

---SITE INDEX---

Go

Resources: [Fun Book](#) | [Help Book](#) | [Web Book](#)

- ▶ LI NEWS
- ▶ NYC NEWS
- ▶ SPORTS
- ▶ BUSINESS
- ▶ LEISURE
- ▶ OPINION
- ▶ ARCHIVES
- ▼ SEARCH

Last 7 Days
 Obituaries
 LI History
 Search



Today's Newsday



HOY
Spanish Language
Paper



News/Sports
Webcasts

June 27, 2001

Count Is Questioned

Hispanic groups say unclear query led to inaccurate numbers

by **Mae M. Cheng and Richard Dalton**
Staff Writers

Some Hispanic groups in the city may have been inaccurately counted in the 2000 census because of the way the question about their ethnicity was posed, according to city officials and community leaders.

The inaccuracy involves people who listed themselves in the census in the broad category of Hispanic but who may not have written in their specific country of origin. Among those groups who city planners believe were not accurately counted are Dominicans, Ecuadoreans and Colombians. City planners say the question was not worded clearly enough and did not provide examples for people to follow.

City officials believed Dominicans and Ecuadoreans would show large increases. Colombians were not expected to decline in population over the last decade, as the latest census figures showed.

NEWS

MORE COVERAGE

- * A Salvadoran Boom
- * More Census

GRAPHICS

- * The Center of Queens Hispanic Population (34k)

SIGN OF THE TIMES



Newsday Photo
Jiro Ose

A store front catering to Hispanic customers on Roosevelt Ave. in Jackson Heights, Queens.

ADVERTISEMENT



- COMPLETE CLASSIFIEDS
- SHOPS OF LONG ISLAND
- FIND A BUSINESS OR ADDRESS
- DOING BUSINESS WITH NEWSDAY

- * [How to Subscribe](#)
- * [How to Advertise](#)
- * [About Us](#)
- * [Contact Us](#)

"If these countries have gone down (in population), what countries have gone up?? asked Joseph Salvo, director of the City Planning Department's Population Division.

The possible undercount comes to light as census data for New York is released today, giving the most detailed accounting to date of the breakdown of Hispanic and Asian groups. Population figures are being released for 25 Hispanic groups, including three catchall categories of Hispanics. Data is also being released for 31 Asian, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian groups, including seven catchall categories.

Among the findings in the latest data release:

Community Districts 3 and 4 in northwestern Queens have a wide-ranging mix of the South American population, being home to the largest groups of Peruvians, Argentinians, Bolivians, Chileans, Colombians, Ecuadoreans and Venezuelans in New York City.

Queens is home to a majority of many of the city's ethnic population. Some 78 percent of Colombians, 57.1 percent of Ecuadoreans, 67.7 percent of Peruvians, 78.8 percent of Bolivians, 65.8 of Uruguayans, 78.9 percent of Paraguayans, 63.4 percent of Indians, 55.4 percent of Filipinos, 71.7 percent of Koreans, 59.5 percent of Thais, 71 percent of Taiwanese, 66.1 percent of Bangladeshis and 72.8 percent of Indonesians in New York City live in Queens.

Among the city's fastest-growing Hispanic groups over the last decade are Mexicans, whose numbers increased by 131,174, making them the fourth-largest Hispanic group; Dominicans, whose population increased by 74,093, making them the second-largest Hispanic group; and Ecuadoreans, whose numbers increased by 22,561, making them the fifth-largest Hispanic group.

Comparing the data with city demographers' own population estimates for Hispanic groups shows that up to 200,000 Dominicans and some 25,000 Ecuadoreans who participated in the census were counted in some other Hispanic category. In addition, city

demographers had predicted that the current Colombian population in the five boroughs is about 125,000, yet the census only shows 77,154 in New York City. If the census numbers are accurate, it would mean the Colombian population decreased by 7,300 people, or 8.6 percent, over the last decade.

"That's just not plausible," said Salvo, who pointed to immigration data showing a steady flow of these groups to New York City.

"There's a problem here," said Angelo Falcon, senior policy executive with the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund in Manhattan. "It's upsetting to us because the investment we made mobilizing the Latino community gets undercut by this."

Salvo and Falcon said they are in the process of reaching out to the Census Bureau to see how this problem can be rectified. Falcon also said his organization is contacting various Hispanic community groups to gauge their feelings about this. Both feel the problem stems from the wording of the Hispanic question on the census forms provided in Census 2000.

Hispanics who did not check off being Mexican, Puerto Rican or Cuban were asked to write in a "Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" group they belonged to. However, on the 1990 form, examples of possible write-in groups were provided.

Because no sample groups were listed in 2000, many people may have written in "Spanish," "Hispanic," or "Latino" for their response, demographers believe. This would explain the growth of the "Other Hispanic" and "Spanish" categories in New York City. Other Hispanics increased during the last decade from 70,792 to 356,743, or by 403.9 percent. The Spanish population nearly doubled between 1990 and 2000, from 17,200 to 32,105.

In explaining why no examples of write-in ethnic groups or nationalities were given in 2000, Census Bureau officials said that they believe that to do so would encourage respondents to write in one of the suggested categories. To illustrate this, they pointed to the decline in the "Spaniard" population. Spaniard was a group listed as an example in 1990.

The number of people who identified themselves as Spaniards in New York City in 2000 was less than half of those who did so in 1990. Spaniards decreased from 19,692 in 1990 to 8,233 in 2000.

Salvo said it is possible that certain Asian groups were also incorrectly counted, but the problem would have been less severe since nine categories of Asian, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander groups were listed on the Census 2000 form to be checked off, leaving less room for ambiguity.

Said Falcon: "These are groups trying to establish themselves. This really undercuts them politically in many ways... This is the kind of thing that frustrates people.?"