

Sexual Orientation Write-ins

- Alternative sexual orientations (e.g., pansexual, asexual, queer) represented 46.8 percent of write-in responses.
- ‘Trolling’ responses represented 8.4 percent of write-in responses.
- Hard refusals represented 9.5 percent of write-in responses.

Sexual Orientation Write-ins: Tentative Conclusions

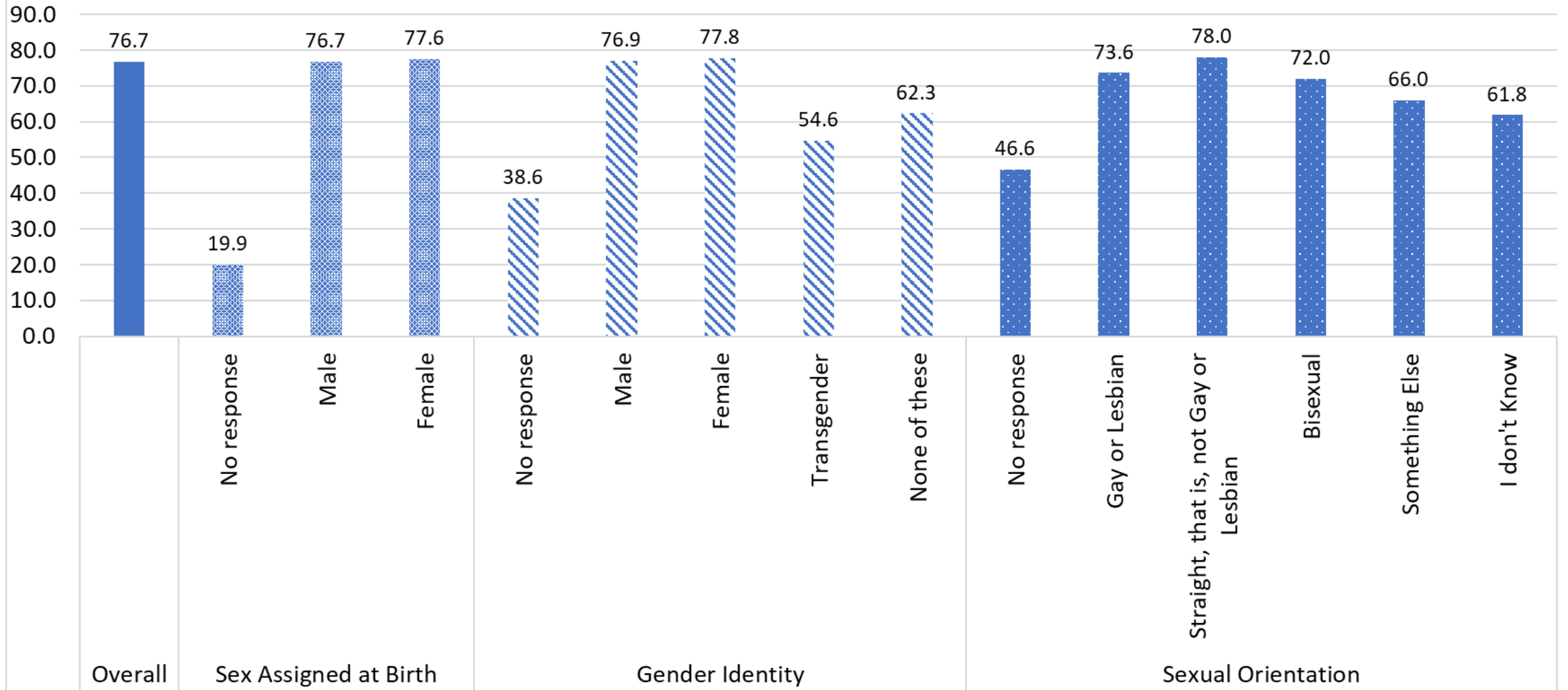
- Addition of a write-in line does not alter distribution of responses to sexual orientation question and provides a space for people identifying as an 'alternative' sexual orientation to report this information.
- Write-in responses could be used to inform additional reporting categories depending on sample size of the survey.

Record Linkage

Record Linkage: Research Questions

- How do rates of matching to protected identification keys (PIKs) compare across HPS reporting categories?
 - PIKs are the field that the Census Bureau uses to link respondents across datasets, and are assigned by pulling in a variety of attributes for respondents, including sex.
- How do HPS response distributions to the sex assigned at birth and gender identity questions compare to the 'gender' distribution from the Census Numident?
- What can be learned from the gender difference flag on the Census Numident when evaluating responses to SOGI questions?

PIK Rates by HPS SOGI Reporting Category (in Percent)

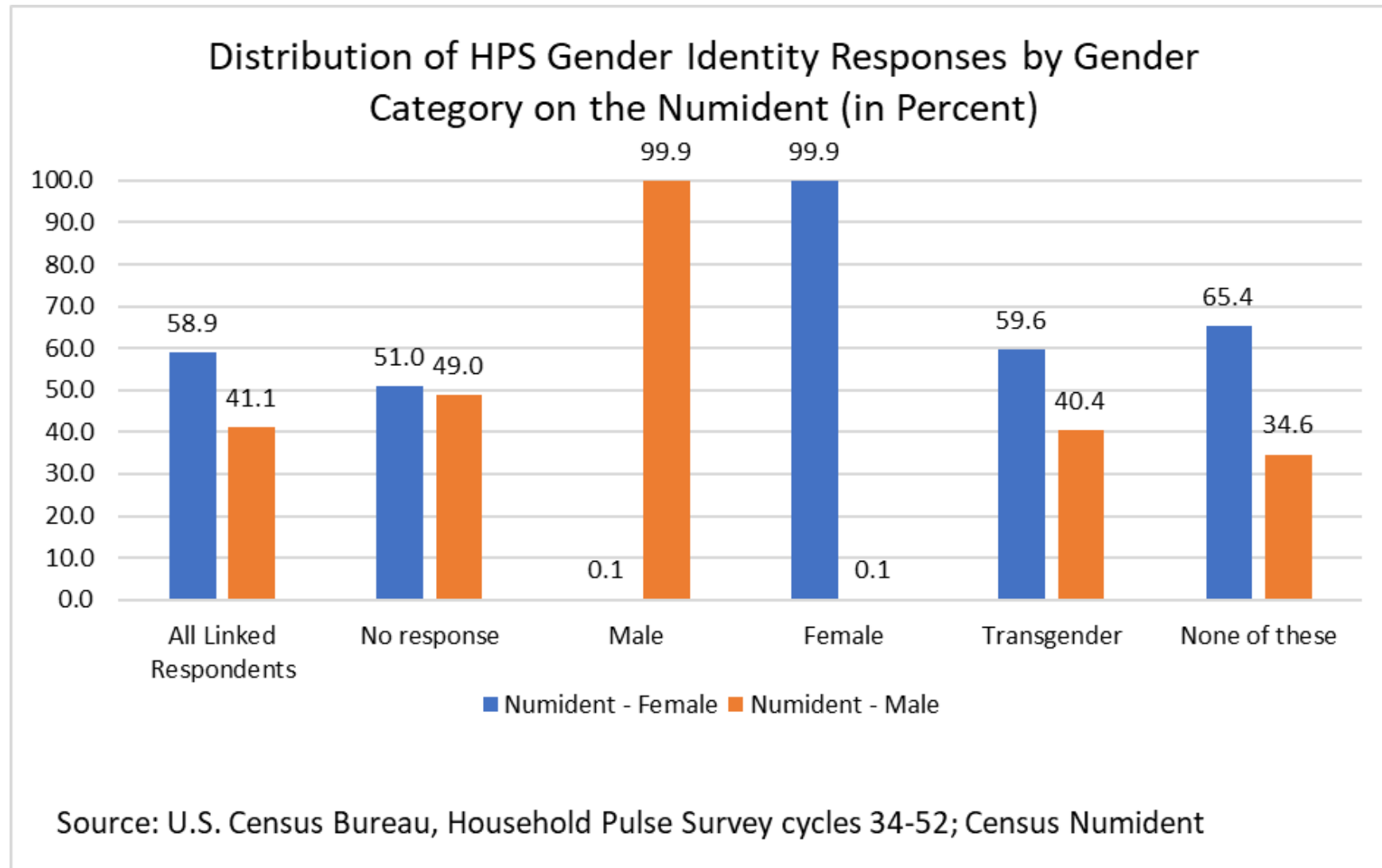


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, cycles 34-52

Record Linkage

- Merged Cycles 34 through 52 of the HPS with the Census Numident via PIKs
- Total N = approximately 900,000 that were successfully linked to a Numident record, omitting:
 - Un-PIKed HPS records and PIKed HPS records without a matching Numident record
 - Those who appeared in the HPS multiple times and provided different sex at birth responses.
 - Those who appeared in the HPS multiple times and provided different gender identity responses.
- Estimates are unweighted and conclusions are not generalizable beyond this dataset.

Record Linkage



Record Linkage

- Almost 100 percent concordance between HPS sex at birth and 'gender' on Numident
 - The Numident 'gender' is used in constructing the PIKs, so instances where the HPS sex does not match the Numident 'gender' would be unlikely to be successfully matched

Record Linkage

- The vast majority (>90%) of those with a 'gender difference' flag in the Numident-HPS dataset are cisgender, and few individuals identifying as transgender have a gender difference flag. This likely reflects:
 - Individuals who have changed their name and/or sex not being successfully PIKed
 - A large number of gender differences reflecting individuals correcting errors, rather than transitioning
 - SSA rules requiring documentation to change gender value were adjusted in late 2022
 - Changing 'gender' values on the SSA record may not be a priority for individuals who are transitioning, and does not have any practical/administrative implications

Record Linkage: Next Steps

- Explore how to augment the methodology for generating linkage keys for likely transgender respondents by making use of other attributes available across datasets
- Linking all three datasets to evaluate concordance between HPS, Numident, and the 2020 Census
- Analyzing those who appear in the HPS data multiple times across cycles and provide different responses to sex assigned at birth or provide different responses to current gender identity.

Breakoffs

Research Questions:

- What percentage of HPS respondents are exiting the survey during the SOGI question sequence?
- How does this compare to other demographic items, and to other potentially sensitive questions (income, etc.)?

Consultations with Qualtrics ongoing on a way to generate a field that could capture the relevant information.

Summary

- Sexual orientation: write-ins do not appear to affect question response distributions.
 - A plurality of write-ins are alternative sexual orientations.
- Record linkage:
 - Large differences in PIK rates across HPS reporting categories
 - Some substantive differences in response patterns to Census Numident among different HPS reporting categories.

Much more to do!

Thank you!

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