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# The 2001–2002 California Workforce Survey

BACKGROUND, METHODS, AND SAMPLE

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THE 2001–2002 CALIFORNIA WORKFORCE SURVEY (CWS), SPONSORED by the Institute for Labor and Employment of the University of California, assesses the current state of the California workforce. It is the basis of the analyses in the next two chapters in this volume, by Fligstein and Sharone and by Weir. The survey, conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley, collected data by telephone on Californians' attitudes toward a wide range of issues, as well as data on the status, conditions, and practices of employment in the state. The interviews took place from July 10, 2001, to January 27, 2002.<sup>1</sup>

## SAMPLING METHODS

There are two telephone samples in the CWS. The first and larger sample is a cross-sectional sample of California adults eligible for the interviews, according to the criteria set for the survey: respondents had to be adults (ages 18 or over), living in a residential household, and able to be interviewed in English or Spanish. For the cross-sectional sample the survey team succeeded in conducting completed interviews with 1,255 adults, 140 of which were in Spanish. The response rate was 50.8 percent. The second sample was a supplementary oversample of unionized workers. The purpose of the oversampling was to increase the number of unionized workers in the sample to facilitate comparative analyses of unionized and nonunionized workers. In the union-member oversample, households were selected as in the cross-sectional sample, but only adult union members working full- or part-time at the time of the interview were eligible for an interview. The supplementary sampling yielded interviews with an additional 149 unionized workers, 6 of them in Spanish; the response rate for this sample was 70.2 percent.<sup>2</sup>

1. Note that the interviewers asked those not working at the time of the interview most of the attitudinal questions in the survey, but of course, for those respondents, they had to skip any questions about current jobs. The text of the questions asked on the survey instrument is available online at <http://sda.berkeley.edu:7502/D3/Calabor/Doc/cal.htm> (under "Indexes").
2. For further details on the sampling outcome, see *ibid.*, "Appendix C: Field Outcome." For the

GENESYS Sampling Systems generated the samples of telephone numbers using a procedure called list-assisted random-digit sampling. This method preserves the characteristics of a simple random sample but takes advantage of the availability of large computer databases of telephone directory information to make the sampling more efficient. The procedure allowed the survey team to reduce the number of calls to nonworking telephone numbers and to obtain a higher proportion of households in the sample than would be possible with simple random-digit dialing.

Briefly, the method works as follows. All possible telephone numbers in the state of California are divided into two strata—telephone numbers from series of 100 numbers with zero or one residential listing in the telephone directories, and telephone numbers from series with at least two such listings. The sample of telephone numbers used for this project was then generated with random numbers, in order to include unlisted numbers, from the stratum containing series of telephone numbers with at least two residential listings. The stratum containing series of telephone numbers with zero or one residential listing was unlikely to contain many residential numbers and therefore was excluded from the sampling frame. For a detailed description of this sampling method, see Casady and Lepkowski (1993).<sup>3</sup>

## WEIGHTING PROCEDURES

The survey statisticians created weights for each respondent case to compensate for the oversampling of unionized members and for other differences in probabilities of selection. They also constructed a post-stratification weight to adjust the sample to match certain basic demographic distributions of age, race and ethnicity, education, and gender in California. A description of each weight appears in the codebook for the survey.<sup>4</sup> The analyses in this volume are generally based on use of the post-stratification weight.

## COMPARISONS WITH CENSUS AND CPS DATA

To assess how closely the CWS sample reflects California's population, we compared some of the aggregate statistics from the survey with published statistics from

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supplementary sample the response rate is the product of the rate of successful screening for union households by the completion rate for the selected union members.

3. For further details on the survey procedures, see *ibid.*, "Appendix A: Sample Design."

4. For a more complete description of the weighting procedures, see *ibid.*, "Appendix B."

the 2001 U.S. Current Population Survey (CPS) and the 2000 U.S. Census. (In these comparisons we weighted the survey results for probabilities of selection but did not post-stratify them by age, race and ethnicity, education, or gender.) According to the 2000 Census, 73 percent of Californians were born in the United States. The CWS sample has the same percentage of native-born respondents. Comparing the 2000 Census and the survey data on racial and ethnic composition shows some differences, however: with Anglos at 48 percent in the Census versus 57 percent in the survey; Latinos at 32 percent versus 28 percent; Asians at 11 percent versus 8 percent; African Americans at 6 percent versus 5 percent; and Native Americans at 0.5 percent versus 1.5 percent.<sup>5</sup> Our sample is thus less racially and ethnically mixed than the Census data are, probably reflecting a higher response rate among Anglos.

According to the CPS, the California unemployment rate in 2001 averaged 5.2 percent; in the survey the reported unemployment rate was 5.1 percent (looking only at the cross-sectional sample). The 2000 Census reports that 60 percent of Californians had attended at least some college, whereas in our sample 65 percent had attended some college, reflecting a somewhat higher response rate among those with higher education.

The CPS reports that in 2001 unionized workers represented 16.4 percent of the employed population in California. In the CWS cross-sectional sample, unionized workers represented 18.1 percent of those currently employed. The 2000 Census reports that 35 percent of Californian workers were managers or professionals, whereas the cross-sectional sample in the survey contains 39 percent managers or professionals. Finally, the 2000 Census reports that 16 percent of Californians worked for a government entity, while 22 percent of the employed respondents in the cross-sectional sample were government employees.

## CONCLUSION

As these comparisons show, the main discrepancy between the CWS sample and the more definitive census information is that the former drew somewhat more from Anglos, the college educated, and managers and professionals. These are common biases in surveys. The authors of the following two analyses in this volume attempted to counteract those biases by using the post-stratification weight we created to adjust the sample to CPS distributions of age, race and ethnicity, education, and gender. As with any sample, of course, one needs to be cautious in extending

5. In this volume we use the term "Latinos" for people the Census and the CPS call "Hispanics" and the term "Anglos" for those they call "non-Hispanic whites," as Latinos may be of any race. Our use of "African Americans" and "Asians" refers to what the Census and CPS call "blacks" and "Asians and Pacific Islanders," respectively.

the conclusions to the entire population, but we are confident that the CWS was well designed and executed in accordance with the highest standards. Furthermore, it has a wealth of information on jobs, working conditions, and public attitudes toward employment in California that is not currently available from any other source.

## REFERENCE

Casady, Robert J., and James M. Lepkowski. 1993. "Stratified Telephone Survey Designs." *Survey Methodology* 19 (June 1993), 103-13.