

Extended Abstract for Poster Session

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Title: *An Examination of the Year of Naturalization Question in the American Community Survey*

As part of the citizenship status question, the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) questionnaire asked a new item: year of naturalization. Respondents who reported that they were naturalized citizens were asked to write in their year of naturalization. This poster will present a number of different frequency tables to examine various aspects of the year of naturalization write-in question. The 2008 ACS data will not be released until late September 2009, and for that reason this abstract does not present results. However, it will provide the general outline of what the poster will present.

After a series of panels describing the ACS and the new year of naturalization question, our first table will display responses to the year of naturalization write-in by year of entry. Since naturalization cannot occur until at least three to five years have passed since establishment of permanent residency (with the time frame dependent on an individual's circumstances¹), the results will illuminate the prevalence of the expected time lag between the point at which a person comes to live in the United States and when they are naturalized, or if the difference is longer or shorter than the legal minimum for naturalization. Respondents whose difference is larger may be delaying entry into the naturalization process or encountering other barriers to naturalization. Respondents whose difference is shorter than the minimum may not be understanding either the year of entry or the year of naturalization question correctly.

¹ Among other requirements, the USCIS webpage at <http://www.uscis.gov/> notes that "(Individuals are) eligible for naturalization if (they) have lived in the United States for at least 5 years as a permanent resident or 3 years if married to and living with a U.S. citizen (if (they) meet all eligibility requirements to file as a spouse of a U.S. citizen)."

Our second table will display responses to the year of naturalization write-in by major countries of birth for the foreign-born population, such as Mexico, China, and India. The purpose behind this table is to illustrate whether there are differences in year of naturalization by country of origin, but will not attempt to explain why any such differences may have occurred, which is beyond the scope of this poster.

Our next sequence of tables will display responses to the year of naturalization write-in by major demographic characteristics, namely by age groups and sex, and by major racial and ethnic groupings (non-Hispanic White alone, non-Hispanic Black or African American alone, non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native alone, non-Hispanic Asian alone, all other non-Hispanic, and Hispanic). As with country of birth, the intent of these tables is not to examine the causes behind differences in any depth, but rather to demonstrate whether there are any differences on year of naturalization by major characteristics.

The final two tables will examine the data quality of the year of naturalization question in a basic way. The first of these will display responses to the year of naturalization write-in by mode of data collection. This will examine whether there are differences in year of naturalization responses by ACS collection mode – CATI, CAPI, and mail. However, the results may be correlated with differences in mode by race and Hispanic origin and so the table may need to be further broken down by basic race and Hispanic origin as well. The final table will be a simple display of year of naturalization results by imputation, to examine whether year of naturalization responses were different for imputed cases compared to non-imputed cases.