In-depth review of measuring Gender Identity

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Work session on Gender Statistics: Measuring Gender Identity
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What do we mean by gender *identity*?

**Gender identity = Male, Female, and a third, *diverse* category**

General terms, such as: Non-binary gender, Gender-diverse, Gender-neutral

Specific terms, such as: Bigender (both male, female), Genderqueer, Demi-boy, Demi-girl, Agender, *and so on*...

Can include *ALL TRANSGENDER*:

Non-binary gender persons *PLUS*  
Transgender men – *their gender is male*  
Transgender women – *their gender is female*

**INTERSEX** = ‘undetermined’ sex – important in a medical context
How long has transgender been around?

Some countries—or peoples—have recognized diversity in sex or gender for a long time → part of their culture

- Hijras in India = ‘third gender’, or transgender women
- Fa’aafafine in Samoa
- Two-spirit indigenous North Americans- term may combine sexual orientation and gender
- Other examples?

For over a decade, some American institutions have been researching ways to collect transgender status in health surveys

- Estimates by state vary, but probably < 1% nationally
Why are NSOs looking at gender identity now?

→ Statistics need to reflect society

Recent public reaction
‘Binary’ categories are too RESTRICTIVE in the census, surveys, government forms, medical records

Legal changes
Court challenges to recognize non-binary persons
Anti-discrimination laws

Policy needs
Research and policy based on evidence
Sex continues to be useful for health analysis, fertility etc
Sensitive to whom?

In countries where non-binary individuals are recognised in law, they are likely to be “visible” already

→ Government documents and registries can include a third category for those who want to use it, although this doesn’t capture transgender

Transgender men and women are requesting that they be allowed to change their sex/gender in government documents, between Male, Female.

- but some may prefer not to reveal their transgender status.

- In the United Kingdom, there is legal protection of privacy regarding transgender status when dealing with government agencies, services.

Proxy reporting within households can be sensitive - Parents versus children - Room-mates
In total, 18 NSOs reported work during the review (in 2018)

Among them:

**India, Nepal, Pakistan** – Incorporated a third category of sex in most recent census

**Australia, Canada, and New Zealand** - Have recently published classifications of sex and gender (subject to further updates).

**Canada, England and Wales** - Planning to include expanded sex and/or gender questions in census (more on this later)

**Canada, Finland, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, Sweden** - Already including expanded sex and/or gender questions in some household surveys
How would we measure gender and transgender in a census?

Two case studies:
Statistics Canada, and UK Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Large-scale testing in 2019!
Full census in 2021, subject to results and government approval.

In each case, TWO questions are proposed. Why?
→ Permit collection of transgender, as well as sex/gender
→ A way to maintain high quality data
Case studies, continued (2)

**Canada**

What was this person’s **sex at birth**?

*Sex refers to sex assigned at birth.*

Male
Female

What is this person’s **gender**?

*Refers to current gender which may be different from sex assigned at birth and may be different from what is indicated on legal documents.*

Male
Female

Or please specify your gender

**England and Wales**

What is your sex?

A question about gender will follow if you are aged 16 or over

Female
Male

Is your gender the same as the sex you were registered at birth?

This question is voluntary
Select one option only
Yes
No – please specify gender
Both sets of questions are quite different:
  Voluntary versus mandatory question on gender
  Age restriction or none

→ This highlights some of the trade-offs that NSOs may need to consider.

→ NSOs need to carry out key activities like consultation, question design and testing with their own populations.
Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions
Still a developing area statistically and conceptually
Difficult to label and classify
Recognise the challenge for register-based censuses

Recommendations
Keep track of research and share experiences
Revisit topic after census data collections and dissemination