

An international perspective on the undercount of young children in the U.S. Census: Rejoinder

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I want to thank those who took the time to write a response to my article. They add a lot of good information and raise a number of important points for consideration. Their perspectives and insights are greatly appreciated.

But the most important part of the responses for me is the fact that no one challenged the primary thesis of the article, namely, the undercount of young children in censuses is widespread. The fact that several esteemed colleagues have read the article and did not challenge the main theme lends credence to the main conclusion.

As I said in the article, the fact that we find a high net undercount of young children in places with very different approaches to census-taking, different levels of socioeconomic development, different methodologies for assessing census coverage, and different census-taking traditions, underscores the extent to which this problem is widespread and has deep roots.

Given the widespread and long-standing nature of the high net undercount of young children in censuses around the world, I think the time is ripe for an international organization to bring countries together to address the issue collectively. It would be good to see an organization such as the United Nations, the World Bank, or the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population sponsor an international meeting focused on the high net undercount of young children. Bringing together representatives from many of the countries where this problem has been observed to work collectively on solving the problem would be a big step forward. At such a meeting experts could share knowledge about the problem in their country, discuss possible solutions to the problem and forge links that would facilitate countries working together going forward. Such a meeting would be a promising start to address what is a long-standing and widely observed problem that has been long over-looked.