



F5 Discussant

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Cognitive Testing of the 2016 American Community Survey Content Test Items

Summary Report for Round 1 and Round 2 Interviews

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Key Findings



- Reactions to minimum and detailed categories – **NCHS, NASS, Census, BLS**
- Modifications to question stem and instructions – **NCHS, NASS, Census, BLS**
- Mode of administration (SAQ, CAI) – **NCHS & NASS**
- Self- and proxy-reporting – **Census & NASS**

Quantitative Reactions to Minimum and Detailed Categories (BLS)

- 13% did not provide a detailed category
- 74% did not provide a write-in response
- More than 9/10 felt their response reflected their race/ethnicity “very well” or “somewhat well”
 - White respondents most likely to say “not too well” or “not well at all” (9%)

Qualitative Reactions to Minimum and Detailed Categories (**Census**, **NCHS**, **NASS**)

- Easy to use the detailed categories (**Census**, **NCHS**)
- Detailed response might depend on intent (**Census**, **NCHS**, **NASS**)
 - Ancestry/Genealogy:
 - Ancestry vs. DNA (**NCHS**, **NASS**)
 - Unsure how far back to go in genealogy/ancestry (**Census**, **NCHS**)
 - Particularly an issue for White participants (**Census**)
 - Potential false positives for AIAN among Hispanic/Spanish version (**Census**)
 - Self-identification: Hard for proxy reporting (**Census**)
 - Administrative: Why does government need to know details? (**Census**, **NASS**)

Qualitative Reactions to Minimum and Detailed Categories, continued

- Hispanic respondents answered easily, most selected only Hispanic (**NCHS**)
 - White subcategories focusing on European ancestry may have influenced that decision
 - More research needed on Afro-Latino/a behaviors
- MENA category is appreciated (**Census, NCHS**)
 - Some uncertainty about whether to also select White (**Census, NCHS**)
 - Some may not see the MENA category on the list (**NCHS**)
- African American respondents do not catch that African American applies to descendants of enslaved, and thus feel the categories may be insensitive (**NCHS**)

Modifications to Question Stem ("or" vs. "and/or")

- People are not paying close attention to the question stem wording (**NCHS**)
- Data distribution is not affected by question stem wording (**BLS**)
- Race "and/or" ethnicity is preferred, cueing for additional details "beyond the obvious" (**NASS, Census**)
- Spanish generally worked fine (**Census**)

Modification to Question Instructions ("Select all" vs. "Select all AND add details")

- No significant difference in # of broad or detailed categories selected between "select all" and "select all AND add additional details" (**BLS**)
- Question instructions do not impact responses or understanding (**BLS, CENSUS**)
- Regardless of instruction wording, some overlooked the instructions altogether (**NASS, NCHS**)
- Enumerators prefer the shorter instructions but participants prefer the longer version to encourage inclusivity (**NASS**)

Mode of Administration (**NCHS**, **NASS**)

- SAQ: Failure to check a main category, failure to write in categories if not listed (**NCHS**, **NASS**)
- CAI: Clunky to read, often need to repeat sub-categories (**NCHS**)
- CAI: Respondents often interrupt enumerator with their answer (**NASS**)

Self- and Proxy-Reporting (**Census**, **NASS**)

- Related: Most had no difficulties (**Census**, **NASS**)
 - A few had challenges for spouses or children, not knowing or having never discussed how that person identifies, or not providing detail for their children (**Census**, English and Spanish)
- Unrelated: Several had difficulties, not knowing the detailed categories (**Census**)

My Takeaways

- NR on detailed categories
- Hispanic race measurement
- MENA category
- Impact on White population
- Wording matters
- Reduce burden for enumerators



Thank you!

Questions?

