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Ann Morning | April 21, 2016

Discussant Remarks on 2015 National Content Test Study Plan for Race & Ethnicity

U.S. Census Bureau
National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic and Other Populations

Overall Assessment of Study Plan

- ★ Comprehensive
- ★ Clear, both organizationally and visually
- ★ Transparent decision process
- ★ Grounded in prior research
 - Census Bureau data, including 2010 Alternative Questionnaire Experiment (AQE)
 - Academic research

Overview of Remarks: Replies to Request for Input

1. Other research questions for analysis of question format or MENA category?
 - Recommendations A – D
2. Suggestions for developing MENA classification?
 - Recommendations E – F
3. Most important research questions?
4. Additional recommendations
 - Recommendations G – H

*Recommendations **A-B** for analysis of question format or MENA category*

A. Greater clarity on measures of accuracy and reliability.

- These terms used alongside “consistency” and measures like consistency scores, gross difference and net difference rates
- More explanation needed, perhaps following 2012 AQE Report
- Table shells, now mostly of consistency scores, should follow text

B. Test accuracy of detailed ethnic reporting, using reinterviews.

- Focus is on rate of detailed reporting
- And consistently include smaller, write-in ethnic groups in analysis

Recommendations C-D for analysis of question format or MENA category

C. Analyze interaction effects of “race” terminology with Hispanic and MENA checkboxes.

- Given varied opinions about whether “Hispanic or Latino” and “Middle Eastern or North African” are *racial* identifiers
- Analyze interaction (joint) effects on: (i) rates of reporting as Hispanic or MENA; (ii) item non-response by Hispanic or MENA respondents

D. Clarify item non-response measure for MENA dimension. (See Res. Q. 8, p. 68)

- Compare item non-response rates in the “MENA/No MENA” conditions for: (i) all respondents; (ii) MENA respondents only

Recommendation E for developing MENA group classification

- E. Conduct inclusive analyses regardless of current “official” MENA designation, for the following groups:**
- Recognized MENA respondents: Individuals who identified in reinterview as MENA and reported one or more Bureau-recognized MENA origin(s) or ethnicity/ies (e.g. Iraqi, Kurdish).
 - Unrecognized (or “candidate”) MENA respondents: Individuals who identified in reinterview as MENA and reported one or more origin or ethnicity, none of which is classified by the Bureau as MENA.
 - Unspecified MENA respondents: Individuals who identified in reinterview as MENA but did not report any origin or ethnicity.
 - Potential MENA respondents: Individuals who do *not* identify in reinterview as MENA, but who report ethnicities that the Bureau considers to be of Middle Eastern or North African origin (e.g. an Iranian who reports as “White”)

Recommendation F for developing MENA group classification

- F. For each “official” or “candidate” MENA detailed group, calculate share of respondents who identify as MENA (via checkbox or write-in).**

The tendency of specific ethnic or national groups to identify as MENA could provide a neutral and reasonable basis for developing the Bureau’s MENA classification framework.

Opinion on most important research questions for deciding final design

- 1. Item non-response rate**
- 2. Reporting in OMB / checkbox categories (i.e. reducing “Some other race” reporting)**
- 3. Detailed ethnic origin reporting**

Additional recommendations G-H

- G. Analyze reporting consistency for all multiple-race groups larger than 1% in the reinterview.**

- H. Supplement decision process with simultaneous ranking of options according to universal measures.**
 - Current decision tree based on aggregate performance of each dimension (e.g. whether in general, a MENA checkbox works better than no MENA checkbox)
 - But interaction effects are possible (e.g. even if a MENA checkbox generally works well, it may work poorly when joined to another strategy, say “race” term)
 - So “check” current decision procedure results against a ranking of all 36 options by:
 - i. Item response rate
 - ii. Consistency scores
 - iii. Rate of reporting in OMB / checkbox—i.e. not SOR—categories
 - iv. Rate of detailed ethnic reporting