Overview of 2015 National Content Test Analysis Report on Race & Ethnicity

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Session Overview

• Introduction and Background
• Question Format (Separate vs. Combined)
• Testing a Middle Eastern or North African Category
• Evaluating Alternative Instructions and Terminology
• Overall Findings
• Discussion
Introduction and Background
Concerns with Current Questions

• Growing number of groups find the race and Hispanic origin questions confusing

• Increasing responses of “Some Other Race”

• Campaigns and lobbying of the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Congress for changes to the race and Hispanic origin questions

• Led to the 2010 Census Race and Hispanic Origin Alternative Questionnaire Experiment (AQE)
Background on Race/Ethnicity Research

1986 National Content Test

1990 Census

1995 Race & Hispanic CPS Supplement

1996 National Census Test

1996 Race & Ethnic Targeted Test (RAETT)

2000 Census

2003 National Census Test

2005 National Census Test

2010 AQE

1977 OMB Race & Ethnic Standards

Note: OMB = U.S. Office of Management and Budget; CPS = Current Population Survey
2010 AQE Main Research Findings

Results for the Combined Question

• Did *not* reduce Hispanic, Black, AIAN, Asian, NHPI
• Reduced reporting of Some Other Race
• Reporting of White dropped to levels reflecting the Non-Hispanic White population
• Yielded lower item nonresponse rates
• Increased detailed reporting for most groups, but decreased reporting for others
• Better reflects self-identity, per reinterview
2010 AQE Main Research Findings

Results from the Focus Groups

• Fair, equitable treatment for all groups with a combined question

• Middle Eastern and North African participants did not see themselves in the current race/ethnicity categories and recommended a separate Middle Eastern, North African, or Arab response category
Census Day of September 1, 2015

Used large, nationally representative sample of 1.2 million addresses, including Puerto Rico

Evaluate and compare different census content

Refine estimates of national self-response and Internet response rates and continue testing different contact strategies for optimizing self-response

Content reinterview with subsample of NCT respondents, to measure accuracy

Overall response rate was 51.9%
Goals for 2015 NCT Race/Ethnicity Research

Key Dimensions to Explore

• Separate questions vs. combined question

• Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) category

• Instruction wording and terminology

• Web-based designs to improve question understanding and optimize reporting of detailed racial and ethnic groups
Question Format
(Separate vs. Combined)
### Question Format

**Separate**

8. Is Person 1 Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish?
Mark all boxes that apply AND print ethnicities in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

- No, not Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish ethnicity - Print, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spanish, Ecuadorian, etc.

9. What is Person 1’s race?
Mark all boxes that apply AND print ethnicities in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

- White – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.
- Black or African Am. – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Senegalese, etc.
- Asian – Print, for example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.
- American Indian or Alaska Native – Print, for example, Navajo Nation Blackfeet Tribe, Arikara, Native Village of Bear Tooth Hopi Reservation, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.
- Middle Eastern or North African – Print, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – Print, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.
- Some other race or origin – Print race or origin.

### Combined w/ Write-Ins

8. What is Person 1’s race or origin?
Mark all boxes that apply AND print origins in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

- White – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – Print, for example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc.
- Black or African Am. – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Senegalese, etc.
- Asian – Print, for example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.
- American Indian or Alaska Native – Print, for example, Navajo Nation Blackfeet Tribe, Arikara, Native Village of Bear Tooth Hopi Reservation, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.
- Middle Eastern or North African – Print, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – Print, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.
- Some other race or origin – Print race or origin.

### Combined w/ Checkboxes

8. Which categories describe Person 1?
Mark all boxes that apply AND print details in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

- WHITE – Provide details below.
- German
- Irish
- Italian
- Polish
- English
- French
- Print, for example, Scottish, Norwegian, Dutch, etc.
- HISpanic, latino, or Spanish – Provide details below.
- Mexican or Mexican American
- Puerto Rican
- Cuban
- Salvadoran
- Dominican
- Colombian
- Print, for example, Guatemalan, Spanish, Ecuadorian, etc.
- Black or African Am. – Provide details below.
- African American
- Jamaican
- Haitian
- Nigerian
- Ethiopian
- Somali
- Print, for example, Ghanaian, South African, Barbadian, etc.
- Asian – Provide details below.
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Asian Indian
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Japanese
- Print, for example, Korean, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.
- American Indian or Alaska Native – Provide details below.
- American Indian
- Alaska Native
- Central or South American Indian
- Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Arikara, Apsaroke, Native Village of Bear Tooth Hopi Reservation, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.
- Middle Eastern or North African – Provide details below.
- Lebanese
- Iranian
- Egyptian
- Syrian
- Moroccan
- Algerian
- Print, for example, Israeli, Iraqi, Tunisian, etc.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – Provide details below.
- Native Hawaiian
- Samoan
- Chamorro
- Fijian
- Marshallese
- Print, for example, Palauan, Tahitian, Chukotka, etc.
- Some Other Race, Ethnicity, or Origin – Print below.
Race/Ethnicity Distributions by Question Format (Percent Alone or in Combination)

White lower in Combined Question formats

SOR lower in Combined Question formats

Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses
Percent Distribution of Hispanic Responses and Non-Hispanic Responses by Question Format

- **Combined Question with Write-In Response Areas**
  - Hispanic alone
  - Hispanic + SOR alone
  - Hispanic + Other Major Group(s)

- **Combined Question with Detailed Checkboxes**
  - White alone
  - Black alone
  - Asian alone
  - AIAN alone
  - MENA alone
  - NHPI alone
  - SOR alone
  - Multiple Responses

Other categories have similar levels of reporting regardless of question format, consistent with 2010 AQE findings.

- Combined Question approaches more easily allow Hispanics to report their Hispanic identity.

Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses
Percent Distribution of Race for Hispanic Respondents by Question Format

Most Hispanics reported only a Hispanic response in the Combined Questions

SOR alone and Two or More are higher in Separate Questions

No differences for Hispanics who identify as Black

Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses
Percent of Item Nonresponse by Question Format

- Hispanic Origin Question
- Race Question
- Both Questions

Source: 2015 NCT, Internet and paper responses

Soft edits on the Internet instrument helped reduced nonresponse.

Paper questions yielded higher nonresponse for the Separate Questions.
Detailed Reporting for Major Race/Ethnicity Groups by Question Format
(Percent Alone or in Combination)

Source: 2015 NCT, Internet responses

Detailed reporting was the same or higher across all major categories for the Combined Question with Detailed Checkboxes format.
Consistency of Reinterview and Self-Response by Race/Ethnicity Group by Question Format (Percent Alone or in Combination)

Differences in consistency for Hispanics between Separate & Combined w/ Checkboxes

Source: 2015 NCT
Summary of Findings

The combined question with detailed checkboxes design appears to elicit higher quality data on race and ethnicity; this is in keeping with the results of 2010 AQE

- No changes to distribution for major groups
- Decreased Some Other Race reporting
- Lower item nonresponse for the combined race/ethnicity question than for the separate race question
- Same or higher level of detailed reporting
- Higher overall consistency for Hispanics
Testing a Middle Eastern or North African Category
Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) Category

8. What is Person 1’s race or origin?
Mark one or more boxes AND print origins.

- White – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc.
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – Print, for example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc.
- Black or African Am. – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.
- Asian – Print, for example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.
- American Indian or Alaska Native – Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – Print, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.
- Some other race or origin – Print race or origin.

8. What is Person 1’s race or origin?
Mark all boxes that apply AND print origins in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

- White – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – Print, for example, Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc.
- Black or African Am. – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.
- Asian – Print, for example, Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.
- American Indian or Alaska Native – Print, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – Print, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.
- Some other race or origin – Print race or origin.
MENA Classification

• Researched MENA classifications from 15 government, academic, and non-governmental organizations

• Nationalities in more than half of classifications researched are included in the Census Working Classification
Detailed Groups for MENA Analysis

NCT Working Classification of MENA Category

- **Includes 19 nationalities**
  
  Algerian, Bahraini, Egyptian, Emirati, Iraqi, Iranian, Israeli, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Moroccan, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Tunisian, Yemeni

- **Includes 11 ethnicities and pan-ethnic terms**
  
  Arab or Arabic, Amazigh or Berber, Assyrian, Bedouin, Chaldean, Druze, Kurdish, Middle Eastern, North African, Syriac

NCT Oversample for MENA also included

Afghan, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Cypriot, Djiboutian, Georgian, Mauritanian, Somali, South Sudanese, Sudanese, Turkish, Turkish Cypriot
Where MENA Responses are Reported by Presence of MENA Category (Percent Alone or in Combination)

MENA respondents use MENA category when it is available.

MENA respondents use White category when no MENA category is available.

* Indicates that a dedicated MENA checkbox was not available.

Source: 2015 NCT
Self-Response Reporting Patterns of MENA Reinterview Population by Presence of MENA Category

Many people have difficulty identifying as only MENA when there is no MENA category.

Some MENA respondents did not identify as MENA in the self-response.

Source: 2015 NCT
Detailed Reporting for Groups Not in the MENA Working Classification by Presence of MENA Category (Percent Alone or in Combination)

Source: 2015 NCT
MENA Category
Summary of Findings

The use of a distinct Middle Eastern or North African category appears to elicit higher quality data for people who would identify with MENA

- People who identify as MENA use the MENA category when it is available
- People who are MENA have trouble identifying as only MENA when no category is available
- The nationalities and ethnicities in the 2015 NCT working classification of MENA identified as MENA when the category was available
- The nationalities and ethnicities in the MENA oversample did not identify as MENA when the category was available
Evaluating Alternative Instructions and Terminology
Instructions and Terminology

Instruction Wording:

• *Mark [X] one or more boxes.*
• *Mark all boxes that apply…*

*Note, you may report more than one group.*

Question Terminology:

• “Race,” “Ethnicity,” “Origin”
  
  **What is Person 1’s race or origin?**
  
  **What is Person 1’s race or ethnicity?**

• No terms = “Categories”
  
  **Which categories describe Person 1?**
Qualitative Research on Question Terminology

Census Bureau’s Center for Survey Measurement and RTI International conducted 40 face-to-face cognitive and usability testing interviews with Spanish-speaking respondents.

¿Cuál es la raza o el origen étnico de Persona 1?
(What is Person 1’s race or ethnicity?)
“had the same meaning,”
“roots,” “where you were born,” “ancestry”

¿Cuáles de estas categorías describen a Persona 1?
(Which categories describe Person 1?)
“hierarchal listing of options in which the ordering of the options implied ranking”
“show a pattern of respondents linking the word ‘categoría’ to a hierarchical order or ranking, rather than to a natural list of options”
“social status or hierarchy”
Instructions and Terminology
Summary of Findings

Instruction Wording:

*Select all boxes that apply …*

*Note, you may report more than one group.*

Question Terminology:

*What is Person 1’s race or ethnicity?*

- Only one major race/ethnicity group (AIAN alone or in combination) had a significant increase in reporting when the instructions were changed from old to new with the Race/Origin terminology; all other distributions were not significantly different.

- The new instructions increased the rate of consistency of multiple-responses when compared to the old instructions; there was no difference in the rate of consistency for any of the other major race/ethnicity groups.

- Qualitative research findings show that Race/Ethnicity terminology was better understood than Categories terminology in Spanish.
Summary of Findings and Optimal Elements from the 2015 NCT Research
Finding for Question Format

Combined Question with Detailed Checkboxes Design
Finding for MENA Response Category

A dedicated response category “Middle Eastern or North African” (MENA)
Findings for Instructions and Terminology

“race / ethnicity” terminology

What is this person’s race or ethnicity?
Mark all boxes that apply AND print ethnicities in the spaces below.
Note, you may report more than one group.
What is this person’s race or ethnicity?

Mark all boxes that apply AND print ethnicities in the spaces below.

Note, you may report more than one group.
**Optimal Elements from 2015 NCT Research**

**Question Format:** combined question with detailed checkboxes

**Middle Eastern or North African category**

**Instructions:** Select all boxes that apply... Note, you may report more than one group.

**Terminology:** race or ethnicity
Next Steps
2015 NCT Report on Race & Ethnicity

Visit:
www.census.gov/2020census

Select:

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2015 National Content Test Race and Ethnicity Analysis Report
NCT Outreach & Engagement

Census National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations

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Institute of Caribbean Studies

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Congressional Hispanic Caucus

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Asian & Pacific Islander Foundation

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Public Affairs Alliance of Asian Americans

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Population Association of America
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| General Public         | Pop.Race.Ethnicity.Research@census.gov     |
|                        | 301-763-2403                               |

For additional resources: