

Research Assessment #5

Date: October 19, 2018

Subject: City 2020 Census Promotion

MLA Citation:

Brown, Nick. "Worried about Undercount, States and Cities Spend to Promote 2020..." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 1 Oct. 2018, www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-census-states/worried-about-undercount-states-and-cities-spend-to-promote-2020-census-idUSKCN1MB25C.

Assessment:

For my fifth research assessment, I really wanted to start working on concrete analysis of data and censuses. My fifth informational interview was with Mr. Seteve Sims of Plano demographics and populations studies and one of the aspects he stressed most during our conversation was how much work he had to do in coordination with the U.S. Census, upcoming in 2020. This, along with my interest in population studies, led me to the article about what cities are having to do to ensure the census is well-prepared for as 2020 approaches.

The first thing that really surprised me in the article was how much cities have to pay for the census preparations themselves. I guess logically it makes sense, because honestly the federal government has no stake in whether or not districts are fairly represented other than on the grounds of honesty, and as far as federal funding goes, they likely don't care much about where it's allocated as opposed to limiting how much is allocated in favor for the federal programs. Because of this, I learned through the article that cities have to fund their own census-support efforts to a high degree, and it's rather high stakes because it determines how much money they get in upcoming years for programs, infrastructure, and other necessities. This resonated with me a lot because of what Mr. Sims discussed during our interview with the emphasis put on the census. Even while speaking to him I thought it was a little peculiar that they look so far in advance (because 2020 seems so far away to me), but I suppose if federal funding is on the line and they get little higher help, getting ready for the census must be a big part of city population and city planning jobs.

The article also highlighted some of the shortcomings of the census. For example, some of the least-represented groups are those most in need of federal funding, so not only are they falling through the cracks, but they are especially hurting because of it. Going through the article, the biggest question that stuck out to me was simply, how could this be done better? The census in theory should and could be so valuable, but it seem with its shortcomings it isn't even accomplishing what it set out to do. Another question I still have is how exactly has the rise of technology changed this process and the practice of collecting census data? Will utilizing technology jeopardize the truth of the data at all because it's easily hacked, or will it overwhelmingly be a benefit in getting people to fill out the census?

Overall, this article and report has given me a real sense of momentum for my Original Work and continued study throughout the year. Hopefully knowing what I know about the census and how important it is to cities, I will be able to synthesize and come up with potential solutions for the shortcomings of the process. This is all early brainstorming, but hopeful the compiled data of the area can help me look beyond and consider different possibilities to make the census a success for both the federal and local governments alike.