

The number of persons involuntarily working part time due to slack work dropped by 1 million in the first 12 months of recovery from the series high in September 1982 and by only 265,000 in the subsequent 16 months (through January 1985). During the first 12 months of recovery, the proportion of the total employed comprised by persons on short workweeks due to slack work fell from 3.7 to 2.6 percent. In January 1985, the group accounted for 2.3 percent of the employed. This pattern of decline was similar to that following the recovery from the 1973–75 recession. Thus, it seems clear that this component shows rapid improvement early in the recovery, as employers restore hours of those workers retained but with reduced workweeks before adding new workers, and then improves more slowly as the recovery matures. In contrast, the other major component—persons who can only find part-time jobs—showed no improvement early in the recovery period; indeed, it rose slightly. It did moderate later, but not by the magnitude of the decline in the slack-work component. □

—FOOTNOTES—

<sup>1</sup>The Current Population Survey, conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the Bureau of the Census, is a monthly sample survey of some 59,500 households in the United States. Information is obtained on the employment status of all persons 16 years and older in the civilian non-institutional population. For the employed, questions are asked about how many hours they worked (in the prior week); those working less than 35 hours are asked the reason for their “short” workweeks.

<sup>2</sup>See Robert W. Bednarzik, “Short workweeks during economic downturns,” *Monthly Labor Review*, June 1983, pp. 3–11.

<sup>3</sup>Other economic (involuntary) reasons for working less than 35 hours include material shortages or repairs to plant and equipment, new job started during week, and job terminated during week. About 6 percent of the total number of persons working part time for economic reasons in 1984 indicated that these other factors caused their short workweeks.

<sup>4</sup>The “full-time” component was meant to reflect persons on short workweeks due to slack work, while the “part-time” component was intended to mirror those workers who could only find part-time work. However, there has been a substantial amount of ambiguity in these series because, although they were intended to represent the reason for working less than 35 hours, they more likely represented the survey respondent’s perception of usual full-time status. For example, of the 2.4 million persons who were involuntarily employed part time due to “slack work” in 1984, only about 55 percent still considered themselves to “usually work full time.” The remainder may have been working part time for so long that they no longer looked upon themselves as “usual full-time” workers who were waiting for their hours to be restored (but continued to report themselves in the “slack work” vein nonetheless). Because of these and related ambiguities, we believed these series did not capture what they were intended to represent. BLS has also discontinued publication of two other seasonally adjusted series—persons at work in nonagricultural industries on full-time schedules and the total at work in nonagricultural industries—because of their erratic seasonal movements (especially in the spring months), their inconsistency with related data on full-time and total civilian employment, and the seemingly limited uses of the series. However, BLS continues to maintain all of the former series and will make them available to data users upon request.

<sup>5</sup>See “The Employment Situation: January 1985,” *USDL NEWS*, Feb. 1, 1985, and *Employment and Earnings*, February 1985.

## Revisions in Hispanic population and labor force data

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In January 1985, procedures designed to improve the estimates of the Hispanic population were introduced into the Current Population Survey (CPS). As shown in table 1, these procedural changes have had a substantial impact on the estimates of Hispanic labor force, employment, and unemployment levels.

Based on information from the 1980 census, independent population estimates for Hispanics were developed for January 1980 up through the present. This, in turn, permitted a revision of the historical data for major Hispanic labor force series for this period. (Data prior to 1980 are not comparable to the revised series.) Monthly seasonally adjusted data for the two independently adjusted Hispanic series—employment and unemployment levels for all Hispanics age 16 and over—have also been revised back to 1980. From these, adjusted labor force, participation rate, employment-population ratio, and unemployment rate series are derived.

In the past, the CPS did not use independent population estimates for Hispanics—the only major population group for which this was the case. Instead, the population estimates were derived from the CPS itself. This yielded estimates that were too low relative to those from the decennial census (because of problems with CPS coverage) and quite unstable over time. Under the revised procedure, CPS sample estimates are “inflated” to the independent estimate of the Hispanic population rather than being determined by the proportion of Hispanics found in the sample each month.

The independent population estimates were developed using a cohort-component methodology, in which the 1980 census count is updated by adding estimates of Hispanic births and immigrants and subtracting estimates of deaths and emigrants. These procedures integrate data on changes in the Hispanic population from a number of sources. Data on births come from the annual CPS fertility questionnaire and from the National Center for Health Statistics. Death rates are derived from mortality statistics in California and Texas, States with more than half of the Hispanic population in 1980. Data on immigration and emigration are from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Puerto Rican Planning Board, and the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

The new methodology results in sharply higher population estimates and, hence, higher labor force counts, although overall national estimates are not affected. For example, table 1 shows that, on an annual average basis for 1984, the revised Hispanic civilian noninstitutional population lev-

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**Table 1. Population and labor force status of persons of Hispanic origin by sex and age, as published and revised, 1984 annual averages**

[Numbers in thousands]

Sex and age	Civilian noninstitutional population			Employed			Unemployed			Unemployment rate		
	Published	Revised	Difference	Published	Revised	Difference	Published	Revised	Difference	Published	Revised	Difference
Total, 16 years and older . . . . .	9,881	11,164	1,283	5,679	6,469	790	676	778	102	10.6	10.7	0.1
Men, 16 years and older . . . . .	4,659	5,471	812	3,359	3,950	591	390	464	74	10.4	10.5	.1
16 to 19 years . . . . .	552	617	65	217	242	25	70	82	12	24.4	25.3	.9
20 years and older . . . . .	4,107	4,854	747	3,142	3,708	566	320	382	62	9.2	9.3	.1
Women, 16 years and older . . . . .	5,221	5,692	471	2,320	2,519	199	286	314	28	11.0	11.1	.1
16 to 19 years . . . . .	565	617	52	185	202	17	54	60	6	22.6	22.9	.3
20 years and older . . . . .	4,656	5,075	419	2,135	2,317	182	232	254	22	9.8	9.9	.1

els were almost 1.3 million, or 13 percent higher than the old estimates. Adult men were the group most affected by these changes; their 1984 population estimates rose by more than 18 percent. The levels of various labor force measures (that is, employment, unemployment, and persons not in the labor force) expanded, to a large extent, proportionately.

Hence, *rates* calculated using these levels are not significantly different from those derived with the old methodology. For example, in 1984, only the unemployment rates for teenagers rose by more than a tenth of a percentage point. Revised data for major Hispanic labor force measures for the years 1980-84 are available upon request. □

#### A note on communications

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