

LGBT Organisations and the 2021/22 UK Censuses: What Can We Learn from Past Census Campaigns?

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The upcoming UK censuses will include questions designed to measure the size of the LGBT population for the first time. The censuses of England and Wales (due to take place in March 2021), Northern Ireland (also March 2021) and Scotland (delayed until March 2022) will all ask respondents aged 16 or over a voluntary question about sexual orientation. Additionally, the English and Welsh census will ask the voluntary question ‘Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?’ and the Scottish census ‘Do you consider yourself to be trans, or have a trans history?’. These questions have been included in part due to tireless campaigning from LGBT organisations who have lobbied for years for their inclusion.

However, LGBT organisations have more work to do when it comes to the census: they have a key role to play in encouraging LGBT people to fill it out and to inform them about the purpose and possible benefits of the new questions.¹ LGBT organisations are well placed to do this as they have large followings of LGBT people online, they understand how to target campaigns at LGBT people and they are trusted by many in the community.

Many LGBT organisations view obtaining census data as a key priority, as significant decisions around funding and resource allocation are made based on the census results. Census data will also help LGBT services to target their support where it is needed and will provide robust evidence that demonstrates the need for LGBT-specific services.

To ensure that UK LGBT organisations are able to implement effective campaigns, this paper analyses and identifies lessons from past census campaigns. There is a sparsity of material to use as no other country has included a question on sexual orientation (although several have offered options beyond a male/female gender binary). However, LGBT organisations overseas have engaged in campaigns to encourage the community to complete the census, and we can look to countries including the US and China for examples of good practice. There are also past examples of campaigns relating to census questions about other aspects of identity, such as ethnicity and religion. We focus here mostly on public-facing campaigns that aim to raise awareness of the importance of the census and encourage people to respond to identity questions in specific ways, but also note campaigns to influence the initial design of the census where these are relevant.

1. Census campaigns: Instrumental and symbolic dimensions

In the context of political mobilisation around ethnic, religious and language census categories, Cooley, drawing on the work of Kertzer and Arel, proposes that census campaigns can have two dimensions, which he terms instrumental and symbolic.² Instrumental approaches focus on the practical benefits of being counted in the census, highlighting for instance how resources are

¹ Laurence Cooley, “LGBT activism and the census: A battle half-won?”, LSE Engenderings, 11 February 2019, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/gender/2019/02/11/lgbt-activism-and-the-census-a-battle-half-won/>.

² Laurence Cooley, “To be a Bosniak or to be a citizen? Bosnia and Herzegovina’s 2013 census as an election”, *Nations and Nationalism* 25, no. 3 (2019): 1065-1086, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12500>.

allocated to areas and communities based on the census findings. Applied to gender identity/trans status and sexual orientation questions, an instrumental campaign approach would emphasize that the more LGBT people who respond to the census the more funding and resources will be allocated to support LGBT communities. Symbolic approaches focus instead on the more emotional benefits of feeling recognised and counted. Such an approach would highlight how LGBT people will feel visible and recognised when disclosing their LGBT identity through the census for the first time.

Examples of both approaches can be seen in past census campaigns. As an example, during this year's US census, the National LGBTQ+ Taskforce tweeted: *"Did you know? The Census determines how many people represent your state in Congress. Let's build power together. #QueerTheCensus"*.³ This is an instrumental approach, highlighting a tangible political benefit of filling out the census.

The National LGBTQ+ Taskforce also tweeted: *"June is a month of celebration and what better way to celebrate #Pride & being counted by dancing with us! Make a video of you dancing and #BeYouBeCounted to share your excitement about being a #LGBTQ+ person who's proud to be you and to be counted! #QueertheCensus"*.⁴ This message does not outline any material benefit of filling out the census; it instead emphasises the emotional benefit of feeling visible and recognised. This is, therefore, an example of a symbolic approach.

In previous campaigns we have identified, organisations have tended to focus on instrumental arguments. This may be in part due to the fact they are most concerned with resource allocation and ensuring that LGBT services receive funding. Instrumental arguments will be very important to many LGBT people, however some LGBT people may be less concerned with resource allocation and for these people, more abstract messages such as 'be counted' and 'be visible' may be more effective.

This research analyses how different approaches are used and assesses the benefits of each approach.

2. Ethnicity and religion question census campaigns

1991 and 2001 UK censuses: New ethnicity and religion questions

Questions about ethnic group were added to the censuses of England and Wales and Scotland in 1991, and Northern Ireland in 2001. There appears to be little research documenting campaigns encouraging response to these new questions. In 2001, the 'white' category used in 1991 was further divided into several tick-boxes, allowing people to identify as Irish for the first time (although a question on place of birth, which would have recorded those born in Ireland, has a longer history). Nagle documents campaigns by community organisations and even the Irish embassy in London to encourage people to identify as Irish if they had some Irish heritage. He notes leaflets that stated "Be Irish. Be Counted" and "Feel Irish? Be Irish! Census 2001". These slogans suggest a symbolic dimension to the campaigns, but there was also a clear instrumental rationale. The Federation of Irish Societies (FIS), which had spearheaded the campaign to get the Irish tick-box included, argued that census data was crucial to policy formulation and the promotional of equal opportunities in

³ National LGBTQ Taskforce, Twitter post, 22 June 2020, 7:30 p.m., <https://twitter.com/TheTaskForce/status/1275134014727356417>.

⁴ National LGBTQ Taskforce, Twitter post, 26 June 2020, 2:47 p.m., <https://twitter.com/TheTaskForce/status/1276512365937295360>.

health, education, employment and housing. The *Irish Post* newspaper quoted the FIS as stating that census results would shape the allocation of public resources.⁵

Ahead of the 2001 census, there were complaints in Wales that the ‘white’ ethnicity category included ‘British’ and ‘Irish’ tick-boxes (and ‘Scottish’ in Scotland) – but not a Welsh option. Campaigners suggested that people write ‘Welsh’ in using the ‘other’ option.⁶ These complaints contributed to the decision to add a national identity question as a supplement to the ethnic group one in 2011.⁷ Having been denied a Cornish tick-box, campaigners, politicians and Cornwall Council encouraged people to write in ‘Cornish’ as an answer to the national identity question. MP Andrew George made a symbolic appeal, stating: “The Cornish have every right to be proud of who they are and entitled to assert their identity in the census”. The council informed people of the write-in option on its website and through use of posters.⁸ Campaigning again for the addition of a Cornish tick-box in 2021, the council leader stated that a tick-box would demonstrate that the government “is treating the Cornish in the same manner as the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish. It would also demonstrate a positive commitment to Cornwall’s national identity and culture”.⁹

In 2001, voluntary questions about religious affiliation were added to the censuses of England and Wales and Scotland (Northern Ireland having had a regular religion question since 1861). This reflected a generally supportive stance towards adding the question from religious groups’ representative organisations, although there had been significant divergence of views, with some individuals and organisations arguing that religion was a private matter and should not be a concern of the state.¹⁰ Writing in 2004, Weller notes that there was the prospect of a certain amount of competition driving the desire by religious community representatives for their groups to be counted – with the status of second-largest religion after Christianity being regarded as important for some Muslim leaders, and a clear instrumental rationale stemming from the use of census results in schools planning, for instance. Weller also documents concerns that the number of Hindus could be under-counted, due to a lack of understanding of the term, but also Sikh concerns that some activists might want to define Sikhs as Hindus.¹¹

⁵ John Nagle, *Multiculturalism’s Double-Bind: Creating Inclusivity, Cosmopolitanism and Difference*, Ashgate (2009): 125-126.

⁶ “Census campaign’s protest”, BBC News, 30 October 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/993986.stm>.

⁷ Laurence Cooley, “Census politics in Northern Ireland from the Good Friday Agreement to Brexit: Beyond the ‘sectarian headcount’?”, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* (in press); Debra Thompson, *The Schematic State: Race, Transnationalism, and the Politics of the Census*, Cambridge University Press (2016): 250.

⁸ “People urged to say they are ‘Cornish’ on census”, BBC News, 21 March 2011, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-12809366>.

⁹ “Calls for a Cornish tick box on the 2021 census”, Cornwall Live, 29 April 2020, <https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/calls-cornish-tick-box-2021-4085419>.

¹⁰ Jamil Sherif, “A Census chronicle – reflections on the campaign for a religion question in the 2001 Census for England and Wales”, *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 32, no. 1 (2011): 1-18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2011.549306>; Paul Weller, “Identity, politics, and the future(s) of religion in the UK: the case of the religion questions in the 2001 decennial census”, *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 19, no. 1 (2004): 3-21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1353790032000165096>.

¹¹ Weller, “Identity, politics, and the future(s) of religion in the UK”.



Little information is available about campaigns undertaken by religious organisations in 2001, beyond their role in getting the religion question added in the first place. However, a campaign in 2011 by the British Humanist Association to address what the organisation regarded as a significant under-count of the non-religious population did attract coverage. The campaign slogan was “If you’re not religious, for God’s sake say so!”.¹² There was some controversy when a poster carrying this slogan designed to be displayed at railway stations was refused by advertisers.¹³

Perhaps the most famous census campaign in the UK (which has since spread to other countries) however, was a largely viral rather than organised one, encouraging identification as ‘Jedi’ in response to the religious affiliation questions in 2001 and 2011, using the write-in response field.¹⁴ An e-mail circulating prior to the 2001 census claimed that if 10,000 people recorded their religious affiliation as Jedi on the census, then it would become a “fully recognised and legal religion”.¹⁵ This was not true, but 390,127 people in England and Wales were recorded as Jedi and included in the published census results as such, which provided recognition of sorts.¹⁶ The Office for National Statistics (ONS) suggested that the Jedi campaign might have served to increase the overall census response rate amongst people in their late teens and twenties.¹⁷

In 2011, there was also a campaign to protest against the non-inclusion of a question about sexual orientation by encouraging people (including men and straight people) to state that their religious affiliation was ‘lesbian’. This started as a Facebook event and was given further publicity on Twitter by broadcaster Amy Lamé and in an electronic bulletin sent by Stonewall chief executive Ben Summerskill.¹⁸ ‘Lesbian’ does not appear as a category in the results published for England and

¹² “British Humanists launch campaign to be counted in census”, Humanists International, 27 October 2010, <https://humanists.international/2010/10/british-humanists-launch-campaign-be-counted-census/>; Matthew Engelke, “Humanists only wanted the 2011 census to reflect religious reality”, *The Guardian*, 11 December 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2012/dec/11/humanists-2011-census-religious>.

¹³ “Posters banned from railway stations published here”, Humanists UK, 4 March 2011, <https://humanism.org.uk/2011/03/04/news-758/>.

¹⁴ Beth Singler, “See Mom it is real: The UK census, Jediism and social media”, *Journal of Religion in Europe* 7, no. 2 (2014): 150-168, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18748929-00702005>.

¹⁵ “Jedi e-mail revealed as hoax”, BBC News, 11 April 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/new_media/1271380.stm.

¹⁶ “Ethnicity and Religion: ‘Jedi’”, Census 2001, Office for National Statistics, https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20030731055343/http://www.statistics.gov.uk:80/census2001/pr_ofiles/rank/jedi.asp.

¹⁷ “Census 2001 Summary theme figures and rankings - 390,000 Jedi There Are”, Office for National Statistics, 13 February 2003, <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120504210829/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/census-2001-summary-theme-figures-and-rankings/390-000-jedis-there-are/jedi.html>.

¹⁸ Jessica Geen, “Census campaign calls for people to list their religion as ‘lesbian’”, PinkNews, 24 March 2011, <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2011/03/24/census-campaign-calls-for-people-to-list-their-religion-as-lesbian/>; Ben Summerskill, Stonewall eBulletin, March 2011, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110511180033/http://dmtrk.net/FBX-DH54-A021ZCVFB6/cr.aspx>.



Wales, suggesting that few people wrote this in or that the ONS included people who did in the ‘religion not stated’ or the small ‘remainder’ category.¹⁹

Divided societies

Census campaigns can be particularly intense (and controversial) in societies that are deeply divided along ethnic, religious or linguistic lines. Care obviously needs to be taken in drawing lessons from such cases, but they do illustrate the use of different campaign approaches. For example, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s 2013 census, which was the first to be conducted since the end of the 1992-1995 war, was characterised by efforts from politicians, religious institutions and campaigners associated with each of the country’s three main ethnic groups to influence how people responded to the questions on ethnicity, religion and language. These campaigns combined instrumental arguments – linking population shares to representation of groups in the country’s power-sharing political institutions and in public sector employment – and more symbolic arguments, particularly in the case of messages targeting the Bosniak majority, who had been labelled only as ‘Muslims by nationality’ in previous, Yugoslav censuses. One video, for example, featured people tearing tape from across their mouths, to declare “I am Bosniak, my religion is Islam, my language is Bosnian”. Some of the campaigns were criticised for making misleading claims about the consequences of (not) being counted as a member of one of the three main groups, and for the use of emotional messages involving children in campaign materials such as YouTube videos. There was also a ‘civic’ campaign that attempted to persuade people to reject ethnic identification and instead declare that they were simply Bosnians, and this campaign used the census as an opportunity to highlight discrimination against citizens who do not regard themselves as belonging to one of the three main ethnic groups.²⁰

In Kenya, the 2009 census happened shortly after the post-election violence of 2007-2008, and a movement called ‘Tribe Kenya’ tried to convince people to identify as Kenyan in response to the ethnicity question, as an anti-tribalist response to the violence.²¹ The 2019 census was the first to have taken place after a new constitution had been adopted in 2010, devolving power to 47 counties, and this shaped census campaigns in 2019. Some politicians, for example, made instrumental arguments not to shape ethnic identification, but to encourage people working in cities to return to their home towns or villages to be counted, highlighting that resources would be made available to counties partly based on their share of the total population.²² One county governor, for

¹⁹ “CT0116_2011 Census - Religion (detailed) by sex by age - England and Wales”, Office for National Statistics, 8 November 2013,

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/adhocs/001934ct01162011censusreligiondetailedbysexbyageenglandandwales>.

²⁰ Laurence Cooley, “To be a Bosniak or to be a citizen?”.

²¹ Samantha Balaton-Chrimes, “Counting as Citizens: Recognition of the Nubians in the 2009 Kenyan Census”, *Ethnopolitics* 10, no. 2 (2011): 205-218, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2011.570983>.

²² “Fight for billions: Worried Central Kenya leaders in ‘return home’ campaign”, *Nairobi News*, 11 February 2019, <https://nairobi.news.nation.co.ke/news/fight-for-billions-worried-central-kenya-leaders-in-return-home-call>.



example, tweeted: “Participating in the census elsewhere will deny your county of birth the much needed share of the funds which is based on the population growth”.²³

1980 US census: Collecting data on Hispanic populations

To give an idea of the importance of community groups and leaders in census participation, we can look to the work that happened with Hispanic communities in the US in the 1970s and 80s.²⁴ Under increasing pressure to better count minority populations in the census, in 1975 the Census Advisory Committee on the Spanish Origin Population for the 1980 census was formed. This group brought together census officials and leaders of Hispanic organisations. It was hoped that the committee would help to ensure the ethnicity questions were of a high quality and would help to boost the number of Hispanic people responding to the census and minimise the undercount in the 1980 census. Forming a committee of people with no statistical expertise was a novel approach as previous census committees contained only experts in topics such as demography, economics and marketing. However, census officials believed that getting these leaders involved would help to ensure that the Hispanic population were counted in the census. This joint work meant that census officials were able to carry out effective publicity and community relations work in *barrios*, which improved public cooperation. For example, the committee was able to ensure that Hispanic bilingual enumerators worked in Hispanic areas, and also had publicity materials published in Spanish. Perhaps most notably, they had federal authorities ensure that no immigration raids took place in *barrios* while the census was taking place. Choldin argues that “it seemed clear that the [Census] Bureau, with the help of Mexican American Organisations, mounted an effective publicity and community relations programme in the barrios that helped to gain the public’s cooperation and improve the enumeration”.²⁵ This demonstrates the role that community organisations can play in both helping to develop census questions and encouraging participation in their communities.

A similar approach was taken with the design of the questions on sexual orientation and trans status for the UK’s 2021 censuses. The ONS and National Records of Scotland (NRS) in particular carried out a significant amount of engagement with LGBT organisations when developing and testing the questions.

²³ Sospeter Ojaamong MGH, Twitter post, 24 February 2019, 12:52 p.m., <https://twitter.com/GovOjaamong/status/1099653379742187521>.

²⁴ Harvey Choldin, “Statistics and Politics: The ‘Hispanic Issue’ in the 1980 Census”, *Demography* 23, no. 3 (1986): 403-418, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2061438>.

²⁵ Harvey Choldin, “Statistics and Politics”.



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LGBT organisations must now ensure they engage with their communities to encourage participation. This approach promises to be particularly effective as LGBT organisations are well positioned to be able to engage with the government and census officials, and as well as with LGBT communities.

3. LGBT census campaigns Chinese same-sex couples visibility

Campaigns in China have had to take a largely symbolic approach as LGBT identities were not recorded in the 2020 census and there was not an even option for same-sex couples living together to be recorded as such. Same-sex couples who disclosed they were living together had their living situation recorded as ‘other’ rather than ‘living with same-sex partner’. The National Bureau of Statistics has said that any of the responses marked ‘other’ would not be analysed and any information outside of the predefined responses would not be recorded.²⁶

However, LGBT groups in China believe in the importance of visibility for LGBT people when filling in the census. LGBT Rights Advocacy China ran a campaign to get same-gender couples to tell census takers about their relationship.²⁷ Peng Yanzi, the director of LGBT Rights Advocacy China, said it was so important to do this because “these census takers may have never met, or even heard of, gay people, so if we have the opportunity to talk to them, they can better understand the LGBT community”.²⁸

The campaign used the message “They are not my roommate, they are my partner”. The above graphic states “He is not my roommate, he is my partner” and was used by LGBT Rights Advocacy China as part of their campaign.²⁹ This was shared on Chinese social media site Weibo and on Twitter. This campaign relied on symbolic messages that highlighted the importance of visibility and honesty, rather than the material benefits of being counted.

Although it is difficult to measure the success of the campaign in China, the campaign did receive significant coverage in the UK media. Articles about the campaign were published in *The Guardian*,³⁰



²⁶ Sarah Wu, “‘We’re part of China’s population’: LGBT couples seek recognition in census”, Reuters, 9 November 2020, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-china-society-census-lgbt/were-part-of-chinas-population-lgbt-couples-seek-recognition-in-census-idUKKBN27P07B>.

²⁷ Sarah Wu, “‘We’re part of China’s population’”.

²⁸ Sarah Wu, “‘We’re part of China’s population’”.

²⁹ “I told the census enumerator: ‘We are a couple,’” *Editorial Team of LGBT Promotion Association*, 21st September, 2020, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/CY-euouHAcOAT89TN0la-g?>

³⁰ “China’s LGBTQ+ community seize census chance to stand up and be counted,” *The Guardian*, 27th November, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/27/chinas-lgbtq-community-seize-census-chance-to-stand-up-and-be-counted>.



The Independent,³¹ on Reuters³² and PinkNews.³³ This demonstrates that there is media interest in campaigns that solely rely on symbolic approaches. Media pieces about the campaign often included the story of Lauren, who, when asked by census takers who she lived with, said that she lived with her girlfriend. Afterwards, she was quoted in news sources saying: “At first I didn’t feel like I was speaking up when the census-takers came. But now looking back, I think I was quite brave”.³⁴ She also said she saw “They are not my roommate, they are my partner” posters on her social media feed.³⁵

The media often want to highlight the experiences of community members who have been affected by a certain topic. So, if a campaign can amplify stories of community members who share why they want to fill in the census and why it is important to do so, this may be effective and help to increase media attention.

US census LGBT campaigns

Although the 2020 US census did not collect data on sexual orientation and trans status, it did ask about the relationship between couples in households with ‘same-sex husband/wife/spouse’, and ‘same-sex unmarried partner’ being options. Therefore, although data on a large proportion of LGBT communities, including single people and trans and non-binary people, has not been collected, some LGBT people were recognised in the census as a result of their relationship status.

Most of the census data was collected in April and May of 2020, so it is particularly beneficial to learn from US 2020 census campaigns as the majority of them took place in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Queer the Census campaign

The most prominent nationwide campaign in the US was the ‘Queer the Census’ campaign led by the National LGBTQ Taskforce, a campaigning and advocacy organisation based in Washington DC and Miami.

The National LGBTQ Taskforce have a wealth of experience in work around improving LGBT representation in the census and have been carrying out census-related activity since the 1990s. In the last 10 years, their focus has been on getting LGBT people to care about the census and to recognise how important it is. In 2019, they increased their educational campaigning activity, starting to teach communities about how the 2020 census would function and why it was important to fill it in. In 2020 the Taskforce began amplifying their ‘Queer the Census’ campaign for the 2020

³¹ Sarah Wu, “‘We’re part of China’s population’: LGBT couples seek recognition in census”, *The Independent*, 9 November 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/world/china-lgbt-couple-census-b1719594.html>.

³² Sarah Wu, “‘We’re part of China’s population’”.

³³ Matilda Davies, “China’s LGBT+ community demands to be counted after a lifetime of erasure,” PinkNews, 27 November 2020, <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/11/27/china-census-lgbt-same-sex-gay-couples-household/>.

³⁴ “China’s LGBTQ+ community seize census chance to stand up and be counted”, *The Guardian*, 27 November 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/27/chinas-lgbtq-community-seize-census-chance-to-stand-up-and-be-counted>.

³⁵ Sarah Wu, “‘We’re part of China’s population’”.



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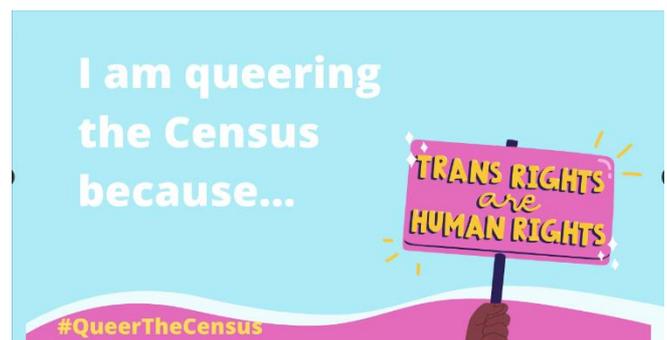
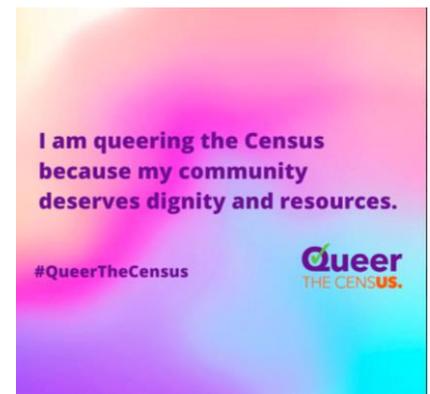
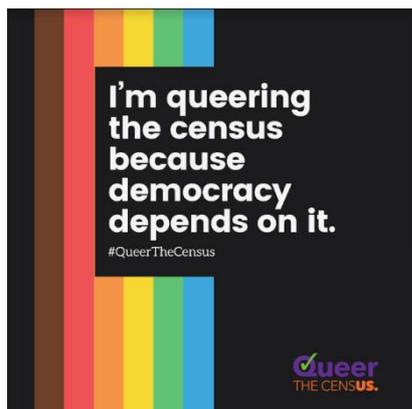
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census. The key aim of the campaign was to provide simplified information to LGBT communities on why filling out the census was so important and how doing so would benefit them and their communities, with the hope that this would encourage LGBT people to fill in the census.

Despite plans to carry out some in-person activity, the vast majority of the campaign took place online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic, the Taskforce was able to carry out a wide range of activities. This included hosting educational webinars, answering people's questions online, getting LGBT people to pledge to fill in the census, running adverts in the media and running a #QueertheCensus social media campaign. They also hosted virtual tours of the census to take people through the form question-by-question and worked with volunteers to make thousands of phone calls to LGBT people to make sure they knew how to fill out the census.

The National LGBT Taskforce also shared social media graphics, factsheets, informational resources, planning tools and training materials. They created a [Google Drive](#) with a range of social media graphics that were free to use. These use clear and short messages with bold colours and graphics. Some examples are below:³⁶



³⁶ "Queer the Census. Census Actions", National LGBTQ Taskforce, <https://www.thetaskforce.org/queerthecensus/census-actions.html>.

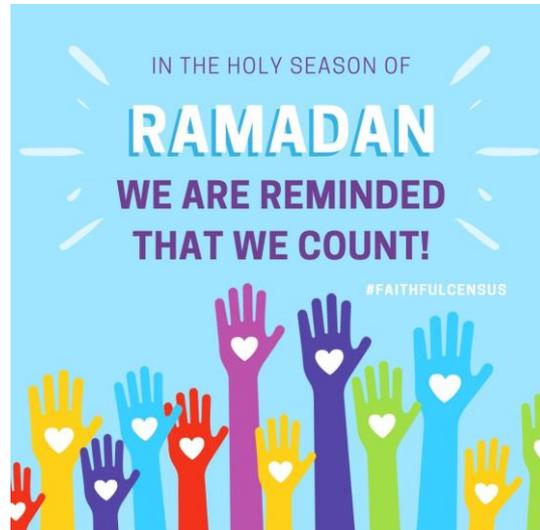
The Taskforce also created unbranded resources for people to share. These resources included memes, some examples of which are below.³⁷ This is a more unique and humorous way of educating people and may have helped to increase engagement as similar images are often shared widely on social media.



Co-production and intersectionality

The National LGBTQ Task Force worked closely with partner organisations on the campaign to reach as many people as possible and to ensure the campaign was intersectional. These organisations included [PFLAG](#), [NQAPIA](#), the [National Black Justice Coalition](#), the [Movement Advancement Project](#), [Equality California](#), [Equality North Carolina](#), the [Montrose Center](#), the [LA LGBTQ Center](#), the [NYC LGBT Center](#), as well as many others.

As an example of the campaign’s intersectional approach, the National LGBTQ Taskforce partnered with Black Women’s Roundtable during Black Census Week and produced a short video urging people to fill out the census.³⁸ During Ramadan they tweeted: “Responding to the census is an act of love for our neighbors. When we're all counted, we get the resources & representation we deserve. This Ramadan spread the word about taking the Census. Visit <http://2020Census.gov> to respond & learn more. [#QueertheCensus](#) [#FaithfulCensus](#)”.³⁹ They shared the following graphic with their tweet:



³⁷ “Unbranded Graphics”, National LGBTQ Taskforce, <https://www.thetaskforce.org/unbranded-graphics.html>.
³⁸ National LGBTQ Taskforce, Facebook post, 26 March 2020, 8:02 p.m., <https://fb.watch/2hR776FWEZ/>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLZDjB1svQ8>.
³⁹ National LGBTQ Taskforce, Twitter post, 24 April 2020, 6.42 p.m., <https://twitter.com/thetaskforce/status/1253740997244260352>.

Type of messaging

This campaign used both instrumental and symbolic approaches but tended to focus on the instrumental arguments. For example, the following graphic, which outlines three of the instrumental benefits of filling in the census, is used on the main page of the Queer the Census website content:⁴⁰



Additionally, the first text to appear on the Queer the Census landing page states: “Every ten years our federal government conducts the Census, a count of every person residing in the United States, so that they can allocate funds for programs like Medicaid, public housing, and food stamps, and so that they can make sure that our federal, state, and local elected officials are representing roughly the same number of people”.⁴¹ This is clearly a solely instrumental message.

However, the campaign did not exclusively rely on instrumental messaging and also used symbolic approaches. For example, they tweeted: “It’s LGBTQ Census Week of Action! Join to share in the ways we count with words, art, and dance over the next 5 days. We’re counting on you to join us in Pride and celebration!! [#QueertheCensus](#) [#BeYouBeCounted](#)”.⁴²

They also produced a short public service announcement video, which didn’t talk about the resource benefits of filling in the census but instead used the slogan “Our families are built on love and we all count. Be you. Be counted. Queer the Census”.⁴³

The National LGBTQ Taskforce also produced the following graphics, which use more symbolic approaches:⁴⁴



⁴⁰ “Queer the Census”, National LGBTQ Taskforce, <https://www.thetaskforce.org/queerthecensus.html>.

⁴¹ “Queer the Census”, National LGBTQ Taskforce.

⁴² National LGBTQ Task force, Twitter post, 22 June 2020, 4:57 p.m., <https://twitter.com/TheTaskForce/status/1275095683935207425>.

⁴³ “Queer the Census PSA”, National LGBTQ Taskforce, YouTube video, 0:30, 7 May 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POQiczuBQ00&feature=youtu.be>.

⁴⁴ “Unbranded Graphics”, National LGBTQ Taskforce, <https://www.thetaskforce.org/unbranded-graphics.html>.



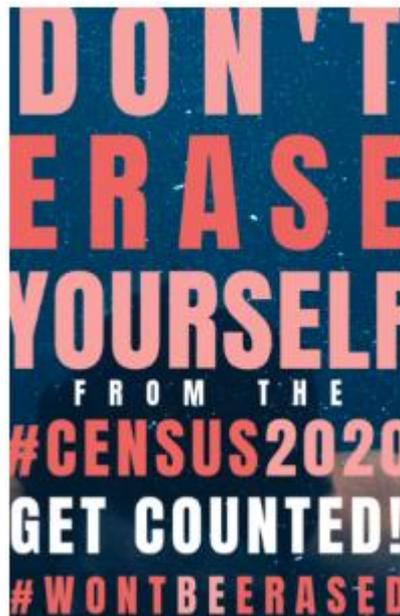
Achieving Equality



Encouraging Wellbeing



Promoting Safety



Key lessons from the National LGBTQ Taskforce’s campaign

The campaign appears to have been successful, with high engagement with the #QueertheCensus hashtag on Twitter and a significant amount of press coverage being generated. The campaign was covered by mainstream news media such as NBC News,⁴⁵ *Chicago Tribune*,⁴⁶ *The Austin Chronicle*,⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Tim Fitzsimons, “2020 census: What LGBTQ Americans should know”, NBC News, 24 March 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/2020-census-what-lgbtq-americans-should-know-n1167656>.

⁴⁶ Elvia Malagon, “LGBTQ people fought for decades to be recognized in the census. This time they will be — sort of”, *Chicago Tribune*, 3 March 2020, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-census-2020-lgbtq-illinois-gender-identity-20200303-yks53nnfjrfe5gyjg2cnuzgsym-story.html>.

⁴⁷ Beth Sullivan, “We’re Here, We’re Queer, Let’s Get Counted”, *The Austin Chronicle*, 17 April 2020, <https://www.austinchronicle.com/news/2020-04-17/were-here-were-queer-lets-get-counted/>.



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NPR,⁴⁸ and *Forbes*,⁴⁹ and by LGBT media such as *Advocate*,⁵⁰ *Gay City News*,⁵¹ *The Washington Blade*⁵² and *Metro Weekly*.⁵³ The campaign was also covered by the UK LGBT news site PinkNews.⁵⁴

The #QueertheCensus hashtag was used and the Taskforce's graphics were shared by LGBT organisations, as well as non-LGBT organisations and individuals. Hundreds of examples of tweets that used #QueertheCensus can be found on the Taskforce's website [here](#). As some examples:⁵⁵ ⁵⁶ ⁵⁷

⁴⁸ Noel Gasca, "This Organization Is Ensuring D.C.'s LGBT Community Is Included In The Census", NPR, 12 March 2020, <https://www.npr.org/local/305/2020/03/12/814914370/this-organization-is-ensuring-d-c-s-l-g-b-t-community-is-included-in-the-census>.

⁴⁹ Molly Sprayregen, "Queering The Census: The National LGBTQ Task Force Policy Director On Why LGBTQ People Must Complete It", *Forbes*, 20 July 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mollysprayregen/2020/07/20/queering-the-census-national-lgbtq-task-force-policy-director-on-why-lgbtq-people-must-complete-it/>.

⁵⁰ Meghan Maury, "Want to Count? Then Queer the Census and Be Tallied", *Advocate*, 24 March 2020, <https://www.advocate.com/commentary/2020/3/24/want-count-then-queer-census-and-be-tallied>.

⁵¹ Matt Tracey, "LGBTQ Groups Join Forces to 'Queer the Census'", *Gay City News*, 30 March 2020, <https://www.gaycitynews.com/lgbtq-groups-join-forces-to-queer-the-census/>.

⁵² Lou Chibbaro Jr., "LGBTQ people urged to 'get counted' in Census", *Washington Blade*, 29 March 2020, <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2020/03/29/lgbtq-people-urged-to-get-counted-in-census/>.

⁵³ John Riley, "The Task Force's 'Queer the Census' is designed to ensure all LGBTQ Americans are counted", *Metro Weekly*, 1 April 2020, <https://www.metroweekly.com/2020/04/the-task-forces-queer-the-census-is-designed-to-ensure-all-lgbtq-americans-are-counted/>.

⁵⁴ Vic Parsons, "This year's census will count same-sex couples for the first time – but still won't record sexuality or gender identity", PinkNews, 25 March 2020, <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/03/25/us-census-same-sex-couples-question-sexuality-gender-identity-queer-data/>.

⁵⁵ PFLAG National, Twitter post, 1 April 2020, 6:12 p.m., <https://twitter.com/PFLAG/status/1245398538709651456>.

⁵⁶ Sheena Anne Kadi, Twitter post, 15 March 2020, 5:57 p.m., https://twitter.com/Sheena_Kadi/status/1239249456228438016.

⁵⁷ Fair Count, Twitter post, 24 June 2020, 9:04 p.m., <https://twitter.com/faircount/status/1275882397498847233>.

⁵⁸ NC Counts Coalition, Twitter post, 23 June 2020, 10:49 p.m., <https://twitter.com/NCCounts/status/1275546504640503816>.



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In order to better understand the campaign and its successes and challenges, we interviewed Meghan Maury, the Policy Director of the National LGBTQ Taskforce. Meghan led the Queer the Census campaign and they sit on the Census Bureau’s National Advisory Committee.

Initially the National LGBTQ Taskforce thought that messages around resistance would be strong and would resonate with communities (recall that the US census does not ask about sexual orientation or trans status). Such messages focus on the argument that the questions are not great and LGBT identities are not being fully recognised but that people should fill out the census anyway to have their voice heard and to hopefully to improve the census in the long run. A *Vice* article titled ‘The



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Census's Sex Question Sucks. But LGBTQ People Should Still Fill It Out' takes this approach.⁵⁹ The article begins with an interview with Meghan Maury, in which they explain how they had to misgender themselves when they filled out the census as they are non-binary and the only options on the census are male and female. The article goes on to explain why filling out the census is so important for LGBT people and uses messages around resistance and hope for change: "despite the omission of questions regarding sexual orientation and gender identity, LGBTQ groups remain resolute in their quest to be counted in every way possible. Although the ultimate goal is to ensure that LGBTQ identities are surveyed the next time that census forms are sent out in the 2030 [census], advocates argued that it is imperative for queer and trans people to fill out this year's surveys, even despite the limited information requested about their lives".

Meghan felt that this approach and style of messaging was less effective and did not get people's attention or encourage them to fill out the census. Additionally, the UK censuses will ask questions about sexual orientation and trans status, so this approach may not be as relevant for a UK campaign.

Overwhelmingly, the National LGBTQ Taskforce found that instrumental approaches were the most effective. These messages were particularly effective in motivating people to act and fill in the census. As well as the National LGBTQ Taskforce finding this, US Census Bureau testing found that these messages were the most effective for the US population in general. A large-scale survey found that 30% said that the single most important reason for filling in the census was because it "helps to determine funding for public services in my community".⁶⁰ This was the most popular choice. A further 17% said that the most important reason for filling in the census was because it "contributes to a better future for my community". These findings were combined with a low awareness of the fact that the census is used to determine community funding, with only 45% being aware of this. This highlights both the efficacy of an instrumental approach as well as the need to carry out educational campaigns that use instrumental messages, due to low awareness of the role of the census.

Meghan outlined how they split instrumental messages into two different categories: there were the more personal messages explaining how filling in the census would help the individual; then there were the more community focussed messages, which highlighted how filling in the census will help people's communities, local areas and local services. The following tweet is an example of this community centred approach: "Services like Quezada's support group are part of what's at stake in this year's #census for #LGBTQ+ communities, with a month left to go after the Trump administration moved up the census deadline to Sept. 30, we must keep working to #QueertheCensus".⁶¹

⁵⁹ Nico Lang, "The Census's Sex Question Sucks. But LGBTQ People Should Still Fill It Out", *Vice*, 5 July 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/jgxe7/census-lgbtq-people-should-still-fill-out>.

⁶⁰ "2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study (CBAMS) Survey and Focus Groups Report Findings Presentation", United States Census Bureau, <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/program-management/pmr-materials/2019-02-01/5-cbams-survey-report-findings.pdf>.

⁶¹ National LGBT Taskforce, Twitter post, 1 September 2020, 1:46 p.m., <https://twitter.com/TheTaskForce/status/1300776945744064518>.



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Meghan felt that neither type of messaging was more effective than the other and it is important that campaigns use both. This may reflect the fact that some LGBT people feel as if they don't need more government support but recognise that others in their communities do, while other LGBT people feel that they personally need more government support.

Although the Taskforce's campaign found that symbolic approaches were less effective, this is not to say that symbolic approaches were not useful. These types of messages did resonate with communities and were effective at catching people's attention. However, ultimately, they were less effective at driving people to act, and messages that took an instrumental approach were much more effective at getting people to act and fill in the census.

Meghan felt that a successful campaign would use more symbolic messages at the start to attract attention and then use more instrumental and educational messages later on, once the census form was available for people to complete, to encourage them to act and respond.

Interestingly, the US Census Bureau research found that 25% said that the single most important reason for filling in the census was because "it is my civic duty".⁶² This is not a reason related to any kind of instrumental benefit of the census, so more symbolic messages may be more effective for these people. These messages could focus not just on the importance of being counted and visible, as previously discussed, but also on the importance of being a good citizen and doing your civic duties.

Obtaining press attention

As outlined in a previous section, the US campaign was able to gain widespread press coverage in both the mainstream press and the LGBT press. Meghan explained what kind of messages were particularly effective in gaining press attention. The US press were particularly interested in the fact that the 2020 census was the first time people could select that they were in a same-sex couple. For example, there was an article on The Conversation's website titled 'The census will officially count same-sex couples for the first time ever – but that's not enough'⁶³ and an article on the NBC News website titled 'In a first, 2020 census to count same-sex couples.'⁶⁴

⁶² "2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study (CBAMS) Survey and Focus Groups Report Findings Presentation", United States Census Bureau.

⁶³ Akiesha Anderson, "The census will officially count same-sex couples for the first time ever – but that's not enough", *The Conversation*, 23 April 2020, <https://theconversation.com/the-census-will-officially-count-same-sex-couples-for-the-first-time-ever-but-thats-not-enough-89902>.

⁶⁴ Julie Moreau, "In a first, 2020 census to count same-sex couples", NBC News, 24 April 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/first-2020-census-count-same-sex-couples-n868506>.



This is an strong angle that UK campaigners could take, given that the 2021 and 2022 censuses ask about sexual orientation and trans status for the first time. There has already been some press interest in this topic: the fact these questions are being asked for the first time was mentioned in the headlines of a number of articles covering this story, including in *The Observer*,⁶⁵ *Gay Times*,⁶⁶ *inews*,⁶⁷ and *PinkNews*.⁶⁸

As with the press coverage of the “They are not my roommate they are my partner” campaign in China, Meghan felt that personal stories work well in the media. Articles around the US census focussed on people talking about how they were able to claim their identity and be visible.

The press was also interested in stories about how civil society was working together to ensure that census campaigning messaging was inclusive and would reach as many communities as possible. For example there was an article in *Gay City News* headlined ‘LGBTQ Groups Join Forces to “Queer the Census”’.⁶⁹

How to reach people

Meghan explained that broad messages aimed at the US population were effective for reaching many in society. However, they found that when it came to getting LGBT and other minority communities to engage with campaigns, these broad messages were less effective and messages needed to be targeted. For example, an advert on an LGBT news site was far more effective at boosting engagement among LGBT people than a TV advert aimed at the US population in general. This is perhaps not surprising but is pertinent to mention because it further substantiates the need to run an LGBT-specific campaign.

The National LGBTQ Taskforce also had plans to carry out in-person activity to reach more people; they were able to do some of this, however most of the planned activity was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. One thing they were able to do was to run some census help centres where people could come and ask questions about what the census was, what kind of questions it asks and why they should fill it in. These help centres found that people particularly liked the opportunity to have one-on-one engagement, where they could have a conversation about the census with an expert and ask any questions.

⁶⁵ Harriet Sherwood, “Census to ask about sexual orientation for the first time” *The Observer*, 18 October 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/oct/18/census-to-ask-about-sexual-orientation-for-the-first-time>.

⁶⁶ Jordan Robledo, “UK census will include questions about gender identity and sexual orientation for the first time”, *Gay Times*, n.d., <https://www.gaytimes.co.uk/life/uk-census-will-include-questions-about-gender-identity-and-sexual-orientation-for-the-first-time/>.

⁶⁷ Helen Lock, “Next UK census will collect data on sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time”, *inews*, 18 November 2020, <https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/uk-census-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-lgbt-729373>.

⁶⁸ Josh Milton, “Britain’s census to ask questions on sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time”, *PinkNews*, 18 October 2020, <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/10/18/national-census-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-office-national-statistics-observer/>.

⁶⁹ Matt Tracey, “LGBTQ Groups Join Forces to ‘Queer the Census’”, *Gay City News*, 30 March 2020, <https://www.gaycitynews.com/lgbtq-groups-join-forces-to-queer-the-census/>.



The Taskforce also found that hosting events that were not explicitly about the census and then ensuring that the census was nonetheless included and discussed were a good way to reach people. For example, ‘census house parties’ where people could come and socialise and have a good time, while also learning about and discussing the census, were popular and effective.

The Center NYC Campaign

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center in New York ran a census campaign using #MakeUsCount as their hashtag. This campaign relied on similar messages to the National LGBT Taskforce’s campaign, highlighting the material and emotional benefits of LGBT people filling in the census and being counted. They too placed a strong focus on instrumental messages. For example, on the landing page of their website it states: “Every 10 years, the federal government is required to count every person living in the country. Political representation, economic investment and government funding for our communities all rely heavily on 2020 Census data. Making sure the 2020 Census count is fair and accurate is crucial, because the results will impact us all for the next decade”.⁷⁰

The Center ran a social media campaign and had a space on their website where people in New York could pledge to fill in the census. They also provided a range of online information, including information on why the census was so important, on how LGBT communities are often undercounted and how data is kept confidential.

Messaging around undercounting was particularly prominent in this campaign. The Center shared the following messages on Facebook and Twitter, which highlight how minority groups are often undercounted in the census:^{71 72}

⁷⁰ “CENS[US] 2020”, The Center, <https://gaycenter.org/census/>.

⁷¹ The Center, Twitter post, 20 August 2020, 9:32 p.m., <https://twitter.com/LGBTCenterNYC/status/1296545757533634561>.

⁷² The Center, Twitter post, 21 July 2020, 7:04 p.m., <https://twitter.com/LGBTCenterNYC/status/1285636892407595011>.



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The Center @LGBTCenterNYC · Aug 20

1/2 The Census is a social justice issue, and we have just over a month to make a difference.

People who are undercounted in the Census are more often those of us who experience multiple forms of oppression, such as LGBTQ people, people of color, immigrants and others.

**The 2020
Census deadline
has been
moved up to**

3 34 38

The Center @LGBTCenterNYC · Aug 20

2/2 An undercount results in less federal funding for programs that support our communities. Help end this cycle by making sure you are counted: my2020census.gov. #MakeUsCount

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center 21 July

Residents of wealthier neighborhoods in Manhattan are not filling out the Census —yet low-income and other marginalized New Yorkers will be most negatively affected if our city is undercounted.

Completing the Census takes just 10 minutes, and everyone's participation is crucial! Visit gaycenter.org/census to learn more and pledge to #MakeUsCount.



NYTIMES.COM

Why Rich New Yorkers Are Causing Big Problems for the Census
If residents who fled the virus for second homes aren't counted, the city could...

22 2 shares

The campaign did receive some press attention, for example it was mentioned in a *Gay City News* article.⁷³ However, it was a much smaller-scale campaign compared to the National LGBTQ Taskforce’s campaign. That being said, it is a useful campaign to learn from, particularly as its messages around minority communities being undercounted are powerful.

4. The issue of opposition

While most LGBT organisations in the UK have been supportive of the decision to add questions about trans status and sexual orientation to the census, there is some possibility that groups or individuals will object to the questions. Responding to calls for people to identify as lesbian in response to the religion question in 2011 as a protest against the lack of a sexual orientation question, a lawyer wrote an opinion piece for *The Guardian* online, arguing that that “implicit in the assumption behind the protest is that there are actual needs that are exclusive to the gay and lesbian community, currently unmet, that can be identified in a census. I just don’t think there are”.⁷⁴ Arguments such as this can be seen as a challenge to the instrumental claims of LGBT census campaigns.

In the run-up to the 2021/22 censuses, the LGB Alliance, a group that has been criticised for being transphobic,⁷⁵ has expressed opposition to what it sees as the blurring of the distinction between sex and gender and to the availability of ‘other’ sexual orientations that suggest attractions beyond same-sex, opposite-sex and both-sex. It has done so including through engagement with Scottish

⁷³ Matt Tracey, “LGBTQ Groups Join Forces to ‘Queer the Census’”.

⁷⁴ Brent Martin, “Telling the census your religion is ‘lesbian’? Count me out”, *The Guardian*, 22 March 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2011/mar/22/census-religion-lesbian>.

⁷⁵ Olivia Petter, “LGB Alliance Group Faces Criticism for being Transphobic”, *The Independent*, 24 October 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/lgb-alliance-group-transphobic-alison-bailey-lesbian-gay-bisexual-a9169091.html>



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Parliament Committee scrutiny of the census legislation.⁷⁶ While there is currently no indication of this developing into a protest campaign against the census, LGB Alliance has also used social media to highlight its criticisms of the census design. There has also been misleading press coverage of the design of the sexual orientation question in Scotland, following statements by the Committee convenor, Joan McAlpine.⁷⁷

On an individual level, some LGBT people may be reluctant to disclose their LGBT identity on the census due to privacy concerns. This is unsurprising as in recent times we have seen increasing media coverage of the concerning amount of personal data that governments and corporations hold. Popular documentaries such as Netflix's *Great Hack* and the *Social Dilemma* have further highlighted these concerns to a mainstream audience.

Trust in the UK government is particularly low and has plummeted since the Covid-19 pandemic began. A survey by the Reuters Institute found that 48% said the government was relatively trustworthy in late May 2020, compared to 67% six weeks before.⁷⁸ Trust is also low in some parts of LGBT communities; for example, trans people and their allies feel let down by the current government's lack of progress on the GRA and their failure to address and condemn transphobic rhetoric.

In a Twitter poll run by LGBT organisation the Outside Project in October, 50.1% of the 1,204 respondents said they didn't think it was safe to give information on their LGBT identity to the government. 22.6% thought it was safe and 27.3% were unsure.⁷⁹ The Outside Project have been vocal about their opposition to people sharing their LGBT status in the census so the self-selecting poll respondents are likely to have been skewed towards people not trusting the government, but even so the proportion regarding it as unsafe is concerningly high and shows that a significant amount of work still needs to be done if an undercount is to be averted.

The ONS, NRS, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and government more broadly take concerns around census data protection incredibly seriously. Census data is kept confidential and is exempt from the Freedom of Information Act. Personal data collected is owned by the ONS, NRS and NISRA and personally identifiable census data is not shared with any other government departments, local councils or marketing agencies. Likewise, data made available to

⁷⁶ Kate Harris and Bev Jackson, LGB Alliance, letter to Joan McAlpine MSP, Convenor, Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, Scottish Parliament, 26 November 2019, https://www.parliament.scot/General%20Documents/CTEEA_2019.26.11LGBcensus.pdf.

⁷⁷ As documented by Caitlin Logan, "Census sexual orientation write-in reflects the power of self-determination", *Source*, 5 November 2019, <https://sourcenews.scot/caitlin-logan-census-sexual-orientation-write-in-reflects-the-power-of-self-determination/>. See also Kevin Guyan, "Predictably queer", EDI Scotland, 30 April 2020, <https://kevinguyan.com/2020/04/30/predictably-queer/>.

⁷⁸ Richard Fletcher, Antonis Kalogeropoulos and Rasmus Nielsen, "Trust in UK government and news media COVID-19 information down, concerns over misinformation from government and politicians up", Reuters Institute, University of Oxford, 1 June 2020, <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/trust-uk-government-and-news-media-covid-19-information-down-concerns-over-misinformation>.

⁷⁹ The Outside Project, Twitter post, 18 October 2020, 11:43 a.m., <https://twitter.com/lgbtiqoutside/status/1317778386450829312>.



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researchers is anonymised. Full census records are made public (for example, for use by family history researchers) 100 years after they are collected.⁸⁰

This information needs to be shared with communities in a clear and engaging way. Effective ways of doing this can be learnt from other campaigns, particularly those from the US. The US campaigns faced similar concerns, given President Trump's poor track record on the treatment of many minority groups such as trans and non-binary communities, women, Black and Muslim communities. Trust in the president was incredibly low, and this was further exacerbated by what may be perceived to be a poor handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2018, gender studies scholar Jane Ward stated that "under such a conservative presidency, I think people probably would be extra cautious about disclosing. Even among people in more progressively leaning states and the coasts, there's a sense of, 'Oh my god, what could be on the horizon here?' Queer people don't know if there's political regression coming. That said, having a democrat in the White House probably won't put people's fears about disclosure to rest either, because people understand what actually matters is their local context".⁸¹

Meghan Maury of the National LGBTQ Task Force outlined how they overcame this opposition and tried to restore public trust. First, they said it was important to note that although LGBT people were concerned about sharing their identity, the most significant concerns were around law enforcement and immigration agencies getting access to the data. People in the UK may share similar concerns particularly as data from the School Census was used as part of the government's 'Hostile Environment' policy.⁸² Helping refugees and asylum seekers feel safe to share their data is incredibly important in ensuring a campaign is intersectional.

The National LGBTQ Taskforce found that the best way to address these concerns was to consistently put out educational messages in as many ways as they could. They outlined all the measures that had been put in place to ensure that census data stays private. They emphasised in particular that organisations such as the police and immigration agencies did not have access to this data. The National LGBTQ Taskforce also promised that if the data was used incorrectly and confidentiality was breached, they would take the government to court.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center had a short FAQs section on their website, where they clearly and concisely stated that data would remain confidential: "The Census Bureau cannot disclose responses in any way that would personally identify a respondent, and data collected cannot be used for any non-statistical purpose, such as revealing an individual's immigration status or other law enforcement". This statement is quite effective as it addresses many people's concerns but is simple, being only a sentence long.

⁸⁰ "Census records", The National Archives, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/census-records/>; "Census Records", National Records of Scotland, <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides/census-records>; "Archives for family and local history", NI Direct, <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/archives-family-and-local-history>.

⁸¹ Tierney Finster, "The LGBTQ community can't find consensus about the census", *MEL Magazine*, n.d., <https://melmagazine.com/en-us/story/the-lgbtq-community-cant-find-consensus-about-the-census>.

⁸² Against Borders for Children, <https://www.schoolsabc.net/>; Laurence Cooley, "LGBT activism and the census".



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