

# We Shall Overwhelm\*

## *Deciphering Bureau of Labor Statistics Data on Hispanic Workers*

BY WILLIAM BUCHANAN

**T**he Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), true to its name, produces a huge array of labor-related data. Among other things it details statistics for Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites, blacks, and Asians.

Unfortunately, BLS *does not publish* these statistics. BLS maintains an extensive website (www.bls.gov). However, the racial and ethnic labor force numbers it publishes there can be misleading. Take for example labor force numbers for white, black, Asian, and Hispanic. But when adding these numbers up, the sum greatly exceeds the totals. This is because Hispanics are counted twice, first as Hispanic, then as white, black, or Asian.

These numbers confirm important assumptions: they obscure the impact of massive legal and illegal immigration.

The figures of interest here are based on the Current Population Survey (CPS), a scientific study of 60,000 households (out of about 115 million in America) performed each month by the Census Bureau.

BLS develops statistics from these data. Among the data are the real and potential population of civilian workers in the country — the civilian non-institutionalized population 16 years of age and older (CNP16+) — a mouthful but easily explained.

This population (CNP16+) accounts for just over three-quarters of the total U.S. population — as measured by Census. As the name suggests, it excludes members of the U.S. military, persons in

retirement homes, asylums, or prisons, and children under 16. BLS divides this population into three parts: *employed*, *unemployed* (but actively seeking employment), and *not in labor force* (homemakers, students, disabled workers, discouraged workers, retirees living at home, etc.) — this is the real and potential civilian labor force.

To make a long story short, figures for Hispanics and Totals in this set are the same as those found on the BLS website. The unpublished BLS data are used here to break out non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks, and non-Hispanic Asians.

### **Astonishing Gains and Losses**

Table 1 shows CNP16+ gains / losses over a six-year period, from FY 2003 to FY 2009. During this time, and from a much smaller base, the CNP16+ population of Hispanics grew faster than the CNP16+ population of non-Hispanic whites — 5,302,000 to 4,629,000!!

Thanks to the recession, employment of non-Hispanic whites and blacks actually fell in FY 2009 by 1,746,000 when compared to FY 2003. At the same time, 2,943,000 more Hispanics and non-Hispanic Asians had jobs in FY 2009 than in FY 2003. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the labor market favors newcomers.

NOTE: A lot of current employment is maintained by means of deficit spending — money that rightfully belongs to future generations.

As indicated above, CNP16+ figures do not include persons under the age of 16. However, immigration makes significant contributions to that population also. Legal immigrants and illegal aliens not only bear children here — according to one study, illegal aliens alone bore 383,000 citizen babies (an-

\*“We [Latinos] will take over house by house, block by block. We may not overcome, but we will overwhelm.” Xavier Herмосillo, Talk Show Host, September, 1992, Sacramento, California.

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chor babies) in 2002 — but also bring in children born earlier in their home countries.

The evidence is irrefutable: legal and illegal immigration is having a major demographic impact on our nation. And now might be a good time to

mention the discomfoting fact that CNP16+ data are derived from a “household survey” and many illegal aliens lead a nomadic existence, outside the reach of Census surveyors. Some argue Census figures are therefore short of the actual numbers.

| <b>Employed (Table 1)</b>                                      |                    |                    |                    |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|  | <u>End FY 2003</u> | <u>End FY 2009</u> | <u>Gain / Loss</u> |
| Non-Hisp White   | 97,768,000         | 96,134,000         | -1,634,000         |
| Non-Hisp Black   | 14,397,000         | 14,285,000         | -112,000           |
| Hispanic   | 17,513,000         | 19,680,000         | 2,167,000          |
| Non-Hisp Asian   | 5,687,000          | 6,463,000          | 76,000             |
| Other  | 2,365,000          | 2,517,000          | 152,000            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>137,730,000</b> | <b>139,079,000</b> | <b>1,349,000</b>   |
| <b>PLUS</b>  |                    |                    |                    |
| <b>Unemployed (from U-3)</b>                                   |                    |                    |                    |
|  | <u>End FY 2003</u> | <u>End FY 2009</u> | <u>Gain / Loss</u> |
| Non-Hisp White   | 4,809,000          | 8,327,000          | 3,518,000          |
| Non-Hisp Black   | 1,684,000          | 2,551,000          | 867,000            |
| Hispanic   | 1,317,000          | 2,733,000          | 1,416,000          |
| Non-Hisp Asian   | 374,000            | 514,000            | 140,000            |
| Other  | 251,000            | 413,000            | 162,000            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>8,435,000</b>   | <b>14,538,000</b>  | <b>6,103,000</b>   |
| <b>PLUS</b>  |                    |                    |                    |
| <b>Not in Labor Force</b>                                      |                    |                    |                    |
|  | <u>End FY 2003</u> | <u>End FY 2009</u> | <u>Gain</u>        |
| Non-Hisp White   | 53,271,000         | 56,017,000         | 2,746,000          |
| Non-Hisp Black   | 8,851,000          | 10,596,000         | 1,745,000          |
| Hispanic   | 8,977,000          | 10,697,000         | 1,720,000          |
| Non-Hisp Asian   | 3,150,000          | 3,661,000          | 511,000            |
| Other  | 1,363,000          | 1,735,000          | 372,000            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>75,612,000</b>  | <b>82,706,000</b>  | <b>7,094,000</b>   |
| <b>EQUALS (CNP16+)</b>   |                    |                    |                    |
| <b>TOTAL Civilian Non-Institutional Population 16 and Over</b> |                    |                    |                    |
|  | <u>End FY 2003</u> | <u>End FY 2009</u> | <u>Gain</u>        |
| Non-Hisp White   | 155,848,000        | 160,477,000        | 4,629,000          |
| Non-Hisp Black   | 24,932,000         | 27,431,000         | 2,499,000          |
| Hispanic   | 27,808,000         | 33,110,000         | 5,302,000          |
| Non-Hisp Asian   | 9,211,000          | 10,638,000         | 1,427,000          |
| Other  | 3,980,000          | 4,666,000          | 686,000            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>221,779,000</b> | <b>236,322,000</b> | <b>14,543,000</b>  |

| <b>Employed (Table 2)</b>                                      |                            |                     |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------|
|  | <u>FY 2006 Gain</u>        | <u>FY 2009 Loss</u> |
| Non-Hisp White   | 954,000                    | - 4,097,000         |
| Non-Hisp Black   | 273,000                    | - 920,000           |
| Hispanic   | 848,000                    | - 790,000           |
| Non-Hisp Asian   | 329,000                    | - 307,000           |
| Other  | 27,000                     | - 117,000           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>2,431,000</b>           | <b>- 6,231,000</b>  |
| <b>PLUS</b>  |                            |                     |
| <b>Unemployed (from U-3)</b>                                   |                            |                     |
|  | <u>FY 2006 Loss</u>        | <u>FY 2009 Gain</u> |
| Non-Hisp White   | -345,000                   | 3,282,000           |
| Non-Hisp Black   | -43,000                    | 634,000             |
| Hispanic   | -148,000                   | 1,042,000           |
| Non-Hisp Asian   | -90,000                    | 256,000             |
| Other  | -8,000                     | 125,000             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>-634,000</b>            | <b>5,339,000</b>    |
| <b>PLUS</b>  |                            |                     |
| <b>Not in Labor Force</b>                                      |                            |                     |
|  | <u>FY 2006 Gain (Loss)</u> | <u>FY 2009 Gain</u> |
| Non-Hisp White   | 296,000                    | 1,496,000           |
| Non-Hisp Black   | 342,000                    | 666,000             |
| Hispanic   | 263,000                    | 488,000             |
| Non-Hisp Asian   | -13,000                    | 63,000              |
| Other  | 42,000                     | 142,000             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>930,000</b>             | <b>2,855,000</b>    |
| <b>EQUALS (CNP16+)</b>   |                            |                     |
| <b>TOTAL Civilian Non-Institutional Population 16 and Over</b> |                            |                     |
|  | <u>FY 2006 Gain</u>        | <u>FY 2009 Gain</u> |
| Non-Hisp White   | 905,000                    | 680,000             |
| Non-Hisp Black   | 571,000                    | 380,000             |
| Hispanic   | 963,000                    | 741,000             |
| Non-Hisp Asian   | 226,000                    | 13,000              |
| Other  | 62,000                     | 148,000             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>2,727,000</b>           | <b>1,962,000</b>    |

**SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table 3, Employment status of the civilian non-institutional population by detailed age, sex, and detailed Hispanic or Latino and non-Hispanic ethnicity, end of September 2003 and 2009. Non-Hispanic residents who select American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or “two or more races” to describe themselves make up the “Other” population.**

Table 1 (on page 97) shows numerical growth of five significant ethnic categories over a six-year period. FY 2009's precipitate decline in employment caused several dislocations.

Table 2 (on page 97), gives us a look at gains and losses in two very different individual fiscal years. FY 2006 was a typical year of high employment gains while FY 2009 was a year of high employment losses. Here one can see the interplay between the *employed*, on the one hand, and the *unemployed* and *not in labor force*, on the other. As *employed* numbers go up, workers tend to leave the ranks of the *unemployed*. At the same time *not in labor force* numbers increase at a modest rate. When the *employed* numbers decline, however, there are substantial increases in both the *unemployed* and *not in labor force* figures.

You also notice that the *total* CNP16+ gains in FY 2009 (gains in the size of the real and potential labor force) are less than in FY 2006. Some expla-

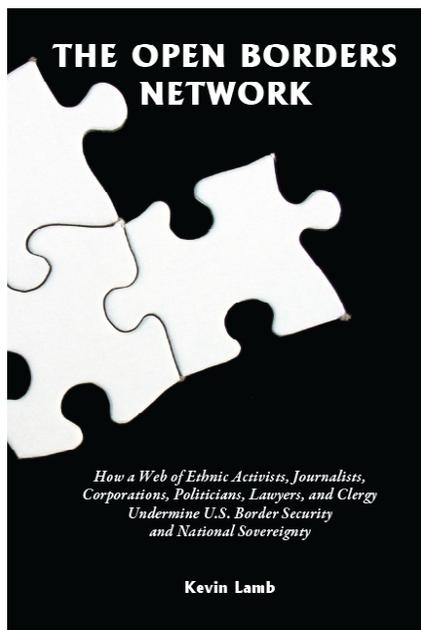
nations are due.

Why were *total* CNP16+ gains for non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanic blacks (a largely indigenous population) less by 225,000 and 191,000 in FY 2009 when compared with FY 2006? The likelihood is that when people lose their jobs, some of them will fall through the cracks. Many newly unemployed are on the move looking for work and not in a position to be queried. They have fallen out of the *employed* category, but have not been picked up as *unemployed* or *not in labor force*.

There was probably also a decline in arrivals of non-immigrants in the non-Hispanic white and black racial categories.

The decline in gains for Hispanics and non-Hispanic Asians, on the other hand, may be the result of reduced legal and illegal immigration. Still, the FY 2009 gains for Hispanics, 741,000 — down from an average of 912,000 in the five previous years — are nevertheless quite large. ■

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