

Addendum

Additional Qualitative Research

The testing of a new “Middle Eastern or North African” (MENA) response category is one of the four key dimensions for race and ethnicity being tested in the 2015 National Content Test (NCT). One-half of the 1.2 million households in the NCT will receive a question design that includes a distinct “Middle Eastern or North African” response category, accompanied by varying treatments of the three other key dimensions being tested: separate questions approach vs. combined question approach; old instructions vs. new instructions and use of different terms (race, ethnicity, origin, or no terms at all); and paper vs. web-based technology for mode of data collection

In addition to the 2015 NCT, the Census Bureau will be conducting additional qualitative research to further evaluate how respondents self-identify as MENA. In summer of 2015, the Census Bureau Center for Survey Measurement will conduct usability testing on the 2015 NCT Internet instrument. In doing so, we will recruit respondents that may identify within the Census Bureau’s working classification of MENA such as Lebanese, Israeli, Iranian, Amazigh/Berber, Kurdish, and Chaldean. Additionally, we will recruit groups that are not in our working classification such as Turkish, Somali, Armenian, Sudanese and Mauritanian. Therefore, this cognitive testing will show whether or not the recruited people from these groups identify as MENA.

In Fiscal Year 2016, the Census Bureau plans to conduct additional cognitive testing of the race question with experimental sets of write-in space examples for the MENA response category.

The experimental sets of write-in space examples will differ based on the population size of the countries listed in each example set. For example, one example set will only include the most populated countries in the Middle Eastern or North African region, while another set will include countries with smaller populations to help inform respondents from those countries that their country is included within the MENA category. This research will explore whether the experimental example sets have an impact on the respondents' understanding of the race question, the MENA race category, and on the reporting of responses.

As part of this research, we will recruit from a small sample of 2015 NCT respondents who identified as MENA and are clustered in specific geographic areas in the U.S. The group of respondents will be diverse on key characteristics, including reported country of origin, age, gender, and education level. In the cognitive interviews, respondents will complete each race question format and discuss their reactions to each one, including their experience of completing each form, as well as their interpretation of form instructions and write-in space example sets. The order format completion will vary across respondents.