

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

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# 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

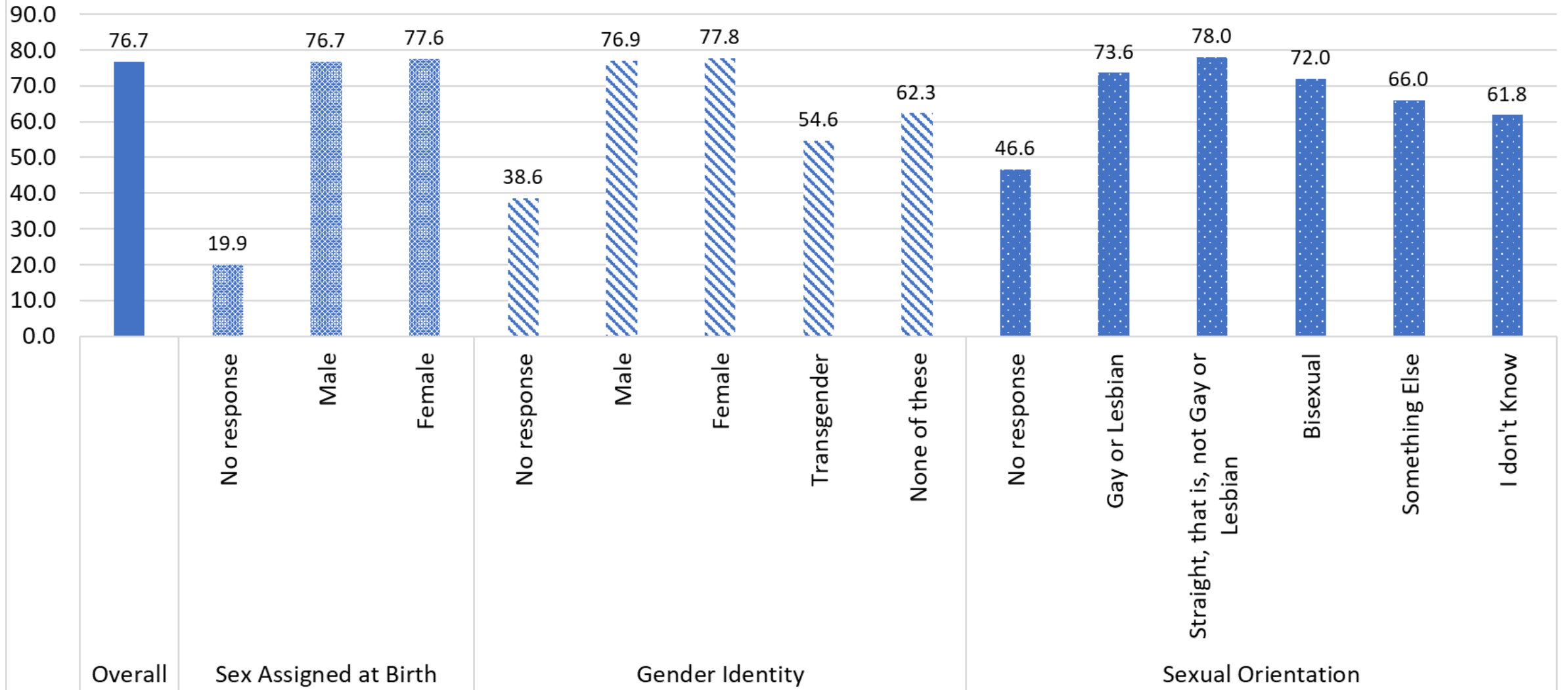
- Addition of a write-in line does not alter distribution of responses to sexual orientation question and provides a space for people identifying as an 'alternative' sexual orientation to report this information.
- Write-in responses could be used to inform additional reporting categories depending on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



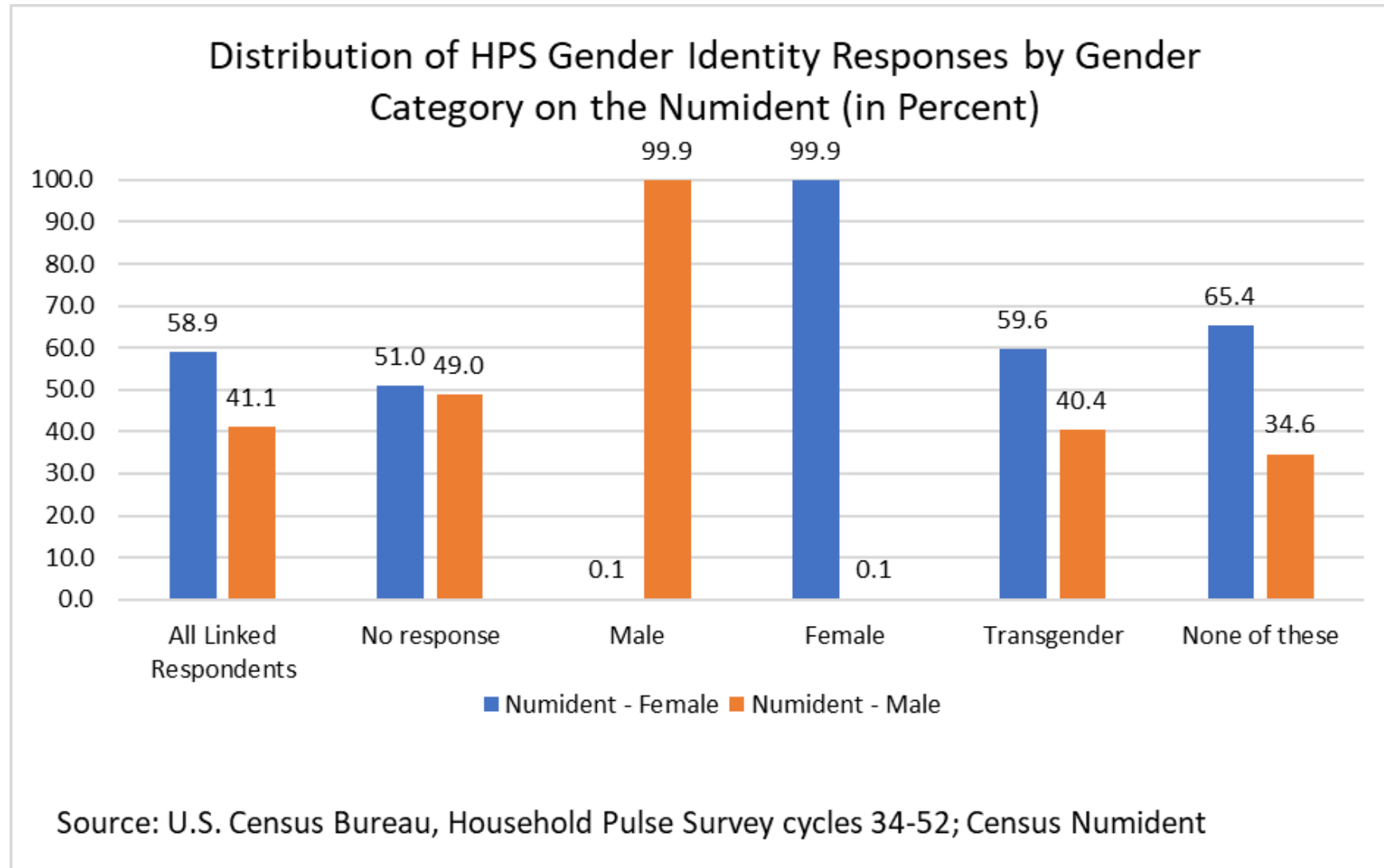
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, cycles 34-52

# 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! Additional results will be presented at FCSM in October.

# Thank you!

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